

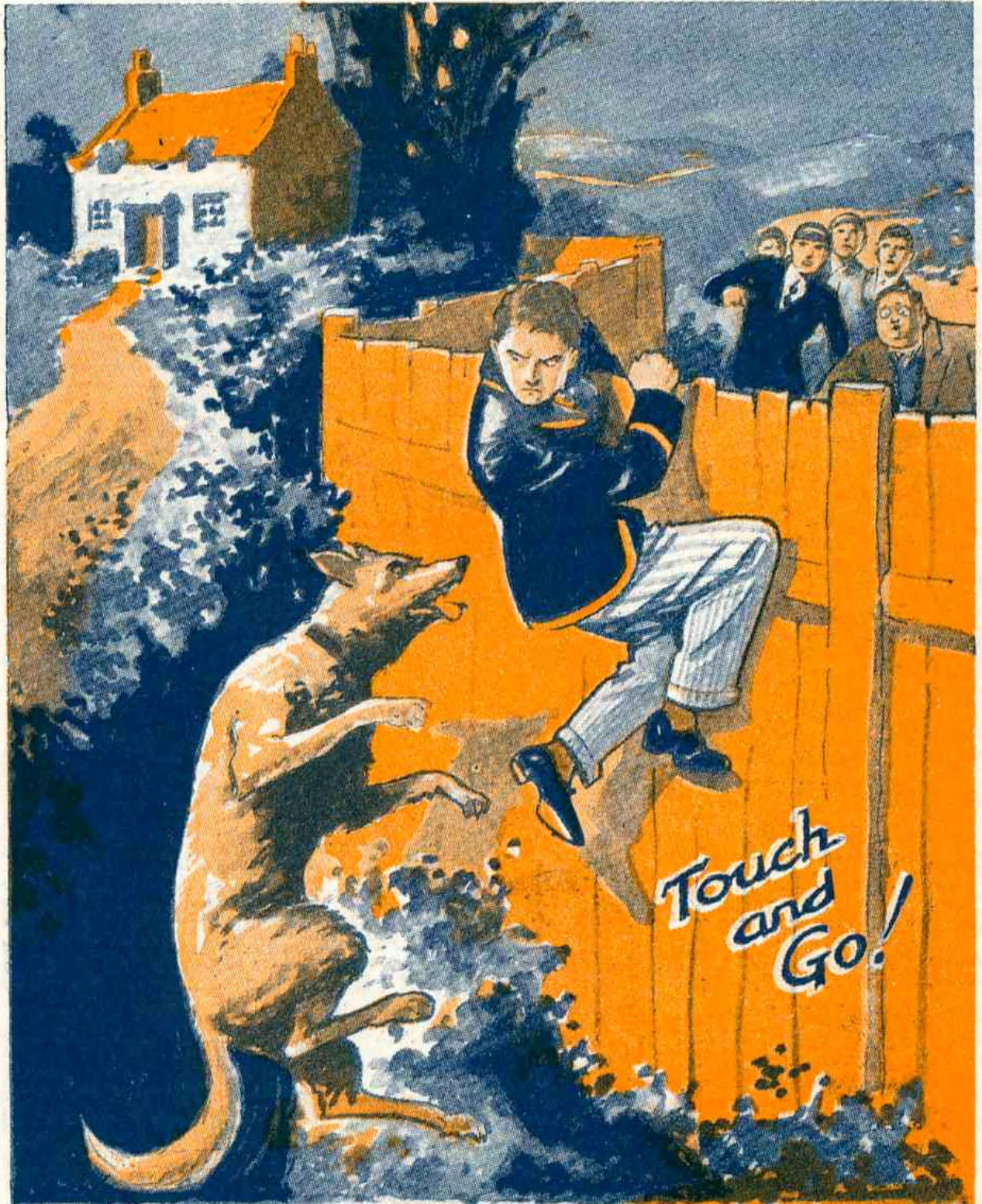
SPECIAL
SCHOOL YARN

HUMOROUS
SUPPLEMENT

THRILLING
WAR STORY

All-star features—inside.

The MAGNET 2^D





By
**FRANK
RICHARDS.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Help for Bunter!

WILL you fellows stop?"

"No!"

"Beasts!"

"Buck up, Bunter!"

"I'm tired!"

"Twenty-seven!" said Bob Cherry gravely.

"Wha-a-at?" Billy Bunter blinked at Bob Cherry, through his big spectacles, in the thickening shadows of Redclyffe Wood. "What? What do you mean, you silly ass?"

"What I say," answered Bob. "Twenty-seven."

"What do you mean—twenty-seven?" howled Bunter.

"You've said you're tired twenty-seven times! That's the twenty-seventh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five of the Greyfriars Remove chortled.

Billy Bunter did not chortle.

He glared at the chums of the Remove with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

"You—silly chump!" he gasped. "Think I want your silly jokes, when I'm tired and hungry—famished, in fact? My legs are dropping off."

"Buck up, old fat bean!" said Harry Wharton cheerfully. "Only another three miles!"

Groan!

Billy Bunter stopped and leaned on the trunk of a tree. Wharton had said it was three miles home to Greyfriars. To judge by the effect of his statement on Billy Bunter, he might have said that it was three thousand miles.

"Come on, old fat man!" said Frank Nugent.

Groan!

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"Look here, Bunter, we shall be late for call-over at this rate!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Get a move on!"

Groan!

The Famous Five came to a halt. Billy Bunter, leaning on the tree, seemed a fixture there. Bunter was tired. He had walked a mile. A mile contains 1,760 yards. Every mile, therefore, contained 1,759 yards too many for Billy Bunter to negotiate with comfort.

The early winter dusk was falling on the woods. A sharp walk was needed for the juniors to arrive at the school in time for call-over. So far from putting up a sharp walk, Bunter did not seem disposed to walk at all. He leaned on the tree and groaned.

"You howling ass!" said Bob Cherry. "Are you thinking of making a night of it here?"

"Beast!"

"Let's get on!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows!" yelled Bunter.

"Don't you go and leave me alone here! I'm not going to be robbed and murdered by footpads and tramps to please you!"

"Get a move on, idiot!"

"Beast! I'm tired!"

"Let's up-end him, and roll him along like a barrel!" suggested Bob Cherry.

"It's downhill most of the way."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!" groaned Bunter. "I'm worn out! I've got a stitch in my side—it feels like plumbago, or—or pneumonia! I've walked miles and miles and miles and miles—"

"We're only a mile from Redclyffe, fathead!"

"Then you've lost the way!" said Bunter. "Just like you to lose the way! I know we've covered miles and miles. Oh dear!"

"What did you come over to Redclyffe

for, you fat chump?" growled Johnny Bull. "Lot you cared about a football match!"

"How was I to know you silly fatheads were going to walk back?" gasped Bunter. "We came over by train. Why couldn't we go back by train—if you were too jolly mean to stand a taxi?"

"The farefulness is terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Snort, from Bunter.

"That's you fellows all over! Mean and stingy! Always thinking about money! I call it sordid!"

"Why, you—you—you—" gasped Johnny Bull.

"You frabjous owl!" roared Bob Cherry. "We came over by train to be in time to see the match. We're walking back because we haven't a lot of money to chuck away on railway fares. You stuck Wharton for your fare over to Redclyffe, anyhow, you fat villain!"

"I'm going to settle that as soon as we get back to the school," answered Bunter. "I told Wharton so! I'm expecting a postal order—"

"Shut up, and come on!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter continued to lean on the tree. The Famous Five stood and stared at him, in the falling gloom, in considerable exasperation. Even the good-natured, dusky face of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh showed signs of exasperation. Bunter, as a matter of fact, was rather trying to any fellow's temper.

"It's our own fault," grunted Johnny Bull. "We shouldn't have let the fat boulder hook on to us!"

"Beast!"

"And I'm jolly well not going to get lines for missing call-over because he's too fat and lazy to shift! I'm going on."

"I say, you fellows—"

Johnny Bull made a movement to go. But as the other fellows did not follow, he stopped again, with a snort.

"Hold on!" said Harry Wharton. "We can't leave the fat idiot here—he doesn't even know the way! He hasn't sense enough to get out of the wood if we leave him!"

"Beast!"

"Well, are we going to carry him?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"I say, you fellows, that's a good idea!" exclaimed Billy Bunter. "Two of you can join hands, you know, and make a chair for me—"

"Oh crikey!"

"You can take it in turns," said Bunter. "There's five of you, and if you take it in turns, you'll manage all right. We'll stop and rest every now and then. I'll risk being late for call-over! I hope I'm considerate!"

"You—you—you hope you're considerate!" gurgled Bob.

"Yes. I never was selfish, I hope."

"Oh, Christopher Columbus!"

"Well, what do you fellows think?" asked Bunter, blinking anxiously at the five dim faces under the shadowy trees.

"We'd better not tell you what we think, old bean," answered Wharton. "It couldn't be put in polite language."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Look here, you fat frump!" said Frank Nugent. "We've got to get in. It's another three miles—"

Groan!

"Might get a lift when we get out into the road. It's only a mile to the road, and—"

Groan!

"Oh, let's camp out here for the night!" said Johnny Bull, savagely sarcastic. "It's a nice, warm, cosy February night for camping out."

"My esteemed chums," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "I have a wheezy good idea! The absurd Bunter is too tired to walk—"

"Yes, rather!" gasped Bunter. "I—I can't take another step till I've had a rest—a long rest!"

"He is too terrifically tired even to start—"

"Much too tired!" said Bunter.

"It is therefore up to our ridiculous selves to give the esteemed Bunter assistance, my worthy chums."

"Thinking of carrying him?" roared Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull! You shut up! Inky's not such a selfish beast as you are! Go on, Inky, and don't mind that beast!"

"Certainly, my esteemed Bunter! In the absurd circumstances," said the dusky junior from India's coral strand, "we are bound to help the ludicrous Bunter—"

"Well, how?" asked Wharton.

"The esteemed Bunter is too tired—or lazy—to take another step," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But it has occurred to my debilitated brain that if we all gathered round him, and kicked him with terrific energy, he might be able to take many steps—"

"Oh!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Why, you—you beast!" howled Bunter. "You're a worse beast than Bull."

"Let us, at all events, try this wheezy idea," suggested the Nabob of Bhanipur, "and perhaps it will be successful."

"Hear, hear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Turn round, Bunter!"

"Lug him away from that tree!"

"Now then, all together!"

"I say, you fellows—yaroooh! I say, I'm going—Yoop! Stop kicking me, you beasts! I say, I'm not so tired after all. Yaroooh! I say, you fellows—Whoooooop! Beasts! Old chaps—Rotters—Dear old fellows—Yaroooooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter found that he could walk. He made the further discovery that he could run. With five chuckling

juniors dribbling him like a very fat football, he put on a good speed. And even if his fat limbs were tired, it was obvious that there was nothing the matter with his lungs. His yells awoke every echo in Redclyffe Woods.

"I say, you fellows—Yaroooh! I'm going—I—I can walk—Stoppit—Oh crikey! Oh lor! Leave off! Owl! Wow!"

"Think you can walk now?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Ow! Yes! Beast! Yes! Ow!"

"Well, if you want any further help, say the word!"

"The helpfulness will be terrific."

"Ow! Beast! Ow!"

Bunter plugged on. Tired as he was, he did not want any more help. Very much indeed he did not want any more.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Crocked!

"OOOOOOH!" yelled Bunter suddenly.

Another quarter of a mile had been covered. Harry Wharton & Co. were tramping cheerily, by the dusky footpath that wound through Redclyffe Woods. A walk of three or four miles, in keen frosty air, was rather a pleasure than a task, to the sturdy chums of the Remove; awful as it was to Billy Bunter. And there was still a chance of getting in at Greyfriars before call-over, if no more time was lost.

While the police are searching everywhere for the notorious gangster, "Jimmy the One," he is lying low at Greyfriars in the guise of a respectable Form master!

For a quarter of a mile Bunter had plugged on, grunting, but without a halt. He did not want to be helped on his way again; and it was obvious that the Famous Five were not going to carry him, though the fat Owl had so considerably offered to let them take it in turns. Hurree Singh's wheeze had proved successful—so far. The juniors were more than half-way through the woods, when Bunter uttered that sudden fearful yell, stumbled, and sat down.

"Ooooooooh!" roared Bunter.

"Oh, my only hat!" exclaimed Bob.

Cherry. "What is it now?"

"The kickfulness—" began Hurree

Jamset Ram Singh.

"Ow! I say, you fellows. I've

sprained my ankle!" groaned Bunter.

"You clumsy ass!"

"If that's what you call sympathetic,

Bull—"

"Well, sit there as long as you like!"

growled Johnny Bull. "I'm going on!"

"Ow! Help!"

Harry Wharton & Co. halted, and once more Johnny Bull followed the example of his comrades. That the fat Owl was malingering was the suspicion in every mind; still, Bunter was just the ass to sprain his ankle. They stared at him, as he sat and groaned.

"Look here—" said Harry.

"Ow! I think my ankle's broken!"

groaned Bunter. "The pain is awful!

Fearful! Excruciating!"

"Let us try the esteemed kickful-

ness—"

"Beast!"

"Hold on!" said Bob, laughing. "If

the fat chump really has sprained his ankle, kicking won't do him any good."

"Kicking always does him good!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Look here, Bunter—"

"Oh dear! Go on and leave me!"

said Bunter bitterly. "Leave me to perish of cold and hunger and awful agony! It would be like you fellows—after all I've done for you! Ow!"

"Are you really hurt?" demanded Wharton.

"I'm suffering fearful agonies!" yelled Bunter. "I can't get up! I can't walk! If you fellows can carry me as far as the road, and get a lift—"

"Fathead!"

"Then leave me! Leave me to die!" moaned Bunter. "It's all your fault I'm landed like this! If you'd let me stand a taxi back, we should be in by this time. You know jolly well that my idea was to have tea at the Redclyffe Tea-rooms, and a taxi back—"

"Shut up, fathead! Let's look at his beastly ankle!" said Bob. "If the fat duffer can't walk, something will have to be done."

"Ow! Don't touch my ankle! The pain—"

"Look here—"

"Yarooooooh!"

"Oh crumbs!" said Wharton. "What a go!"

The Famous Five stared down at Bunter, exasperated and perplexed. No doubt a fellow who had sprained his ankle was deserving of deep sympathy. But they could not feel at all sure that it was not spoof. They knew their Bunter only too well.

Billy Bunter blinked up at them through his big spectacles. He was quite assured that the Famous Five would not go on and leave him alone in the dusky woods. He was not going to walk any farther—at least, without a good long rest. It was a difficult situation, and it was up to the Famous Five to solve the difficulty—after landing Bunter in this. They had landed him in it—by refusing to let him stand a taxi home from Redclyffe. A taxi home from Redclyffe would only have cost fifteen shillings—which would have been three shillings each from the five—all of which Bunter was prepared to settle out of a postal order that he was expecting. They had not seemed to see it, somehow.

What was going to be done now was rather a mystery. Bunter saw no reason why two fellows should not make a "chair" for him, and carry him onward. The other fellows saw a lot of reasons why they shouldn't.

"If he really can't walk—" said Nugent, at last.

"Ow! My ankle's broken, I think—"

"Bother the fat idiot!" growled Johnny Bull. "I jolly well believe he's gammoning all the time."

"Yarooooooh!" roared Bunter.

"You ass, what's that fearful row about?"

"The pain—the awful pain—the excruciating agony—" gasped Bunter.

"Oh, shut up!"

"Look here, something's got to be done!" said Wharton. "We can't get any sort of a lift till we get to the road—and it's more than half a mile, unless—" He paused.

"Well, what?" asked Bob. "We can't stay here."

"I believe we're not very far from old Joyce, the woodcutter's cottage," said Harry. "It's right in the middle of Redclyffe Wood. He has a pony and

cart that he carries the faggots in. Might get him to give Bunter a lift in his cart—five bob would do it—”

“I say, you fellows, I’ll stand the five bob!” said Bunter. “You can leave that to me. I’m not asking you fellows to pay my expenses.”

“Got it about you?” roared Johnny Bull.

“Oh, really, Bull! I suppose one of you fellows can lend me the five bob, if I settle out of my postal order to-morrow—”

“I’m going to kick him!” hissed Johnny Bull. “I’m jolly well going to kick him—”

“Hold on, old chap! If the fat chump’s really damaged—”

“I don’t believe he is. It’s all gammon.”

“Well, he says he is. Look here, there’s a track somewhere, that runs straight to Joyce’s cottage; we can’t be far from it,” said Harry. “Old Joyce would jump at five bob to drive the fat chump to the school—and it’s worth that to get rid of him.”

“Oh, really, Wharton! If you don’t like my company—”

“Great pip!”

“This is what comes of being mean. We could have got a taxi all the way for fifteen bob. Now I’ve got to jolt along in a beastly cart—to save a miserable ten bob! And with this awful pain in my back—”

“Where?” gasped Bob Cherry.

“I mean, in my ankle.”

“It’s gammon!” snorted Johnny Bull.

“Just gammon!”

“Oh, really, Bull—”

Harry Wharton was staring about him in the thickening dusk. Somewhere in the depths of Redclyffe Woods was the wood-cutter’s cottage; but it was a lonely and remote spot, and not easy to place. The captain of the Remove remembered that he had seen it during a summer ramble two terms ago; but Redclyffe Woods were not so familiar to the Greyfriars fellows as the locality nearer the school. While he looked about him and thought it out, his comrades waited, and Bunter contributed a series of groans, in order that his sufferings should not be overlooked.

“I think I can find it all right,” said Harry, at last. “I know it’s not far from here. The track turns off this path on the left, I know. It’s not far away. We shall see a light, too, I expect. Come on, Bunter! We shall have to help you along to the cottage.”

Wharton and Bob Cherry grasped the fat junior, and lifted him. Billy Bunter hung on them heavily. He gave them all his weight to bear; and his weight was rather uncommon.

“Oh crumbs!” gasped Bob. “Ease off a bit, old bean! You’re folding me up like a pocket-knife.”

“Hold me, you silly idiot!”

“Brace up!” gasped Wharton.

“I—I say, you fellows, hold me! I can’t walk if it’s far. I’m suffering frightful agonies.”

“Shall I help from behind?” asked Johnny Bull. “A jolly good kick would set him going.”

“Beast!” roared Bunter.

“Oh, let’s get on!” groaned Bob.

“The sooner the better, with this hippopotamus to lug about.”

The juniors re-started after the interval, as it were. Wharton and Bob staggered along, with Bunter’s fat arms grasping their shoulders, and the fat Owl’s terrific weight thrown on them.

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Fortunately, the distance proved not to be great. Quite soon they came on the spot where the track to Joyce’s cottage branched off from the main path.

“Here’s the place!” gasped Wharton. “We ought to see the lights of the cottage from here.”

“Can’t see any lights,” grunted Johnny Bull.

“Well, I’m sure it’s this way.”

“Hark!”

From the distant darkness came the deep bay of a dog. Evidently that sound came from some human habitation, and the only habitation within three miles was the wood-cutter’s lonely cottage. It assured the juniors that they were on the right route, and they turned into the dim track and tramped on towards the cottage. The baying of the dog, which sounded like that of a large and powerful animal, was heard again, and yet again, as they advanced, but not a glimmer of light was to be seen.

“Hallo! Hallo! Hallo! Here we are!” exclaimed Bob Cherry, as he stumbled against a gate in the darkness.

And the juniors came to a halt. And Wharton and Bob, gasping, let Bunter slide to the earth, where he sat and spluttered.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Narrow Escape!

“T HANK goodness!” gasped Harry Wharton.

The captain of the Greyfriars Remove was no weakling; but Billy Bunter’s terrific weight had told severely upon him. He stood gasping for breath. Bob Cherry, breathing hard and deep, leaned on the gate.

“I say, you fellows, buck up!” said Bunter. “It’s jolly cold, you know. Don’t hang about wasting time.”

“Shut up!” roared Johnny Bull.

“Open the gate, one of you chaps!” said Harry.

“It seems to be locked,” said Frank Nugent, who was fumbling at the gate.

“What the thump does Joyce lock his gate for? Nobody about here to pinch his faggots, I suppose?”

“Sure it’s locked?” asked Harry, in surprise.

“Well, it won’t open.”

Wharton tried the gate. It was a solid gate, built strongly of wood, and securely locked. The wood-cutter’s cottage stood in a large garden, which was surrounded by a fence. Fence and gate were both of solid construction, and could not be seen through; and they were six feet high. Harry Wharton made a jump, caught the top of the gate with his hands, drew himself up, and looked over.

He could see the cottage in the thick dusk a dozen yards away. There was no glimmer of light from any of the front windows, but he could discern that the wooden shutters were closed, so it was possible that there was a light within—unseen.

He dropped back from the gate.

“Looks as if there’s nobody there,” he said. “But Joyce has a wife and two sons, and they can’t all be out. If the men are cutting wood at a distance, they mayn’t have got in from work yet.”

“Oh, what rotten luck!”

