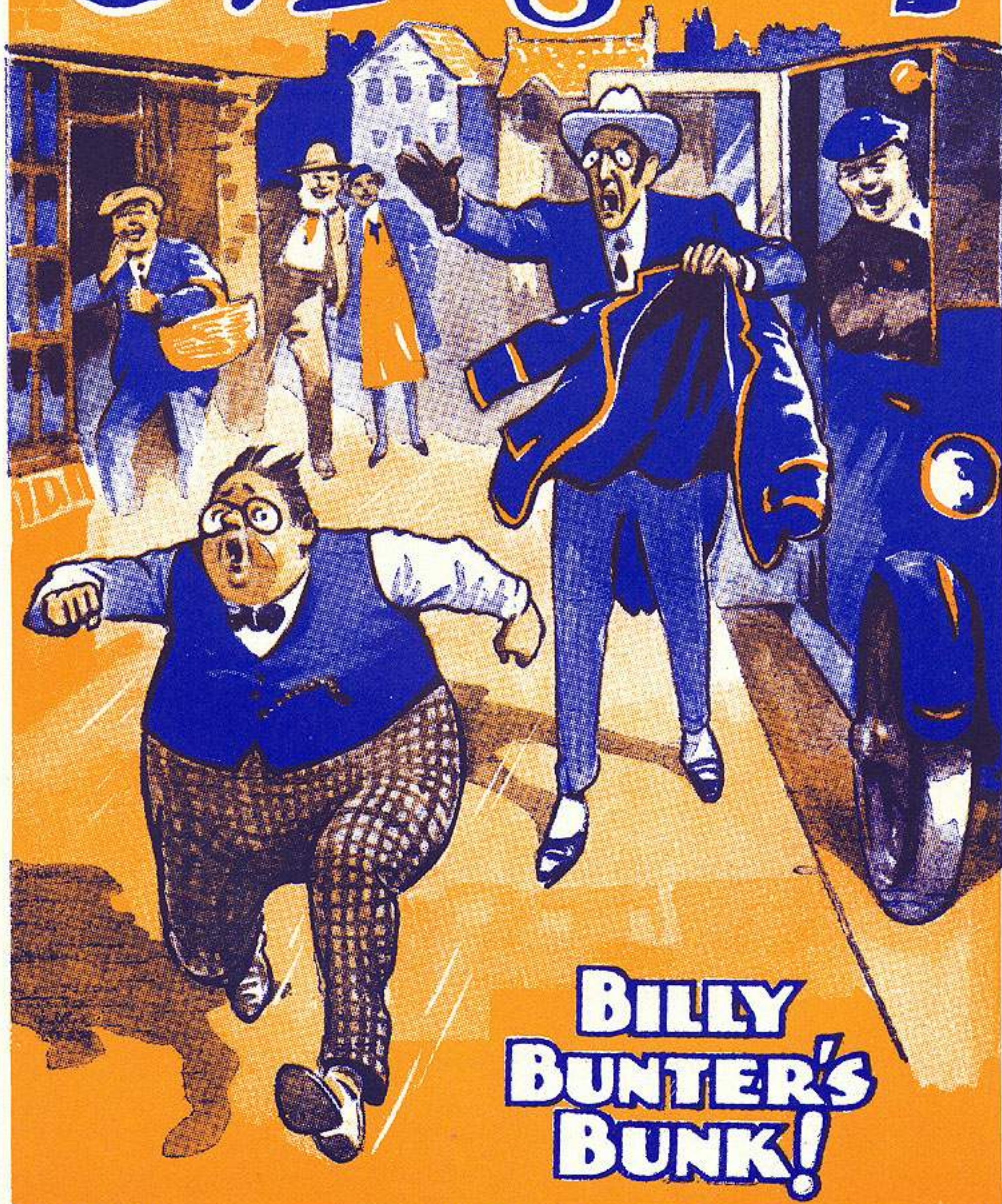


Amazing Antics of Fattest and Funniest Schoolboy on Record!

The Magnet ^{2^D}



**BILLY
BUNTER'S
BUNK!**



COME INTO the OFFICE, BOYS - AND GIRLS!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of the "Magnet," The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped, addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

OWING to pressure of space the last few weeks, my chat has been somewhat crowded out. Now, with a full page at my disposal, I intend to make the most of it.

You've all heard the old saying: "An apple a day keeps the doctor away!"—haven't you? Well, this week, strange to say, one of my reader-chums, George Groves (of Littlehampton), writes to say that he hasn't eaten an apple for five years, yet he's as fit and well as any fellow could wish to be. "The only tonic I ever take," so George goes on to say, "is the good old MAGNET!" And George is not a bad judge—what? Believe it or not, chums, when I have a fit of the "blues," I settle myself comfortably in a chair, and read the next Frank Richards yarn. Then, hey presto!—all's well again.

Take, for instance, our present series of circus yarns. Who could help smiling at the amusing and amazing antics of Billy Bunter? And what a cute move of his it was to dodge innumerable lickings by seeking refuge at Muccolini's Circus! There are certainly no flies on our "Billy." The next yarn in this super series, entitled:

"FROM SCHOOL TO CIRCUS!"

will absolutely send you into fits of laughter. Having given Marco, the famous lion-tamer, the mistaken impression that he is a real plucked 'un, Billy Bunter has a wonderful chance of throwing his weight about—and our tame porpoise is not the fellow to let such chances like the sun-beams pass him by!

This grand new series promises to be such a record-breaker, chums, that I have persuaded Frank Richards to burn the midnight oil and write longer stories. Commencing the week after next—in our issue dated July 25th—The MAGNET will contain

COVER TO COVER

stories of Harry Wharton & Co., the chums of Greyfriars. Isn't this just stunning news—what?

The "Greyfriars Herald," of course, will continue to appear in our centre pages, and in addition to the contributions of the boys of Greyfriars, there will be some really pithy paragraphs written by Marjorie Hazeldene & Co., of Cliff House School, which should give an added interest to our vast number of girl readers. This supplement still maintains an immense popularity, and most deservedly, too! Harry Wharton & Co. have done their best to amuse you, and being boys themselves, they know just how a supplement should be run. Well, now the girls have got a chance as well!

By way of a change, we'll have

A FEW BRAIN-TEASERS!

1. A hiker came to six cross-roads. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,482.

He wanted to reach a certain town, but at the cross-roads he found the signpost was blown down. As there was no passer-by to ask the way, how did the hiker find out which road to take to get to the town he wanted?

2. How long is a piece of string?
3. What is the opposite of "Not in"?
4. If you were a member of the police force and during the execution of your duty you found a taxicab driver gagged and bound to some iron railings, while his assailant broke open his taximeter, would you charge the assailant with theft or robbery with violence?
5. How far can a dog run into a wood?
6. It's in the middle of water—yet completely dry. What is it?

For the answers to these teasers, see end of chat.

GEORGE HODGSON, of Cheltenham, is one of my lucky readers. He tells me that he is going to spend a holiday cruising, this summer, and in the course of the cruise he will cross the Equator. He asks me to tell him something about

"CROSSING THE LINE."

Why do sailors dress-up as Neptune and his court, and carry out an elaborate ceremony of "initiating" victims who have never before crossed the Equator? This is one of the oldest superstitions of the sea, and dates from the very earliest days.

In those days sailors believed that Neptune was actually the god of the sea, and that the Equator was the centre of his domain. They imagined that it was necessary, when "crossing the line," to make a sacrifice to Neptune. The old superstition died out, but the custom has been kept up to this day. Nowadays, it is a very interesting and jolly ceremony. Sailors dressed-up as Neptune, his wife, his court, his barber, and his policemen "come aboard" the ship. The policemen round up everyone who has not previously crossed the line. The victims are then "lathered" with a special composition, shaved with hoop-iron, and then thrown into a bath where they are ducked by the court, who are generally called "bears."

I may tell you that Neptune doesn't get off scot-free himself. When the business of initiating the victims has been carried out, the sea-god and his court are promptly slung into the bath themselves, and soundly ducked by their victims!

A little while ago, I met a sailor who had been

HUNDREDS OF TIMES ACROSS THE LINE!

He had crossed it so many times, in fact, that it was impossible for him to keep count of the number. This was how it happened:

During the War a German commerce raider broke through our northern patrol lines, and made off to the South Atlantic. British cruisers were sent down to establish

patrol lines in an endeavour to pick up traces of the raider. One particular cruiser was detailed to patrol right on the very line of the Equator. But she did not cruise in an ordinary easterly or westerly direction. She "zigzagged" from side to side on her course. The result was that every hour she crossed the Equator several times. And, as this cruiser was on patrol there for many weeks, you can see that it would take a great deal of working out to discover exactly how many times she had crossed the line. And yet, on the other hand, there are sailors who have spent all their lives at sea, and have never crossed the Equator once!

I will say this, though—one needn't cross the Equator to get a copy of our companion paper, "The Gem," in which are appearing the early stories of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars! In this week's bumper issue you will read how that popular character, Hurree Janset Ram Singh, the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur, made his advent at Greyfriars, and how he taught Bulstrode the bully of the Remove, just where to get off! You will also learn how "Inky" became associated with Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, and Bob Cherry, which led up to the forming of the Famous Four. If you are not already reading these tip-top stories, you should start doing so without delay. Pay your newsagent a visit and get a copy of "The Gem" to-day!

NOW, just to finish off my chat, here are a few items I have collected for you regarding

THIS WEIRD WORLD OF OURS.

Where Caged Birds are Taxed. Owners of birds in cages in Changsu, China, have to pay a tax of 1s. 6d. per bird. The money is to be used for purchasing aeroplanes for the defence of China.

A Frontier that is to Become a Park! The Governments of the United States and Mexico propose to set aside one and a half million acres of land on both sides of the frontier, as an international park. It will contain some of the finest country on the American continent.

Human Life Kept in Cold Storage! This is the claim made by an American professor. He says that it will soon be possible to keep human beings in cold storage for as long as two hundred years. Then they will be revived, like super Rip Van Winkles!

Waiting for a Message from Mars. An amateur scientist in South London has picked up mysterious wireless messages which, he claims, can come from no terrestrial source. He believes that people on the planet Mars are trying to get into contact with the earth!

The Soldier who Lives at Sea. A retired Army officer has hit upon a novel way of living. He spends all his time as a passenger, travelling between Australia and England. He has asked the shipping company to reserve his cabin for the rest of his life!

Here are the answers to the "teasers" I gave you earlier on in my chat:

1. The hiker knew the town from which he had come. He simply lifted up the signpost, pointed the arm bearing that name in the direction from which he had come—and the other arms then pointed in their proper directions! Simple, isn't it?
 2. Twice as long as the distance from the end to the centre, of course!
 3. In. You surely never thought it was "Out"!
 4. Neither. There is no money in a taximeter.
 5. To the middle only. After that, he's running out!
 6. T (Tea).
- And that's all for this week, chums. Meet you all again, next week!

YOUR EDITOR.

BILLY BUNTER'S BUNK!

By FRANK RICHARDS



The Second Yarn in Our Uproariously Funny Circus Series, featuring HARRY WHARTON & CO., the World-Famous Chums of Greyfriars.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Charge!

B UZZ!"

"Bunk!"

Billy Bunter heeded neither injunction.

He did not buzz, and he did not bunk. He stepped into Study No. 1 in the Remove, shut the door after him quickly, and stood gasping for breath.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent gave him a glare.

They were working under pressure in Study No. 1.

It was not a time usually devoted to work in a study, being the interval between dinner and afternoon school. And it was a hot July afternoon, when no fellow could possibly want to be indoors if he could possibly get out. But it could not be helped.

Harry Wharton, sitting at the table, was writing lines at express speed. Frank Nugent, sitting on the table, was reading them aloud to him, to save time as he wrote. On the table lay a cricket bat, which Harry Wharton was much more anxious to handle than the pen. There was time to put in some cricket before the bell rang for class. But a hundred lines for Loder stood in the way. Wharton was getting them out of the way as fast as he could. Moments were precious, and interruptions were not wanted.

"I say, you fellows——" began Bunter breathlessly.

"Shut up!"

"But I say——"

"Get out!"

"Likely, with that beast Temple of the Fourth hunting for me!" said Billy Bunter. "I'm not sure I dodged him. If he spotted me on the stairs, he will be after me. I say——"

"Shut up!" howled Frank Nugent. "Vix e conspectu Sicula——"

"What the dickens are you sticking in this study for?" asked Bunter. "I never expected to find you here."

"Stay and be flogged by the Head! No, a thousand times no!" says Billy Bunter, the porpoise of the Greyfriars Remove. "I'm for the circus-ring, where I can be a big noise and a great gun!"

Frowsting about indoors in this weather——"

"—telluris in altum——" went on Nugent.

Wharton's pen raced.

"I say——"

"Will you shut up?" howled the captain of the Remove. "You can stick there if you like, if you keep quiet. I've got to get these lines done for Loder of the Sixth."

"Slacker!" said Bunter. "Loder gave you those lines yesterday. You had lots of time yesterday——"

"Shut up, you burbling chump! Dry up, you screeching owl! Give your jawbone a rest, you burbling bandersnatch!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"—vela dabant læti——" went on Nugent.

"I say, if that beast Temple roots me out in this study, will you chaps handle him?" asked Bunter. "It's a bit thick for a Fourth Form cad to chase a Remove man up to the studies. He makes out——"

"Quiet!"

"He makes out that I bagged his ticket for Muccolini's Circus the other day, and he wants me to pay him for it. He says he's going to kick me every time he sees me till I square——"

"Shut up!"

"Of course, I'd pay for the ticket if I had it. I've told Temple that I never saw him drop it in the quad, and never picked it up. Besides, how was I to know that it was his ticket? His name wasn't on it."

Harry Wharton ceased to scribble, and gave the fat Owl of the Remove a concentrated glare across the study table.

"You blithering bandersnatch," he hooted. "I've got to get these lines done for Loder. They ought to have been handed in yesterday——"

"You shouldn't be so jolly lazy!" said Bunter. "Never put off till tomorrow what you can do to-day, old chap."