Another groan from Bunter.

“Bang on the blessed gate!” said Johnny Bull. “If there’s anybody at home they’ll hear that.”

Wharton shook his head.

“If Mrs. Joyce is alone there, she wouldn’t be likely to come out and open the gate. This is a jolly lonely place, and she might think it was a tramp. There was a man robbed by a tramp in this wood not long ago.”

“Well, what’s going to be done?”

“I think I’ll nip over the gate and knock at the door,” said Harry. “If Joyce is out; Mrs. Joyce knows me, and she might trust me with the pony and cart.”

“That’s a good idea.”

“Look out for the dog,” said Bob.

“We heard a dog as we came along.”

“That’s all right; I know Joyce’s dog. I’ve often seen him around with Joyce and the cart when he’s selling faggots.”

“Go it, then!”

“I say, you fellows, you might buck up!” said Billy Bunter plaintively.

“I’m cold.”

“Shut up, you fat fraud!”

“When I’m suffering fearful agonics I—”

“Give us a rest.”

“Beast!”

Harry Wharton clambered over the gate, and dropped inside. He had no doubt that, if her men folk were absent, Mrs. Joyce would be keeping gate and door carefully locked in that solitary spot; but it would be easy to speak through the door and reassure her. It was likely enough that she would agree to lend him the pony and cart, knowing that he belonged to Greyfriars. Otherwise, it was difficult to know what was to be done with Bunter.

He crossed the yard quickly towards the cottage, and reached the porch at the door. As he did so there was a sound of pattering feet in the yard.

It was the dog which had apparently been on the other side of the house, and whose keen ears had caught his footsteps.

Wharton turned round towards the approaching animal. He knew the wood-cutter’s dog, and was not alarmed. But the next moment he gave a convulsive start, and his heart almost leaped into his mouth.

It was not Joyce’s half-bred collie that was coming round the house. It was a huge Alsatian—a brute that Wharton had never seen before, and that certainly could not have belonged to the wood-cutter. And the briefest glance was enough to show that it was a fierce and savage animal.

A deep-throated growl came from the great beast as it sighted Wharton, and there was a glimmer of bared teeth in the dusk.

The schoolboy’s heart throbbed.

It was not the woodcutter’s dog. It was a strange animal that did not know him, and it was going to attack him—there was not the slightest doubt on that point. The brute’s eyes almost flamed at him as it approached.

“Oh!” panted Wharton.

He was taken utterly by surprise, but, fortunately, he did not, for a second, lose his presence of mind. With his bare hands he had no chance whatever in a struggle with the huge, powerful brute. And his blood ran almost cold at the sight of the fearful teeth, and the sound of ferocity from the deep, muscular throat. But he did not lose his courage. There was no time to bang at the door and obtain admittance. The brute would have been upon him before the door could have been opened, even if there was anyone within to open it, of which he was not sure. Startled as he was, his heart almost in his

mouth, Wharton acted promptly, and did not lose a moment. His feet seemed scarcely to touch the ground as he raced back to the gate.

If he had needed anything to spur him on, the savage growl behind him would have done so. It sounded horribly like the growl of a tiger. The great brute was rushing after him, and Wharton could almost feel the sharp fangs burying themselves in his flesh.

How he reached the gate he hardly knew; never in his life had he covered the ground so quickly; the swiftest rush on the football field was a crawl to it. But he reached the gate and made a wild leap, and his arms came over the top, his legs were drawn up convulsively behind him, and he heard the snap of savage teeth that barely missed.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What—"

can't belong to him; it's a fearful beast, but it's worth a lot of money. It can't belong to Joyce. Goodness knows how it got there. It's nearly as big as a pony, and it's teeth— Oh crikey!"

"My hat!" said Bob Cherry. "Listen to the brute! Sounds like a jolly old bloodhound!"

Bob pulled himself up to the top of the gate and glanced over. One glimpse of the Alsatian was enough for him. The great brute eyed him with eyes of flame, and made a leap at the gate. Bob tumbled back in a great hurry, his face quite pale.

"Harry, old man— Great pip! You've had a frightfully narrow escape— Oh crumbs!"

"I—I can't make it out!" gasped Wharton. "Joyce may not be living here now—he may have let or sold the

Nugent, rather unasily. "That brute sounds as if he would tear us to pieces if he can get at us. If he got through the fence—"

"Yaroooooooh!"

Billy Bunter bounded to his feet! His sprained ankle was quite forgotten at the bare suggestion that the savage Alsatian might get loose.

"I say, you fellows!" yelled Bunter. "Come on!"

Bunter started! He fairly raced away along the track towards the main path. The Famous Five stared after him, almost in stupefaction.

"Bunter!" gasped Wharton. "Your ankle—"

"Come on!" shrieked Bunter.

He vanished into the shadows.

"Why, the—the—the fat villain!" gasped Bob. "His ankle's not sprained—he was spoofing all the time!"



Wharton and Bob Cherry grasped Billy Bunter and lifted him. The fat junior hung on them heavily. "Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob. "Ease off a bit, old bean! You're folding me up like a pocket-knife!" "Ooooh!" Bunter gave an agonising groan.

"Harry—"

"What the thump—"

Harry Wharton bundled over the gate, and dropped in a breathless heap, panting and gasping. From the other side of the gate came the fierce baying of the disappointed Alsatian.

Nugent caught his chum, and helped him up. Wharton stood unsteadily, white as chalk, panting.

"Harry! What—"

"The—the dog—" Wharton's voice was almost inarticulate.

"But you know Joyce's dog—"

"It's not Joyce's dog! Oh crumbs!" Wharton shuddered. "He nearly had me! Oh scissors!"

"I say, you fellows, if Wharton's afraid of a dog—"

"It's a big Alsatian!" gasped Wharton. "It's not Joyce's dog; it

place—that dog can't be his, anyhow. Oh, my hat!" He shuddered. "I—I suppose the brute was right to go for me, coming in as I did; he seems to be left to guard the place! But—but if he'd got me!"

"They oughtn't to leave a dog like that loose in the yard!" said Johnny Bull.

"Well, I suppose one oughtn't to get over the gate, if you come to that," said Harry. "Of course, I never dreamed that—"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"

"That's all very well," said Bunter.

"But if Wharton's afraid to go to the cottage because of a silly dog, what are we going to do? I can tell you I'm jolly cold, and hungry, too!"

"I suppose this fence is safe!" said

"I told you he was spoofing!" snorted Johnny Bull.

"Why, I—I—I'll—"

"After him!" gasped Wharton. "Kick him all the way to Greyfriars! Pulling our leg all the time! After him!"

The Famous Five rushed in pursuit! It was evident, from the rate at which Bunter was going, that there was nothing wrong with his ankle! The difficult question of transport was solved, after all—the hint that the Alsatian might get through the fence had solved it!

With feelings that could not be expressed in words—which could only be expressed, in fact, by kicking Bunter—the Famous Five rushed after the fat Owl.

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But they did not overtake him soon. Bunter, no doubt, was tired, and undoubtedly he was slack and lazy. But he forgot that he was tired, and forgot that he was lazy, at the bare idea of a ferocious Alsatian on his track. He fairly flew.

The juniors were far from the lonely cottage, far from the sound of the Alsatian's deep bay, when they overtook Bunter at last. He was in the main path, going strong, when they reached him.

After they reached him he was going stronger still!

Thud, thud, thud, thud!

"Yaroooooh! Whooooop!"

Thud, thud, thud!

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

How many kicks landed on Bunter he never knew! He felt as if they numbered thousands. He yelled and roared, and roared and yelled, and his fat little legs fairly twinkled as he flew. Behind him came the Famous Five, letting out a kick every now and then to keep Bunter on the go.

It really looked as if they might reach Greyfriars in time for call-over, after all!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Smithy Tries It On!

"W HARTON!"

"Adsum!"

Some of the Removites, in Big Hall, glanced round at Herbert Vernon-Smith as he answered. Some of them grinned.

It was good-natured of Smithy; but it was taking rather a risk. But the Bounder of Greyfriars was the man to take risks; and he rather liked to get

the eyes of the Form on him by doing so.

The school were gathered in Big Hall for roll-call. There were, as a matter of fact, six vacant places in the ranks of the Remove.

Plenty of fellows had been over to Redclyffe that afternoon to see Wingate and his merry men play Soccer at Redclyffe School; but most of them had got back in good time for call-over. A few had squeezed in at the last minute. Six were absent—the Famous Five and Billy Bunter; and they were still absent when the big oak doors closed, and it was too late for late-comers to enter Hall.

Had the Head been taking the roll nobody would have ventured to play tricks, not even the reckless Bounder. Had Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, been taking it, the Bounder would have thought twice, if not thrice. He might have chanced it with Prout, or Wiggins, or Capper, or Twigg, or even Hacker—hardly with Henry Samuel Quelch.

But Mr. Quelch was in sanny with a bad cold, and his gimlet-eyes were not on his Form. And it was Mr. Lagden, the new and temporary master of the Remove, who was taking the roll, and with the new man Smithy chanced it.

Mr. Lagden had been little more than a week at the school. He was a young man, handsome and athletic; popular among the seniors because he played football, and rather liked by his own Form.

It was suspected that he had a hard and even violent temper under his smiling and good-humoured aspect; but there was no doubt that the smiling good-humour predominated; the fierce temper had only peeped out once or twice in moments of irritation.

He had been long enough at Greyfriars now to know his Form pretty well; still, he could hardly be acquainted with all their voices, and Big Hall was rather dusky, and he was calling the roll from a distance; and Smithy thought the chance worth taking.

He seemed to get away with it successfully, too, for Mr. Lagden did not pause; he went on with the Remove names, in Form order.

And the Bounder winked cheerfully at Tom Redwing, who was looking rather anxious, and Redwing smiled.

"Saved our jolly old Panjandrum a hundred lines, Reddy!" whispered the Bounder.

"I hope so!" murmured Redwing.

"But—"

"But what?"

"Lagden's pretty keen!" said Tom doubtfully.

"Oh, it's all right! My hat! He's calling Cherry now—Adsum!" called out the Bounder, without stopping to think.

There was a suppressed chuckle in the Remove. Most of the fellows knew that the Famous Five were not there.

Mr. Lagden seemed to suspect nothing. He went on with the roll, without even glancing at the Remove.

A fellow who cut call-over was liable to a hundred lines. It was not unknown for one fellow to answer for another when it seemed safe so to do. Answering for two absent fellows, one after another, was certainly unusual, and very risky. But the Bounder was the man to take chances. He liked making the fellows stare.

"Nugent!"

"Adsum!" called back the Bounder, changing his voice a little, pitching it in a higher key.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Skinner. "Smithy's goin' the whole giddy unicorn! Lagden will spot this!"

"Bull!"

The Remove were almost breathless now. In deeper tones, as like Johnny Bull's as he could manage, the Bounder called:

"Adsum!"

The Remove fellows almost gasped. Heads were craned round at Smithy. He grinned cheerily. Every fellow there was wondering at his nerve. It was meat and drink to the Bounder.

"Smithy, old man!" whispered Redwing uneasily. He was getting anxious for his chum.

"My dear man, I'm goin' the whole hog—"

"Hurree Jamset Ram Singh!"

"Adsum!"

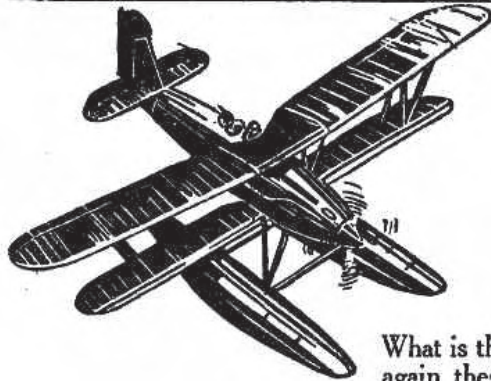
"Great pip!" breathed Peter Todd. "If you get away with that, Smithy, you're a jolly old wonder!"

Fellows fixed their eyes on the handsome face of Mr. Lagden, standing on the dais at a distance.

It was true that he was a new master and perhaps not "up" to the wiles of the Remove. But answering for five fellows in a bunch was really piling it on thick.

New as he was to Greyfriars, he was not an inexperienced master. It was known that he had filled many temporary posts in many schools. It was his regular business, in fact, to take such temporary posts. And though he was the youngest member of Dr. Locke's staff, he was well over thirty. Not a green young man by any means. Nevertheless, he seemed to suspect nothing. He gave his attention to the roll, not to the Remove, and seemed satisfied with receiving an answer to every name he called. Fellows did not have to step forward to answer to their

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names; they answered from where they stood; and the juniors, of course, were in large numbers.

Had it been a summer call-over in the open air, the Bounder would have had no chance; but in the dusky old Hall on a dusky winter evening there was a chance of getting away with the whole bag of tricks, as it were.

A prefect quite near the Remove glanced round. Had it been Loder, or Carne Smithy's game would have been up. But it was Gwynne, who was good-natured to a fault. If Gwynne detected a similarity of tone in all these answers to different names he took no notice, being unwilling to get a thoughtless young rascal into a row.

"Bunter!"

"Adsum!"

The Remove almost gasped.

For the sixth time Herbert Vernon-Smith answered for a fellow who was not there. He was going the whole hog, as he had expressed it; the whole giddy unicorn, as Skinner put it.

But even Smithy watched Mr. Lagdon a little anxiously now. Really, the Bounder was rather asking for it.

But the new master of the Remove seemed satisfied. Having finished with the Remove, he proceeded to call the Third. As he ran off the names of the fags, Smithy grinned complacently. Certainly he seemed to have "got away" with the most reckless attempt to pull a master's leg that had ever happened in Big Hall at Greyfriars School.

"Six hundred lines saved!" murmured the Bounder. "I shall stick those men for a study supper for this!"

Redwing nodded, but he was still uneasy. At Greyfriars, Forms were not dismissed as they were called. The whole school had to remain till the roll was finished. The Bounder was not yet out of the wood, but he smiled cheerily as he waited. Smithy was full of confidence.

Mr. Lagden finished calling the Third, and started on the Second. Dicky Nugent and Gatty and Myers and the rest answered "Adsum" in turn, till Mr. Lagden called "Flip."

That name—a rather remarkable name for a Greyfriars fellow—was unanswered. It was the name, or nickname, of the Greyfriars waif, who had come to the school a new boy that term, and who, as all the school knew, had disappeared and had not been found.

"Absent-minded beggar!" murmured Toddy. "He's forgotten that poor old Flip is missing!"

"Silly ass," murmured Bolsover major. "Must be a silly ass if he lets Smithy get away with his game!"

"Flip!" repeated Mr. Lagden.

Mr. Twigg, the master of the Second Form, stepped to the master who was calling the roll, and spoke to him. Mr. Lagden glanced up and seemed to remember, and nodded.

"On, quite so!" he said in his pleasant voice. "It had quite slipped my mind. Thank you!"

And the roll went on. Evidently the Second Form master had reminded Mr. Lagden that Flip was no longer in the school.

It was time now for the school to be dismissed, all names but Flip's having been answered. It was for Mr. Lagden to give the word, as he had called the roll. The Bounder winked at Redwing.

"All serene!" he murmured. "What?"

"Looks like it. But—"

"Rats! Blow your 'buts.' It's all serene! The man's an ass!"

"Dismiss," said Mr. Lagden's clear, pleasant voice, "with the exception of the Remove. My Form will remain."

"Oh, my hat!" breathed the Bounder.

The Remove remained. Some of them wondered why, and some wondered whether it had anything to do with the Bounder's little game. The confident grin faded from Smithy's face.

Many curious glances were cast at the Remove by the other fellows as they went out. Mr. Lagden remained chatting with Prout, the master of the Fifth, till they were gone. Then he came down the Hall. The Bounder felt his heart beating rather faster.

Mr. Lagden glanced over his waiting Form. The Remove were almost breathless.

"Vernon-Smith!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Wher Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, Bull, Hurree Singh, and Bunter come

message to the boys I have named Dismiss!"

The Remove streamed out of Hall.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

For It!

"H A, ha, ha!"
"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

There was a laughing crowd in the Rag. The episode in Hall had tickled the Remove immensely. Even the Bounder could not help grinning over it. Certainly nobody in the Remove was thinking any longer that the new man was an "ass." Mr. Lagden had been rather liked already in his new Form. Now he had jumped into popularity at a bound. Evidently the new beak had a sense of humour; equally, evidently, in the opinion of the juniors, he was a sportsman.

Quelch undoubtedly would have given Smithy six, at least, for such a trick—had Smithy ventured to play it on Quelch. The new master had only warned him off, with a good-humoured smile. The warning was quite efficacious. Smithy was not likely to try it on again with Lagden, and he realised very clearly that he had escaped cheaply.

"That man's a sportsman!" said Smithy, in the Rag. "He's shown a bit of a nasty temper once or twice, but he's a sportsman. I'm jolly well backing up Lagden from now on."

"Keen as mustard, too!" said Skinner. "Never let on, but he knew all the time. He's got eyes like a hawk—or like Quelchy."

"Jolly decent of him to take it as he did!" said Squiff. "Most beaks would have been frightfully ratty!"

"Smithy thought he was pulling his leg—and Lagden was pulling Smithy's leg, all the while!" chuckled Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co., looking in at the doorway of the Rag, beheld a hilarious crowd of fellows. They were not feeling very hilarious themselves, as they had arrived a quarter of an hour late for call-over—which meant lines all round.

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

The Bounder chuckled.

"It's one on me!" he answered. "I say, that man Lagden is a sportsman! I wish we could swap Quelch for him permanently!"

"What-ho!" said Skinner.

"Oh, I don't know about that," said Harry Wharton. "But what's Lagden's latest?"

A dozen voices explained and the Famous Five chuckled.

"Decent sort," exclaimed Bob. "I like a beak with a sense of humour! A sense of humour is rare among beaks, my beloved 'earers. Jolly glad he's in a good temper, too, as we're late!"

"You're to report in his study," said the Bounder. "But you'll find him all right! Better than Quelch, anyhow!"

"What's made you men late?" asked Hazeldene. "You had lots of time to get back from Redlyffe!"

"We had to roll a fat porpoise along!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Well, let's go to see Lagden," said Harry. "The sooner the better. Glad he's so merry and bright!"


"I say, you fellows—"

"Come on, Bunter!"

"I say, I think you'd better see Lagden without me," said Bunter. "You

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Porter: "'Ave I, mum, never mind, we'll pick it hup at Hellington!"

Now, get busy, and see what YOU can do!

in, please tell them to report themselves in my study!"

The Bounder gasped.

The Removites gasped, too. They looked at Smithy and they looked at Mr. Lagden. The new Form master was grave, but a faint smile flickered over his handsome face. There was a sudden chortle in the Remove. The juniors really could not help it. The Bounder's face, as Skinner said afterwards, was worth a guinea a box at that moment.

"You hear me, Vernon-Smith?"

"Oh!" gasped the Bounder. "Yes! Yes, sir! Certainly!"

"On another occasion," remarked Mr. Lagden in a pleasant, casual sort of way, "I shall be obliged, Vernon-Smith, if you will have the kindness to answer only to your own name."

"Oh! Yes! Yes, sir!" gurgled Smithy.

"I quite appreciate your motives, Vernon-Smith. I have been a schoolboy myself," said Mr. Lagden pleasantly. "But it won't do, you know. Give my

can explain to him that it was all your fault!"

"You fat chump——" roared Johnny Bull. "It was all your fault! We should have been back early if you hadn't pretended to have a sprain——"

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"Come on, you men," said Harry, "let's catch Lagden while he's good-tempered. We may get off the lines!"

"I say, you fellows, you tell Lagden——"
"Rats!"

The Famous Five walked away to report themselves to their Form master, and Billy Bunter, with a dissatisfied grunt, rolled after them. With the selfishness to which Bunter was so sadly accustomed, they evidently weren't going to explain how wholly blameless Bunter was in the matter.

Wharton tapped at the door of the study that had been Mr. Quelch's, and that was now occupied by the new master of the Remove. A pleasant voice bade them enter and the six delinquents filed in.

Mr. Lagden rose from his table. His handsome, clean-shaved, healthy face looked very good-humoured, and the juniors could not help thinking how much better-tempered he looked than the respected Quelch. They sympathised, of course, with their old Form master, who was laid up in sanny, but at the moment they were rather glad that he was in sanny, and that they had to deal with this pleasant young man instead.

"Well," said Mr. Lagden. "You are late for call-over! You are aware, Wharton, as head boy of my Form, that that is a serious matter!"

"We're sorry, sir!" said the captain of the Remove meekly. "But we've been over to Redclyffe to see the football match——"

"I believe a great many boys went over to Redclyffe to see the football match, Wharton! Come, come!"

"Bunter got rather tired walking back, sir, and—and that rather delayed us!"

"Ow!" groaned Bunter. He felt that a scound of woe might touch the Form master's heart.

Mr. Lagden stared at him.

"Bunter! What is the matter with you?"

"I—I'm awfully tired, sir! Dropping!" said Bunter pathetically. "I—I think I—I over-exerted myself, sir, trying to get in for call-over!"

"No doubt Bunter is tired," said Mr. Lagden. "It must be five or six miles from Redclyffe, walking by the road!"

"We took the short cut through the woods, sir!"

Mr. Lagden's face changed. The good-humoured smile was wiped off it, as it were, and it became very stern.

"What? I am new here, Wharton, but I understand that Redclyffe Woods are out of school bounds!"

"Yes, sir, but——"

"But what?" rapped Mr. Lagden.

Harry Wharton's face set a little. He did not like the tone in which the new master spoke neither did he like his sudden change of humour. It was not the first time that the juniors had noted that Mr. Lagden's temper was uncertain. That was not like Quelch. Mr. Quelch might be, as some of the juniors said, a grim old gargoyle compared to Lagden, but, at least, a fellow knew where to have him, and how to take him. Consistent severity was really easier to deal with than unexpected alterations of good-humour and sharp sternness.

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"Redclyffe Woods are out of school bounds, of course, sir," said Harry, "but when a man has leave to go over to Redclyffe he has leave to come back any way he pleases!"

"That does not follow at all," said Mr. Lagden sharply. "I have heard that there was a case of a robbery by a footpad in Redclyffe woods not very long ago!"

"Yes, that is so, sir!"

"Such very solitary places, especially at this time of the year, are quite unsuitable for schoolboys to ramble in, indeed, dangerous!" said Mr. Lagden. "No doubt you would have realised this, had you met with some dangerous tramp!"

"We're not afraid of tramps, sir!" said Johnny Bull.

"I—I was with them, sir!" ventured Billy Bunter. "I don't think a tramp would be likely to tackle me, sir!"

"Shut up, you blithering ass!" whispered Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"I am bound to take serious notice of this," said Mr. Lagden. "You will understand, Wharton, quite clearly, that even when you have leave to go as far as Redclyffe, or Lantham, the woods there are out of bounds!"

"Very well, sir!"

Mr. Lagden paused. The juniors waited wondering whether it was to be lines or a licking. They had come to the study in quite a cheery and hopeful mood, but the angry expression on the new master's face sobered them considerably.

They looked rather grim, as they noticed that Lagden's hand strayed to a cane on his table. It was not really a matter for "licking"; certainly, Quelch would have deemed lines sufficient, if he had not excused them entirely, after hearing a reasonable explanation. But the new master relieved them a little by leaving the cane where it was.

"I—I say, sir——" began Bunter, breaking the silence.

"What? What?"

"C-c-can I go now, sir?"

"Silence!"

"Yes, sir, certainly, sir; but I haven't had my tea——"

"Silence!" repeated Mr. Lagden, in a voice that made Billy Bunter jump. The fat Owl closed his capacious mouth.

Mr. Lagden fixed his eyes on Wharton again.

"You say that you took a short cut through the woods at Redclyffe?" he said. "Yet you are later than boys who returned by road. This requires some explanation, Wharton!"

Wharton's eyes glinted. The implied distrust of his word was more than sufficient to rouse his ire. The thought came into his mind that Rupert Lagden, Master of Arts, was no gentleman. There was a streak of the "bounder" in the handsome Form master.

"I've already explained that, sir!" said the captain of the Remove, very quietly. "Bunter was tired, and very slow!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Silence, Bunter! Wharton, this matter is serious. But if you assure me that your delay was due only to Bunter's slowness, and that you kept to the main path through Redclyffe woods, without wandering or rambling——"

He paused for a reply.

"We did not wander or ramble, sir," answered Harry. "We did our best to be back in time for call-over!"

"You have not answered my question!" rapped Mr. Lagden.

"We kept to the main path most of

the time, sir," answered Harry. "But Bunter had a fall, and—and fancied that he had hurt his ankle, and we tried to get him a lift home——"

"Indeed! And where could you possibly have tried to get him a lift, in solitary woodlands like those at Redclyffe?"

"We went to the woodcutter's cottage, sir——"

"Where?"

Mr. Lagden rapped out the word like a bullet. His eye gleamed at the captain of the Remove.

"There is a woodcutter's cottage in Redclyffe Woods, sir," answered Harry. "It belongs—or did belong—to a man named Joyce. He has a pony and cart, and we went along to see if we could hire it."

Why Mr. Lagden was so angry was a puzzle to the juniors. It could hardly be considered an offence to seek to hire a lift from a woodcutter to get back to the school. But there was no doubt that he was angry—intensely angry. His hand strayed to the cane again.

"So you went to this woodcutter's cottage, Wharton?" Mr. Lagden's voice was sharp.

"Yes, sir. But nobody was there, so we were unable to hire the cart. Bunter found that he could walk, after all, and we came on."

"I had a fearful pain, sir——"

"Silence! You say that you found nobody at the woodcutter's cottage, Wharton? I have never heard of the place; but I accept your statement that there is such a place——"

"Any fellow can tell you there is such a place, sir, if you do not care to take my word!" said Wharton icily. "Joyce is well known around here—he can be seen any day on the roads with his faggots. He has a brother who is head-keeper to Sir Hilton Popper, at Popper Court."

"All this is immaterial. It appears that you have been rambling at large in woods that are out of school bounds, with the result that you are late for call-over. Taking a short cut by the main path is one thing; rambling in the woods is quite another. You did not consider, I presume, that leave to go to Redclyffe for the football match included leave to ramble in woods which are out of school bounds?"

"Certainly not, sir!"

"Yet you have done so."

"We have not done so!" said Harry quietly. "We went direct from the path, by the track up to Joyce's cottage, for the reason I have told you. Bunter fancied he couldn't walk, and we wanted to get him a lift."

"I was in terrible agony, sir!" squeaked Bunter.

"Shut up, you ass!" hissed Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"You did not succeed in getting this lift for Bunter?" said Mr. Lagden sharply.

"I've said that there was nobody at the cottage, sir. At least, we saw nobody—only a dog. Owing to the dog, we were unable to knock at the door. I was going to knock, when the dog came for me, and I had to run. It was a big Alsatian."

The glint in Mr. Lagden's eyes quite startled the juniors.

"You say you were going to knock at the door, Wharton?"

"Yes, sir, to ask——"

"I am unacquainted with the place," said Lagden. "Am I to understand that the door is accessible from the path, and that a big Alsatian dog was loose? Is that what you mean?"



Thud, thud, thud, thud! Billy Bunter yelled and roared, and his fat little legs fairly twinkled as he flew. Behind him were the Famous Five, letting out a kick every now and then to keep the fat junior on the go!

"No, sir. If you'd ever seen the place, you'd know—"

"As I have been here only a short while, Wharton, I am naturally unacquainted with such outlying places. Answer my question."

"There's a fence and a gate, sir," said Harry. "The dog was in the yard inside the fence, running loose."

"Then you opened the gate?"

"No, sir; it was locked."

"Indeed! And how did you reach the door of the cottage if the gate was locked?"

"I climbed over the gate."

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Lagden. "We appear to be getting to the facts at last. You committed a trespass?"

Wharton coloured with anger.

"Nothing of the kind, sir! Knowing Joyce, and knowing that he would be willing to hire us the cart, we saw no harm—"

"When a gate is locked, Wharton, does it not usually imply that no one is desired to enter without permission?"

"I—I suppose so, sir; but in the circumstances—"

"No circumstances can excuse a trespass, Wharton! By your reckless disregard of the school rules, and, indeed, of the law of the land, you placed yourself in danger. You say the dog came for you, as you express it. Does that mean that the dog attacked you?"

"I got over the gate in time."

"Otherwise you might—and indeed would—have been mauled, perhaps seriously injured by a big Alsatian dog?"

"Yee-es, sir."

"And you regard this as a light matter?" exclaimed Mr. Lagden. The juniors were silent.

Certainly the matter had a serious aspect, and if Mr. Lagden was concerned about Wharton's narrow escape from the Alsatian, there was something to be said for his anger. But it was an undoubted fact that he had been angry before the Alsatian was mentioned. But for his remark that he knew nothing of the woodcutter's cottage, the juniors might have supposed that he knew all about the Alsatian and the danger that had been incurred. But, so far as they could see, he could not have known that until Wharton mentioned it.

"It comes to this, then," said Mr. Lagden. "You were given leave to go to Redclyffe for a football match; you took advantage of this to ramble in woods that are out of school bounds for very good reasons; you committed a trespass, and one of you, at least, placed himself in danger from a savage dog. I am compelled to deal with you severely."

"I have said—"

"You need say no more, Wharton! For your own sakes, I must impress upon you that the rules of this school cannot be defied with impunity. As you are head boy of my Form, Wharton, I hold you chiefly responsible. I shall cane you, and the others will take five hundred lines each." Mr. Lagden picked up the cane. "Bend over that chair, Wharton."

Harry Wharton looked at him, his eyes gleaming. Resistance to a Form master's authority was a thing that had hardly entered the head of any Greyfriars man, a thing unthinkable. But it entered the head of the captain of the Remove now. It was not the caning that he cared much about—canings often came the way of juniors. But the injustice of it was bitter.

"Will you let me speak, sir?" said

Harry quietly, but with a tremble of anger in his voice. "I have said that we came directly through the woods—we did not ramble—and getting over the gate at Joyce's cottage was not a trespass—"

"That is enough, Wharton! Bend over that chair at once, or I shall take you to your headmaster and request him to flog you for disobedience."

Harry Wharton breathed hard and deep.

His chums eyed him anxiously. They understood his feelings and shared them. But a beak had to be given his head.

Fortunately the captain of the Remove realised that. Only for a moment he stood looking at Lagden. Then, with a scorn in his face that he did not take the trouble to conceal, he turned to the chair.

Six strokes of the cane fell, hard, one after another. Every one was a hefty lash; but no sound came from the captain of the Remove.

He rose from the chair, his face pale, and his eyes glinting. Mr. Lagden pointed to the door.

"You may go!" he said harshly.

And the juniors, in silence, went.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Down on Lagden!

"THE man's a sportsman!" remarked the Bounder.

"The man's a rotten cur!" said Harry Wharton.

"Eh, what?"

It was in the Rag, after prep. Some of the juniors were still talking about the incident at calling-over, hence the Bounder's remark. Smithy, at least,

had a very good opinion of the new master of the Remove, which was shared by most of the fellows. And there was quite a jump, when the captain of the Remove contributed his opinion.

The juniors stared at Wharton on all sides.

"What's bitin' you, old bean?" asked Vernon-Smith. "I tell you the man's a sportsman—never heard of a beak who would have played up as he did in Hall."

Wharton's lip curled.

"I dare say the fellow would like to make himself popular," he answered. "He knows the way, too—if he could keep his rotten temper in check. But we saw the kind of man he really was when he pitched into Bunter for next to nothing, his first day here. I've had a sample now myself."

"Ragged for being late?" grinned the Bounder, "Too many lines, old bean?"

"Doesn't Lagden know what a very important chap Wharton is?" asked Skinner. "After all, he's new here. It will dawn on him later."

Some of the fellows laughed.

"Shut up, Skinner!" said Bob Cherry, frowning.

"My dear chap," said Skinner airily. "Let's make allowances for the man. He's only been here a short while. Give him another week to learn that his High Mightiness mustn't be treated like a common mortal."

"He, he, he!" from Billy Bunter.

"The shut-upfulness is the proper caper, my esteemed Skinner," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Otherwise, the punchfulness of your ridiculous napper will be the next item on the programme."

"Oh, let him run on!" said Wharton contemptuously. "Skinner's head isn't worth punching!"

"Glad to hear it!" said Skinner blandly. "But what has the man done? Has he had the cheek to give Wharton lines? Has he had the unparalleled nerve to lick him? What is it jolly old Shakespeare says—'On horror's head, horrors accumulate—'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The man's a cur!" said Harry Wharton, his voice distinct, and audible to every fellow in the Rag. "I hope Quelch will soon be well, and come back. Quelch is rather a Tartar, but he's a gentleman, anyhow."

"And the new man isn't?" asked Smithy, with a stare.

"He isn't!"

"Better tell him so!" suggested Skinner.

"That's not so unlikely as you suppose, Skinner," answered Wharton. "It's quite possible that I may tell him so if he stays here long."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Tell him in Form, so that we can all be there when you do it!" sniggered Snoop. "I should like to see his face when you tell him—and yours, soon afterwards."

"I say, you fellows, he's an awful beast, really," said Billy Bunter. "You know how he licked me his first day—and now he's given me five hundred lines! Of course, I shan't do them, and I shall jolly well tell him so."

"I can hear you telling him so!" agreed Skinner. "About the same time that Wharton tells him that he's no gentleman!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton coloured with vexation. He had spoken in anger; but it was rather unpleasant to be bracketed like this with the gaseous Owl of the Remove. Skinner smiled cheerily. Getting

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Wharton's rag out was a happy amusement for the amiable Skinner.

"Five hundred lines is rather thick for cutting call-over," said the Bounder, with a curious look at Wharton. "He was so jolly good-tempered in Hall, too—"

"I've had six!" said Wharton curtly.

"Oh, my hat! Then you must have cheeked him a lot."

"You can think so if you like."

The Bounder laughed.

"Dear man!" he said. "No need to rag me—I haven't given you six, you know. But, look here, I don't get this. What did he give you six for?"

"Because he's a rank outsider."

"Any other reason?" grinned Skinner.

"Tell us about it, old bean," said Peter Todd. "I've been thinking that the new man was rather decent."

"I don't mind telling you. As I've said that the man's a cur, I may as well give you the reason."

And the captain of the Remove, in a very few words, told of what had passed in the Form master's study.

The Remove men listened in astonishment. The Bounder whistled.

"That's rather thick!" he said. "But—I suppose he was a bit alarmed when you told him about that jolly old Alsatian. If you'd got mauled, the matter would have been jolly serious."

"That's not the point! He ought to have taken a fellow's word. He was dealing with me, not with Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"He's new here," murmured Skinner. "He doesn't know that our Form captain is a jolly old model of truthfulness. Besides, as a matter of fact, old bean, you were trespassing, just as Lagden said you were. I've heard about that old cottage in the wood—it doesn't belong to the Joyces now. Old Joyce has let the place and moved into Woodend with his family."

"I never knew that!" snapped Wharton.

"The knowfulness was not terrific."

"Facts are facts, you know, whether you happen to know them or not!" grinned Skinner. "You were butting into some stranger's place; and if you'd found him at home, he might have wanted to know what the thump you meant by climbing over his gate—might have come up complaining to the Head."

"I don't understand all this," said Harry. "Who the dickens would want to hire that cottage, in the heart of the woods, two miles from a house—"

"Weil, somebody has, because the jolly old woodcutter has let it," said Skinner. "I spoke to him in Woodend only yesterday, and he told me so."

"So you jolly well were trespassing!" said Smithy.

"Lagden didn't know that," said Wharton. "He said quite plainly that he had never heard of the place; so he couldn't have heard that it was let."

"Better keep clear of Redclyffe Woods after this!" said Squiff. "No short cuts for me if I go over to Redclyffe."

"Catch me within a mile of the place!" grinned Skinner. "If Lagden's so jolly particular about bounds in that direction, I'm going to give him his head. I don't want six."

"Same here!" chuckled Toddy.

"The man seems a bit of a Tartar at times," said Smithy thoughtfully.

"Still, he's rather a sportsman."

"You mean, he knows how to make himself popular—and he wants to be popular!" said Wharton, with a curl of the lip. "But his rotten temper gives him away all the time. He looks decent enough; but he's got a yellow

streak in him. Quelch is a bit of a coughdrop; but that man isn't fit to black Quelch's boots!"

"And all because of six!" sighed Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not because of six, Skinner!" said Harry Wharton quietly. "But because he handed out six for nothing—because he was unjust, suspicious, and a rotter! I shall be jolly thankful when we get Quelch back again, for once. That man's not the kind we want here!"

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry.

"The hear-hearfulness is terrific!"

"My dear chap!" said Skinner. It was an opportunity to be unpleasant, and Harold Skinner could not resist it.

"My dear chap, I shouldn't make such a fuss about a licking. We all get licked at times—even nice, innocent chaps like myself—"

Harry Wharton's eyes gleamed at Skinner for a moment. But he disdained to bandy words with the cad of the Remove, and he left the group and moved away. Skinner winked at his friends.

"The dear man's getting his rag out!" sighed Skinner. "He's cross with Lagden—and cross with poor little me! Nevertheless, friends and sportsmen, a licking isn't a thing to make such a tremendous fuss about—"

"Think not?" asked Johnny Bull, with a glare at Skinner, and speaking in a voice that was rather like the growl of a bulldog.

"Well, that's my opinion!" yawned Skinner. "I can take a licking myself, without doing a song and dance afterwards!"

"Wharton's told you it wasn't the licking—it was the injustice!" growled Johnny Bull. "The man's a cruel brute, when he lets his temper go, and he's got a rotten temper, with all his dashed nice manners. And if I were Wharton I'd punch your head for your cheek!"

Johnny Bull paused and seemed to reflect.

"Come to think of it, I'll punch it anyhow!" he added.

"Here, you silly ass, keep off! Yaroooh!" roared Skinner, as Johnny suited the action to the word. "You dashed fathead—Whoooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, come on, you sniggering sweep, and show us how you can take a licking!" snorted Johnny Bull.

"Go it, Skinner!" chuckled the Bounder.

But Skinner did not "go" it; he rubbed his head and glared at Johnny Bull and stamped away, scowling. He seemed to have no desire to show the Remove how a licking should be taken!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Visitor for Bunter!

MR. LAGDEN, in the Form-room the following morning was his customary good-tempered and agreeable self. He seemed to have dismissed the incident of the previous evening from his mind; and when he had to speak to his head boy on matters connected with the Form, he spoke in his usual pleasant manner.

Wharton, of course, answered respectfully, but with a very evident reserve. He did not trust a man who had a cat-like temper that might break out at any moment, and he could neither forget nor forgive the incident that Mr. Lagden seemed to have forgotten.

The fact was that Wharton had, to

(Continued on page 12.)

FOOTBALL FAVOURITES!

No. 17.

JAMES RUFFELL,
aptly described
as the
WEST HAM Whirlwind.



A Product of the District!

IN recent times there has sprung up on the outskirts of the east of London a new and huge estate. It is at a place called Beacontree. I have a memory of that new estate which will stay with me for quite a long time. Some little while ago I had an invitation to call on Jimmy Ruffell, the West Ham outside-left, at his home on the new estate.

The busman seemed to have but a rough idea of the place where I ought to get off to be as near as possible to the road in which Ruffell lived. As a matter of fact, his idea was anything but a good one. This new estate at Beacontree is one of those up-to-date affairs; you have probably come across them. The roads don't just run straight up and straight across; they wind round and round. I eventually found the house in which Ruffell lived, after what seemed like miles and miles of wandering on that cold, dreary, winter's night.

Fortunately for me, the welcome which I got from Ruffell was as warm as the night was cold. He's a great little fellow, this outside-left of West Ham United, when you get to know him. During his lifetime he has done more listening than talking. He does not suffer from the same shortcomings as a parrot which he possesses—that of talking too much. He leaves the talking to others, for he himself is a man of action. But he can be drawn, gradually, and when I drew him from his natural reserve, I found him most entertaining.

West Ham have a way of building a football team which is almost, if not quite, unique. They scarcely ever pay anything like a big sum by way of transfer fee. Most of the players who represent them now, and who have represented them in the past, have been players from the district. Jimmy Ruffell is one of the local players.

Because Ruffell was picked up by West Ham on their own doorstep, as it were, there is a general impression that he is a Londoner through and through. Actually he isn't. "I have the information of my parents," said Jimmy, "that I was born at Doncaster, in Yorkshire. I have to take that statement for granted, because I don't remember having lived in Yorkshire. My people moved to London before I was two years of age, before I had begun to think of playing football."

One of the reasons why West Ham have been able to find so many good footballers in their own district is because football is taken very seriously at the schools in the district. The master of the school at Manor Park, where young Jimmy Ruffell attended, has had through his hands many boys who have turned out to be really good footballers. Would that more schoolmasters would take an interest in the football as played by the boys, not only allowing them to play, and finding opportunities for them to play, but also teaching them how to play.

That Schoolboy Complexion!

JAMES WILLIAM RUFFELL—that is the name in full—is not included among the footballers who have flitted from one position to another, much as the butterfly flits from flower to flower. "From the very first football match in which I played I have been an outside-left," he told me, "and I suppose I shall finish my career in the same position. I have now played too long to start making experiments."

It is a fact that Ruffell has played for West Ham for ten years, and yet there is no younger player—at heart—in the Hammers' side to-day. Nor is there one who looks younger, for, somehow or other, Jimmy has managed to retain that schoolboy complexion. I must switch back, however, because I am running on too far ahead of my story.

When young Jimmy first went to work he was concerned with the preparation of ebonite for switchboards and wireless telegraphy. Officially his job was described as that of an ebonite curer.