That was sound advice. But it was not of much use to a fellow who had

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,482.

put off till to-day what he ought to have done yesterday. It often happened that lines were put off till the latest possible moment—especially in bright summer weather, when fellows had so very many things to occupy their time.

Harry Wharton was well aware that it would have been judicious to get that "impot" done at once, especially when he was dealing with so unpleasant a prefect as Gerald Loder, the bully of the Sixth. Nevertheless, the lines had remained unwritten; and now Loder had caught him, going down to the cricket, and sent him back to the House to write them. Bunter's advice was sound, but it was useless, and it was also exasperating.

"If you don't shut up," said the captain of the Remove, "I'll buzz the inkpot at you. Loder's given me half an hour to get this rot done—and do you think I want him to come after me and give me six instead?"

"Well, I'm not stopping you!" said Bunter. "But I think you fellows might stand by a chap if a Fourth Form man butts in and—"

Harry Wharton grasped the inkpot. "Are you shutting up?" he roared. "Beast!"

Billy Bunter shut up. Shutting up was not his long suit. It was said in the Greyfriars Remove that Bunter had discovered the secret of perpetual motion, and exemplified the same with his fat chin. But he did not want the inkpot, so at last he shut up.

"—et spumas salis aere ruebant—" went on Nugent, and Harry Wharton's pen raced again.

He was working against time, for the half-hour was nearly up. Not only did he want to get down to cricket before class, but he did not want the bully of the Sixth to come inquiring after those lines.

Any other Greyfriars prefect would have given a fellow a chance, but not Loder. Loder had a special down on Study No. 1, and was not likely to miss the least excuse for handling his official ashplant.

Nugent rattled on, and Wharton's pen raced; and Billy Bunter grunted, and refrained from further remarks.

He listened anxiously at the door.

He was sure—almost sure—that he had dodged that beast, Cecil Reginald Temple of the Fourth Form. But he dreaded to hear the sound of the avenger's footsteps. Temple of the Fourth seemed quite annoyed about the loss of that ticket for the circus. Bunter would not have minded that, had not Temple's annoyance found expression in kicking the fat Owl who had bagged his ticket. Bunter minded that very much indeed.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter suddenly.

"Shut up!"

"I can hear somebody—"

"Quiet!"

"I say, if it's Temple—"

"Do you want the inkpot?"

"Beast!"

Bunter shut up again. Wharton's little worries, and the possibility of "six" from the prefect's ashplant, did not bother Bunter at all. What worried Bunter was the possibility of being run down by the angry and indignant Fourth Former and kicked along the Remove passage. Having used Temple's ticket for the circus, Bunter was willing to let the whole matter drop. Temple seemed determined not

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,482.

to let it drop. After the feast came the reckoning.

"He—he—he's coming!" groaned Bunter.

Footsteps came along the Remove passage from the stairs. They might have been any fellow's footsteps—but Bunter dreaded that they were Temple's.

He gave the chums of the Remove an appealing blink through his big spectacles. But they were absolutely indifferent to Bunter's woes. Nugent read out lines, and Wharton wrote them down, both going strong. Neither did they see any reason why Bunter should not be kicked. Bagging another fellow's ticket for the circus was asking for it, and it was only fair and reasonable for the Owl of the Remove to receive that for which he asked.

"Beasts!" hissed Bunter.

There was no help from the captain of the Remove or his chum. And the footsteps were drawing nearer. If they stopped at Study No. 1—

In sheer desperation, Billy Bunter grabbed the cricket bat from the table. Twice that day already had the indignant Temple kicked him—once in morning break, once after dinner. A third application of boot-leather to his tight trousers was altogether too much. The worm will turn! Bunter did not perhaps regard himself as a worm—but he turned!

Grasping the cricket bat by the handle with both fat hands, Bunter posted himself just inside the door—ready to charge!

If the footsteps passed on up the passage, well and good. If they stopped at Study No. 1, Bunter was cornered—and the worm was going to turn!

A sudden charge with the cricket bat the instant Temple opened the door would do the trick.

Any fellow suddenly charged in the waistcoat with the business-end of a cricket bat would be out of action for a time—at least long enough for a hunted Owl to scud and seek safety in flight!

Bunter's fat mind was made up! It was that—or kicking! It was going to be that—and that was that!

He grasped the bat, standing at the "ready," with his eyes gleaming through his spectacles. If that door opened—

The footsteps stopped! The door opened—

Bunter charged!

Crash!

Bang went the end of the bat into a waistcoat, quite according to plan. Back went the recipient thereof, staggering across the passage, with a wild and winded gurgle. He sat down, with a bump! He gasped!

So did Bunter!

For one single second Billy Bunter stood blinking in horror at Loder of the Sixth, sitting spluttering. It was not Temple of the Fourth! It was Loder of the Sixth! It was not a wrathful Fourth Former after Bunter! It was a Sixth Form prefect after Wharton! And that Sixth Form prefect sat in the passage, clasping both hands to his waistcoat, gurgling horribly.

One blink Bunter gave him.

Then he flew!

Gurgle, gurgle, gurgle!

The horrid sound died away behind Billy Bunter, as he went down the Remove staircase three steps at a time.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bad for Bunter!

MR. QUELCH frowned.

If there was one fault that the Remove master disliked more than another in his Form, it was unpunctuality.

Quelch was always on time himself: to the second. He expected the same of others. Needless to say, he was often disappointed.

Nobody disappointed him oftener than Billy Bunter.

Even Lord Mauleverer was not quite so lazy, dilatory, and unpunctual as the fat Owl. Bunter easily held the record for being late for class. Now, on this warm July afternoon, he was late again—later than usual.

The Remove were all in their places—except Bunter. Henry Samuel Quelch was taking them in Roman history. Bunter was losing the chance of acquiring some valuable knowledge of the early Roman emperors. He was not likely to miss it. But Quelch missed Bunter—which was what mattered.

Some of the fellows wondered where Bunter was, and what he fancied he was up to, when Roman history had been going on for a quarter of an hour—minus Bunter.

Lots of fellows would have liked to spend that afternoon outside the Form-room. It was glorious July sunshine without—dusky and a little stuffy within. A pull on the Sark, a knock at the nets, or a visit to the circus on Courtfield Common, would have beaten Roman emperors hollow as an entertainment.

But in this weary world, fellows cannot always do as they like—and the Remove were in, not out; except Bunter. Bunter, it seemed, was giving himself a little holiday.

If he was enjoying it, the expression on Quelch's face hinted that he would not enjoy what was to follow.

Quelch's face grew grimmer and grimmer. When the Form-room clock indicated that twenty minutes of the history hour had elapsed, Quelch suddenly dropped Roman emperors, and referred to Bunter.

"Wharton!" He addressed Wharton, as head boy. "Do you know why Bunter has not come in?"

"No, sir!" answered Harry.

"Do you know where he is?"

"No, sir!"

Wharton and Nugent had been the last to see Bunter. But they had not seen him since he had scooted past the gasping Loder, and vanished down the Remove staircase. Since that time, Bunter had been understudying the coy violet, and keeping in quiet seclusion—where, nobody knew. But Wharton and Nugent could guess that he was keeping out of the way of Loder of the Sixth.

Wharton wondered whether, deep in some hiding-place, the scared Owl had failed to hear the bell for class. Anyhow, he had not reappeared.

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"Does any boy here know where Bunter is?" he asked.

Nobody knew.

Grimmer grew the brow of Henry Samuel Quelch. Roman history was resumed. Five minutes later, the door of the Form-room opened and Billy Bunter rolled in.

All eyes were fixed on Bunter at once.

The fat junior gave Quelch a stealthy blink through his big spectacles, and trod softly towards his place. Perhaps he hoped to insinuate himself quietly

into the Form, without drawing his Form-master's attention.

If so, that hope proved delusive. Quelch's voice came like the bark of a startled watch-dog.

"Bunter!"
"Oh! Yes, sir! I—I hope I'm not late!" gasped Bunter.

"Hopeful nature, Bunter's!" whispered Skinner to Vernon-Smith; and the Bounder grinned.

"You hope you are not late, Bunter!" thundered the Remove master. "You are twenty-five minutes late, or nearly."

"Oh, sir! Sorry, sir! I—I couldn't help it!" gasped Bunter. "I—I was—was waiting, sir—"

"Waiting?" repeated Mr. Quelch blankly.

I—I was too far away to hear it when I heard it, sir—"

"What?"
"I—I mean, when I didn't hear it, sir!"

Mr. Quelch picked up a cane from his desk.

"You will bend over that form, Bunter."

"Oh lor'!"
Whack!

"Wow!"
"Now go to your place!" said Mr. Quelch, frowning.

Bunter went to his place. He wriggled as he sat down. Still, he was not dissatisfied. He would have wriggled a great deal more, he knew, if he had fallen in with Loder of the Sixth.

Quelch to keep him in, instead of whopping him for unpunctuality.

However, Quelch had whopped him, and he was not kept in; and when the clock indicated that the history hour was up Bunter was booked to leave the Form-room with the rest.

Mr. Quelch dismissed his Form, and sat at his high desk, with a pile of papers before him. He was going through those papers before he left the Form-room himself.

The Remove marched out. In the broad corridor outside, Billy Bunter looked this way and that way, like Moses of old. But the Sixth were not out yet, and the coast was clear—so far as Gerald Loder was concerned. In other respects, it was not; for Mr. Capper had already dismissed the



Loder reached out to grasp a fat shoulder, as Billy Bunter made a jump to bolt. Squash! Hardly knowing what he did in his alarm and terror, the Owl of the Remove slammed the jam tart in Loder's face. It squashed there, over the prefect's features. "Urrrrgh!" gurgled Loder. "Why, I—I—I'll—urrgh! Gurrgh!"

"I—I mean—" stammered Bunter.
"What do you mean, Bunter?"

"I—I mean, the Sixth have only just gone in, sir—"

"The Sixth?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir, and—and—I—I—I mean—that is—I—I never heard the bell, sir. That's what I meant to say, sir!"

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes glittered at the fat Owl. The Sixth Form had gone to their Form-room that afternoon later than the Remove. But that had nothing to do with Bunter—so far as Quelch knew.

Why Bunter should have waited till the Sixth were gone in was quite a mystery—though it was a mystery to which Wharton and Nugent had the clue. Loder, of course, had gone in with the rest of the Sixth; and Bunter had waited till the coast was clear before heading for the Remove-room.

"I—I never heard the bell, sir!" stammered Bunter, blinking uneasily at his Form-master's thunderous brow. "I—I was down at the nets, sir, and

He had escaped Loder, so far. After that awful mistake at the door of Study No. 1 in the Remove, Loder had been two or three minutes getting his second wind before he could start in pursuit of Bunter. Bunter had not wasted a second, in those two or three minutes.

The fat Owl had parked himself in a far, secluded corner, till he was certain that the Sixth had gone in. Now he was safe in his Form-room. He was almost the only fellow in the Remove who was glad to be there, that sunny afternoon. It was true that he was not keen on Roman history, or any other kind of knowledge. But he was safe from Loder.

For the first time in his fat career, Billy Bunter regretted that there was only one hour of school on that particular afternoon. He was by no means anxious to quit the shelter of the Form-room. He would have preferred history with Quelch, or even maths with Lascelles, to a meeting with Loder of the Sixth. He would have preferred

Fourth; and Temple of that Form was waiting at the corner—Bunter could guess why.

"I say, you fellows, hold on!" gasped the dismayed Owl. "I say—"

Harry Wharton & Co. came to a halt. Hitherto they had seen no reason why Temple of the Fourth should not take the value of his lost circus ticket out of Bunter in kicking. But, considering what the hapless Owl had coming to him from Loder of the Sixth, they decided that he required no more from Cecil Reginald.

"Waiting for you, Bunter!" said the dandy of the Fourth agreeably. "Are you squaring for that ticket you pinched?"

"Oh, really, Temple—" Bunter backed round the Famous Five.

"Chuck it, Temple, old bean!" said Harry Wharton. "Bunter's got Loder of the Sixth after him—"

"Blow Loder!" answered Temple.

"Don't you think Bunter's had enough?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Not at all!"

"Loder's going to skin him!" said Nugent.

"More power to his elbow."

"My esteemed and idiotic Temple," remonstrated Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Will you fellows get out of the way?" asked Temple.

"Shift us!" suggested Johnny Bull.

"Now, look here, Temple," said the captain of the Remove, "that benighted ass banged Loder in the bread-basket with a cricket bat, and Loder will skin him alive. So you can let him off—see?"

"I'm going to kick him."

"You won't let him off?"

"No!" roared Temple.

"Sit on him!" said Harry.

The next moment Cecil Reginald Temple was whirling in the grasp of five pairs of hands. A moment more and he was down on the corridor floor, spluttering for breath, with Bob Cherry standing on his legs, and Johnny Bull sitting on his chest.

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

"Cut the cackle and beat it!" said the captain of the Remove.

Billy Bunter promptly beat it.

Temple heaved and struggled and roared. But he heaved and struggled and roared in vain. The Famous Five had quite decided that Bunter had enough coming to him without any from Temple. Also, there was a certain amount of harmless and necessary entertainment in pinning Cecil Reginald to the floor. The dandy of the Fourth was very particular about his clothes, and they were getting rather dusty now.

"Will you leggo?" yelled Temple.

"Will you gerroff?"

"Keep still, old bean!" said Bob.

"How can I stand on your legs if you keep on wriggling like that?"

"Yurrrrrggh! Gerroff!"

"Keep still, fathead! With all thy faults I love thee still!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gerroff! I'll—I'll—yoop!—I'll—"

The Remove Form door opened, and Mr. Quelch glanced out.

"What—" he began.

Five juniors vanished down the corridor like five ghosts at cock-crow. Temple, breathless and dusty, picked himself up and tottered after them. Mr. Quelch gave a snort, and shut the Form-room door again.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Any Port in a Storm!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Poor old Bunter!"

"I—I say, it—it's awful!" groaned Bunter.

"The awfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh sympathetically.

All the Famous Five were sympathetic.