Having started his working career in this way, you won't be surprised when I tell you that Ruffell is to-day a wireless expert. When I paid that visit to his home which I mentioned earlier in this article, he showed me a wireless set—built by himself—of which anybody would have been proud. Turning the dial here and there, he picked up stations all over the world as cleanly, as confidently, and with as little fuss as he picks up those long, swinging passes which Vic Watson, the centre-forward of West Ham, sends out to him.

There was a football team connected with the works at which Ruffell was employed, and, of course, he played for that team. Ambition got into his blood. Knowing something of the willingness of the West Ham officials to give local talent every chance, Ruffell applied to the club for a trial. He got it, and was duly signed on as a professional player in March 1921.

In December of that same year he played in his initial game with the West Ham first team, and from that day to this has never been out of the West Ham side except through injury, or when he has been called away to play for his country in International matches.

Not often has Jimmy been troubled with serious injury, because he is not one of the players who go about asking for trouble. The secret of his success as a footballer lies in his ability to beat the opposition by speed and trickery, not by attempting to knock them out of the way by brute force.

A Hat-Trick Against the "Toffee-men!"

THERE are few wing players who have scored goals more consistently than Ruffell. Twice he has had an individual total of eighteen League goals to his credit in a season. That shows most emphatically that he is no believer in the idea that the wing men should hug the touchline all the time. He cuts in on every available opportunity, and, goodness, how he can shoot with that left foot of his while on the run!

Earlier in the present season I saw a match between West Ham and Everton. My mind goes back to it now because, in the course of the game, the methods which have brought Ruffell so much success on the field were shown to all with eyes to see. Everton were going great guns at that time, carrying everything before them. They were expected to beat West Ham easily.

These Everton men started as if they would do it, too, penning the "Hammers" in their own goal to a considerable extent. Three times in the first half-hour of that match, however, the West Ham forwards broke away. Three times the ball was swung out to Jimmy Ruffell, and three times Ruffell cut in towards goal, and finished with a shot which left the Everton goalkeeper helpless. It was a hat-trick of which any player would have a right to be proud, but Jimmy just walked back calmly to the centre-line after each effort. He had just done his job—raced past the defenders of Everton in the way which has caused him to be described as the West Ham Whirlwind.

Ruffell was a member of the West Ham team which gained promotion to the First Division at the end of the 1922-23 season. That was the season, also, in which the "Hammers" got to the Final, and played in that most amazing of all Finals—the first one at Wembley.

Six times this flying winger of the "Hammers" has played for England, and twice each against Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. He has not been the same consistent goal-scorer in these International games as in his League matches, but that is mostly because, when playing with strange colleagues, he has not received the passes which have enabled him to use his extraordinary pace to the best advantage.

THE HUNTED MASTER!

(Continued from page 10.)

some extent, read the man's character. Lagden desired to be liked in his Form, and he knew how to make himself popular. Only on rare occasions the man's real nature showed; but Wharton had seen enough of it to form a very decided opinion; and his opinion was that Rupert Lagden, Master of Arts, was a good deal of a "bounder." Under his excellent manners and his pleasant smile, there was a yellow streak in the man; and Wharton did not like him, and had no intention of pretending to like him.

"Excellent!" said Mr. Lagden, when Wharton had finished his "con."

"Bunter, you will go on."

"Oh dear!" said Bunter. Bunter had nourished a hope that Lagden's eye would not fall on him that morning. After that walk home from Redclyffe, Bunter had been too tired for prep; or, at all events, too lazy. His fat mind was a beautiful blank on the subject of the section of the *Æneid* which the Removites were supposed to have "prepared" in their studies. Every fellow was not called on to construe; there was always a chance of escape, and Bunter often took such chances and hoped for the best.

"What did you say, Bunter?" asked Mr. Lagden.

"Oh, nothing, sir!" stammered Bunter. "I mean, I'm ready to go on, sir. I—I was very careful with my prep last night, sir."

"Let us hear the result of this unusual application, Bunter," said Mr. Lagden. "No doubt the whole Form will benefit."

This was a jest, and the Remove dutifully smiled.

"Yes, sir. I—I can't find the place—"

"Show Bunter the place, Skinner." "Here you are, fathhead!" whispered Skinner. "Go on from 'jamque rubescebat radiis mare—'"

"What does it mean, old chap?" breathed Bunter.

Skinner was not a fellow to ask for help in a difficulty; but he was leaning over to point out the place to Bunter, and so he was the only fellow to whom Bunter could whisper without detection.

Bunter really ought to have known that it meant that the sea was reddening in the rays of dawn. As he evidently did not know, Skinner was not the man to tell him. Skinner was the man to pull the fat Owl's leg, careless whether it landed him in a row or not. He whispered information that would have made any other Remove man jump; but which was good enough for the fatuous Owl.

"I am waiting, Bunter," said Mr. Lagden.

"Yes, sir. I've found the place, sir," said Bunter cheerfully. "Jamque rubescebat radiis mare—and jam reddened the radiant mare—"

"Wha-a-t?"

"Jam reddened the radiant mare—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Remove.

Bunter's "con" was often of a kind calculated to set any Form-room in a roar. But this was a record, even for Bunter.

Mr. Lagden stared at the fat Owl.

"What—what did you say, Bunter?" he gasped.

"Jam, reddened the radiant mare—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter! You utterly ridiculous boy

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—are you totally ignorant of Latin?" exclaimed Mr. Lagden.

"Oh, you beast, Skinner!" groaned Bunter. He realised that Skinner must have taken him in. "Yes, sir! I mean, no, sir. Have—have—have I got it wrong, sir?"

"You have not prepared this lesson, Bunter!"

"Oh, yes, sir! I—I was working very hard in my study last night, sir," said Bunter. "I wasn't taking it easy in the armchair, sir. You can ask Toddy, sir. He saw me."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Besides, sir, with all those lines to do, I hadn't time for prep," said Bunter anxiously. "You gave me five hundred lines, sir."

"If you have written out your imposition, Bunter, I shall take that as an excuse. But you have not handed it in to me."

"I—I haven't exactly written it, sir. I mean, I haven't finished it, sir," stammered Bunter. "I—I was going to—"

"How much have you written of it, Bunter?"

"One—one line, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Lagden, to Bunter's relief, joined in the laugh. Either he was in a very good temper that morning, or he was, as Wharton reflected scornfully, on the "popularity" tack again.

"You may go on, Cherry," he said, and Bunter, with a relieved grunt, sat down, feeling that Lagden wasn't such a beast after all.

Bob Cherry was struggling with his "con," when there came a tap at the Form-room door. It opened, and Trotter, the page, looked in. Mr. Lagden gave him a glance of inquiry.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Please, sir, Master Bunter's to go to the 'Ead, sir," said Trotter.

"Oh crikey!" ejaculated Bunter.

A summons to the Head's study boded trouble. A fellow whose conscience was perfectly clear, of course, would have received such a summons with perfect equanimity. But consciences in the Lower School were seldom absolutely clear. Billy Bunter's least of all. The fat Owl wondered what, and which, of his many delinquencies had reached the august ears of his headmaster.

"Very well," said Mr. Lagden, "Bunter, you will leave the class, and go to Dr. Locke's study."

"I—I—I say, if—if you please, sir, it—it wasn't me!" gasped Bunter.

"What? What was not you?"

"Anything, sir—I mean, nothing!" stammered Bunter. "I—I wasn't there at all, sir."

"You were not where?"

"Anywhere, sir! I mean, I didn't do it!" groaned Bunter. "I—I think perhaps it's some other fellow the Head wants, sir. If it's about a pie, sir, I give you my word that I know nothing about it—absolutely nothing."

Mr. Lagden stared at the fat Owl for a moment, and smiled. Then he glanced at Trotter again, who was grinning.

"It's a gentleman to see Master Bunter, sir," said Trotter, kindly taking compassion on the scared Owl.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. He realised that it was not trouble with the Head, and his fat brow cleared. "Oh, good!" Instead of trouble, it was a visitor, and escape from Latin. "Is it my father, Trotter?"

"No, sir," said Trotter. "The gentleman gave the name of Brent, sir, when I let him in, sir—Inspector Brent, sir."

Nobody in the Remove had ever heard of Inspector Brent. The local police-inspector, who had the case of the missing Second-Form fag in hand, was Mr. Grimes, of Courtfield. What a police-inspector could want with Billy Bunter was rather a mystery. Billy Bunter's sins were many and manifold; but certainly not of the sort that would call for attention from the police. But if the Removites were rather surprised, Mr. Lagden, the new master of the Remove, seemed more than surprised. He took a quick step towards Trotter, and stopped again.

"What name did you say, Trotter?" he asked.

"Brent, sir—Inspector Brent."

There was an instant's pause. Some of the Removites looked at Mr. Lagden, wondering whether he knew Inspector Brent—whoever Inspector Brent was.

"You may go, Bunter!" said Mr. Lagden.

Billy Bunter followed Trotter, and the Form-room door closed.

Mr. Lagden went to his desk—the high desk belonging to Mr. Quelch. He opened it, and peered into the interior for several minutes, and during those minutes the Remove fellows did not see his face. They waited patiently for his attention to return to them—quite patiently. Not a man in the Form was eager to get back to Virgil.

Mr. Lagden lifted his head at last.

"Wharton!"

"Yes, sir!"

"I find that I have forgotten a letter—a rather important letter. I am compelled to leave the Form-room for a time—I leave the Form in your hands, and trust you to keep order here."

"Very well, sir."

Mr. Lagden left the Form-room. There was a general relaxation. The head boy of the Remove was quite capable of keeping order in his Form-master's absence; but it was improbable that the Remove would improve their knowledge of the Latin language to any great extent during that absence. A cheery buzz of talk in the Form-room followed Mr. Lagden's departure.

Rupert Lagden went directly to his study. He closed the door carefully, and then, as if he had thrown aside a disguise, the expression of his face changed. The black look that came over it would have startled his Form, could they have seen it. Under his knitted brows his eyes glittered with a savage light. He had told the Remove that he had to attend to an important letter; but no letter occupied his attention after he was in his study. He moved restlessly about the room, his hands clenched, his brows knitted.

"What does he want here? He knows nothing—can know nothing. Only the boy could have told—and the boy has not spoken. Yet he is here."

Had the Remove fellows overheard those strange mutterings, they would have guessed that the name of "Inspector Brent" was not unknown to Mr. Lagden—that it meant much to him. But there were no ears to hear the mutterings of the Remove master as he restlessly paced his study.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Man from Scotland Yard!

"HERE is Bunter!" said the Head.

Billy Bunter entered the headmaster's study, with an inquisitive blink at the gentleman who was seated there in conversation with Dr. Locke.

What he was at Greyfriars School for, what he could possibly want with Bunter, the fat Owl could not guess. Still, he was glad that Mr. Brent had called; it got him away from class, at least.

The visitor rose to his feet as Dr. Locke spoke and fixed his eyes on Bunter. Bunter did not much like his looks.

If he was an inspector, he was not in uniform; he was dressed in ordinary lounge clothes of a dark grey, well cut. He was a man of rather stocky figure, evidently strong and muscular. His face was, to Bunter's eyes, forbidding; the features were handsome in themselves, but cold, hard, grim in expression. The eyes were very keen and penetrating—rather reminding Bunter of Quelchy's "gimlet-eyes." They

Scotland Yard. He desires to speak to you."

"Y-yes, sir!" stammered Bunter, in great wonder.

Bunter had feared that the Head might want to see him about a certain pie that had been missing from where it belonged. But even Bunter could not suppose that a Scotland Yard detective had come to Greyfriars to inquire after a missing pie. He could not begin to imagine what the detective was there for.

"So this is Bunter," said Mr. Brent in a deep voice that seemed to Bunter rather like the growl of a bear. Neither his voice nor his look expressed any favourable impression of Bunter.

"Yes, Mr. Brent," said the Head, rising from his chair. "No doubt you will desire to question Bunter alone;

a detective officer," said Mr. Brent. "No doubt you guess that I am here in connection with the boy in the Second Form who disappeared from the school a few days ago."

Bunter had not guessed it—though really he might have done so.

"Oh, Flip?" he said.

"The boy called Flip," said Mr. Brent. "I am given to understand that you know more of this boy than anyone else at the school."

Bunter began to understand why he was wanted.

"Oh, yes, sir!" he said, recovering confidence. "I fancy I know all about the kid. The fact is—"

"I have seen Inspector Grimes at Courtfield," said Mr. Brent, ruthlessly interrupting Bunter, "and I have heard all that your headmaster can tell me.



The door of the dreary prison opened, and a man in an overcoat and a soft hat appeared upon the threshold. In spite of the disguise, Flip recognised the man to be none other than Mr. Lagden, the new master at Greyfriars!

looked out from under knitted, heavy brows.

Mr. Brent's age might have been anything between thirty and forty; but, though he was evidently still a young man, there was nothing of youth in his expression. He looked a hard man; and keener eyes than Bunter's might have read in that hard face the signs of some old grief sternly suppressed. Anyone but Bunter might have read that Mr. Brent was a man who had seen trouble, and had borne it with courage and fortitude.

No such idea occurred to the Owl of the Remove as he blinked at the man through his big spectacles. He thought that Mr. Brent looked rather a hard nut to crack, and shifted a little uneasily under the penetrating stare of the keen eyes under the frowning brows.

"Bunter," said Dr. Locke, "this is Inspector Brent, a detective officer from

and as I am required in the Sixth Form room—"

"Certainly, sir."

Dr. Locke quitted the study. Mr. Brent's call had interrupted the Head, who was taking the Sixth Form in Greek that morning. The Head was rather anxious to get back to the Sixth and Sophocles—though it was not improbable that the Sixth would have been quite willing to give Sophocles a long rest.

Mr. Brent reseated himself when the headmaster was gone. He was still scanning Bunter, who stood uneasily, shifting from one leg to the other, under that steady, unwinking gaze.

"Sit down, Bunter!" said Mr. Brent suddenly. He barked the words out so suddenly that Bunter jumped.

"Oh! Yes!" gasped Bunter.

He sat down.

"You are aware, I suppose, that I am

It appears clear that this boy called Flip has been kidnapped, and is now being kept away from the school. So much, I conclude, is well known here."

"Oh, yes," said Bunter, "everybody knows the kid was kidnapped! I can tell you all about that—"

"I have already heard all about that. I am informed that an earlier attempt was made to kidnap the boy, and that he stated that some rough, called the 'Buster,' had seized him, instigated by a man called 'Jimmy the One.' It is fairly obvious now that he has disappeared, that a second attempt was made by the same persons, and succeeded. It appears that you are the boy who was most in Flip's confidence—"

"Yes, rather! I did a lot for that kid—a tremendous lot—"

"You will tell me everything that

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(Continued from page 13.)

Flip may have told you on the subject of the crook called Jimmy the One, and please keep to the point," said Inspector Brent.

Billy Bunter breathed rather hard. This man appeared to have no scruple about interrupting Bunter and cutting him short in the most ruthless manner. Bunter disliked his manners very much indeed. Bunter would have preferred to expatiate on his own uncommon generosity to Flip; in fact, he would have preferred to talk about himself, as usual. Moreover, though poor Flip had regarded Bunter as his patron and his best friend, Bunter had never troubled his head much about the fag, and if Flip had ever felt disposed to confide in him, it had never occurred to Bunter to give him the chance. On that subject he had nothing to tell Mr. Brent that a dozen other Remove fellows could not have told him.

"Well?" rapped Mr. Brent; and Bunter jumped again. The man had a way of barking at a fellow that was quite startling.

"Well, Flip told us that he'd known a man—a crook or something—called Jimmy the One when he lived at Puggins' Alley, in a slum in London," said Bunter. "He said he'd seen this man since he came to Greyfriars, and warned him to clear off; and that it was Jimmy the One who put up that hooligan to kidnap him."

"I have already heard this, and more," barked Mr. Brent. "Has Flip ever told you any particulars about this crook?"

"Only that the man thrashed him once—"

"Never mind that! His description?" "Never thought of asking him," said Bunter. "You see, I never thought of—"

"I can see that you never thought," said Mr. Brent grimly. "Try to call to mind anything that Flip may have said about this crook."

Bunter cudgelled his fat brains. "He's said that the man looked like a gentleman, and nobody would ever suspect him of being a crook," he said. "He said he was what he called a swell."

"And the name he was called by?" "Jimmy the One!" said Bunter. "I mean any other name—surname?"

"He never said anything about that. In fact, I fancy he was rather keen on not giving the man away," said Bunter. "Some sort of silly idea that it wasn't the game."

"He never mentioned any name to you?"

"No."

"Or gave any description of the man's looks?"

"Only that he was a swell."

Mr. Brent gave a grunt. Even Bunter could see that the detective had hoped that Flip might have talked freely to another schoolboy and men-

tioned details that would be useful to the man from Scotland Yard.

There was a brief pause. "The boy stated that he had seen this crook since he became a Greyfriars boy?" rapped Mr. Brent in his sudden way.

"Yes."

"Where?"

"He never said where. Somewhere near Greyfriars, of course."

"Why near Greyfriars?"

"Well, Flip never went far from the school. If he saw him at all, it must have been somewhere near."

"When did he see him?"

"He never told us."

"Did he tell you what he supposed the man's object to be in attempting to kidnap him?"

"Oh, everybody knew that!" said Bunter. "It was to keep his mouth shut."

"Did Flip say so?"

"Yes, more than once. He could have given the man away, and the man wanted to shut him up."

"Did Flip have any acquaintances outside the school that you know of?"

"Never heard of any."

"Do you know if he ever went out to meet anyone outside the school?"

"Never heard of it, if he did," said Bunter. "But, of course, I don't see much of the Second Form."

"I am given to understand that you were the boy's friend—that it was you who caused him to be sent to this school in the first place?"

"That's so," said Bunter. "You see, I came on him in the Christmas holidays and befriended him—took him up, and all that. In fact, treated him very generously indeed."

"Did you see much of him here?"

"Well, of course, I was kind to the kid," said the fatuous Owl. "But a Remove man doesn't see a lot of the Second. I was going to help him with his Latin, but somehow I never got time. I stood him a spread sometimes in Wharton's study. I—"

"You saw very little of the boy at this school?" barked Mr. Brent.

"You see, I'm rather popular in my Form, and the fellows run after a fellow a lot," explained Bunter. "I always have so many engagements on hand that—"

"How often did you see the boy here?"

"Oh, lots of times—every day—at least two or three times a week!"

Mr. Brent snorted.

"You see, a Remove man hasn't time—"

Another snort from Mr. Brent, so emphatic that Bunter jumped, and was silent.

The fat Owl blinked rather indignantly at the detective. He wondered whether the man supposed that a Remove man—especially so popular a fellow as Bunter—had time to be always running after a fag in the Second Form. Bunter had been kind to Flip—in his own fat and fatuous way. But there was no doubt that he had forgotten Flip's existence for days at a time, and that when the grateful little fellow had sought him out, Bunter had never had much time to waste on him.

To Bunter's surprise and annoyance, Mr. Brent was actually glaring at him. He seemed annoyed about something.

"It seems that you were the original cause of Lord Mauleverer's uncle placing the boy at this school!" barked Mr. Brent suddenly. "But that after he was here, although a boy with such an upbringing must have felt very strange

in such surroundings, you took very little notice of him."

"Oh, really, sir—"

"In fact, you neglected a lad who had considerable claims on you, as you had caused him to be placed in new and very strange surroundings."

Bunter gasped.

"Well, I like that!" he ejaculated. "After all I've done for that kid—"

"From what I have learned, it appears that the boy was grateful to you, and looked on you as his only friend."

"Oh, yes, rather!" said Bunter complacently.

"Had you given him more notice, and encouraged him to confide in you, he might very probably have told you things that would be very useful now in the search for him."

"Oh!" said Bunter. "Of—of course, I talked to him sometimes."

"What about?" asked Mr. Brent, with a gleam of hope.

A less obtuse fellow than Bunter would have discerned that the man from Scotland Yard was almost desperately anxious to hear even the slightest detail in connection with "Jimmy the One."

"Well, I used to tell him about Bunter Court sometimes," said the fatuous Owl, "and about my splendid holidays, and—"

Mr. Brent gave a snort that made Bunter almost jump from the chair he was sitting on. It was really, as Bunter told the Remove fellows afterwards, like a bull in the room.

"If you talked to the boy, you talked about yourself, apparently!" barked Mr. Brent.

Bunter blinked. What the dickens did the man suppose he would talk about, he wondered.

"You may go back to your lessons, Bunter!" barked Mr. Brent.

"Oh!" said Bunter.

This was cutting the interview rather short. Unpleasant as Mr. Brent was, barking at a fellow like a dog, Bunter preferred him to Latin in the Form-room. But it seemed that the man from Scotland Yard had done with him.

He rose from the chair.

"You are a fool!" added Mr. Brent, in the same barking voice.

"Eh!"

"A fool! You may go!"

Billy Bunter went, with feelings that were really too deep for words.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Hunter and the Hunted!