Bunter, it was clear, was in a bad box.

So far, Loder of the Sixth had not found him; but the Sixth were out of their Form-room now, and there was no shadow of doubt that Gerald Loder was looking for Bunter.

Even a good-tempered prefect, even old Wingate, would certainly have given a junior toco for jamming a cricket bat like a battering-ram into his waistcoat. And Loder was not a good-tempered prefect. He was a very bad-tempered one. There was no doubt that Loder had been hurt. It was doubtful whether

he had yet quite recovered from that fearful bang in the region described by the juniors as the bread-basket. If there was anything that was absolutely certain, it was that Loder of the Sixth would not rest till he had made Bunter squirm.

It was a horrid prospect for Bunter.

So far he had dodged Loder successfully; but a fellow could not dodge another fellow for ever within the limits of a school. Sooner or later, it was certain, Loder would get him—probably sooner rather than later. Neither could Bunter hope that the passage of time would have the effect of cooling Loder's wrath. It was fairly certain, on the other hand, that that wrath would improve, like wine, with keeping.

The sympathy of the Famous Five was taking a practical form—a form that Billy Bunter could appreciate. They were standing him ginger-pop and jam tarts in the tuckshop. Bunter was fearfully worried, but his worry had not, fortunately affected his appetite. He gobbled jam tarts and washed them down with ginger-pop, and found comfort therein. But he gobbled with a wary eye on the doorway. If Loder came in—

Loder, it was certain, was looking for him, and the school shop was quite a likely spot to look for Bunter.

"I say, you fellows, what's a fellow going to do?" moaned Bunter. "If it was anybody else I wouldn't mind. Old Wingate or Gwynne would give a chap six, and let it go at that; but Loder—"

"More likely six dozen!" said Nugent.

"Oh lor'!"

"Or six hundred!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"Oh crikey!"

"Best thing you can do, old chap, is to see Loder and get it over," said Harry Wharton. "You've got it coming, you know."

"You silly idiot!" was Bunter's reply.

"You can't dodge a Sixth Form prefect for ever," the captain of the Remove pointed out.

"I'm jolly well going to dodge him as long as I can!" said Bunter. "I say, you fellows, you ought to stand by a pal."

"We'll look after Temple," said Harry.

"Oh, blow Temple!" said Bunter crossly. "It's Loder I'm worried about. Suppose you fellows collar him like you did Temple? They can't sack a batch of six. It would only be a flogging."

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

The idea of handling a prefect, and bagging a Head's flogging as a result, to save Bunter from a whopping, seemed to strike the chums of the Remove as a good joke.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" grunted Bunter. "If it was anybody but Loder I'd face up to it and get it over. But you know that brute. He will skin me!"

"The skinfulness will be terrific!" sighed the Nabob of Bhanipur. "Have you room for another esteemed tart, Bunter?"

"Yes, rather!" said Bunter promptly.

Herbert Vernon-Smith stepped into the school shop. There was a grin on his face as he glanced round over the fellows there.

"Bunter here?" he asked. "Oh, here you are! Loder's coming this way!"

"Oh crikey!" A jam tart dropped from Bunter's fat hand, and he blinked round in terror at the door. "I—I say, you fellows—I say—hide me!"

"Loder's going to hide you!" said the Bounder. "He's got his ashplant with him."

DAN of the DOGGER BANK

Fire at sea! Scuttled ships, villainous plotting—here's a breath of the real North Sea, the tang of salty adventure aboard craft that haunt the fishing-grounds—and beyond.

From the moment Dan of the Dogger Bank finds himself thrown overboard in mid-ocean, all these things come his way—and buried treasure, fights and friendships too! Get this magnificent adventure story to-day, at any Newsagents or Book-stall. It's No. 535 of

Boys' Friend Library 4^D



"You silly ass!" yelled Bunter. "I don't mean that! I mean——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say, you fellows, get in front of me!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say, keep me out of sight of that beast! Oh crikey!"

There was a chuckle in the tuckshop. The hunted life that Billy Bunter was leading that afternoon had its comic side, from the onlookers' point of view. But its comic aspect was quite lost on Billy Bunter. However, though the juniors chuckled, they played up.

The Famous Five, and Smithy and five or six other fellows, bunched round Bunter. He crouched behind that human rampart hoping to keep out of Loder's way when the bully of the Sixth looked in.

The Bunder's warning had come only in time. Hardly a minute later, Loder of the Sixth stamped in, his ashplant under his arm, and a glitter in his eyes. Loder still had a pain under his waistcoat. He seemed to have a worse one in his temper. He gave the bunch of juniors a glare.

"Is Bunter here?" he snapped.

Crouching behind innumerable legs, the fat Owl of the Remove hardly breathed.

"Bunter!" repeated Harry Wharton. "Do you want Bunter?"

"You know I do!" snapped Loder. "The fat little scoundrel has been dodging me all day. Have you seen him?"

"I saw him ten minutes ago," answered the captain of the Remove. Which was perfectly true. He was not bound to mention that he had also seen Bunter later than that.

"Have you looked in the Cloisters, Loder?" asked Peter Todd.

"The Cloisters?" repeated Loder. "Is he there?"

"Well, a fellow might dodge there if he wanted to keep out of sight," said Peter blandly. Which also was perfectly true, though it was not what had happened in this instance.

Loder gave a snort and turned and tramped out of the tuckshop. Billy Bunter gave a gasp of relief.

"Oh, dear! Thank goodness that beast's gone! I say, you fellows, I'll cut off to the House while he's in the Cloisters, and, if he comes back, tell him I've gone to the circus, see?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter grabbed up his jam tart, but he did not stop to devour it. With the tart in his fat hand, he rolled out of the tuckshop. Loder, it was clear, had been looking in the House for him, and drawn it blank. So it was a safe refuge, if Bunter could reach it unseen. And if Loder was heading for the Cloisters, there seemed a healthy chance.

Alas for Bunter! Loder, instead of heading for the Cloisters, had stopped in the quad, to ask fellows whether they had seen Bunter.

He did not need to continue his inquiries—for he saw Bunter himself, as the fat junior rolled out of the school shop.

"Bunter! So you were in there all the time!" hooted Loder. He came striding at the fat junior.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

"Now, then! You——" Loder reached out to grasp a fat shoulder as Bunter made a jump to bolt.

Squash!

Hardly knowing what he did, in his alarm and terror, the fat Owl slammed the jam tart in Loder's face.

It squashed there over the prefect's features.

His grasp missed Bunter! Bunter

did not want to give him another chance. He flew.

"Urrrrgh!" gurgled Loder, grabbing and dabbing at jam. "Why, I—I—I'll—urrgh—I'll—gurrgh!"

"Put it on, Bunter!" yelled three or four fellows, and there was a roar of laughter as Bunter streaked for the House.

Loder rushed in pursuit.

Bunter was an easy first. He vanished into the House.

Loder cut in after him, cut up the stairs, and rooted in the Remove passage, where he fully expected to find Bunter. Disappointed there, he came down again, and rooted in the Rag—but the Rag also was drawn blank. The fat Owl of the Remove seemed to have melted into thin air!

Meanwhile, Mr. Quelch had the surprise of his life.

Sitting at his desk busy with a pile of papers for his Form, he was surprised to see the Form-room door open and the fat figure of his most obtuse and backward pupil roll in. He frowned at Bunter.

"What is it, Bunter?" he rapped.

Bunter shut the door before replying.

"If—if you please, sir——" he stammered.

"Well?"

"I—I—I—if you pip-pip-please, I—I'm sorry I was so bad with my—my history this afternoon, sir——"

"I am glad to hear it, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch rather blankly. Bunter had plenty to be sorry for, that was certain, but his Form-master certainly never had expected him to come back to the Form-room and say so.

"And—and if you please, sir——"

"Well?"

"If—if you'd be so kind, sir——"

"What is it?"

"Pi-pip-perhaps you'd set me a history paper, sir, and—and I—I'd like to—to sit here and do it, sir!" stammered Bunter.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch.

He gazed at Bunter in astonishment and approval.

Knowing nothing of the hunted life the fat Owl was leading that day, he naturally did not guess that the Form-room was Bunter's only safe refuge. He was surprised—but he was pleased. This desire for knowledge was quite a new thing on Bunter's part. It was amazingly new. But Mr. Quelch was the man to encourage it.

"Certainly, Bunter," he said. "Most certainly, my boy! I am glad, very glad indeed, to see this desire on your part to make up for the time you lost this afternoon. I will certainly set you a paper, Bunter. Take your seat."

"Oh, thank you, sir," gasped Bunter.

He sat at his desk. Mr. Quelch provided him with a history paper—bestowing upon him quite a genial smile at the same time. For the next hour, while the Remove master corrected papers at his high desk, Bunter sat and absorbed knowledge of Roman emperors—which, rotten as it was, was not quite so rotten as falling into the clutches of Loder of the Sixth!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Hunted Down!

"BESSIE!"

"Billy!"

It was a couple of hours later.

Billy Bunter was sitting on the stile in Friardale Lane. Like the Irish emigrant in the song, he sat on the stile, and meditated sadly. Seldom, or never, had the fat Owl of the Remove felt so desperately up against it.

He had stayed in the Remove Form Room till Mr. Quelch left. Then Bunter had to vacate also. He could not very well confide to his Form-master that he was hunting cover from an exasperated prefect of the Sixth. When Quelch left, and locked the Form-room after him, Bunter went—somewhat raised in his Form-master's estimation, if that was any comfort to him.

In fear and trembling, the fat Owl bolted across the quad, and got out of gates. Now he sat on the stile in the lane. He was safe from Loder—at least, he hoped he was. But the future—the near future—was problematic. It was not long now to lock-up—and then he had to go in. That meant falling into the clutch of the avenger. So far, he had escaped—but in doing so, he had made matters worse instead of better. Loder, already exasperated by the bang on his waistcoat, would obviously be still more exasperated by the slamming of a jam tart on his features. If Bunter had dreaded a meeting before that episode, he dreaded it doubly afterwards.

Yet it had to come! He could sit there on the stile till lock-up—but clearly he could not take a night out, sitting on the stile. And even if he could, there was the morrow—and Loder on the morrow. Bunter began to wish that he had grasped the nettle, as it were—faced the whopping, and got it over. But he was not inclined to face it now.

The sound of a bicycle in the lane made him blink round in alarm. But he was relieved to see that the newcomer was Bessie Bunter—Sister Bessie, of the Fourth Form at Cliff House School.

Bessie braked and alighted. She blinked at her brother, on the stile, through the big spectacles that were so like Billy's.

"What are you sitting there for, Billy?" she asked.

"Oh, just taking a rest," answered Bunter dismally.

"Got any chocs?"

"No."

"Toffee?"

"No!"

"Bullseyes?"

"No!"

Miss Bunter turned back to her bicycle. As Billy had nothing about him of an edible nature, she seemed to lose interest in him. Billy Bunter blinked at her morosely. He was in need of sympathy.

"I say, Bessie, I'm in an awful scrape!" he said.

"What have you been doing?" asked Bessie. She seemed to take it for granted that Billy had done something.

"Bagging somebody's tuck?"

"No!" hooted Bunter. "Think I'd bag a fellow's tuck?"

"I jolly well know you would!" declared Bessie. "You came over to Cliff House one day to get out of Vernon-Smith's way, because you'd had his cake."

"It wasn't his cake," grunted Bunter, "and I jolly well never had it, either. And you needn't jaw, Bessie—I gave you some, as you jolly well know. I say, Loder's after me! You've seen Loder of the Sixth—a long-legged beast with a face like a rat-trap. I say, he's going to whop me when I go in."

"I've seen him," said Bessie. "I passed him on my bike, ten minutes ago."

"Oh crikey! Was—was he coming this way?"

"Yes."

"Oh lor'!" groaned Bunter. "I shall have to dodge the beast! But I can't dodge him for ever, can I? I've a jolly good mind to bolt."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,482.

Bessie chuckled.

"Yes—I can see father's face, if you butted in, in the middle of the term," she remarked. "I fancy you'd wish you had Loder instead."

"I can't go home, of course. I've got other resources, if I jolly well choose," said Billy Bunter, loftily. "You mayn't believe that I've been offered a job, at a jolly high salary, if I choose to take it."

"Right in one!" assented Bessie. "I don't!"

"Well, it's true," said Bunter. "I've made friends with Marco, the lion-tamer at the circus, and he wants a boy assistant. The last one left him, and he hasn't been able to get another yet—you see, a job with a lion-tamer needs a lot of pluck."

"Then what use would you be?" asked Bessie.

"Cat!" said Bunter, with the polished politeness habitual to the Bunter tribe. "Marco jolly well knows I'm plucky. He stood me tea in his van one day last week, and offered me the job if I left school, so there! He thinks me no end plucky. He knows me—"

"You mean, he doesn't know you?"

"Yah! I'd like to know what would have happened at Cliff House the other day if I hadn't come in while the escaped lion was there—"

"Nothing!" said Bessie. "We all know about it now. That lion was as tame as a cat, and we shouldn't have been frightened if we'd known it at the time. You jolly well knew it!"

"That's the thanks I get for risking my life to save a lot of frightened schoolgirls!" said Bunter bitterly. "Talk about ingratitude being a sharper tooth than a serpent's child! If I hadn't been so plucky—"

"Well, if you're so plucky, old bean, you've got a chance to show it now," grinned Bessie.

"What do you mean?"

"Here comes Loder."

"Oh crikey!"

Billy Bunter rolled off the stile in such a hurry that he rolled in the grass. He picked himself up, and blinked along the lane at a tall figure that came striding from the direction of the school. It was Loder of the Sixth—and his eyes were on Bunter.

It was true that Marco, the lion-tamer, the King of the Lions at Muccolini's Circus, believed Billy Bunter to be a plucky kid—owing to a misapprehension. But if Marco had seen him at this moment, he would undoubtedly have revised that opinion. The hapless fat Owl blinked at the approaching prefect, his fat knees knocking together, his eyes dilated behind his big spectacles.

"I—I say, Bessie, lend me your bike!" gasped Bunter.

"Eh? And walk back to Cliff House?" ejaculated Bessie.

"Yes, old dear—"

"Bosh!"

"I say, that beast will skin me—"

"Rubbish!"

"Will you lend me your jigger?" howled Bunter. "I tell you, I've got to get away from that beast!"

"Where's all that pluck?"

"Cat!"

"If you think I'm going to walk three miles—" exclaimed Bessie Bunter indignantly.

"I—I say, did you drop that shilling, Bessie?"

"Eh? Yes! Where?"

Bessie Bunter blinked round hastily for the shilling. Billy Bunter grabbed the bike, and rushed it up the road.

"Why, you—you—you—" gasped

Bessie, realising that there was no shilling. "Billy, you—you—gimme my bike!"

Bunter plumped on the bike and pedalled. It was rather awkward for Bunter to ride; but he was desperate. Loder, having spotted him, was coming on at a run.

"Stop!" shrieked Bessie Bunter. "Come back! My bike! I shall be late for call-over! Billy! My bike!"

Bunter did not heed. His fat little legs drove hard at the pedals, and he fairly raced. Bessie dashed after him in frantic excitement.

"Stop!" roared Loder, coming on at a rush, after Bessie.

Bunter heeded Loder no more than Bessie. He pedalled on wildly. Loder rushed in pursuit. But the fugitive Owl was well ahead; and he would have got clear, but from the direction of Friar-dale an Austin car came whizzing.

Bunter, plunging out of the way of the car, plunged into the grassy bank beside the lane.

The bike curled up. So did Bunter! Landing with a bump in the grass, he curled up beside the bike, spluttering.

The car jammed to a halt. The big, broad-shouldered man who was driving it stared at Bunter, sprawling in the grass. His look showed that he recognised Bunter.

Bunter, however, was not looking at him. Bunter was sprawling breathlessly. Bessie came panting up.

"If you've damaged my bike—" bawled Bessie. Apparently Miss Bunter was more concerned about possible damage to the bike, than possible damage to Bunter.

Bunter's spluttering howls sounded as if he was damaged. But the bike, fortunately, was all right! Bessie lifted it, and mounted.

Evidently she did not intend to give Billy another chance of grabbing that jigger. Once in the saddle, she pedalled, and vanished up the road towards the village.

A minute more, and Loder of the Sixth was on the scene. Bunter, winded, was still sprawling, and Loder's grip on his collar lifted him out of the grass.

"Got you!" said Loder grimly.

"Ow! Leggo! Yaroooooh!"

The big man in the little Austin stepped down. Loder had hardly noticed him till then. But he had to notice him now.

"Let that kid alone!" said the big man.

Loder stared round at him, in angry surprise.

"Who the dooce are you, and what do you want?" he snapped.

"My name's Marco—and I want you to leave that kid alone," answered the big man calmly, "and I want you to do it at once!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Friend in Need!

BILLY BUNTER blinked at the big, broad-shouldered man, and gave a gasp of relief.

In Loder's grip the fat junior was as helpless as a fat rabbit in the jaws of a terrier. But Loder of the Sixth would have been equally helpless in the grasp of the herculean lion-tamer.

It was an unexpected, but very happy meeting for Bunter. Marco's good-tempered, rugged face was very determined. Who Loder was, he had, of course, not the faintest idea, and even had he known that he was a Greyfriars prefect, he knew nothing of Greyfriars, or the prefectorial system. All he knew

was what he saw—a big fellow pitching into a little one—and that was enough for the circus man.

As Loder did not let go Bunter's collar, Marco took a grip on Loder's.

"Chuck it!" said Marco tersely.

"I say, make him leggo!" wailed Bunter.

"I'll make him, fast enough, if he doesn't!" said the lion-tamer cheerfully.

"Here, you! Let go that kid!"

Loder's face was crimson with fury.

"You silly ruffian!" he bawled. "Mind your own business! How dare you lay hands on me!"

"You're laying hands on that kid!" Marco pointed out.

"That's different, you fool!"

"Better language, please!" said the lion-tamer. Like most big and strong men, in perfect physical condition, he had a patient temper. He could have picked up Loder with one hand, and tossed him over the hedge. But he kept his temper much better than the Greyfriars prefect did.

"Take your paw off my collar!" howled Loder furiously. "I'll have you run in, if you dare to interfere with me!"

"Let that kid go!"

"I won't!"

"You will!" said Marco coolly. "I'm going to make you, if you don't!"

"You—you fool!" gasped Loder. "This junior belongs to my school. I'm a senior and a prefect, and I'm going to take him back there for punishment. Now do you understand?"

"No, I don't!" retorted Marco.

"You ain't a schoolmaster?"

"You idiot! I'm a prefect!"

"I don't rightly know what that may happen to be," said the lion-tamer. "But I know you're not going to handle that kid!"

"Make him leggo!" wailed Bunter.

Billy Bunter, while he was sitting on the stile, had been thinking dimly about the future. But he was not thinking about the future now. He was thinking about the present. And at present his thoughts and wishes and hopes were limited to getting out of the grasp of the bully of the Sixth. That was enough for Bunter for the moment, and the future could take care of itself!

"I've told you to let that kid go!"

said Marco quietly.

"And I've told you I won't!" hissed Loder. "Ask the kid himself, you fool—he will tell you I have the authority!"

Marco looked at him, and looked at Bunter. Marco was a great man in the circus, but he knew nothing of Public schools. That senior men in the Sixth Form were invested with authority over boys in lower Forms, was a new one to Marco. He was not prepared to believe Loder; but he would have believed Bunter, of course, had Bunter borne out Loder's statement.

But Billy Bunter was not likely to corroborate any statement that would leave him at Loder's mercy. Bunter's one idea was to get away from Loder.

"Is that so, kid?" asked Marco dubiously. "I don't want to make trouble for you at your school."

"Ow! No!" howled Bunter. "He's a beastly bully—he's always pitching into chaps. I'd jolly well punch him if I was big enough!"

"Why, you lying young rascal—" gasped Loder.

"That's enough!" said Marco. "Let him go!"

"I won't, and you shan't make me!" said Loder, between his teeth. "And if you dare to try, I'll— Urrrgh—yurrgh—gurrgh!"

Loder choked and spluttered, as



"I—I say, did you drop that shilling, Bessie?" asked Bunter, as Loder came on at a rush. "Eh? Yes! Where?" As his sister blinked round hastily for the shilling, Billy grabbed the bike, and rushed it up the road. "Why, you—you—you——" gasped Bessie, realising that there was no shilling. "Billy! Stop! Come back! My bike!"

Marco compressed an iron grip on his neck. He released Billy Bunter's collar as he was swung off his feet.

"Urrrrgh! Wurrrrgh!" spluttered Loder wildly, as he swung his feet kicking up a cloud of dust in the lane.

Marco, with hardly an effort, slung him across the grassy bank, and sat him down in a bed of nettles by the hedge. Marco, perhaps, did not notice that the nettles were there. But Loder did! Loder could not help noticing that he was sprawling in stinging nettles!

"Now you behave yourself!" said Marco.

"Yaroooh!"

Loder bounded out of the stinging-nettles. He clenched his fists and made a fierce rush at the circus man.

Marco grinned.

"Better not, young man!" he warned.

And Loder, realising in time that he had better not, checked his rush. He stood panting, glaring at the towering lion-tamer. Then his angry glare turned on Bunter, who promptly dodged behind the big circus man.

"You young rascal——" panted Loder.

"Yah!" retorted Bunter from the safe shelter of Marco's herculean form. "Beast!"

Loder choked with rage.

But he could carry the matter no further. He did not want to be pitched into the stinging-nettles again, and he was little more than an infant in the hands of the lion-tamer.

"Wait! Just wait a bit, you young scoundrel!" he gasped, and, turning away, Loder tramped on towards the village, whither he had been bound when he sighted Bunter.

"Oh crikey!" breathed Billy Bunter.

He watched Loder out of sight in the direction of Friardale. It was a great relief to see the last of him.

But now that the present trouble was

happily over, the immediate future recurred to Bunter's fat mind.

Once more he had escaped Loder's vengeance—but only at the cost of piling up worse to come. After that handling by the sinewy circus man the bully of the Sixth would be more implacable than ever. And it was getting near lock-up, and Bunter had to get back to Greyfriars before the gates were closed.

"Like a lift, kid?" asked Marco.

"Oh! Yes! Rather!" said Bunter. He was glad of a lift, at least. Anything that saved exertion was so much to the good.

"I'm going back to the circus now," said the lion-tamer. "I shall pass near your school, if you're going back there."

"Oh! Yes!" stammered Bunter. "I—I say." He stammered again. "I say, I—I missed my tea at school owing to dodging that beast! It's too late for tea now."

Marco smiled.

On the occasion when Bunter had "tea'd" with him in his caravan he had noticed that the fat junior was a good man with the foodstuffs. It was a thing that nobody could have failed to notice. He did not need telling that it was a serious matter to Bunter to miss a meal. Billy Bunter's hint was quite enough for the good-natured circus man.

"Hop into the car and come along," he said. "You mustn't be late back at school, whatever the time is you have to get in; but if you've time I'm going back to tea now——"

"Lots of time!" said Bunter promptly.

"Hop in, then!"

Bunter hopped into the Austin. Marco sat at the wheel, and the little car buzzed on.

Bunter was glad of the prospect of tea at the circus camp. Last time Marco had stood him an ample feed, and the same again was exactly what

the fat Owl wanted. But, for once, Bunter was not thinking solely of his next meal. He was thinking of keeping clear of Loder of the Sixth.

Had no other refuge offered, no doubt Bunter would have been driven to return to school and take what was coming to him. But, as it happened, there was another refuge. He was welcome at the circus.

Certainly it was a very serious matter to stay out of school after lock-up. But that was not so serious, in Bunter's estimation, as coming into contact with Loder of the Sixth in Loder's present mood. That prospect fairly made Bunter cringe. Whatever the result, he was going to keep clear of Loder.

Loder, when he came back from the village, would look for Bunter at once. He was not going to find him if Bunter could help it. As for the future, that, as usual, could take care of itself. Billy Bunter was not the fellow to meet troubles half-way.

The car whizzed on by the road over Courtfield Common. Greyfriars School dropped out of sight behind.

Marco turned the Austin off the road by the path that led across the common to the circus pitch. Preparations were going on there for the evening performance. Marco parked his car, and in a few minutes more Bunter was sitting down to tea.

"What time do you have to get back?" asked the lion-tamer, as Bunter gobbled.

Bunter, by that time, had made up his fat mind that he was not going back—that day, at all events. But he realised that he had to be a little tactful in dealing with Marco.

The circus man was kind and friendly and hospitable, but it was not likely that he would have any part in a fellow running away from school—and that, in
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,482.

point of fact, was what Bunter's proceedings amounted to.

"Oh, that's all right!" said Bunter airily. "I can please myself about that."

"But your schoolmaster——" said Marco.

"Oh! He trusts me anywhere!" said Bunter calmly. "The fact is, I'd like to stay to see the show, if it can be fixed."

"That's easy enough, if it won't land you in trouble at your school," said the lion-tamer.

"The only difficulty is," explained Bunter, "that I left my money in my study——"

"I can pass you in," said Marco, smiling.

"Then I'm jolly well staying!" said Bunter.

And he jolly well did!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

No Bunter!

"SEEN Bunter?"

"No!"

"He's cutting roll!"

"The fat ass!"

The school had assembled for calling-over. Loder, from his place in the Sixth, had an eye on the Remove.

As Billy Bunter had dimly foreseen, Loder's wrath had not diminished with the passage of time. It had intensified. Not only had that bang in the waistcoat to be settled for, and the jam tart squashing on Loder's features—but the handling by the unknown rescuer in the lane was now added to the list of Bunter's dire offences.

Loder, in fact, was almost at boiling-point.

Every fellow at Greyfriars School had to turn up to answer to his name at roll, so Loder had no doubt of getting his man at last. When the Remove marched out after roll a hand was going to fall on Bunter's fat shoulder.

Loder did not spot the fat Owl in the Remove, but he had no doubt that he was there. The Remove fellows, however, knew that he wasn't. They had, of course, no doubt of the reason. Bunter's hunted life that day had caused a great deal of merriment in his Form, and fellows had wondered whether Bunter would succeed in keeping clear of Loder till calling-over. That, they supposed, was the latest limit of his dodging.

Evidently, however, Bunter was keeping it up later than that! Mr. Quelch was beginning to call the names; but the Owl of the Remove was not there to answer.

"The howling ass!" murmured Peter Todd. "He will have Quelch after him, as well as Loder, if he cuts roll."

"Can't answer for him with Quelch!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"No fear!"

If Mr. Wiggins or Mr. Prout had been taking roll some fellow might have risked answering "Adsum" for Bunter. But that was quite futile in dealing with the gimlet-eyed Remove master.

"The blithering ass!" said Harry Wharton. "Where the dickens is he?"

"Parked in the study, I suppose," said Peter.

"The benighted chump will have to turn up for prep!" said Johnny Bull. "And Loder's the prefect taking prep this evening. He will get him."

"The getfulness will be terrific," remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, "and the whopfulness will be an esteemed record."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,482.

"Silence!" called out Wingate of the Sixth. And the murmur of voices in the Remove died away.

Quelch was calling the names now, and the fellows answered "'Sum" one after another till the name of Bunter was called.

"Bunter!" repeated Mr. Quelch.

No answer.

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips and marked Bunter absent. Quelch had been pleased with Bunter that afternoon, surprised and pleased by his sudden and laudable thirst for knowledge of Roman history. But he did not look pleased now.

Roll-call finished, the fellows marched out of Hall, and Loder of the Sixth, coming quickly after the Remove, called to the head boy of that Form. He had noted that Bunter had failed to answer to his name.

"Wharton!"

"Yes, Loder!" answered Harry, suppressing a grin.

"Has Bunter cut calling-over?"

"Yes."

"Do you know where he is?"

"No."

"He must have come in!" said Loder, scowling.

"Must have!" agreed Harry.

"Well, go and have a look for him, and tell him to come to my study at once."