RUPERT LAGDEN, Master of Arts, looked from his study window.

It was a cold February morning, but there was a bright gleam of wintry sunshine in the quadrangle of Greyfriars.

Mr. Lagden, apparently, had forgotten that his Form were still waiting for him in the Remove-room, which was rather singular, for since Rupert Lagden had been at Greyfriars, he had been a very careful and dutiful Form master.

Other matters than Form work, however, filled his mind now.

Standing at the study window, half-concealed by the curtain, he looked out, his eyes glued on a stocky form that had emerged from the House.

Inspector Brent's interview with Bunter evidently was over, for here was the inspector walking in the deserted quad.

Mr. Lagden, having been in the

Form-room at the time, had not, of course, seen Mr. Brent arrive, and had known nothing of his arrival until Trotter came to call the fat Owl. But his look, as he gazed from the study window, showed that he knew who the stocky gentleman with the bulldog jaw was. And the glitter in his eyes told that that stocky gentleman was no friend of his. The burning glitter in Mr. Lagden's eyes might well have startled Mr. Brent, had he discerned it.

The stocky man, with his hands thrust deep into his pockets, was tramping down the path by Masters' Studies, his brow knitted in reflecting. His lips were set, and his jaw jutted a little. Mr. Brent looked like a man whom few would have liked to have for an enemy. He looked like a man who had the characteristics of a bulldog, who, having got his teeth into a problem, was not likely to let go. And Mr. Lagden, who had the best of reasons to know John Brent's record, knew that his looks did not belie him.

Inspector Brent, as he tramped with heavy, solid footsteps, was looking at the ground. But as if some sixth sense warned him of the burning eyes that were fixed on him, he glanced up as he was passing the Remove master's window.

Instantly Mr. Lagden's gaze shifted, and he seemed to be looking past the inspector, at the distant windows of the library. A moment, and Mr. Brent's glance dropped again, and he went solidly on. And Lagden drew a deep, deep breath. He knew that the man, without appearing to do so, had noted that searching look from the study window.

He bit his lip, then shrugged his shoulders. After all, what did it matter? The keenest detective ever turned out by Scotland Yard was not likely to dream that a Form master at a Public school like Greyfriars had any fear of his penetrating eyes.

Mr. Lagden watched the stocky form tramping out of sight. John Brent tramped on—John Brent, the only officer of the law whose hand had ever dropped on the shoulder of Jimmy the One.

The master of the Remove remembered his Form. He left his study, and went back to the Form-room.

A cheery buzz of voices greeted him as he opened the door of the Remove-room. The juniors were all in their places, but a general conversation was going on. It ceased the moment Mr. Lagden entered.

For a second he glanced at Billy Bunter. But if he had any personal interest in Bunter's interview with the man from Scotland Yard, he was careful not to betray it. Lessons were resumed in the Form-room, and went on till break. Only the Removites noticed that the good humour Mr. Lagden had displayed that morning was now conspicuous by its absence. He was in a sharp temper—sharp and irritable. Indeed, the juniors might have fancied that he was nervy had there been anything for a Greyfriars Form master to be nervy about.

Lord Mauleverer bungled his "con," as usual, and received a hundred lines. Vernon-Smith made the slightest of mistakes, and was quite startled by an angry reprimand. The Bounder's eyes gleamed as he sat down. He had pronounced Lagden a "sportsman" after the incident at calling-over the previous evening. Now he began to veer round to Harry Wharton's opinion of the man. Mr. Lagden, apparently, wanted to be

liked at Greyfriars; but his temper was not under control as it should have been. Like a dashed cat, the Bounder said afterwards; purring one minute, and scratching the next. Not a man a fellow could trust.

Billy Bunter was glad that he had got through his "con" earlier. With Lagden in this mood, "Jam reddened the radiant mare," would have been likely to earn him a licking instead of a laugh.

The Remove were glad when they were dismissed for break. No doubt Mr. Lagden was glad, too, with his thoughts following the stocky man he had watched walking in the quad.

"Bunter!"
Billy Bunter blinked in dismay at the Form master. Mr. Lagden called to him as the juniors were going out.
"Oh dear! Yes, sir!" mumbled Bunter.

With Lagden in this unpleasant temper Bunter did not want to draw his attention.

"Your construe was very bad, Bunter," said Mr. Lagden. "You may remain, and I will go through the passage with you."

"Oh lor!"
The Remove left the Form-room, leaving the unhappy Owl behind. He sat down again dismally at his desk.

Mr. Lagden strolled over to him. To Bunter's great relief he looked good-tempered again. He smiled at the fat junior; and Bunter grinned with relief.

"You have lost time this morning, Bunter," remarked Mr. Lagden. "Of course, it was not your fault that you were called away from the Form-room. I do not blame you."

"Thank you, sir!" gasped Bunter.
"No doubt Mr.—what was his name—"

"Brent, sir—Inspector Brent."
"Ah, yes—no doubt Mr. Brent had something of importance to say to you, or you would not have been called away from class to see him."

"Oh, yes, rather, sir," said Bunter importantly. "He wanted to ask me all about Flip, sir."

Bunter was very pleased to show off his importance. Likewise, he was very pleased to keep off Latin. Not for a moment did it occur to the fat Owl that Mr. Lagden had kept him in to learn what had passed in his interview with the man from Scotland Yard.

"Flip!" repeated Mr. Lagden. "Who is Flip?"

"That kid in the Second Form, sir, who disappeared last week," said Bunter.

"Ah! I remember hearing him spoken of. I do not think I have seen him," remarked Mr. Lagden carelessly.

"Oh, yes, sir! I dare say you've forgotten him," said Bunter. "But you've

seen him. It's the kid who was with me, and some Remove fellows, the day you came, and he jumped like anything when he saw you—"

"Eh?"
"Some of the fellows asked him if he'd ever seen you before, sir, he seemed so startled when you came in," prattled on Bunter.
"I dare say you remember him now, sir."

For a second Mr. Lagden's eyes

glinted at the fatuous Owl. Then he laughed.

"I seem to remember—a rather grubby little fellow—"

"That's him, sir!" said Bunter. "He always looked a bit grubby, though I did my best with him. He never washed much in Puggins' Alley, I suppose, and it came rather new to him."

"I hope you were able to give Inspector Brent any information he desired to obtain from you, Bunter."

"Well, I told him all I knew, of course, sir," said Bunter. "All about Jimmy the One. I—I say, sir, what's the matter?" ejaculated Bunter, startled by a sudden movement on Mr. Lagden's part.

"Nothing, Bunter! What name did you say?"

"Jimmy the One, sir—that's the name of some awful villain Flip knew when he was a vagrant," said Bunter, blinking rather uneasily at his Form master.

Mr. Lagden was smiling with his lips, but his eyes were strangely unsmiling, and Bunter felt oddly uneasy.

"I see," said Mr. Lagden, "and no doubt you were able to tell Mr. Brent quite a great deal about this—this person, Jimmy the One?"

"Well, I told him what Flip told us—that it was Jimmy the One who put up that beast Buster to kidnap him," said Bunter. "I couldn't tell him any more than that, because Flip never told us anything else."

"That is rather unfortunate," remarked Mr. Lagden. His eyes were smiling now, as well as his lips.

"Yes, I wish I'd asked him about it, now," said Bunter. "Of course, he would have told me anything if I'd asked him. I was his benefactor, you see; he was grateful to me, as he ought to have been. But, of course, I never knew he was going to be kidnapped, or anything. All I know is that the man he called Jimmy the One was an awful villain—"

"Indeed?" said Mr. Lagden.

"An absolute scoundrel," said Bunter. "He's been wanted by the police for ten years and more. I hear—a cracksmen and a thief and a villain in every way—a frightful beast altogether—"

"You may go, Bunter."

"Thank you, sir," said Bunter; and he went promptly.

Mr. Lagden seemed to have forgotten that he had kept Bunter in to go through a Latin passage with him; and Bunter was not the fellow to remind him. He scuttled out of the Form-room in a hurry before Mr. Lagden had time to call it to mind.

It was probable, however, that Rupert Lagden, Master of Arts, was not thinking of Latin, or likely to think of it. With that stocky man with the jutting

(Continued on next page.)



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jaw at Greyfriars, the man with a double life had more important things to occupy his thoughts. John Brent had hunted Jimmy the One for ten years and more, but only once had he been so near his quarry as he was now—now that he was near Mr. Lagden, the new master of the Greyfriars Remove.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Prisoner!

"O H swipes!" mumbled Flip. Flip, of the Greyfriars Second Form, was in a dismal mood.

It was only a few days since he had been rapt away from all who knew him, but it seemed like weeks, if not years, to the Greyfriars waif.

He rose from a table, at which he had been working with school books, and moved restlessly about the room.

The room had no windows. Light came from a skylight, far above the fag's head. In what building that room was situated Flip did not know, nor whether he was a hundred or five hundred miles from Greyfriars.

All he knew was that he was in the hands of Jimmy the One, and that only Jimmy the One knew where he was.

Bound and gagged, rolled in a motor-rug, Flip had been carried in a car, whither he knew not. He knew that, after a lapse of time, the car had halted—that he had been lifted out and carried, wrapped in the rug so that he could not get a glimpse of his surroundings. He had been carried some distance, so he knew that the car must have stopped at some distance from the building, and guessed that it was a lonely building far from a road. Beyond that he could form no conjecture.

His first impression had been that he had been taken a great distance from Greyfriars School. But on reflection the kidnapped boy realised that that could not be the case, for twice Jimmy the One had visited him in his imprisonment, and Jimmy the One was playing the part of a Form master at Greyfriars. His only object in keeping the fag out of the way was to continue playing that part in safety. It seemed, therefore, that wherever Flip was he must be within such a distance of Greyfriars as would enable the crook to come to him without such a prolonged absence as would excite remark at the school.

Even the Buster, who had helped to kidnap him, had not been allowed to know where he was imprisoned—the Buster had been dismissed as soon as his help was no longer needed. That was like Jimmy the One—he was not a man to take chances. Probably the Buster did not know that Jimmy the One was at the school—did not know that he was named Lagden at all. Jimmy was the man to keep secrets closely.

"Oh swipes!" mumbled Flip, as he moved restlessly about the room. "This 'ere's enough to make a bloke go off his blooming onion, this 'ere is! Swipes! I'd be glad to see even the Buster now."

The solitude was oppressive to the waif—the solitude and the silence.

No guard was left over him, but no guard was needed. His prison had been carefully prepared by the crook's own active hands.

Where windows had been, thick, strong boards were nailed fast. Outside, shutters were fastened. Flip was in an upstairs room, the door of which was

locked and bolted on the outside. Many times he had tried his hand on the door, and on the boards that were nailed over the windows. But there was nothing doing. He was a helpless and solitary prisoner, and the only sound that ever reached him was the savage howl of a dog that ran loose in the yard below, and that came faint and muffled.

But if he had been able to work a way out of the prison-room, the fag might have hesitated to venture forth, for he had seen the terrible animal that ran loose in the yard, and Jimmy the One had told him, quietly and coolly, that if he got out of the house he would be torn in pieces before he reached the gate.

The room was furnished roughly but comfortably. Everything that Flip needed was there so far as that went. Indeed, the quarters might have been considered luxurious in comparison with his old garret in Puggins' Alley.

He had ample food, and a tap in the corner of the room over a sink provided him with water. From an impulse of humanity, perhaps, the crook had provided him with books—including school books. Flip found a resource in study. He was making progress in Latin that was calculated to please Mr. Twigg, his Form master, if he ever returned to Greyfriars. Work helped the weary hours to pass.

But often and often the fag's eyes turned to the little window in the roof, watching the steely winter sky in the daytime and the stars at night.

Often and often he roved round the room, restless as a caged animal, as he was doing now.

Yet, irksome as his imprisonment was, it was not of himself chiefly that the Greyfriars waif thought.

He was shut up in this dreary prison, while Jimmy the One carried on his game at Greyfriars, unsuspected. Bitterly now did Flip repent that he had not denounced the crook at once, when "Mr. Lagden" had arrived at Greyfriars as a temporary master of the Remove.

He had shrunk from betraying an associate of former days; he had warned the crook off, and he had believed that Jimmy the One would heed the warning and clear. This was the result. And the school that had sheltered Flip—seemed to him like Paradise after Puggins' Alley—would be robbed, and he could not prevent it. The field was clear for Jimmy the One, and Flip knew only too well what his game was—the game the man with a double life had played successfully many times before.

The Greyfriars waif ceased his weary pacing, started, and listened, at the sound of a footstep in the silent building.

Jimmy the One was coming!

There was a scraping of the bolt, a click of the lock, and the door opened.

A man in an overcoat and a soft hat stepped in, and Flip's eyes fixed inimically on the face under the slouch of the hat—a face that the Remove fellows would hardly have recognised as that of Mr. Lagden. A thick black moustache and a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles changed its aspect very considerably.

"You!" grunted Flip.

He clenched his hands.

"Come to see that I'm safe!" he jeered. "You think I might 'ave got out through the blooming keyhole?"

"I'm not letting you starve, Flip," said Jimmy the One quietly. He laid a heavy bag on the table. "Unpack that!"

"You'd let me starve if you dared!"

snapped Flip. "Lot you'd care if I never got out of 'ere alive!"

"You can get out of here, alive and well, as soon as you choose, Flip!" said Jimmy the One. "You know the conditions."

"Aw, stow it!" grunted Flip. "I was a pincher in Puggins' Alley; but I've told you more'n once I'll never pinch agin. If them blokes at Greyfriars see me agin, they ain't going to see me a pincher, s'elp me!"

The crook's lip curved sarcastically.

"They will never see you agin, in that case, Flip!" he said. "You young fool! Cannot you see that I must keep you a prisoner, for my own safety, unless you are as deep in the mud as I am in the mire?"

"I'll 'old my tongue about you if you clear out of Greyfriars!" muttered Flip. "I ain't letting you rob the old cove in the gownd what was so kind to me. Not 'arf! But I'll 'old my tongue if you go, like I said I would!"

Jimmy the One shook his head.

"I've never trusted anyone yet," he said—"not unless I had a strong hold! You know too much, Flip! I never dreamed that you were at Greyfriars when I came there. I'd have kept clear enough if I'd even dreamed it. How could I have foreseen anything of the kind? A beggarly waif from a slum—I was not likely to foresee that! But you know me, Flip; you know now my real name. My liberty is in your hands if you are free." He gave a hard laugh.

"Do you think I am the man to take such chances?"

Flip was silent.

"Think it over!" drawled Jimmy the One. "A few months ago, when you were a vagrant in a slum, you'd have been overjoyed if I had taken you up and offered to make a comrade of you."

"That's true enough," admitted Flip. "I was a pincher then, and knowed no better. But I've learned a lot since then. Since I've knowed Master Bunter and his friends—and the 'Ead, too—I got to understand things better. And that ain't all! You done it yourself, Jimmy."

"What do you mean, you young fool?"

"You told me you knowed where my father is, and who he is, and that he's an honest man, and an officer of the law!" said Flip. "You offered to tell me all you knowed about it if I'd kept mum and let you carry on. And 'cause I wouldn't fall for it, you kidnapped me and put me 'ere. But you told me enough, Jimmy the One, to make me scared of pinching agin. Mebbe I'll never know who my father is, and never see him; but I'll never do nothing what would disgrace him! I'll be cut in pieces first!"

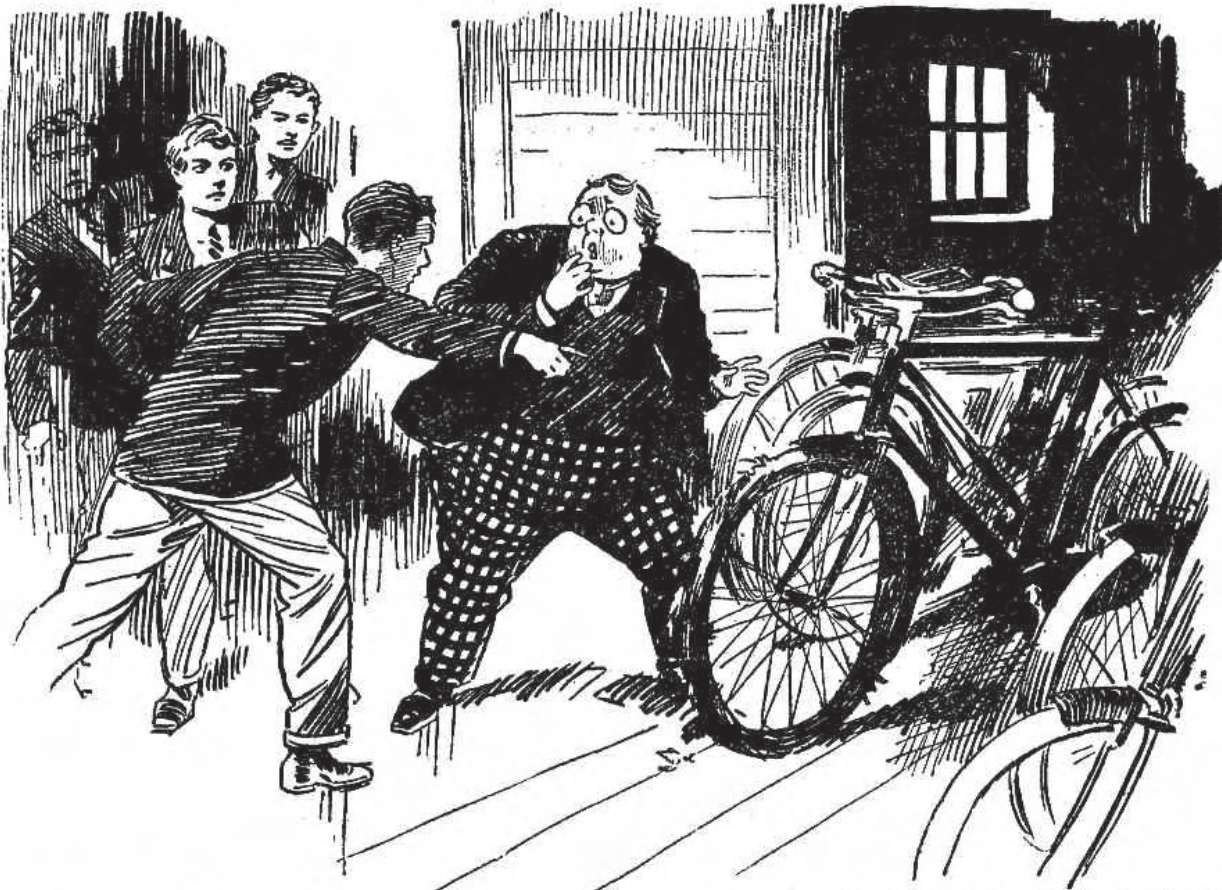
"Take time to think it over, Flip—you've got bags of time before you," said Jimmy the One lightly. "My engagement at Greyfriars will last some time yet."

"You ain't cracked the safe yet?" jeered Flip.

Jimmy the One laughed. "Plenty of time for that," he said. "I have to choose a time when there is something in it worth lifting, Flip. And, in any case, I should stay out my engagement. If I left before that, people might want to know why. You will remain here till I go. After that we shall see! At present I have to keep you under my eye—"

"Then we can't be fur from the school!" said Flip, eyeing the man keenly.

"You need not build on that, Flip—nobody will find you here. Neither, I think, will you get out—though I see



The Removites gazed in amazement at Mr. Lagden's bicycle, the tyres of which were cut and slashed almost to shreds. "You unspeakable idiot!" gasped Wharton. "You'll get flogged for this, Bunter!" "I—I say, I—I never did it, you know!" gasped the Owl of the Remove.

the marks of your grubby fingers on the boards at the window. If you do get out, I pity you! The Alsatian is loose in the yard, and you would not live long enough to reach the gate. Unpack that bag—I have no more time to waste on you!"

Flip obeyed in silence.

"Jimmy!" He spoke in a low voice as the crook was about to go. "Jimmy, if you'd give up the job at Greyfriars you could trust me to 'old my tongue! You know I did 'old it, Jimmy."

"I'm not giving up the job at Greyfriars," said Jimmy the One coolly, "and I can't trust you, Flip! If you'd stood in with me, I'd have trusted you then! But now—"

He paused.

"What's the difference now?" asked Flip.

"It's too late now, Flip! Your disappearance has brought the police on the scene—you've mentioned the name of Jimmy the One."

"What about it?" asked Flip uneasily. The crook laughed.

"That name, Flip, has been enough to bring a man from Scotland Yard down to the school. A man who's been after Jimmy the One for years, and who nearly had him once! Even if I could trust you, Flip, I should not dare to let you return to Greyfriars. That man would have the truth out of you, whether you liked it or not. You'll never see Greyfriars again, Flip! You'll never see freedom again, unless as the companion and confederate of Jimmy the One—up to the neck in breaking the law, Flip! That's all that's left for you now; circumstances have changed, and that's all that's left."

"It'll never come to that!" said Flip.

"Never's a long word!" said Jimmy the One.