Loder stalked away.

Harry Wharton glanced after him, and then at his friends, with a smile.

"I suppose a fellow must carry out a prefect's order!" he remarked. "Come on, you men, I'm going to look for Bunter! Come into the Rag!"

"He's not there," said Bob.

"I know. That's why I'm going to look for him there."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Famous Five went into the Rag, where they were certainly not likely to find the missing Owl, howsoever hard they looked for him. If Gerald Loder waited for the fat junior to arrive in his study, he waited in vain.

However, he only had to wait—at least, so he supposed. Bunter had to turn up for prep.

The Remove did their preparation in their studies, not in the Form-room, like the small fry of the Third and Second. But a prefect was on duty in prep, his duty being to see that the Removeites really did prep in their studies, and did not wander about the passages talking or leap-frogging—as they were likely to do if left to their own devices.

When Loder took his turn at that duty it was seldom done carefully. As a rule, if Loder was "on," fellows could leave their studies, and even go down to the Rag, safe in the knowledge that Loder was not troubling his head about them, or about his duty.

On this particular evening, however, Loder was as dutiful as the Head could have expected any of his prefects to be. He was on the Remove landing when the Remove came up to prep, and his glittering eye scanned them for Bunter.

But Bunter did not come up with the rest.

"Is Bunter in his study, Todd?" he asked.

"I haven't seen him there, Loder."

Loder grunted, and went along to Study No. 7. Peter Todd and Tom Dutton entered that apartment, but the third member of Study No. 7 was not to be seen.

"Where's Bunter?" rapped out Loder savagely.

"Haven't the foggiest," answered Peter.

"Have you seen him, Dutton?"

"Eh?" asked Tom Dutton.

He was deaf, and it was necessary to put on a little steam in speaking to him. Loder gave an angry snort.

"You deaf ass! Why isn't Bunter in his study?"

"No," answered Dutton.

"What do you mean, no, you young idiot?" hooted Loder.

"Dusty, if you like," answered Tom, with a stare. "But I never noticed that it was muddy. There hasn't been any rain."

"Muddy?" repeated Loder blankly. "You young ass! I asked you why Bunter wasn't in the study. Have you seen that young sweep? He can't be still out of gates! Have you seen him?"

"Eh? Yes," answered Dutton.

"Oh, good! Where did you see him?"

"Eh?"

"Where did you see him?" roared Loder.

"In Hall, at roll," answered Dutton.

"He wasn't at calling-over!" roared Loder. "What do you mean?"

"He jolly well was," said Dutton. "I saw him in the Fourth, talking to Temple."

"You saw Bunter?" gasped Loder.

"Eh? Who's talking about Bunter? You asked me if I'd seen Bates."

"Bates!" gasped Loder. "I never mentioned Bates!"

"You said Bates——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Peter Todd. "Loder said gates, not Bates."

"Gates!" repeated Dutton. "There's no chap here named Gates, that I know of. I haven't seen anybody named Gates, Loder."

Tom Dutton's deafness was an affliction—not only to himself! Loder almost foamed.

"Do you know whether Bunter's stayed out of gates?" he roared.

"I don't know anybody named Gates! I saw Bates—he was talking to Temple, in Hall——"

"I don't want to know anything about Bates!" shrieked Loder.

"Eh? Yates! Did you say Yates?"

"I don't know Yates! There's a chap in the Highcliffe Fourth named Yates, but I haven't seen him for weeks——"

"Have you seen Bunter?" roared Loder, in a voice that could have been heard at the other end of the Remove passage.

"Bunter! No. I saw Bates——"

Loder stamped out of Study No. 7, leaving Tom Dutton staring and Peter almost in hysterics.

"I say, what's the matter with Loder?" asked Dutton. "If he wants Bates, it's no good looking for him in the Remove. Bates is in the Fourth."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Peter.

"I couldn't make out whether he said Bates or Yates, he mumbles so," said Dutton. "But he can't want a Highcliffe chap, can he?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No good asking me, if he does!" said the puzzled Dutton. "Looks to me as if Loder's going batchy! Coming here, talking about Gates, and Bates, and Yates, and then howling out about Bunter. I say, Peter, Bunter's not here! I noticed that he wasn't in Hall. I wonder where Bunter is. Seen him?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled Peter.

"Bunter's missing!"

"Rot!" said Dutton. "Who's he kissing, I'd like to know? What do you mean? Not one of the Cliff House girls? They'd be ill if he did!"

"Bunter's dodging Loder."

"What the dickens does he want soda for?"

But Peter did not try to explain further.

Loder of the Sixth rooted through the Remove studies, finding all the Remove

but Bunter! Bunter was not in his own study, or in any other fellow's study. Nobody knew where he was. Nobody had seen him since he had gone out of gates; and it was clear that he had not come in. So Loder went down to report to Mr. Quelch that one of his Form was missing from prep, not sorry to add Mr. Quelch's wrath to his own, to fall upon the devoted head of the Owl of the Remove.

A double allowance of trouble now awaited Billy Bunter, when he came in. Only—he did not come in! While Loder raged, and Quelch frowned, Billy Bunter was sitting at Muccolini's Circus, watching Marco the Lion-Tamer, and the Queen of the Ring, and listening to the wheezes of Tippity Tip, the circus clown—in happy forgetfulness of Greyfriars, and the storm that was brewing for him there.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Told on the Telephone!

MR. QUELCH was worried. It was drawing near bed-time for the Remove, and a member of his Form was missing from the school.

After prep the Remove master had questioned every fellow in the Remove on the subject of Bunter. But they could tell him nothing.

Bunter had gone out of gates. He had not come in. If he was staying out of his own accord, Mr. Quelch wanted to give him the licking of his life. If he had met with some accident, Mr. Quelch wanted to be helpful and sympathetic. So long as the state of doubt lasted, it was quite a mixture of feelings, and very disturbing and uncomfortable.

Only a few weeks ago Bunter had been missing, and it turned out that he had been stranded on Popper's Island. That, of course, was not likely to have happened again. Mr. Quelch had been anxious on that occasion, and as it had turned out, there had been no need for anxiety. It had been a sheer waste! Now, however, he was getting anxious again, though he was more angry than anxious. He thought of ringing up the police station, to inquire whether any accident had been heard of. But he had done that very thing on the last occasion, and he did not want to repeat himself, if he could help it.

Still, when half-past nine sounded, and the Remove had to go to their dormitory, Mr. Quelch felt that the matter could no longer be left where it was. Something had to be done. He approached his telephone.

Buzzzzzz!

It was the telephone bell.

Mr. Quelch felt quite a pang of anxious apprehension as he clutched up the receiver. Someone was ringing him up—and he dreaded to hear that it was news of an accident! How very probable, after all, that some accident had kept Bunter away—a short-sighted, stupid, obtuse fellow—poor boy!

"Yes, yes!" gasped Mr. Quelch into the transmitter. "Yes? What is it? Please tell me at once!"

"I say—" came a fat voice over the wires.

Mr. Quelch jumped.

All his fears of an accident faded away at once. It was the voice of the missing Owl.

"Bunter!" he gasped.

"Is that Mr. Quelch?"

"Yes, Bunter! How dare you remain out of gates till bed-time? How dare you miss calling-over? Where are you? What are you doing? I shall punish

you most severely, Bunter. Return to the school at once!"

"Eh? I didn't catch that, sir."

"What?"

"Would you mind saying that again, sir?"

"You—you—you—Bunter!" hooted Mr. Quelch. "Where are you?"

"In a telephone box, sir."

"You utterly stupid boy—"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Where are you telephoning from?" roared Mr. Quelch, too exasperated to bother about the proper placing of his prepositions.

"From here, sir."

"Upon my word!"

"I—I thought I'd ring you up, sir, to let you know I'm all right," said Bunter. "I thought I'd telephone as soon as it was over."

"What's happened, then?"

"Oh, nothing, sir! I—I can't get back to school to-night."

"What!"

"It's nothing to do with Loder, sir—"

"Loder?"

"Nothing at all, sir. The fact is, I am unavoidably detained. My pater—"

"What?"

"My father is fearfully ill, sir, and I've had to go home—"

"Are you telephoning from your home, Bunter?"

"No, Yes, I mean—"

"I do not believe you, Bunter."

"Oh, really, sir! I had a letter from my father to-day, telling me that he was fearfully ill—in fact, he's been unconscious for days, sir—"

"Goodness gracious!"

"Yes, isn't it sad, sir? He's been asking for me, and—and I felt that—that I had to go."

"How dare you tell me such palpable untruths, Bunter?" shrieked Mr. Quelch.

"Eh?"

"Come back to the school instantly."

"I—I can't, sir, when my mater's so ill—I mean, my pater! I—I'm sitting by his bedside at this very moment, sir—"

"You are telephoning from a bedside?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! Yes! No! I mean, I've been sitting by his bedside, sir, and—now—now I've gone down to the post office—I mean to the library—to telephone to you, sir. My poor father's lying unconscious upstairs, sir, and—and asking for me every moment—"

"I shall cane you most severely, Bunter! I order you to come back to the school at once. You shall be flogged for this."

"Oh crikey!"

"I order you to tell me where you are at the present moment, Bunter. Are you in Courtfield?"

"Oh! No! I'm miles from here, sir."

"Wha-a-t?"

"It's no good thinking of looking for me in Courtfield, sir, when I'm miles and miles away. Miles and miles and miles!"

"How dare you utter such untruths, Bunter? You utterly stupid boy, if I believed, for one moment, that you had gone home, I should telephone immediately to your father—"

"Oh crikey! I—I haven't gone home, sir!" squeaked Bunter, in alarm. "I—I—I'm telephoning from—from my uncle's, sir."

"Your uncle's!" said Mr. Quelch dazedly.

"Yes, sir! N-n-now I come to think of it, it's not my father who's ill, but my uncle—my Uncle William—"

"Bless my soul!"

"He's awfully ill, sir—I—I can hear him groaning, as I sit at the phone, sir! He's got galloping plumbago—"

"Bunter! Return to the school instantly!"

"I—I can't leave my poor father, sir—I—I mean, my poor uncle! He keeps on asking for me, I'm his favourite son, sir—I mean, his favourite nephew! He—he likes me to give him his medicine, sir! He—he won't take it from any other hand."

"If you do not return immediately to the school, Bunter, I shall have you searched for—" gasped Mr. Quelch. "For what reason, you incredibly stupid boy, are you staying out of gates?"

"I've told you, sir. My Uncle George—"

"What are you doing, Bunter?"

"Telephoning, sir."

"You utterly stupid boy, I mean, what are you doing out of the school?" hooted Mr. Quelch. "Why have you not come in?"

"You don't seem to have caught what I said, sir. My father—I mean, my Uncle George—is fearfully ill, and—and I feel it's my duty to stay with him, sir. I—I thought I'd better let you know, so that you wouldn't be anxious, sir. Now you know I'm with my father—I mean my uncle—you needn't trouble to look for me, or—or anything of that sort, sir. Good-bye, sir!"

"Bunter!" shrieked Mr. Quelch.

But the fat Owl of the Remove had rung off.

Mr. Quelch sat and stared at the telephone. He really looked as if he could have bitten it!

He slammed the receiver back on the hooks, with a heavy slam. The instrument rocked.

"Upon my word!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

He was relieved of anxiety on Bunter's account. The fat Owl's call had had that effect, at all events. Nothing had happened to Bunter.

Hitherto, Mr. Quelch had been divided between anxiety and anger. Now anger reigned undisputed. He picked up the cane from his table, and swished it. Had Bunter been within reach, he certainly would have captured the most tremendous licking of his fat and fatuous career. Perhaps it was just as well for Bunter that he wasn't!

Mr. Quelch laid down the cane again. Where Bunter was, and what he fancied he was up to, was a mystery. The Remove master went to consult the Head.

Meanwhile, Loder was seeing lights out for the Remove. With a lingering hope that Bunter might have turned up in time for dorm, he took his ashplant under his arm. But there was no Bunter!

A few weeks ago Bunter had had a night out, because he could not help it. Now, it seemed, he was having another, of his own free will and choice. Loder had no use for his ashplant; but he drew comfort from the reflection that a fellow who stayed out of school all night was booked for a Head's flogging, at the very least, if not for the sack.

In the Remove, Bunter, generally the most unimportant member for the Form, filled all thoughts. Where was Bunter? Every fellow asked that question; but no fellow could answer it. Nobody knew.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Little Ventriloquism!

BILLY BUNTER grinned cheerfully as he rolled away from the telephone-box in Courtfield.

All was well.

At least, Bunter had no doubt that

all was well. He had stuffed Quelch.

Billy Bunter had great faith in his powers of deception. It had been quite a brain-wave to ring Quelch up on the phone, and explain that he had been suddenly called away by the serious illness of a near and dear relative.

Quelch was a crusty old stick; but he surely could not blame a fellow for rushing off, even without asking leave, in such serious circumstances as that.

Not only did this make the future safe. Bunter considered, but it made the present safe also; it prevented a search from being made for him.

Quelch, believing that he was in affectionate attendance upon a sick relative, would never suspect that he was only a few miles from Greyfriars, all the time, least of all that he was in a circus!

Satisfied that he had "stuffed" Quelch, Bunter felt that all was well. He was clear of Loder—his absence from school was satisfactorily explained—and he was free to do as he liked. By the time he went back to Greyfriars—which was not going to be just yet—Loder would have had plenty of time to get over it; indeed, even a beast like Loder might feel a bit sympathetic, when he heard that Bunter had had such bad news from home.

Marco was sitting in the little Austin, waiting for Bunter. He had run him into the town to telephone.

"All serene?" asked the lion-tamer, as the fat Owl rejoined him.

"Right as rain!" answered Bunter breezily. "All clear!"

"You've got leave?"

"Oh, yes! I simply had to explain," said Bunter calmly. "It's all right now. I told you it would be all right."

He clambered into the car, and Marco drove back to the circus. Had Marco been better acquainted with the manners and customs of Greyfriars School, and had he known his Bunter a little better, he might have doubted. But, as the matter stood, he saw no reason to doubt.

Bunter had telephoned to his schoolmaster, and came away from the telephone to say that it was all right. So, as far as Marco could see, it was all right. Marco was no fool; but he was a simple-hearted man, and not at all suspicious. It was easy enough to pull his leg, and Bunter, to do him justice, did not realise that it was a shabby trick to pull the leg of a good-natured and unsuspecting man. Keeping clear of Loder was Bunter's dominating thought; and, as usual, all Bunter's concern was concentrated upon his fat self.

Moreover, Bunter was hungry. It was extremely doubtful whether he would have had any supper if he had gone back to Greyfriars at that hour. Most certainly he would have had a licking; but supper was far from certain. But there was supper at the circus. When it was a choice between supper and a whipping, Bunter's fat mind was easily made up. He plumped for supper.

The fat junior was feeling very cheerful as he alighted from the Austin at the circus camp.

The performance was over, and the crowds were gone; but men were moving about in a flare of lights, clearing away and packing up.

A good many curious glances were cast at Billy Bunter.

The fat junior regarded the circus, and the circus company, with a rather lofty and patronising eye, as became a Public school man, and especially such an aristocrat as William George Bunter. At the same time, he was very glad to find refuge there.

Marco, in the belief that he had leave

from school, was hospitable, and Bunter could stay if he liked! He was staying. For how long, he had not yet made up his fat mind.

From what he had seen of Muccolini's Circus, Bunter rather fancied that he would like it. It was plain that Marco did very well out of his lion-taming act, as he had a handsome caravan, and could afford to keep a car. And Signor Muccolini, who was rather a swaggering and bullying sort of man, treated Marco with respect, as a valuable member of his company. Bunter was already turning over in his mind the idea of accepting the offer Marco had made him, a week ago, of joining up as the lion-tamer's assistant.

Marco had lost his boy assistant recently, that youth having been lured away to another show.

He had been quite impressed by Bunter, and quite disappointed to hear that the fat junior was still at school, and could not take on the job.

Now Bunter had given him a hint that he might be leaving school shortly.

This was true to a certain extent, as Greyfriars would be breaking up for the summer holidays in two or three weeks, when Bunter, of course, would be leaving with the rest. It was as near to the truth, anyhow, as Bunter generally succeeded in getting!

There would be a salary attached if Bunter took on that job; which was rather attractive to a fellow who had been disappointed about a series of postal orders he had been expecting!

Bunter was turning it over in his mind, but, in the meantime, he was thinking chiefly about supper. First things came first!

"Now about the feeding," said Marco.

"Yes, rather!" agreed Bunter. It was, it seemed, a case of two souls with but a single thought; two hearts that beat as one!

"Come on!" said Marco.

Bunter rolled after him.

To his surprise, Marco did not head for his van, or for the mess-tent, where the circus staff had their supper. He headed for the annexe where the menagerie was parked.

"I—I say, didn't you say about the feeding?" hinted Bunter.

"Yes; they have a regular meal after the performance," said the lion-tamer. "Beef in the morning, and a mash at night."

"Bib-bib-beef in the morning, and a mum-mum-mash at night!" stuttered Bunter.

"And I always see to it myself!" said Marco. "You'd better help me, as the more you get used to them, the better!"

It dawned on Billy Bunter that the feeding Marco alluded to was the feeding of the lions!

The feeding of Bunter was, of course, a matter of far greater importance. But Marco did not seem to realise that.

He grunted. However, he rolled on after Marco. A fat man in a silk hat, with an eyeglass stuck in his eye, came towards them.

"Who's that kid, Marco?" he asked.

Billy Bunter blinked at Signor Muccolini. He did not like the fat Italian. Marco's name was adopted for professional reasons, his own name being Williams. But Signor Muccolini was the genuine article. He was fat, swarthy, rather greasy, and had a lingering scent of garlic about him. His manner was overbearing, and Bunter did not like it at all. He seemed absolutely unaware of what an important person Bunter was. From his look, he might have taken the Owl of Greyfriars for a horse-boy.

"Friend of mine, Mucky!" answered

the lion-tamer. "You've seen him before."

"What is he doing here?"

"He may be joining up as my assistant."

The signor's sharp black eyes scanned Bunter. Obviously he was not favourably impressed by the fat schoolboy.

"That the best you can do?" he said.

Billy Bunter's eyes gleamed behind his spectacles. He disliked the signor already. Now he began to dislike him intensely.

"It's not easy to get a boy for the job," said Marco. "I shouldn't let him get into danger, of course, but it needs pluck to deal with lions. This lad has plenty of pluck. He caught my old lion, Cæsar, when he escaped the other day. Cæsar wandered into a girls' school, and there might have been a lot of trouble if this lad hadn't been there."

"He knew that Cæsar was as tame as a cat, of course!" said the signor disparagingly. "If it had been one of the other lions—"

"He won't have to handle the other lions—I'm not the man to let a boy go into danger, however plucky he may be!" said Marco. Which was good news for his prospective assistant; Bunter had been rather dubious on that point.

"Isn't he the same young man who made a fool of himself in the circus the other day?" asked the signor, staring at Bunter. "You won't find him any use, Marco."

Billy Bunter gave a little fat cough.

Had Signor Muccolini been as well acquainted with Bunter as the Remove fellows were, he would have known that that was a preliminary to some of Bunter's ventriloquism.

But the signor, of course, had not the remotest idea that the fat junior was a ventriloquist.

The fact was, that Marco's impression of Bunter, owing to circumstances, was rather an erroneous one, and the circus-master judged him more accurately on his looks. But Bunter was not pleased thereby. Bunter's idea was that the fat Italian was a most unpleasant bouncer, and that he had had enough of his dashed cheek!

"Look here, Muccy," said Marco, "I'm engaging this lad, not you, and I'm satisfied with him."

"Well, wait till he hears a growl from Brutus, and you'll see him running for his life!" sneered the signor.

Gr-r-r-r-rgh! came a deep, fierce growl from just behind Signor Muccolini.

The Greyfriars ventriloquist could imitate any sound he heard, from his headmaster's voice to the mew of a cat or the growl of a lion.

That deep, savage growl was so life-like and so menacing, that Marco, as well as the signor, was deceived by it.

"What the dickens!" exclaimed the trainer. "Has that fool Parker left the cages open?"

Signor Muccolini bounded. He did not waste time in words. Fat and heavy as he was, he bounded like an india-rubber ball. He covered six feet at a leap, and dodged behind Marco.

Billy Bunter grinned.

The growl had no effect on Bunter! He never turned a hair! That was not surprising, as it was his own ventriloquism that had produced the growl! But the effect on the signor was tremendous. His fat face was white as chalk as he planted himself behind the trainer.

"Look after that lion!" he howled. "What fool let him out of the cage? Keep him away from me, Marco, confound you!"

Marco stared round him blankly. There was no lion to be seen. Billy

Bunter grinned at the terrified circus-master.

"Don't you be frightened," he said cheerfully. "I'll keep him off."

"Where is the brute!" yelled Signor Muccolini.

Gr-r-r-r-r-rh! came the fierce growl again, and again it came from behind the circus master.

Signor Muccolini gave another wild bound. It sounded to him as if the lion was at his very heels.

This time he bounded away, running for his van. He did not even look round at the imaginary lion. He crossed the space to his van in a series of frantic leaps, and bolted inside—and the hurried slam of a door followed.

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter. Marco stared round him, bewildered. "Where's that lion?" he gasped.

mind that he was going to stay on at Muccolini's Magnificent Circus.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Missing from Greyfriars!

"WHERE'S Bunter?" "The wherefulness is terrific!"

"The fat ass!" "The blithering chump!"

That morning Billy Bunter was the most talked-of fellow at Greyfriars School. From the Sixth to the Second the Greyfriars fellows discussed Bunter of the Remove and his extraordinary antics.

Bunter was missing from school. He had been missing when the

Everybody knew that Bunter was in his usual stony state. All the Remove knew, certainly, that he was expecting a postal order; but they knew also that that long-expected postal order had not arrived. Five or six fellows in the Form could recall that the previous day Bunter had tried to "touch" them for small loans, ranging from sixpence to half-a-crown. Clearly, he was not in possession of cash. But meals had to be paid for. If Bunter was getting breakfast out of school, clearly he was somehow getting it "on the nod." But how, was a mystery. That he was missing a meal no fellow supposed for a moment. That was unthinkable.

Fellows had been rather anxious about Bunter, on the occasion when he had had a night out, stranded on the island in the river. But nobody was anxious now.



As Monsieur Charpentier dashed up the staircase after Bunter, the fat junior kicked out backwards. "Ciel!" gasped the French master, as a boot clumped on his jawbone. Prout, following up behind, was quite taken by surprise, as Monsieur Charpentier toppled backwards.

Remove went to sleep in their dormitory; but most of them expected that he would turn up some time, and that he would be found in bed in the morning. But when the Remove turned out at rising-bell, one bed in the dorm was empty, and had not been slept in.

Bunter had not turned up!

He did not turn up for breakfast. That disposed of the idea that he might be hiding somewhere about the school. Even to dodge a vengeful prefect and an angry Form-master, Bunter would hardly have passed unheeded the bell that announced a meal.

No fellow would have liked to cut brekker. Bunter would have liked it least of all. If Bunter did not breakfast at the school, it was certain that he was getting breakfast somewhere else.

Where? That was a mystery. And how? That was another mystery.

Bunter winked into space. Marco hurried to the cages, and Bunter followed him. The lion-tamer's bewilderment increased when he found all the grated doors safely shut, and the animals safe in their quarters.

"I don't make this out!" he said blankly. "I heard it—you heard it, too, didn't you, Bunter?"

"I did!" agreed Bunter. "Sounded like a lion growling, to me."

"They're all safe in the cages! Is the place haunted?" exclaimed the bewildered lion-tamer. "It beats me. I could have sworn it was Brutus' growl—and he's the fiercest of the lot. It would be real trouble if he got out." Then he grinned. "No wonder Mucky bolted, if he thought Brutus was out! You weren't scared, kid?"

"No fear!" agreed Bunter. "No good being scared of a growl if a chap's going to be a lion-tamer, what?"

"I told him you got pluck!" said Marco. "Perhaps he will believe it now. By gum, you're the lad I want, Bunter—just the lad."

Which was really quite a natural misapprehension on the part of the King of the Lions. Bunter's conduct at that alarming moment, certainly had contrasted very much with the signor's! There had not been the slightest trace of alarm about Bunter!

Puzzled as he was by the mysterious occurrence, Marco proceeded with the feeding of the lions. Bunter helped to feed old Caesar, with whom he was already on a friendly footing; but, much to his relief, Marco did not want him to go near Brutus or Pericles or Apollo.

After which Bunter was able, at long last, to get his own supper. It was so good and ample a supper that it convinced Bunter that he would like circus life no end! And when he curled up in bed in a caravan that night, the fat Owl of the Remove had quite made up his

For it was known that he had telephoned Mr. Quelch, which made it clear that no accident had happened to him.

Mr. Quelch's face that morning in the Remove Form Room was like unto a thundercloud. One glance at Quelch's speaking countenance warned the Removites that they had to walk warily that day!

Bunter did not appear in the Form-room. He was not seen in break. He did not turn up for third school. He did not appear at dinner.

Where was Bunter? He was, of course, still dodging Loder of the Sixth; all the Remove guessed that one! But where and how?

He had not gone home! That was (Continued on page 16.) THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1482.

BILLY BUNTER'S BUNK!



(Continued from page 13.)

known! Mr. Quelch had not believed a word of the fat Owl's extraordinary statements on the telephone; but during the morning he rang up Bunter's home to make sure.

Bunter had not been heard of there.

It looked as if Billy Bunter had run away from school to escape the tremendous whopping that was due to him from Loder of the Sixth.

But where had he run to? What refuge had he found? Sammy Bunter of the Second Form was questioned by dozens of fellows; but Sammy knew nothing of his major's proceedings.

"I wonder," said Bob Cherry thoughtfully, when the Remove fellows came out after dinner. "I wonder— You fellows remember the rot Bunter was talking a few days ago—"

"Which?" asked Harry.

"About the circus—"

"The circus?"

"He seems to have made friends with the lion-tamer chap there. He was talking some rot about the man being awfully impressed with him and offering to take him on—"

"I remember! Only Bunter's gas, of course," said the captain of the Remove. "Bunter can't be there."

"Well, he's somewhere!" argued Bob. "He must have put up somewhere last night; and somebody must be standing him grub to-day. If he was missing meals, he would come back fast enough, Loder or no Loder."

"Right on the wicket! But—"

"He may have spun some yarn and got the man to put him up!" said Bob. "If he isn't there, where is he?"

Harry Wharton looked thoughtful.

Billy Bunter's "gas" on the subject of the impression he had made on the King of the Lions, had only made the chums of the Remove smile—and they had forgotten it. But Bob remembered it now. And, as he said, Bunter was certainly somewhere! He could not have dissolved into thin air.

"He hasn't gone home," said Bob.

"He can't be paying his way anywhere—so he must be sticking somebody! And he knows that man at the circus! Might have pulled his leg and got the man to put him up."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"It's possible!" he said. "In fact, now you speak of it, it seems jolly likely. He's somewhere!"

"The somewherefulness is terrific!" agreed Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "That is a deadly cert."

"Lots of time to walk over to the circus before class," said Bob. "We can ask any of them if they've seen a human porcupine rolling about. The sooner that blithering idiot comes back the better. It's the sack for clearing off from school—unless they make allowances for Bunter being a born idiot. Anyhow, it's a flogging."

"That's so!" agreed Harry. "It may make a difference if he comes back of his own accord, without having to be

hunted for and yanked in. It may make the beaks go easier with him. If we can find him, and make him understand that, the howling chump may come back with us."

"It's a chance!" said Nugent. "Let's walk over and see, at any rate."

"Let's!" agreed Johnny Bull.

And the Famous Five, having decided to follow up that faint clue to the missing Owl, walked out of gates, and took the road to Courtfield Common.