The Greyfriars waif paced the room again after the crook was gone. Escape was impossible; rescue equally out of the question. Flip had given up hope of either.

How was it to end—unless in his yielding to the terms offered by the crook? End how it might, it should never end in that—on that point, at least, the Greyfriars waif was resolute.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Clue!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"That man's a fool!" said Billy Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove jerked a fat thumb in the direction of a stocky, thick-set man who was crossing the quad.

It was Saturday afternoon, and, as there was no football match on, the Famous Five were discussing, after dinner, what they were going to do with the half-holiday.

Billy Bunter interrupted them as he drew their attention to the stocky gentleman.

Harry Wharton & Co. glanced at Inspector Brent. They had seen the detective about the school several times during the past few days, and their impression of him was that he was anything but a fool. That, however, was evidently the valuable opinion of William George Bunter, the fat ornament of the Remove.

"You want to be careful what you say, Bunter," said Bob Cherry.

"What's he doing here?" asked Bunter.

"Eh! I suppose he came along to

look for poor old Flip!" said Bob. "It seems to be a job over Grimey's weight, and they've called in a man from Scotland Yard. What about it, ass?"

Sniff, from Bunter.

"Well, the man's a fool!" he said. "The fact is, he called me a fool the first time I saw him and talked to him."

"Doesn't that rather show that he's a man of some judgment?" asked Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Well, what's the man done, fat-head?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Nothing!" answered Bunter. "That's the point—nothing! Flip's been missing more than a week. Nobody knows where he is, but everybody knows that he's not here. Well, then, what is that ass mooching about the school for?"

"Asking questions, chiefly!" grinned Bob.

Harry Wharton's face dwelt thoughtfully on the stocky figure that was approaching from the gates.

Mr. Brent seemed to have taken up his quarters at Courtfield, but nearly every day he was seen at the school.

He had questioned all, or almost all, the fellows, including the Famous Five, on the subject of Flip.

That the waif had seen Jimmy the One since he had been at the school was certain, and Mr. Brent seemed keen to find any fellow who might have seen Flip in talk with a stranger, evidently with a view to getting a description of the man.

But he had had no luck so far. Nobody remembered having seen the fag in the company of anyone outside the school.

"Let's ask him if there's any news," said Bob Cherry. "He's asked us

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questions enough. I suppose we can ask him one."

"Let's!" agreed Nugent.

And as Inspector Brent drew nearer, the Famous Five capped him respectfully, and Wharton addressed him.

"Excuse me, sir. Is there any news of Flip yet?"

The stocky gentleman stopped and looked at the juniors. There was a derisive expression on Bunter's fat face which Mr. Brent did not seem to observe, though he was undoubtedly a very observant man.

"We're all very anxious about Flip, sir!" said Bob, as the detective did not immediately reply.

"The anxiety is terrific!" added the Nabob of Bhanipur. "Our likefulness of the excellent and execrable Flip was preposterously tremendous!"

Mr. Brent glanced at the dusky junior, and his hard, cold face broke into a faint smile for a second. The nabob's beautiful English had the effect of disturbing his grim gravity for a passing moment.

"A clue has been found!" he barked.

"Oh, good!" exclaimed all the Famous Five. And the nabob added that the goodfulness was terrific.

Mr. Brent looked thoughtfully at the juniors under his wrinkled brows. He was a man of few words, and slow to utter even those few.

"Is it a secret, sir?" asked Nugent.

"If it were a secret I should not mention it," barked Mr. Brent. "It is common knowledge, or soon will be. The boy's cap has been found."

"Flip's cap?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Oh, good! Every fellow here has to have his name in his hat—"

"Exactly! That is how it was identified."

"Will you tell us where it was found, sir?"

"Why not, when it will probably be in the evening newspapers?" barked Mr. Brent. "It was picked up some days ago in a street at Ashford."

"That's a good thirty miles from here," said Nugent. "But it's a jolly good clue. It shows the way the villain went with Flip."

Mr. Brent stared at Nugent for a moment.

"But how was it found, sir?" asked Harry, with keen interest.

"It seems to have been picked up by a farmer's man," said Mr. Brent. "He found it lying in the road, as if, as he supposed, it had been blown from someone passing in a car. Instead of taking it to the police station, as he should have done, he attached no particular importance to it until he learned, from his paper, that a boy named Flip had disappeared and was being searched for. Then he remembered the name in the cap, and took it to the police at Ashford."

"And it's certain that it is Flip's cap?" asked Bob.

"It has been identified as a Greyfriars cap, and the name of Flip was in it. Flip is not, I think, a common name!" barked Mr. Brent.

"Oh, quite!" said Bob, a little abashed. "Then it shows that the brute who took Flip away passed through Ashford. Of course, it's on the way to London. I suppose that's where he would head for—his jolly old native heath."

"If Jimmy the One let Flip's cap blow off the car—if he had him in a car—he must be a howling ass!" said Johnny Bull. "More likely Flip got a chance to chuck it out, with the idea of somebody picking it up and finding the way he went. He was a clever kid. Just the kid to think of such a thing."

"That's it, of course," said Harry.

"That is the conclusion generally drawn," grunted Mr. Brent. "It seems a natural conclusion."

"Pretty certain, I should think," said Frank Nugent.

"Looks as if that brute got poor old Flip back to London," said Harry Wharton.

Mr. Brent gave the captain of the Remove one of his disconcerting stares, nodded, and walked on to the House.

"I say, you fellows, I told you that man was a fool!" said Billy Bunter, with a sniff. "A regular idiot, you know. We all knew that Flip must have been taken a long way off, and now it's a certainty; and that fathead of a detective is still hanging about here instead of looking for him. I've a jolly

good mind to tell him what I think of him!"

And Bunter rolled away.

"Blessed if I don't half think Bunter's right," said Bob. "Now it's certain that Flip's been taken such a distance, I can't quite see what Brent is hanging on here for."

His chums nodded assent, with the exception of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. The nabob was staring after Mr. Brent, with a very thoughtful expression on his dusky face. There was a glimmer of intelligence in his dark eyes.

Bob Cherry grinned.

"What have you got in your jolly old black noddle, Inky?" he asked. "I can see it's a brainwave. Cough it up!"

"My esteemed and idiotic chums," said Hurree Singh, "it appears terrifically certain that the absurd Flip was taken away through Ashford, as his ridiculous cap has been picked up there."

"Not much doubt about it," said Nugent. "Of course, that brute would naturally head for London. He's safer there."

"Perhapsfully it is too terrifically certain," suggested the nabob, with a grin.

"Eh? What on earth are you driving at Inky?" exclaimed Bob. "It's as clear as daylight that the poor kid got a chance of chucking his cap out of the car to leave a clue behind him."

"The clearfulness is preposterous!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Unless, my esteemed chums, that is what the execrable Jimmy the One desired the police to think, in whichful case he may have dropped the cap there himself."

"Oh!" ejaculated the juniors.

They stared at the dusky nabob.

"My hat!" said Bob. "Why, the blighter may have chucked poor old Flip's cap there after landing poor old Flip a hundred miles away in another direction!"

"Or—" murmured the nabob.

"Or, what, fathead?"

"Or the absurd kidnapper may have wished the search to concentrate at a distance from this ridiculous school, in whichful case it may turn out that the esteemed Flip is not, after all, far away."

"Oh crumbs!"

"But the kidnapper wouldn't be ass enough to stack him away anywhere near Greyfriars!" exclaimed Nugent.

The nabob made a gesture towards the stocky figure disappearing into the House.

"The esteemed and absurd detective is still here," he remarked. "Possibly he is lingerfully hanging on because he does not want to follow the trail of a ridiculous red herring."

It was a rather startling thought to the chums of the Remove. If the discovery at Ashford was in the nature of a false scent laid for the searchers, it was possible that the nabob's astute conjecture was right, and that Mr. Brent suspected that the kidnapped fag was still somewhere in the vicinity of the school. Harry Wharton & Co. would have given a great deal to read the thoughts of the man from Scotland Yard.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

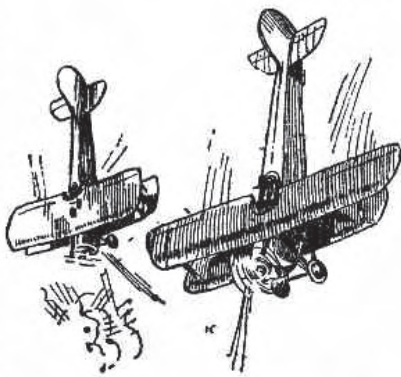
Startling!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"
"Oh crikey!" gasped Billy Bunter.

He jumped.

Harry Wharton & Co. jumped, too, as they discerned how the fat Owl of the Remove was occupied.

The THREE MUSKETEERS of the AIR!



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The Famous Five had decided to take their bikes out for the afternoon, and they had come along to the bicycle-shed to wheel them out.

Billy Bunter was there!

He was alone there, and very busy. He was stooping beside a rather handsome machine on a stand; a man's machine, which belonged to Mr. Lagden, the new master of the Remove.

Mr. Lagden was the only master at Greyfriars who rode a push-bike. But nearly every day he found time for a run on that push-bike; and dark and wintry as the evenings were, it was not uncommon for Mr. Lagden to go for a spin after he was done with his Form.

His machine stood next to Wingate's, which was a big, handsome Sunbeam, kept in beautiful order by Wingate's fag. The juniors' machines were at the other end of the shed, and Bunter had no business where he was, and still less business to be occupied as he was.

He jumped up with a startled squeak and blinked round at the Famous Five through his big spectacles in sheer alarm.

"Oh, I say, you fellows! It's only you!" gasped Bunter. "I say, don't you mention you saw me here, you know."

"You unspeakable idiot!" gasped Harry Wharton.

He stared at Mr. Lagden's machine—a big black Raleigh. It was a good machine, but not much use to Mr. Lagden if he wanted it for one of his solitary spins that afternoon. The tyres were cut and slashed almost to shreds, and Billy Bunter slipped a pocket-knife into his pocket rather too late to hide it from the eyes of the juniors.

"I—I say, I—I never did that, you know!" gasped Bunter. "I—I've only been here a—minute, and—and I saw it—"

"You fat villain, you were doing it as we came in!" howled Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry! Look here, the beast gave me five hundred lines!" gasped Bunter. "And he's licked me because I haven't done them, although I told him I wrote them out yesterday and Toddy used them to light the study fire by mistake. He refused to take my word, just like he did yours the other day, Wharton—"

"You awful idiot!" said Nugent. "You'd get flogged for this! Lagden will be as mad as a hatter when he sees it."

"I—I never did it, you know! I—I saw it when I—I came in. I—I was just stooping down to—to look—"

"Let's hope Lagden will believe that!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows, don't you tell Lagden you saw me here!" squeaked Bunter in alarm. "I say, it serves him right to give him a puncture or two after he's licked a chap for nothing—"

"A—a puncture or two!" ejaculated Bob. "You frabjous owl, you've ripped the tyres to ribbons!"

"Well, serve him right!" said Bunter. "I heard him tell Twigg he was going out at three, so he won't be here yet. It's not half-past two! Safe as houses, you chaps! He won't find it out till he's going to start. Serve him jolly well right, the beast! You fellows keep it dark, you know. Not that I did it, of course."

And Billy Bunter rolled out of the bikeshed, leaving the Famous Five staring blankly at Mr. Lagden's crooked jigger.

"Well, my hat!" said Bob, with a deep breath. "Lagden's rather a

GREYFRIARS HEROES.

No. 19.

Herewith the Greyfriars Rhymester reveals in a suitable parody the heroes worshipped by PAT Gwynne, of the Sixth.

OF a humorous turn of mind is Gwynne,
And the hero of his choosing
Must really be considered the twin

Of another remarkable paladin
Who gave him help great fame to win
From operas amusing;
Their plays are shown year in, year out,
And they will last for ever—
Of that there is no possible doubt,
No possible, probable shadow of doubt,
No possible doubt whatever.

Sir William Gilbert we may find
Exceedingly attractive;
But we must never leave behind
Sir Arthur Sullivan, whose mind,
With Gilbert's, cleverly combined,
Was humorous and active.
The people wanted more, without
Permitting them to sever,



sweep, but that's a dirty trick to play on any man. Bunter ought to be boiled in oil. Look here, let's get off. We don't want to be caught on the spot, or we may be asked questions; can't give that benighted bandersnatch away."

"What-ho!" agreed Wharton.

And the Famous Five wheeled out their machines very quickly. As they mounted in the road they spotted William George Bunter strolling away with a satisfied grin on his fat face. He gave the chums of the Remove a podgy wink as they started.

Bunter evidently was satisfied with his peculiar form of vengeance on the new Form master. Certainly it was, as Bob had said, a dirty trick; but it had to be admitted that Bunter had just cause for resentment against the new master. He had been licked for not doing his lines, and the lines had been given unjustly in the first place. Bunter, no doubt, would have preferred to tell Rupert Lagden what he thought of him; but that was rather impracticable, so he had taken it out of Lagden's bike. Certainly he had knocked Lagden's spin that afternoon on the head.

Harry Wharton & Co. rode away at a good speed. They were going by



Of that there is no possible doubt,
No possible, probable shadow of doubt,
No possible doubt whatever.

Their operas we all may hear—
Their memory is cherished.
The Yeomen of the Guard, we fear
May make us drop a silent tear,
But the highly respectable Gondolier,
Who miserably perished,
Will cause us all to laugh and shout,
Despite our best endeavour;
Of that there is no possible doubt,
No possible, probable shadow of doubt,
No possible doubt whatever.

The lyrics and the musical score
Have made each play a naller;
Spectators always chuckle and roar
At the Bad Baronet of Ruddigore,
And every chap knows "Pinafore,"
Or "The Lass that Loved a Sailor."
We all have heard the captain spout—
"What never? Hardly ever!"
Of that there is no possible doubt,
No possible, probable shadow of doubt,
No possible doubt whatever.

Pat Gwynne admires these jolly plays,
For he's a humorous fibbert;
This whimsical pair he loves to praise,
And cheers himself on rainy days,
By singing the rib-ticking lays
Of Sullivan and Gilbert.
No matter what they wrote about,
The plays were bright and clever;
Of that there is no possible doubt,
No possible, probable shadow of doubt,
No possible doubt whatever.

Courtfield and along to Redclyffe, where they intended to stop for tea. After which there would be a run home to Greyfriars—but not by way of the path through Redclyffe Woods! After the trouble with Lagden they had sagely resolved to give Redclyffe Woods a miss. And the few extra miles were nothing to them on the bikes. They were out for a long spin.

Billy Bunter's antics were no business of theirs, of course, and they dismissed the matter from their minds. Certainly they thought that the fat Owl ought to be kicked, but it was not their business to kick him. And it was certain that he would get something much more severe than a kicking if Mr. Lagden discovered who had ripped his tyres.

It was a cold, but clear and fine day, with a keen wind from the sea, and the chums of the Remove enjoyed that spin. They rode by Courtfield and round by Highcliffe, and then by the towpath along the Sark, where biking really was not allowed; but as there was nobody on the towpath in the winter they allowed themselves that privilege. Then they got into the Redclyffe road, and shot along in a merry bunch for the distant town.

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It was tea-time when they rode into the old-fashioned High Street of Redclyffe, and after two or three hours in the keen air they were quite ready for tea.

The teashop at Redclyffe was an adjunct to the grocery stores. Adjoining the grocery was a railed space where cyclists could park their machines while they had tea within. In the summer there were often two or three dozen machines stacked there, but in the winter they were few. Only one machine stood there when the chums of the Remove wheeled in. Bob Cherry, glancing at it, grimaced.

"We're going to have old Wingate's company at tea!" he remarked.

"Wingate!" repeated Wharton. "Wingate's playing football this afternoon. There's a Form match—Fifth and Sixth."

"Old Wingate's jolly well cut it, then; that's his jigger," answered Bob.

Wharton looked at the machine.

He had noticed that it was a big Sunbeam. A second glance showed that it was Wingate's Sunbeam. He knew the machine well enough now that he gave it attention.

"Wingate hasn't cut the footer," said Johnny Bull. "He was going down to play before we came out. He's lent somebody his jigger—some other Sixth Form man."

"Oh, very likely," agreed Bob. "I suppose he wouldn't be likely to cut the footer."

The juniors wheeled their machines on and stacked them against the farther wall. While they were thus occupied a man came out of the grocery door with a large parcel under his arm. He stepped to the Sunbeam and proceeded with rapid fingers to tie the parcel on the handlebars. The juniors, turning away from their own machines, all looked at him at once. In fact, they stared almost in stupefaction.

The man was a stranger to them. He had a dark face, with a thick, black moustache, and a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles, and looked about forty. What he was doing with Wingate's jigger was a mystery, unless he was "pinching" it. Certainly it was clear that he intended to ride it, for he fastened the parcel on and then took hold of the machine to wheel it out of the yard.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

He made a sudden rush forward and caught hold of the bike. So far as Bob could see, it was the most barefaced case of "bike-pinching" he had ever come across. Whether Wingate, or another senior of Greyfriars, had left the machine there, obviously a perfect stranger could have no right to take possession of it.

"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Bob warmly.

The man in the horn-rimmed glasses gave a start and stared at him. It seemed to Bob that there was recognition in the look the man gave him through the big spectacles. But if the horn-rimmed man knew the Greyfriars junior, Bob did not know him.

"What do you mean?" he rapped out, in a harsh, husky voice. "Let go my bicycle!"

"Your bike?" gasped Bob.

"Certainly! Let go at once!"

With a powerful wrench the dark-faced man almost tore the machine from Bob's grasp. But Bob held on manfully and shouted to his comrades: "Here, you men—lend a hand—"

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A moment more and the bike was grasped by five pairs of vigorous hands, and the horn-rimmed man wrenched at it in vain, his eyes gleaming savage anger through the big glasses.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Whose Bike?

"LET go, you young rascals!"

The harsh, husky voice was shaking with rage.

But the anger of a bike-thief had no terrors for the Famous Five of Greyfriars. They held on grimly.

"You're not taking this machine!" said Harry Wharton. "You see, we know the owner, and we know you're jolly well not the owner!"

"It is my machine!" snarled the dark-faced man savagely.

"This jigger belongs to a fellow at our school," answered the captain of the Remove. "We know it as well as we know our own jiggers!"

"You young fool! Bicycles are much alike. Do you think there is only one Sunbeam bicycle in Kent?"

"Hundreds, very likely," answered Harry. "But this one belongs to Wingate, a chap at our school, and I tell you we know it."

"That's the patch on the front tyre that I put on for old Wingate only two or three days ago!" said Bob.

"Nugent, old chap, cut into the teashop," said Harry. "Either Wingate's there, or the chap he lent the bike to. Tell him what's up and bring him out!"

"You bet!" said Frank. And he scudded off. The man in the horn-rimmed glasses gave up wrenching at the bike. He seemed to control his anger with a great effort, and burst into a harsh laugh.

"You young fool!" he repeated. "If there is a schoolboy in the place who claims the machine I will say nothing more."

"Well, there jolly well is, and must be," said Harry. "Hold on and see."

Frank Nugent came back in a few minutes. But he came alone, with a puzzled expression on his face.

"No Greyfriars man about," he said. "I've asked in the grocery, too; nobody belonging to Greyfriars here."

"Oh!" said Harry.

"Are you satisfied now that you have made a mistake?" snapped the horn-rimmed man. "Let go my machine at once, or I will call a constable."

"You can call a constable as soon as you like," said Harry Wharton determinedly, "and we'll jolly well give you in charge for stealing this bike. It belongs to the captain of our school—"

"I—I say, if we've made a mistake—"

"Nothing of the kind! Bob knows the patch he put on for Wingate—and I jolly well know the machine!" said Wharton. "If there's no Greyfriars man here, it only shows that the bike was stolen somewhere else and ridden here by the thief. Look!"

The captain of the Remove opened the saddlebag. He knew where the name of the bike's owner was to be found, and as he opened the flap it stared the juniors in the face:

"G. Wingate, Greyfriars School."

"Oh, my hat! That's proof positive!" ejaculated Nugent.

"The positiveness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "This esteemed person is a delectable and preposterous bike-thief!"

The man in the horn-rimmed glasses gave the juniors a deadly look. Under his thick black moustache his teeth were gritting.

Wharton's eyes flashed at him.

"You cheeky rotter! Are you making out now that the bike's yours, with Wingate's name written on it?" he exclaimed.

"Somebody's had it out, and this sportsman has pinched it, that's jolly clear!" said Johnny Bull. "And we're jolly well going to give him in charge, too! Old Wingate will pat us on the back for this! One of you chaps cut off and call a bobby!"

"An esteemed and ludicrous bobby is the proper caper!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "This excellent and execrable rascal can give an account of himself at the 'bobby' station."

"Hold him!" yelled Bob.

But it was too late to hold the horn-rimmed man. Suddenly letting go the disputed bicycle, he made a leap back, turned, and took to his heels. It was evident that the prospect of interviewing a "bobby" had deeply alarmed him. "After him!"