Bunter, it was certain, did not realise the seriousness of what he was doing. Obviously, it would be to his advantage to return before matters became still more serious. And, with the kind and friendly intention of saving the fat Owl, if they could, from the results of his own fatheadedness, the chums of the Remove walked across the common to the circus camp.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Voice from the Van!

"O H crikey!" ejaculated Billy Bunter.

He blinked through his big spectacles in alarm from the window of the roomy and handsome caravan that belonged to Marco, the lion-tamer.

Billy Bunter had had his dinner—an ample dinner. He had retired to that van to take a little nap. Bunter liked a nap after a meal. He really needed a little rest after his exertions in the gastronomic line.

But all idea of napping vanished from his fat mind when, glancing from the window, he spotted five figures approaching.

He blinked at the Famous Five in alarm and wrath. There was no performance at the circus till the evening, so it was not for that reason that they were coming. Moreover, they were not heading for the big circus tent. Apparently they were sauntering along to have a look at the circus camp—and Bunter was thankful that he was out of sight inside a van.

"Beasts!" breathed Bunter.

It was very important—from Bunter's point of view—that his presence in the circus should not become known at Greyfriars. If Quelch learned that he was there, the next item on the programme would be a visit from Quelch and a hand on his collar.

The van window was open to let in what air there was on a hot July afternoon. Bunter quickly drew the curtain across it.

Screened by the curtain, he watched the juniors, as they came, in growing alarm.

They could not see him, certainly. He was safe in cover. But if they learned that he was in the camp, his game was up. And a chance word might betray him.

Marco's van was parked at a little distance from the other numerous vehicles. Harry Wharton & Co. were passing within a few yards of the fat alarmed face that watched them from behind the curtain. They did not even dream that a fat fist was shaken at them, unseen.

That the Famous Five suspected that he might be in the circus camp, did not occur to Bunter. Still less did he realise that their idea was to save him from his own fatheadedness. Bunter did not want to be saved from his own fatheadedness! Indeed, he was far from realising that he was a fathead!

He was alarmed and uneasy at the possibility of discovery. And it was a

relief to him when Signor Muccolini came striding round the van, and planted himself in the path of the schoolboys.

"Here, what do you want here?" snapped the signor. "The public are not admitted here! Clear off!"

The Famous Five came to a stop. They were so near Bunter's window, that the fat junior was careful to make no sound to draw their attention in his direction. He hoped to see them clear off at once, at the order of the circus-master. Signor Muccolini's manner was unpleasant; and his look far from encouraging to visitors.

"Do you hear me?" added the signor, without waiting for a reply. His voice was loud and aggressive.

"Whisper and I shall hear!" answered Bob Cherry amiably.

"What?"

"We're not deaf!" said Bob, pleasantly. "We should be able to hear you, even if you didn't shout."

The signor made an angry gesture.

"I've told you to clear off!" he snapped.

"Then you needn't tell us again!" remarked Johnny Bull. "Did you buy this common when you pitched your camp here?"

"You're the boss of this show, I suppose?" asked Harry Wharton. He recognised the fat Italian who acted as ring-master when the circus performance was on.

"I am Signor Muccolini!" snapped the signor.

"Well, we're doing no harm here," said Harry, "and we'll clear off as soon as you like. But the fact is, we're looking for a fellow, and if he's here, we'd like to see him."

Billy Bunter gave a gasp. He had heard every word.

It was not, after all a chance visit; the beasts were actually looking for him! A few more words to Signor Muccolini, and they would know that he was there—in that very van!

For a moment, the fat Owl was utterly dismayed. He did not need telling that he was the "fellow" the Famous Five were looking for! But they were not going to find him, if Bunter could help it. The Greyfriars ventriloquist had a card to play!

"Who—?" began Signor Muccolini.

"Oh, shut up, you fat old ass!" went on a voice that sounded remarkably like Harry Wharton's. "Don't interrupt me!"

Harry Wharton started, in amazement, as he heard those words. His friends stared at him. Believing that he had spoken, they were amazed at what they heard.

Signor Muccolini was more than amazed. He was enraged. He was by nature an overbearing and aggressive man; but even a good-tempered and amiable man might have been angry at such a form of address.

"What?" he roared, his fat face purple with wrath. "What do you say? Impudent young rascal!"

"I—I—" stuttered Harry, blankly. "I—I—"

"Harry, old chap!" gasped Nugent.

"Barge the old fool out of the way!" went on the voice. "Pitch the silly old idiot over!"

Billy Bunter grinned through the curtain. Signor Muccolini was almost dancing with rage. He had his circus whip under his arm. He slipped it down into his hand, and the long lash cracked in the air. The next second it was cracking round Harry Wharton's legs.

"Ow!" roared Wharton, as he jumped. "Stop that! I never— yaroooh!"

Swipe, swipe!
"Clear off, you young rascals!" roared the signor. "Dio mio, I will thrash you—I will—"

"Here, look out!" gasped Bob Cherry. He made a grasp at the signor's arm, to arrest the lashing whip.

"Who the thump—!" gasped Harry Wharton. "I never—look here, keep that whip away—I—I never—"

"Here, Jones—Robinson—Giles!" roared the signor. "Here, clear those young scoundrels off! Kick them out!"

Bunter peered from the back of the caravan as three or four of the circus hands, already staring at the scene, came running up.

One of them grasped Bob Cherry, to drag him away from the signor. As the fat Italian's arm was released, up it went again, and the whip lashed and rang across Bob's shoulders.

"Yoo-hoop!" roared Bob. "You old ass, keep off! I say—yaronoo!" The whip came lashing down again, as the exasperated circus master strode at the juniors.

Whack, whack, whack!
Bob Cherry dodged, and jumped, and suddenly lowering his head, butted at the wide and well-filled waistcoat of Signor Muccolini.

Crash!
"Ooooooogh!" came a prolonged gasp from the fat circus man, like the air escaping from a badly punctured tyre.

He tottered back, and sat down, bumping in the grass. He sat and waved fat hands, spluttering wildly.

"He, he, he!" gasped Billy Bunter. It was clear, now, that the Famous Five were not going to have any chance of asking questions about Bunter in the circus. They had far more pressing matters to think of.

"Grooogh! Throw them out!" gurgled Signor Muccolini, clasping his hands to his podgy waist, and spluttering for breath. "Throw them into the ditch! Kick them out! Duck them! Do you hear? Throw them in the ditch!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Johnny Bull. "Here, hands off!"

"Out you go!" grinned a burly stableman, grasping him. "Kim along! Ow!" he added, in a yell, as Johnny's fist jammed under his chin.

"Look out!"
"Back up!"
"Oh crumbs!"

Five or six rough fellows were piling on to the chums of the Remove now, urged on by the spluttering yells of the enraged signor.

They would have been glad to clear off without further trouble; but unfortunately they could not get away from the trouble caused by the Greyfriars ventriloquist.

Signor Muccolini, staggering to his feet, waved his men on—and the juniors were hustled and hustled, shoved and barged and rolled; and they punched in self-defence, and were punched in return. They retreated, and the retreat became a flight.

From the rear of Marco's van, Billy Bunter watched them, with a fat grinning face, as they cut off across the common—leaving the circus men grinning, and Signor Muccolini brandishing his whip.

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter. The Famous Five were gone. The voice from the van had worked the oracle. They were not likely to return for more!

Billy Bunter, satisfied that the danger was past, laid his fat head on a pillow in the van, and started, at last, on his delayed nap.

A few minutes later, a rumbling sound, like the mutter of distant thunder, might have been heard proceeding from that van. Had the Famous Five been still near, no doubt they would have recognised a sound familiar in the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars—the deep and hefty snore of William George Bunter.

But the Famous Five were far away by that time, and the fat Owl of the Remove snored in happy peace.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Caught!

MR. QUELCH jumped. So did Billy Bunter. The jump was simultaneous! "Bunter!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter. Had Billy Bunter been aware that his Form-master was in Courtfield that afternoon, looking for him, certainly Billy Bunter would never have been found anywhere within the precincts of that ancient market town.

But Mr. Quelch, so far as Bunter was aware, was in the Form-room at Greyfriars, imparting to the Remove the valuable instruction which was for their good, but which Bunter was happy to escape.

Having no doubt that he had "stuffed" Quelch on the telephone, Bunter did not expect the Remove master to be looking for him.

That, however, was exactly what Mr. Quelch was doing.

Convinced that the fat and fatuous Owl was not far away, Mr. Quelch had fixed up extra French for the Remove that afternoon, thoughtfully taking care that their time should not be wasted while he was looking for Bunter.

Leaving them to the care of Monsieur Charpentier, he walked down to Courtfield, in the hope of picking up news of Bunter. He had learned that Bunter's telephone call had come from Courtfield Post Office, which indicated that he was—or had been—in Courtfield. And Bunter was a fellow who, once seen, was not easily forgotten.

Quelch made inquiries. He did not, as Bunter would naturally have expected, inquire for a handsome, distinguished-looking fellow, athletic, and of aristocratic appearance. He inquired for a fat schoolboy in spectacles.

But he had had no luck. He came along the High Street, by the doorway of a bunshop. He decided to drop into that establishment for two reasons. One was that a cup of tea would be grateful and comforting on a hot afternoon; the other was that a place where foodstuffs were obtainable was a place where Billy Bunter was likely to be found.

Quelch walked in—as Bunter walked out!

They met in the doorway! Having arranged matters with Marco, Billy Bunter had received an advance of his salary as assistant to the lion-tamer. He explained to Marco that there were a few things he had to get.

He got them in the bunshop! They were all eatable, and he packed them away in his capacious interior.

After which, Bunter rolled out, feeling fat and cheery and satisfied, to walk back to the circus camp. And he jumped clear of the floor at the sight of a tall and angular figure just in front of him.

He had taken it for granted that Quelch was in the Remove-room at Greyfriars. Evidently, he had taken too much for granted.

"Bunter!" repeated Mr. Quelch.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "So you are here?" barked the Remove master.

"Oh, no!" gasped Bunter. "N-n-not at all, sir! I—I—I mean—"

"I have found you, Bunter!"

"Beast!"

"Wha-at?"

"I—I—I mean—I—I was just coming back to school, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I was on my way, sir! My father—I mean, my uncle—is—is much better, and—and I was coming bub-bib-back— You—you needn't take hold of my collar, sir! I—I'm coming!"

Mr. Quelch did not seem to agree with Bunter on that point. He took hold of the fat junior's collar with a grip of iron.

"Come!" he said.

"Oh crumbs!"

Bunter came! With that grip on his collar, he had to come! People in the bunshop stared round. Neither Mr. Quelch nor Bunter heeded them. The fat junior trailed out dismally with his Form-master.

Mr. Quelch gave up the idea of that refreshing cup of tea. Having made his capture, he was anxious to get that hopeful member of his Form back to the school as quickly as possible. He was rather keen to see Bunter receive what awaited him there. Bunter, on the other hand, was far from keen.

In the High Street they received many glances from passers-by. It was rather unusual to see a tall, scholastic-looking gentleman marching a fat and wriggling schoolboy along by the collar.

But Mr. Quelch could not venture to let go Bunter's collar. It was quite clear that the fat junior would dodge if he did.

"I—I—I say, sir," gasped Bunter, "you can let go—"

"Silence!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Walk quickly, Bunter! We are receiving very undesirable attention from the public!"

"I—I can't walk quickly, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I've sprained my ankle! I've got a fearful pain, sir!"

Heedless of that statement, Mr. Quelch marched him rapidly on. More and more people stared, and three or four small boys began to follow in a sort of procession. They made remarks as they followed.

Mr. Quelch was pink with vexation. He jerked at Bunter's collar, and the fat junior gurgled as he rolled onward. It was far from being Mr. Quelch's wish to afford an entertainment for the small fry of Courtfield. Publicity had no attractions for him at all.

Unattractive as it was, he was getting it. More small boys joined up. A grocer's lad with a basket and a butcher's boy with a wooden tray forgot that it was their duty to deliver goods with promptness and dispatch, and followed the growing procession.

"I—I say, sir, if—if you'll leggo, I—I'll come all right, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I want to come!"

"I do not trust you, Bunter!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, really, sir, I—I'm not thinking of dodging away if you let go my collar! I—I say, sir—"

"Be silent!"

"I—I say, is—is the Head waxy, sir?"

Mr. Quelch gave him a glare.

"If you mean, is your headmaster angry, Bunter, he is very angry indeed! You will be flogged severely!"

"Oh crikey! I—I say, sir—"

"Silence!"

Billy Bunter rolled on dismally. It was clear to him now that he had not "stuffed" Quelch, as he had happily

believed. Instead of supposing that he was in affectionate attendance at the bedside of a sick relative, Quelch somehow—Bunter did not know how—knew that he had run away from school. And he was taking him back to be flogged!

The fact that he deserved to be flogged made no difference to Billy Bunter. He hated the idea of it.

Somehow or other, he had to get away before Quelch walked him into Greyfriars. Then, to his horror, Mr. Quelch spotted a passing empty taxi, and with his disengaged hand signed to the driver. Mr. Quelch was extremely anxious to get away from the gathering crowd, and he was very glad to see that taxi. The taximan drove to the kerb and stopped.

Bunter was desperate.

Quelch's grip on his collar was like that of a vice. There was no possibility of loosening it. But Billy Bunter's fat brain was working at full pressure now.

Suddenly, with a swift turn, he twisted out of his jacket. Mr. Quelch, jerking him towards the taxi, jerked the jacket away as Bunter escaped from it.

Bunter bounded.

In his shirtsleeves, he went down Courtfield High Street at a frantic rush, and the Remove master was left standing at the door of the taxi, with an empty jacket in his hand, staring blankly after the fleeing Owl.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Booked!

"**B**UNTER!" shrieked Mr. Quelch. Bunter flew.

"Stop! You hear me, Bunter? Stop!"

Bunter heard, but he heeded not! The rate at which the fat Owl went down the High Street hinted that he had a good chance for the school 100 yards. His feet hardly touched the pavement.

There was a buzz of excitement from the crowd. The entertainment was panning out better than they had expected.