The Famous Five rushed, whooping, in pursuit. But the man in the horn-rimmed glasses ran almost like a deer, turned a corner, and vanished. The juniors stopped.

"Well, we've got the bike back for old Wingate," said Harry. "We don't want to chase that rotter all over Redclyffe. Let him rip—we've got the jigger!"

"Hear, hear!"

The chums of the Remove returned to the machine. The parcel belonging to the horn-rimmed man was still on the handlebars. Bob Cherry chuckled.

"That jolly old bike-thief has lost his parcel!" he remarked. "I wonder what's in it?"

"He brought it out of the shop," said Harry. "Better take it back there and speak to the grocer."

The parcel was untied, and the juniors carried it into the grocery. They handed it over to an astonished grocer, and were equally astonished to hear that the parcel contained food supplies, which had been bought and paid for by the man in the horn-rimmed glasses. Apparently the man had come by the parcel honestly, whatever might be his method of acquiring a bike. There was nothing to be done but to leave the parcel with the grocer, in case the man came back for it—which he was not, however, likely to do, considering the circumstances which had caused him to abandon it.

The juniors went into the adjoining teashop, feeling extremely pleased with themselves. Wingate's bike had cost his father twenty pounds, and it was certain that the captain of Greyfriars would be greatly relieved to see it safe again when he learned that it had been stolen. How it had been pinched was rather a mystery as yet; but the juniors could only conclude that Wingate had lent it to some friend in the Sixth who had been careless with it.

After tea the Famous Five remounted their machines to ride back to Greyfriars, and Bob rode with one hand on Wingate's machine, wheeling it by his side.

It was rather a troublesome task; but the chums of the Remove were glad that they had it to perform. They were, in fact, in rather high feather and looking forward to Wingate's relief and satisfaction when the Sunbeam was trundled safely home.

It was a cheery bunch of cyclists that arrived at Greyfriars in the falling



As the dark-skinned man almost tore the bicycle from his grasp, Bob Cherry shouted to his comrades. "Quick, you men, lend a hand—this chap's a thief!"

dusk, put up the machines in the shed, and raced across to the House just in time for calling-over.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Clue!

VENERABLE and esteemed Wingate—” began Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. Wingate of the Sixth grinned.

The captain of Greyfriars had gone to his study after calling-over, and he was a little surprised when five juniors of the Remove followed him there, and presented themselves with smiling faces in the doorway.

“Well, what’s up?” asked Wingate. “We’ve brought your bike back, Wingate!” said Bob Cherry. Wingate stared.

“My bike?” he repeated. “Yes; it’s safe in the bikeshed now,” said Harry Wharton.

“The safefulness is terrific, after the narrow and preposterous escape from estimable hands of an esteemed pincher.”

“What the dickens do you mean?” asked the captain of Greyfriars. “Did Lagden ask you to bring the bike home, or what?”

“Lagden?” repeated Wharton blankly.

“What the dickens have you been up to?” demanded Wingate. “Mr. Lagden isn’t in yet—he wasn’t present at calling-over, I noticed. Have you been playing tricks on your Form master, or what?”

“What on earth has Lagden to do with it?” asked Nugent. “We found your bike at Redclyffe—”

“Parked at the teashop—” said Johnny Bull.

“And trundled it home,” said Bob Cherry warmly. “And a jolly long way it was to trundle a jigger, I can tell you!”

“As we knew it had been pinched, and—” said Wharton, taking up the tale again.

“We had terrific expectations of seeing the gladfulness in your venerable and absurd countenance, esteemed Wingate.”

“You utter young asses!” said the Greyfriars captain. “You found my bike parked at the teashop in Redclyffe and trundled it home? You benighted little idiots! Then you’ve left Lagden to walk? He must have stopped there for tea or something—”

“Lagden? What the thump has Lagden—”

“I lent the bike to Lagden. Some young rascal has been playing tricks with his bike, ripping the tyres, and he couldn’t use it. He had to go somewhere, and I lent him my jigger.”

“Oh, my hat!”

“But—but Lagden wasn’t there!” exclaimed Nugent. “We thought you might have lent it to some Sixth Form man, and I looked in the teashop—there wasn’t any Greyfriars man there, and certainly Lagden wasn’t there, or I should have seen him.”

“Must have been there, if the bike was there!” grunted Wingate. “He went out on it, anyhow. What on earth made you think the jigger was pinched, you young asses?”

The chums of the Remove exchanged rather dismayed looks. This was not what they had expected at all.

“Look here! That bike jolly well was pinched!” exclaimed Harry Wharton. “Lagden must have left it somewhere, and that fellow pinched it—”

“What fellow?” hooted Wingate. The juniors explained all together.

Wingate listened with some impatience at first; but his expression changed when the Removites had got their story out. He whistled.

“My hat!” he said. “The man you’ve described must have been a bike-pincher, from the way he acted. I fancy Lagden must have left the jigger there—but it certainly would have been pinched before he got back if you kids hadn’t been so sharp. Dash it all, a man’s supposed to take care of a jigger when he borrows it—” Wingate broke off abruptly, remembering that it was the Removites’ Form master of whom he was speaking. “Thank you very much! There’s no doubt that you’ve saved my machine for me. Much obliged.”

And the Famous Five left the captain’s study, glad to feel that old Wingate realised, after all, that they had done him a considerable service.

“Hallo, hallo, hallo! There’s Lagden!” said Bob Cherry.

The Remove master had just come in. “Better tell him, I think,” said Harry.

“He must be feeling rather worried. It’s no joke to lose a borrowed bike.” “Yes, rather!”

Mr. Lagden did not seem to observe the juniors; but they intercepted him on his way to his study, and he stopped. He did not seem in a good humour.

“What is it?” he snapped.

“About Wingate’s bike, sir!” said Harry. “I thought we’d better tell you that we found it at Redclyffe and brought it home.”

“Indeed!”

The juniors looked curiously at Mr. Lagden. He was making a visible effort to control his ill-humour and to speak genially.

“That’s all, sir,” said Harry. “We thought you’d like to know.”

"Oh, quite! I was very much perturbed about it," said Mr. Lagden. "I left the machine in Woodend Lane for a few minutes, and it was gone when I returned for it. The thief must have taken it a long way if you found it at Reddlyffe. Please tell me how you found it."

The story was told once more.

Mr. Lagden listened attentively.

"You have acted very well, my boys," he said. "It is a great relief to me to know that the machine is safe, as Wingate so kindly lent it to me. Was the man you describe a stranger to you?"

"Quite a stranger, sir."

"You had never seen him before?"

"No, sir."

Mr. Lagden smiled—his old, pleasant smile. His good-humour seemed to be restored now.

"You would know the man if you saw him again?" he asked.

"Yes, I'm quite sure of that," said Harry. "We had a good look at him."

"The knowfulness would be terrific!"

declared the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"The rascal ought to be under lock and key," said Mr. Lagden. "But if he is a stranger in the district, no doubt he has lost no time in getting to a safe distance. You are sure you had never seen him before?"

"Yes, we're quite sure of that, sir."

"Very well. I am much obliged to you for what you have done."

Mr. Lagden passed on, and the Famous Five went along to the Rag. Billy Bunter was there, and he greeted them with a fat chuckle.

"I say, you fellows—he, he, he!—Lagden wasn't able to go out on his bike this afternoon—he, he, he!—somebody had punctured his tyres—he, he, he!"

"You fat Owl!" said Bob Cherry. "He borrowed Wingate's machine, and very nearly lost it for him."

"The lossfulness was terrific!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"I saw you fellows wheeling it in," said Vernon-Smith. "Where on earth did you pick up Wingate's jigger?"

For the third time the story was told. "Jolly lucky for Wingate!" remarked Peter Todd. "Lagden must have been a careless ass!"

"The carelessness of the esteemed ass was terrific!"

"Any news of Flip?" asked Wharton.

"We've heard that his cap was picked up at Ashford—" said Toddy.

"Oh, we've had that! Nothing since?"

"Not that I know of. That merchant Brent is mooching about the school still. Goodness knows what for."

"I say, you fellows, I told you that man was an ass!" said Billy Bunter. "He's still hanging about—as if there's anything to be found out about poor old Flip here! I've a jolly good mind to tell him it's time he got off to Ashford."

"Fathead!"

"Well, what's the good of the man mooching about the school asking fellow questions?" grunted Billy Bunter. "Just wasting time, you know."

(Continued on page 28.)

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., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

EVER read "Treasure Island"? Of course you have! Well, a Sunderland chum has just been reading it, and he is puzzled about the lines that run:

"Fifteen men on the Dead Man's Chest,
Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!"

What does it mean? he asks. Does it mean that the fifteen men were sitting on a dead man's chest, or does it mean that he had a sea-chest that was big enough to accommodate fifteen of his shipmates? As a matter of fact, chum, it means neither.

THE DEAD MAN'S CHEST

Is the name of an island in the Caribbean Sea. It is only a little island—called a "cay" in those waters—and, in the old days of pirates and buccaneers, it was a favourite place for marooning seamen. The fifteen men referred to in the verse were, apparently, the remainder of a ship's crew who were marooned on the island after their vessel had been boarded and captured by pirates. The reference to "The Dead Man's Chest" is rather puzzling, perhaps, until you realise that it is an island.

How many times have you wished that you could become

A MODERN ROBINSON CRUSOE?

Do you know that there is a man who lives a Crusoe-like existence no farther away than on an island in the Bristol Channel? His name is Lieut. H. Cox, and he is in charge of a bird sanctuary which has been established on the rocky island of Steep Holm. He lives on Steep Holm for weeks together, with no other human companion—entirely cut off from the world. Now, however, he has been given permission to establish a wireless station there, where he will be able to receive, and also to transmit messages which will keep him in touch with the outer world. I wonder what my readers would miss most if they

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were suddenly put into the position of Robinson Crusoe? Am I right in thinking that it would be their weekly MAGNET?

HAVE you ever wished you could become an explorer? Most fellows have at some time or other, so my reply to Harry Wills, of Kilmarnock, may interest you.

HE WANTS TO BECOME AN EXPLORER.

So he asks me how to set about it. Well, first of all he has got to become an expert in some particular subject, such as zoology, natural history, botany, navigation, and so on. Then he must be connected with some big museum, or scientific association, for it is the museums and scientific associations who fit out expeditions to little known parts of the world.

An expedition consists of a collection of men all of whom have a particular job. There is a leader, of course, who has generally had a great deal of experience in the handling of the native workers who go with the white men. His job is similar to that of a captain of a ship. Then there is a navigator, whose job is to find the position of the expedition each day, map out the directions they travel, work out the heights of mountains, make plans and charts, and do all that sort of work.

The rest of the members each have their particular job. One may have to study the habits of birds, trap specimens, and so on. Another attends to the animals encountered—and he is usually an old trapper or hunter. Yet another looks after the equipment and makes arrangements for its handling and shipping.

Arctic and Antarctic exploration is generally carried out by the Navy, and men who have seen service in these waters are picked for the job. The officers in charge are naval men, but a number of civilian scientists also accompany the expeditions. So if any of you wish to become explorers, you must become scientific experts first!

I HAVE managed to rake up a few more THINGS YOU'D HARDLY BELIEVE

for this week. Here they are:

The oldest Royal Family in the world is the Japanese. The present Emperor is the 124th of the same family. He is a direct descendant of Jimmu Tenno, who reigned 2,590 years ago!

A forest of solid stone is to be found in Texas, near the head of the Pasigno river. There are several hundreds of trees there, all petrified, while other trees, though partly turned to stone, are still growing!

Steel can be made to float in the air by the action of a blow-pipe which reduces it to an impalpable powder.

A caterpillar that turns into a plant is found in New Zealand. The caterpillar eats its way through the tree to the root, and then comes out of the root and dies, while another shoot of the tree immediately begins to grow out of its head. The caterpillar's body remains perfect and entire. The Maori make a colouring for tattooing out of the bodies of these caterpillars.

WELL, chums, what do you think of the above? They seem impossible, don't they? But they are all vouched for on good authority. This old earth of ours keeps springing surprises on us, doesn't it? I'll see if I can rake up a few more of these interesting facts for you next week.

In the meantime, I'd better see what next week's programme is. Here's a good start, anyway:

"WHILE GREYFRIARS SLEPT!"

By Frank Richards.

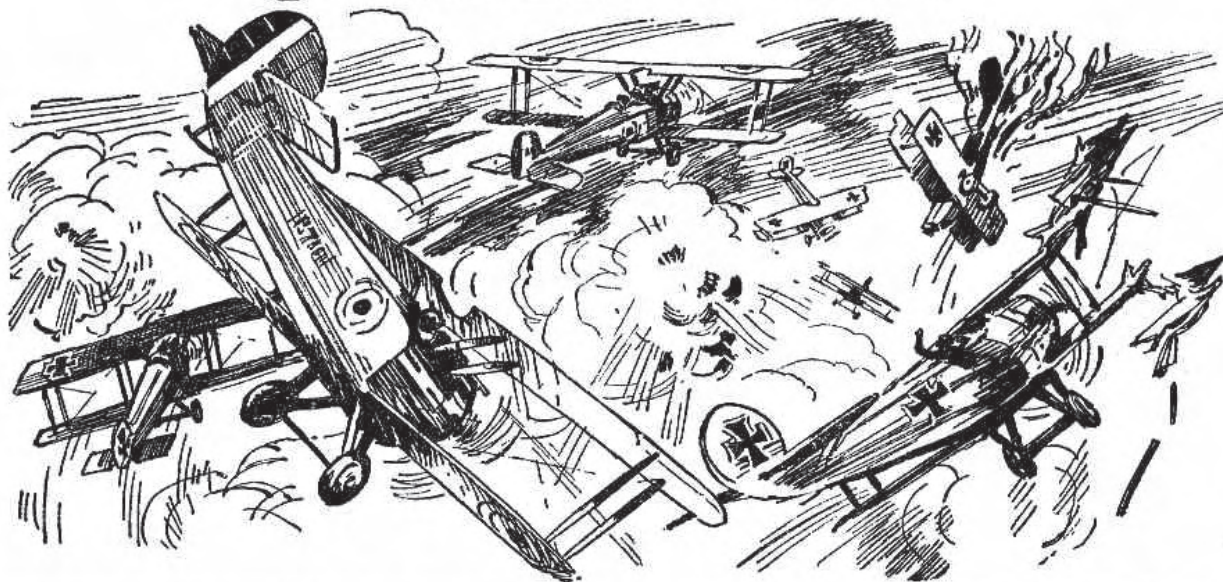
You know what to expect from Frank R. in the way of a good story, and you'll get it next week. It's a thumping good yarn, I can tell you—and Billy Bunter is the fellow who gets some of the thumping! Still, Billy deserves it, as you'll agree when you've read this latest exploit of the chums of Greyfriars.

You'll be thrilled no end when you read the next chapters of our grand new flying story, and you fellows will also tumble across some fun when you see the "full-of-smiles" issue of the "Greyfriars Herald." Jokes, limericks, prizes, and your Editor's chat, round off a really topping issue.

YOUR EDITOR,

WINGS OF WAR!

By HEDLEY SCOTT



WHAT'S GONE BEFORE!
 DURING THE STIRRING DAYS OF THE GREAT WAR THREE YOUNGSTERS, JIM DANIELS, RON GLYNN, AND BRUCE THORBURN, FIRED WITH AN ENTHUSIASM TO BECOME PILOTS, JOIN THE ROYAL FLYING CORPS AS CADETS. DURING THEIR COURSE OF TRAINING THEY FALL FOUL OF SERGEANT WILKINS, A TYRANT AND A BULLY, WHO MAKES THEIR LIVES A MISERY. UNDER GREAT PROVOCATION JIM DANIELS STRIKES SERGEANT WILKINS AND IS IMMEDIATELY PLACED UNDER ARREST. IN THE INTERVIEW THAT FOLLOWS WITH THE ADJUTANT, WHO INCIDENTALLY HAS JUST RECEIVED PAPERS FROM THE AIR MINISTRY ANNOUNCING THAT THE CADETS OF INGLESHEM AERODROME HAVE BEEN APPOINTED TO COMMISSIONED RANK, SERGEANT WILKINS IS ASKED TO OVERLOOK JIM'S OFFENCE. WILKINS REPLIES THAT JIM IS THE WORST SOLDIER HE'S EVER TRAINED.
(Now read on.)

Plain Speaking!

MAJOR COWLISHAW, the adjutant, frowned. "I disagree, sergeant." He spoke quickly. "I am not blind to your methods. To be frank, they savour too much of the German military machine—"

He saw the sergeant wince, but paid no extra special heed to it. In the months to come both Jim Daniels and the adjutant were to recall this moment with particular interest.

"Between ourselves, sergeant"—Jim almost wondered whether he was dreaming as he listened to the adjutant's dressing-down of the sergeant—"you are a bully—"

"Major—" began Wilkins, in a defiant bluster.

"We will consider ourselves off duty for the moment," continued the adjutant. "A bully, let me add, of the worst type. Quite privately I am glad that this youngster, who has proved himself a better soldier than you will ever be, reminded you in the only way that it is possible to impress people of your kidney. How the cadets of this station have endured your tyrannies without complaint is beyond me. But one fact emerges from their persecution. Each one of them has grit—real grit—or complaints would have showered in on the commanding officer."

Sergeant Wilkins glared at the major as if he would glare the life out of him. Never in all his life had he been spoken

to like this. Quite unconsciously his fist clenched.

"Now I think we know each other," wound up the major. "Don't clench your fist like that, Sergeant Wilkins, or you may be tempted to emulate Mr. Daniels! Aha!" He laughed scornfully as Wilkins brought his doubled fists in front of him in a frenzy and dropped them to his sides again. "You will appreciate how easy it is to forget Army discipline in moments of provocation!"

Jim's head was in a whirl. What a brick the major was, he told himself. Beneath that grim, iron-faced exterior he was as human as any youngster. Sergeant Wilkins, meantime, was working himself up into a passion—a passion but faintly held in check by thoughts of the Army-law he was so fond of thrusting down the necks of others.

"Major Cowlshaw," he stormed at length, "I shall complain to the commanding officer!"

"I'm afraid that won't serve you, sergeant," smiled the adjutant. "You see, the commanding officer has already complained about you."

"What?" roared Wilkins, drumming a massive fist on his equally massive chest. "Me?"

Major Cowlshaw nodded.

"Furthermore, Sergeant Wilkins, you will accept the official intimation from me that you have been sent to another unit. You will leave here to-morrow!"

His voice grew stern. "About-turn! Quick-march!"

For one second the sergeant eyed Major Cowlshaw, with a blaze of challenging defiance. Then he snapped a salute, glaring balefully at "Mr. Daniels," and departed for the door.

As his heavy steps rang along the passage the major turned to Jim. The youngster felt like jumping forward and shaking him by the hand, but something in the major's eye brought him stiffly to attention instead.

"You are a young donkey, Mr. Daniels!" snapped the adjutant. "But you are a good pilot. England has need of such pilots over there, for our casualties are heavy. You will kindly post these orders from the Air Ministry in the mess, and hold yourself in readiness for orders overseas! Dismiss!"

Like a piece of machinery, Jim's hand came to the salute. He took the official document, wheeled, and departed, wondering whether he was standing on his head or his heels.

Once outside the guard-room, his sense of dignity departed. He whooped, flung his cap in the air, himself after it, gave the sentry the shock of his life by billing him between the shoulder-blades, and sped hot-foot for the mess.

"Boys!" His voice rang shrill and eager as he flung open the door of the mess. "Boys! We're through! All twenty of us! Commissioned from

yesterday! Got to hold ourselves ready for overseas! Hurrah!"

Twenty excited youngsters, not one of them nineteen years of age, whooped and danced with glee.

"France!" roared Jim. "We'll soon be there, you fellows! And then Richthofen's Circus had better beware!" "Hurrah!" came a mighty chorus, lusty, youthful, patriotic. "France! Hip-hip!"

The gaping steward, who had served three years in the trenches from the commencement of hostilities, and was badly wounded, shook his head sadly. How little would these youngsters feel like cheering when the theory of war they had learned so thoroughly and enthusiastically became a practical measure of life and death in the war clouds of the Western Front!

"Steward!" bawled Jim, springing on to a table. "Drinks for twenty! And just for luck you can have something stronger than lemonade, if you like!"

"Good-bye, Sergeant!"

A GENTLE breeze wafted the chimes of the church clock across the Ingleshon plain.

It also carried with it the familiar tread of a sergeant's feet.

There was an irregularity about the tread which told of the owner's difficulty in keeping to a straight line. The moonbeams flickering through a short avenue of trees revealed an uncommon sight. In the lower branches of a large oak-tree a dozen young cadets were clinging like leeches. For an hour they had patiently awaited the coming of those heavy footsteps.

The fickle beams would have revealed to a very close observer a stretched rope which lay right across the path. And along that path, swaying unsteadily, came Sergeant Wilkins, all unsuspecting of the special preparations that had been made in his honour.

It had been young Thorburn's idea in the first place, consequent upon Jim's information that Sergeant Wilkins was to be drafted to another unit. This would be his last night at Ingleshon; this, perhaps, would be the last chance many of them would ever get of squaring something of the heavy account that was arraigned against him.

Being his last night at the depot, Sergeant Wilkins had betaken himself to the village inn, and had imbibed not wisely but too well of the cup that cheers. He had consumed so much as to forget his hatred or all officers and would-be officers; in fact, he was singing a song to keep himself company as he lurched towards the camp.

The first intimation he had that something was wrong was when his unsteady feet came into contact with the stretched rope.

Biff!

Sergeant Wilkins, bully, tyrant, came as pretty a purler as has ever been seen. He fell, fuming luridly, as flat as a pancake. After that his memory was not at all clear. Something—some things, to be precise, seemed to drop from the clouds like a series of avalanches.

A blanket was wrapped stifflingly round his head and deftly secured. He gurgled, he struggled, he kicked and fumed, but the avalanches persisted. Next he found himself being belaboured on a prominent portion of his anatomy with his own walking-cane. Two dozen strokes would have told him that the twelve cadets present had swiped

heartily at that tender spot twice had he been able to appreciate the number of his assailants. Alas! for Sergeant Wilkins, sight of them was denied him. His eyes saw nothing in the heavy folds of the blanket; his yells barely percolated through it. But for the pain he was experiencing, and the rough handling, Sergeant Wilkins would almost have convinced himself that the whole thing was a nightmare.

His lashing legs encountered nothing more solid than air. His yells brought him no succour. For once in his life Sergeant Wilkins felt sorry that he had made enemies for himself. But it was too late now; he was receiving a small dose—a very small dose of what he had handed out to others.

Muffled voices reached his ears. He tried to identify one—one would have been sufficient for his purpose when he got free. But the voices were unfamiliar to him, and it occurred to him that they were purposely disguised. In the Ingleshon camp there were as many as five hundred soldiers and cadets, and it was safe to say that the whole five hundred of them loathed him like poison.

Thorburn and his eleven stalwarts warmed to their work.

"The tar!" growled Thorburn. "Hand it over!"

From the shadow of the tree Jim Daniel's and Ron Glynn staggered with a refuse can filled with liquid tar.

Thorburn's gloved hands dipped a bucket into it, and then proceeded to swamp the sticky mixture over the tyrant.

"Grooooooh! Gug-gug! Mummm!" Sergeant Wilkins' gurgles came faintly through the blanket as the tar soaked through to his face and neck—and mouth.

"Get a move on, boys!" The last of the tar had been swamped over the bully, and now came the next stage.

The blanket was whipped off the sergeant's head, and then from all sides showers of feathers fell upon him. In a second he was being transformed. Gasping and panting and gurgling he gouged his eyes to rid himself of the tar and feathers; he heard the sounds of rapidly diminishing footsteps and laughter. Then he found himself alone in his misery.

In the mess twelve excited cadets regaled the others with the result of their vengeance campaign, and any moment they expected to see the tar-and-feathered apparition of the sergeant stagger into the mess to accuse them. But the evening passed off without any visit from the tyrant, and the cadets of Ingleshon learned with great glee next morning that Sergeant Wilkins had departed by the first train for his new unit.

"Good-bye, sergeant!" cried Jim Daniels tearfully, waving a handkerchief at an imaginary sergeant. "And many happy returns of the day. It's a rare pity we shall never meet again."

But in that Jim Daniels, Second Lieutenant, Royal Air Force, was far wide of the mark. He and Ron Glynn, at any rate, were destined to see quite a lot of the tyrannical sergeant "somewhere in France."

The Enemy Strikes.

THE ugly squat nose of the s.s. Rupert ploughed determinedly through the lashing waves of the Channel, her camouflaged hull rising and falling with a sickening,

monotonous regularity that had already given fifty or more luckless souls aboard her their first painful experience of seasickness.

"This is the blooming limit," grumbled Thorburn, whose boyish features were already cultivating a shade of green that matched the tossing waves.

"It's worse than that," conceded Ron Glynn. "Take your mind back, boys, to the first time the instructor showed us what stunting was like and multiply it a hundred times. Then you've underestimated it."

Jim Daniels smiled.

Of the three he was standing the rough passage from Folkestone to Boulogne the best, although his spray-lashed face was a trifle drawn and pale. For more than two hours the s.s. Rupert, fully laden with a fresh draft of fighting men for the fields of Flanders, had struggled against the elements with a bulldog-like tenacity.

"I wouldn't be a sailor for a thousand a year and a skipper's job thrown in," howled Thorburn above the beating of the wind. "Oh, why—oh, why did I have roast pork for lunch—"

He lurched as the ship canted suddenly, and was saved from a certain fall by Jim's protecting arm thrown round him.

"Hop below for a spell, old bean," advised Jim. "You'll be in good company. Look, there's a brass-hat' showing you the way!"

Thorburn grinned faintly and groped for the companion-way.

Ron and Jim decided to stick it out on deck. In each case it was their first trip of any length on the sea, and neither would admit to the other that he was feeling the ill-effects of it. The Channel was showing the worst side of her variable temper, and being no respecter of persons, was taking a heavy toll. From brigadier-generals and staff-officers, more commonly known as brass-hats by the rest of the Army, to the youngest full-blown private she was demanding her customary footing.

"How do you feel, Ron?" asked Jim, clutching at a rail for support.

"Fine!" lied Ron promptly.

"So do I," said Jim; "but I shall be thumping glad when we touch Boulogne. I'm drenched."

Ron nodded and looked down at his own brand-new uniform lugubriously. Despite the trench-coat's protection, it had lost much of its brilliance; but a sight of the embroidered wings on his breast cheered him considerably.

He was a full-blown flying-officer at last! Keen, ready and fit to take his place in the world struggle that was raging less than a hundred miles away from the plunging s.s. Rupert. One week's leave had elapsed since the memorable day that had seen the departure of Sergeant Wilkins from Ingleshon aerodrome—one crammed week of shopping, purchasing the necessary kit for Overseas, visiting relatives, being taken out and about by patriotic aunts and uncles, and being admired by young, romantic members of the fair sex.

Ron, Jim, and Thorburn had stuck together throughout. It was an understood compact between them that they would see the War out; a boyish optimism and code of comradeship that completely overlooked the horrors of War and of the toll it must take of all such compacts.



Unconscious of the preparations that had been made in his honour, Sergeant Wilkins came along the path, swaying unsteadily. Then suddenly his legs became entangled with the rope, and—Biff!—he came as pretty a purrier as has ever been seen!

Yet even in the wastes of the English Channel, storm-tossed and sullen, War was playing its part. Of a sudden there came a thunderous roar above the challenge of the storm; the ship shivered as if a giant hand had struck her; portions of the forecastle splintered and shot up towards the heavens, and the shrieks of stricken men echoed back on the wings of the storm.

"We've struck a mine!" roared Jim, clutching Ron by the arm.

Ron nodded, too appalled by the unexpected tragedy to speak even; but like Jim his first thought was for Thorburn.

Side by side the chums staggered down the companion-way. Passing them reeled a continuous line of soldiers, feverishly adjusting the tapes of their lifebelts. Above the mighty voice of the storm, which was now raging at its height, came the bellowed commands of the ship's officers as they controlled their stations and ordered out the lifebelts.

"Bruce!" roared Jim. "Where are you?"

The youthful figure of an Air Force officer reeled out from the cover of a bulkhead. Ron and Jim darted forward and seized hold of him.

"What's the rumpus?" asked Thorburn, who was still in the throes of seasickness.

"We've been mined!" explained Jim. "Front of the ship took it fair and square."

Thorburn pulled a grimace. The news did not stir him more than that, for when you are seasick there is nothing in the whole wide world that can possibly make you feel worse.

A gold-laced cap came into view. "Step lively there!" came the command. "We shall be lucky if we keep

afloat for another twenty minutes. Have you got your lifebelts properly secured?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Then get on deck!"

Supporting Thorburn between them Ron and Jim reached the deck, clutching at anything that seemed to offer support. The s.s. Rupert was sinking fast; her nose was already buried at an angle of forty degrees, and keeping a footing on the wave-swept decks was a task requiring both strength and good fortune.

Boat after boat was filled and lowered away with that orderliness and dispatch in times of emergency for which the British Navy and Merchant Service are envied up and down the seven seas. The "Tommies" and the commissioned ranks, shoulder to shoulder now, comrades in the one endeavour, awaited their turn.

The captain on the bridge gave his orders briskly. His years of experience told him that the end was near; the s.s. Rupert was settling much too fast for his liking. Suddenly the ship gave a convulsive shudder, seemed to stand up on end, and then was drawn down into the depths as steel is drawn to a magnet. Above the hissing of the steam in the sea-swamped boilers came the skipper's voice issuing his last command.

"All hands jump for it!"

Ron and Jim, with Thorburn still between them, leaped into the raging sea, striking out blindly, madly. By the narrowest of margins they missed the swirling vortex that marked the resting-place of the troopship and forged on—anywhere to be away from the overpowering suction.

Thorburn was now awake to the peril he and his chums were in. The cold sea water had done much to revive him. The overladen lifeboats were a quarter

of a mile away, and there seemed small chance of being picked up. It was then that the chums thanked the severe military training that had hardened them. For an hour they plugged on through the rising sea, reserving their strength, keeping always together.

"Stick it, Ron!" panted Jim. "Don't look so downhearted. We shall be picked up all right."

"I wasn't thinking of that," replied Ron. "I was thinking of my lovely kit. Left it behind me, you know, in the jolly old Rupert."

Thorburn and Jim had to laugh, and each promptly paid the penalty by shipping a pint or two of briny sea-water.

"Here's luck!" exclaimed Ron suddenly, and he struck out his fastest crawl stroke in the direction of a dark object that floated fifty or sixty yards away. His was the first hand to touch it, but Thorburn and Jim were only a split second behind him.

The "luck" consisted of a fairly large grating that had obviously washed away from the s.s. Rupert, for her name was discernible on it. With difficulty the chums clambered on to it.

"Steady does it, chaps," said Jim. "It'll only just keep the three of us afloat."

In shivering silence the three settled themselves gingerly to keep the balance of their improvised craft, and gazed about them.

(Ron and his chums have come face to face with the realities of war much sooner than they expected. Are these brave sons of Britain doomed to meet their end without even having a chance of coming to grips with the enemy? Boys, be sure and read next week's instalment of this powerful flying story. Every line will thrill you!)

THE HUNTED MASTER!

(Continued from page 24.)

As a matter of fact, a good many fellows, as well as Billy Bunter, were rather puzzled as to Mr. Brent's object in mooching about the school. So far as any fellow could see, there was no chance of picking up a clue to the missing fag at Greyfriars. But he was still there, and when the Remove went up to their studies for prep they passed him standing by the staircase in conversation with Mr. Twigg.

The Famous Five gathered in Study No. 1 to dispose of baked chestnuts before prep. There was a tap at the door, which they had no doubt indicated that Billy Bunter was on the trail of the chestnuts.

"Roll away, fathead!" called out Nugent, as the door opened.

"What?"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Nugent.

It was not Billy Bunter. It was Inspector Brent, of Scotland Yard, who entered the study. He gave the juniors a glare.

"Sorry, sir—thought it was Bunter—please come in!" stammered Frank.

Mr. Brent came in, with his heavy tread.

The Famous Five waited for him to speak, wondering what could have brought the detective to their study.

"I want a few words with you boys," barked Mr. Brent. "I have heard some talk about something this afternoon at Redclyffe. Please give me a full account of it."

"My only hat!" ejaculated Bob involuntarily.

To say that the juniors were surprised would be putting it mildly. They fairly blinked at Mr. Brent in their astonishment. Evidently the most trifling matter did not escape the detective's attention, and no doubt that was as it should be. But what interest he could possibly take in a trifling incident like this was a mystery.

"I am waiting!" barked Mr. Brent.

"Oh! Certainly!" gasped Wharton.

"We'll tell you with pleasure, sir."

For the fourth time the story was told.

Mr. Brent kept his steady stare fixed on the juniors, in the disconcerting way he had; while they told the tale. He did

not interrupt them once. But when they had finished, he barked:

"Tell me again what was in the parcel the man fastened on the machine."

"Food, sir."

"What sort of food?"

"All sorts—bread and ham and tongue and cold beef and so on. Solid sort of stuff," said Harry. "Looked as if he was laying in a good supply for some reason."

"Very good! Thank you!" barked Mr. Brent.

He left the study, leaving the chums of the Remove staring at one another blankly.

"Well, my hat!" said Bob Cherry. "He can't be thinking of going after the

Flip is concealingly hidden at no great distance—"

"Flip?" repeated the juniors.

"And wherever the absurd Flip may be, it is terrifically necessary to provide him with grubfulness—"

"Inky!" gasped Wharton.

"And it may have occurred to the detective's powerful and idiotic brain that the excellent bike-thief was taking the absurd grub to a kidnapped and imprisoned person."

"Great Scott!"

The juniors stared blankly at the Nabob of Bhanipur. It was rather a startling idea.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Is that what the jolly old detective has got in his nut?"

Johnny Bull whistled.

"If that's it, and if there's anything in it," he said, "it was the kidnapper himself that we handled at Redclyffe!"

"I—I wonder—" said Nugent slowly.

"Inky, old man, you think—" exclaimed Wharton.

Hurree Singh nodded.

"The thoughtfulness is terrific, my esteemed chums! That is what the ludicrous and absurd detective has in his excellent mind, and my own preposterous idea is that it is a ridiculous clue!"

The chums of the Remove looked at one another. It seemed rather a wild theory—rather as if Inspector Brent was catching at straws, if that, indeed, was what he had in his mind. But if that was not it, it was difficult to guess what he had there.

"Well," said Harry Wharton at last, "if that's it, and if—if there's anything in it, Brent may have got hold of a clue. One thing's jolly certain—that Johnny from Scotland Yard knows what he's about, and if anybody is going to find poor old Flip, Brent will find him."

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

The Famous Five were all agreed on that. And—had they only known it—the same thought was passing through the mind of Mr. Lagden, the new master of the Remove—alias "Jimmy the One."

THE END.

(It looks as though Inspector Brent's hot on the trail, and that Lagden's capture is only a matter of time now! On no account, chums, miss: "WHILE GREYFRIARS SLEPT!" the next magnificent yarn in this great series.)

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bike thief, surely! That isn't a job for Scotland Yard!"

"He seemed more interested in the parcel than in the bike or the bike-thief," said Nugent. "Blessed if I know why!"

"I suppose it's rather odd, a man carting about a supply of food on a bike!" said Wharton. "But—"

"Oh, my esteemed hat!" ejaculated Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh suddenly.

Four pairs of eyes turned on the nabob at once.

"Give it a name, Inky!" said Bob, with a grin. "What have you got in your old inky noddle now?"

The nabob's eyes were gleaming.

"My ridiculous chums," he said, "I have already remarkably observed that probably the absurd Brent believes that

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Greyfriars Herald

Edited by HARRY WEAFTON, F.G.F.
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IS BUNTER A HYPNOTIST?

Strange Compelling Influence

FOURTH-FORMER'S OBEDIENCE

In Bunter a hypnotist? This question is being asked on all hands in Remove and Upper-Fourth circles.

Something ought to be done about the hypnotic powers, before we fall all victims of his compelling gaze. So far, fortunately, Angel, the gay dog of the Fourth, seems the only chap affected, but you can't tell how soon Bunter is going to start on others!

Bunter's hypnotic influence was first seen one day last week, when Angel called on him in a formal way, intending to stop up the holes in his trousers. He had a good job to do, but he missed. Instead of doing the mopping duty, Angel suddenly became very quiet, and came out of Bunter's study trembling.

"THE GREYFRIARS COMET"

Rival Paper Fizzles Out, But—
EDITOR FISH STILL SMILES

All records in American hustle were smashed this week by Fisher T. Fish, who, entering Transatlantic gentlemen succeeded in starting a rival paper to the Herald, which died before it was even born.

The new paper, which took the name of the Greyfriars Comet, was launched with a flourish of trumpets, at a meeting in the Bag. Fishy, addressing the meeting said he guessed it was time Greyfriars had some healthy competition in the hoosierap line. He reckoned he was the guy to start it. He guessed the more intelligent section of the Remove were sick of being dominated by Wharton and his crew. He saw an excellent chance to get ahead, and he calculated that a real, live hoosierap would soon wipe the Herald "out of existence."



Young journalists had been turned down by the Big Stone on the "Herald" staff. He guessed he wasn't that kind of a guy; no, sir! He'd show the "Herald" how far wrong they'd been, by printing all manuscripts sent to him which had pre-

appointed contributors to the "Herald" greeted this promise, Fishy holding up his hand for silence, said that,

CONJURER IN COURT

"Gold Ticker" Tragedy

COUNSEL'S DRAMATIC REVELATION

(Before Mr. Justice Vernon-Smith, in the Common-room Bench Division.)

Mr. Skimmer, in a dramatic revelation of a case in the Remove Court of Justice yesterday.

Harold Skimmer sued Thomas Brown for £19 18s. 11d., the value of a solid-gold watch, irreparably damaged by the said Brown in the course of a conjuring trick.

Mr. Skimmer, who conducted his own case, said that on the impetuous of January last, he attended a variety performance in the Bag, which included a conjuring act by defendant, playing under his stage name of Marvoglio, the Human Miracle.

After executing a number of card tricks, Marvoglio alias Tom Brown, took Skimmer on the witness stand, and proceeded to remove Mr. Skimmer's watch, wearing his gold half-number, handkerchief, and hit it a number of blows with a heavy mallet.

Mr. Skimmer: "Yes, my lord—there's the mallet. Perhaps you'd like to try it on your nappy?" He me to try it on one of the junior counsel. Mr. Skimmer accordingly demonstrated on Squiff, and after the latter had been carried out unconscious, went on with his case.

He alleged that on unwrapping the watch, Marvoglio discovered there was only one small point he wished to make before he sat down. That point was, that as the expenses in connection with the first issue were so enormous, he would have to ask such contributors to pay for the privilege of having their stuff printed, as the usual advertising rates. This money would be repaid, together with the printed form, to the contributors, as soon as the "Greyfriars Comet" was in a position to pay a dividend.

It sounded a genuine enough offer, and a good many fellows accepted. Fishy had quite a busy time at the close of the meeting, receiving manuscripts and writing out receipts.

Mr. Justice Vernon-Smith, delivering judgment, said he had no hesitation in awarding judgment in favor of the respondent, Mr. Skimmer, who was entitled to a solid-gold watch, with its case, and he would be kicked round the Court by the police.

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"CAT'S AWAY" CLUB

Vernon-Smith's New Venture

Incidents in other Forms bear sounds of revelry coming from the Remove Form room during class, let them not be alarmed. It'll probably be merely a session of Vernon-Smith's brand-new creation—the "Cat's Away" Club.



Originality is Smithy's long-suit, but he certainly has excelled himself this time! The "Cat's Away" Club meets only in the Remove Form-room during any temporary absence of the Form master or whoever else happens to be in charge.

So far, the Form master hasn't absented himself from class and the club entered into its work. The only member who has taken part in the Remove Form master away for ten minutes, and so what happens, then? The club regalia, consisting of Black masks, skull-cups, nap-poles, etc., is

tricked away in a cupboard at the back of the Form-room, the president and founder has written out his opening speech, and the hon. sec. has his minute-book ruled for use. The club you'll waste much time on speeches and minutes, though, once it gets on the move. Most of its time will be spent in the revival and patching up of the club's regalia, and in patching up the desks, ink-pallets and so on.

Guards will be posted on the door during the club's session, and we bet he any stranger who tries to enter the secret portal without giving the password for the day.

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CHOOSING A STUDY

Advice to the Inexperienced
By A PESSIMIST

If the study window faces the east, choose a study.

I should have said, you study into it, I don't need to, myself! I've had experience!

In the first place, choose a small room; the smaller it is, the less there'll be to look after.

Make sure that it's dark and dingy and dismal; and that it's dark and dingy; so long as it's dark and dingy, it's all right.

See, you'll have a rough-hewn, and impossible of holding a fire. You'll freeze when it's cold, but you'll have the satisfaction of knowing you're saving coal.

The study cupboard must be one without a lock, so that Bunter won't be put to bother faint for hours of food while you're out. Well, dear reader, these are the principle points to bear in mind. Interesting, aren't they?

Some fellows might advise you to look out for something a little better than what I've described. But what I've described is what you'll jolly well get, anyway! So that's that!

Peter Todd, Lawyer (Certified), offers his services to Junior Commons from Thursday, Dorm King College, in the Bag. He has a large number of articles, also, on the subject of "How to Wield an Ash Plant," and other modern languages. Export on Chinese and other modern languages. Export on Chinese and other modern languages. Salary: 1s an hour, or 1s. 0d. half-hour. Apply: Box 99, Greyfriars Herald, D. EMPLOYMENT BUREAU.