For a moment Mr. Quelch stared, transfixed. Then he rushed after Bunter.

"'Ere, sir—" shouted the taxi-driver.

Mr. Quelch did not heed him. He tore after Bunter. His long legs whisked at a terrific rate as he rushed in pursuit. And he did not rush alone. After him rushed quite an army of the juvenile population of Courtfield, in great excitement. They were not missing this.

"Bunter! Stop!"

"Oh crikey!"

Billy Bunter pounded frantically on. He had started at a terrific burst of speed. But he had to slow down. He had too much weight to carry to keep it up.

Mr. Quelch's sprinting days were long over. But he was still active, and he gained rapidly on the fleeing Owl.

Closer and closer behind Bunter came the pattering footsteps of the pursuer. An outstretched clutching hand grasped at Bunter and barely missed a fat shoulder. The next clutch touched, and almost held. Another moment, and Quelch would have had him.

What happened next was unintentional on Bunter's part. He bounded on desperately, stumbled, and fell fairly at the Remove master's feet.

Mr. Quelch was going too fast to stop. In a moment his long legs tangled over Bunter, and he pitched forward.

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

He sprawled over the fat Owl, his

nose tapped the pavement, and his hat rolled off. Hardly knowing what had happened to him, the breathless Form-master lay spreadeagled, gurgling for breath.

"Urrrrgh!" gurgled Mr. Quelch dizzily.

"Urrrrgh!" gurgled Bunter.

"Urrrrgh! Upon my word! Urrrrgh!"

"Wow! Oh crikey! Wow!"

Billy Bunter scrambled up. Mr. Quelch had got as far as his hands and knees by the time Bunter got to his feet.

Bunter did not wait for Quelch to resume the perpendicular. Breathless, gasping, but desperate, he barged on, and careered down the street. A yell of encouragement from the thickening crowd followed him. There were at least thirty people taking a deep and personal interest in the matter now, and the public sympathy, on the whole, was on Bunter's side.

"Hook it, fatty!" roared the butcher's boy.

"Put it on, you with the specs!" shouted the youth who assisted the local grocer in the delivery of goods—a duty that he had momentarily forgotten in his keen interest in Bunter and Quelch.

Mr. Quelch staggered up.

His nose, which had tapped the hard pavement, was red and raw. His hat was gone. His scanty locks blew out on end. He panted for breath. He was dusty. He was damaged. He was intensely exasperated.

He grabbed at his hat. Even at the cost of allowing Bunter to gain a lead, he could not rush on hatless.

But the butcher's boy, with the good-natured intention of giving Bunter a chance, kicked the hat out of his reach.

"How dare you!" gasped Mr. Quelch, "Leave my hat alone! Give me my hat!"

He plunged after it again. But the grocer's boy weighed in, and kicked it off the pavement into the road.

"Let the kid alone, old boney!" said the grocer's boy. "What's he done?"

Mr. Quelch did not answer that question. He plunged into the road after his hat. He grabbed it up, jammed it on his head, and re-started after the interval.

But Billy Bunter had gained quite a long start by that time. His fat figure had vanished down the High Street, going all out for the road over the common.

Bunter's one idea was to get clear of the Remove master, and get back to the circus. Once there, he was safe: if only he reached that refuge unpursued. And by the time Mr. Quelch had finally recaptured his hat and re-started, Bunter had got out of the town, and the open common lay before him.

In a state of excitement and wrath to which no words could have done justice, Mr. Quelch sprinted after him. After Quelch trotted the young Courtfielders, eager to be in at the death.

At the end of the High Street, Quelch sighted Bunter again. Well ahead, the fat Owl panted desperately.

In the distance, across the green common, rose the summit of the big circus tent. But Mr. Quelch did not glance at it. He was quite unaware that Muccolini's Circus was Bunter's destination.

His eyes fixed on Bunter with a glitter in them that would have made the fat junior's flesh creep, had he seen it. Seldom, or never, had Henry Samuel Quelch been so terrifically enraged. Not only had Bunter absented himself from school without leave. Not only had he cut classes. He was resisting his Form-master's attempt to

recapture him—adding reckless rebellion to his other numerous offences: offence piled on offence, like Ossa piled on Pelion. Quelch surged on.

But now he was losing ground. His fall on the pavement had damaged him. He had barked his knees, and he had a pain in them. His wind was failing him. As the last houses of Courtfield dropped astern, Mr. Quelch slowed to a stop, panting and panting for breath, perspiration streaming down his face.

The fat figure ahead was still running. Only desperation could have kept Billy Bunter going. But desperation did.

"Go it, old 'un!"

"Put it on, bag of bones!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch did not heed the voices round him. He mopped a streaming brow, and glared after the fat figure that was growing smaller and smaller in the distance down the long white road.

He felt a touch on his arm.

"'Ere, you, sir—"

"Stand back!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "How dare you—" Then he saw that it was the taximan.

"Didn't you call my cab?" demanded the taxi-driver indignantly. "Didn't you stop me? I ask you! I've follered you as far as this, and I tell you I want my fare! See?"

Mr. Quelch checked an angry answer. He had forgotten the taxi. But the driver, who considered that he was entitled to a fare, had not forgotten. He had followed on; and there he was!

"Oh! Yes! No! Yes!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Certainly! Quite!" He spun round towards the taxi. It was a wind-fall at that moment. "Driver! Follow that boy—you see him—that fat boy—he has run away from school—follow him—lose no time—I will pay you double fare if he is caught."

Indignation disappeared from the taxi-man's face as if wiped off by a duster.

"I'm on, sir! Jump in!"

Mr. Quelch bounded into the taxi. The driver jumped into his seat. The taxi buzzed away—followed by disappointed howls from the audience. Some of them scuttled after the cab, still hopeful. But there was nothing in it. The whizzing taxi dropped them swiftly behind. The entertainment was over! The butcher's boy and the grocer's boy proceeded to the belated delivery of goods; and the rest were left staring.

Mr. Quelch, mopping a perspiring brow in the taxi, was glad to get clear of them. It had been quite against his will that he had provided that free entertainment that afternoon, in the High Street of Courtfield.

The taxi whizzed down the road over the common. Quelch fixed his eyes on the fat figure, on which he was now gaining hand over fist. Bunter was booked!

Unaware that he was booked, the fat Owl came to a halt on the road. He blinked back through his big spectacles. He was anxious to make sure that Quelch was not at hand before he cut across from the road to the circus camp on the common.

He did not see Quelch! All he saw was a taxi-cab, coming on at a rush. It did not occur to him for the moment, that Quelch was inside the taxi.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "Oh lor!" He dabbed trickling perspiration on his fat face, and gasped for breath. "Thank goodness I've got clear of that beast! Oh, crumbs!"

The taxi jarred to a halt.

The door flew open.

Mr. Quelch jumped out.

"Bunter!"

"Ch crikey!" gasped Bunter. "Oh!" His eyes bulged behind his spectacles at the Remove master.

He made a wild bound to escape. But it was too late! A leaping tiger had nothing on Quelch, as the Remove master leaped at Bunter. A grip of iron fastened on the fat junior

This time it did not fasten on a jacket collar. This time the grip fastened on a fat neck!

"Oooocgh!" gurgled Bunter.

He wriggled wildly. But the game was up. He could not play the same trick again. He had slipped out of his jacket and left it behind. But he could not leave his neck behind!

"Wurrgh! Leggo! You're chook-chick-chuck-choking me!" spluttered Bunter. "I say—gurrgh!"

With a swing of his arm, Mr. Quelch landed Bunter in the taxi. He followed him in.

"Greyfriars School, as quickly as possible!" he yapped to the driver.

"Yessir!"

The taxi rushed on. Mr. Quelch, still panting, sat beside Bunter—not speaking, but indicating, by his look, whole volumes!

Billy Bunter gave a longing blink back at the circus tent, as it vanished. Marco, the King of the Lions, had been making plans for his new assistant to show up in the ring at the performance that evening. Evidently, Marco had to make new plans! The circus disappeared, and the grey old tower of Greyfriars School rose into view over the trees ahead.

Billy Bunter groaned dismally. The game was up!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Return of the Prodigal!

"THAT ass—"

"Bother him!" said Harry Wharton, crossly.

"I fancy Quelch has gone after him!" said Bob.

"Serve him right if he gets him!" said the captain of the Remove. "What Bunter wants is a jolly good hiding!"

The Remove came out of class-room No. 10, where they had been busy with Monsieur Charpentier, and extra French. Every fellow in the Form guessed why they had been handed over to Mosoo for that lesson. There could be no doubt that Mr. Quelch had gone in search of Bunter. And it was a question of deep and thrilling interest to the Remove, whether Quelch had had any luck.

The Famous Five, earlier that day, had walked to the circus, with quite kind and friendly intentions towards the fat and fatuous Owl. But what had happened at the circus had naturally made them wrathful.

They had returned to Greyfriars dusty and dishevelled and damaged. And they had guessed the source of the mysterious voice that had caused the shindy.

What had happened had, in fact, left no doubt in their minds that Bunter was at the circus. They had not seen him; but he had seen them, and they had been the victims of his ventriloquial trickery. They had no doubt on that point after thinking it over; and now their chief desire was to get within kicking distance of Bunter and kick him hard!

"He's there all right, and he must have spotted us!" remarked Johnny Bull. "But Quelch will never think of looking in the circus."

"Hardly!" agreed Bob.

"I don't see how he could!" assented

Harry Wharton. "We can't give the fat ass away; but, by Jove, I'll jolly well kick him all round the quad when he comes back!"

"But is he coming back?" grinned Bob. "He's got a high old time waiting for him here! Loder's anxious to see him, and Quelch, and the Head—not to mention our noble selves! I fancy Bunter will keep away as long as he jolly well can, and if he sticks safe in the circus, Quelch will never dream of looking for him there. I wonder how long the fat idiot will keep it up?"

"The wonderfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is that Quelch coming back? There's a taxi!" exclaimed Bob suddenly.

"That's Quelch in it!"

"And—great pip! Bunter!"

"Bunter!"

"He's got him!"

The taxi that turned in at the school gates did not stop there. It came on to the House. And there was a roar of voices as the fat, dismal visage of Billy Bunter was spotted, blinking from a window.

Evidently Quelch had "got" him!

"Quelch looks good-tempered—what?" murmured the Bouncer to the Famous Five, as they watched the taxi. And Smithy chuckled.

"Poor old Bunter!" said Bob.

"The poorfulness of the esteemed old Bunter is terrific!"

At the sight of the dismal fat Owl, recaptured and brought back for stern justice, the Famous Five quite forgot their own hostile intentions towards him. Clearly Bunter had enough

(Continued on next page.)

GREYFRIARS INTERVIEWS

Our tame poet is on the war-path again. This week he "holds up"

TROTTER,

the Greyfriars Page-boy.

(1)

We all know the hobby of Trotter, the page, Is reading his hair-raising thrillers. Bold brigands and bandits of every age, The heroes you see on the films and the stage, The cracksmen, detectives and killers! He wallows in stories of bloodthirsty crime, On shockers he spends his whole wages, A criminal's life he considers sublime, And even at work, he will dream all the time He is Trotter the Terror of Pages!

(2)

His heroes are many, but all of them fill The minds of the people with terror. His eyeballs pop out as he thinks with a thrill He's riding with Turpin or Buffalo Bill On a mustang across the Sierra! But greater than any old brigand of yore Is an Al or an Ed or a Toni! For who, demands Trotter, can help but adore The American gunman who's ready to roar, "Aw, say, you ginks, dat's all boloney!"

(3)

There's Jake, the American bandit, who clumps Around in the smartest apparel, I guess he's the baby to give you the jumps, As into some citizen's waistcoat he pumps Hot lead by the bushel or barrel! He don't give a cent for a cartload of "bulls," That's "cops" in American argot, And if they get after him, Jake always pulls His hardware and plugs 'em, then off with the jools! They do things like that in Chicago!

(4)

No answer from Trotter to-day when I called, He sat there engrossed in a novel, Quite dead to the world, he was reading enthralled, A hair-raising journal, a book which was called "The Hound of the Horrible Hovel!" His lips, as he followed the words of the book, Were breathing the speeches out glibly. I stood there a couple of seconds to look, Then quietly slung (to be vulgar) my hook, And went back to speak to old Wibley.

(5)



"But why go to Wibley?" no doubt you will ask. Well, Wib keeps a stock of disguises, I thought it would help me to finish my task If Wib fixed me up in a cloak, with a mask To cover my honny blue eyeses! He did, and he lent me a property gun And a fierce-looking pair of moustaches. "That's fine!" he declared with a chuckle of fun, "If Trotter sees that and don't go with a run, I'll eat my best Sunday goloshes!"



(6)

So back to old Trotter, still fixed to his chair, I crept and I stood there in silence. Then Trotter looked up and discovered me there! I levelled my weapon and shouted: "Prepare To die a dog's death with great violence!" For one fearful second he sat as though bound, Divested of every feeling, And then he rose up with a screech and a bound, And afterwards, when I looked upwards, I found His brainbox had dented the ceiling.

(7)

"Eeeeah!" was the yell that he suddenly gave, He gazed at me, quite overpowered; For when he felt doomed to a too early grave, He no longer acted as Trotter the Brave, But rather as Trotter the Coward. "Beware!" I exclaimed in a voice low and deep, "Beware, oh thou son of a camel! Oh, sluggard, I come here to make thy flesh creep, Too long you have studied this literature cheap, So now you start cleaning enamel!"

(8)



I covered him with my revolver, and said: "You've often said you would abolish The work you are given for earning your bread, Now try it!" But Trotter was shaking with dread, He silently took up the polish! I covered him grimly, and Trotter perspired, But worked with his dread undiminished, And then I gave Trotter a look and retired, But Trotter, they tell me, though toilworn and tired, Worked on till his labour was finished!

coming to him without being kicked round the quad by the Famous Five.

His look indicated that he was aware of it. Never had the fat face of William George Bunter looked so dismal and woebegone.

His expression, indeed, might have touched a heart of stone. But it did not seem to touch Quelch's. The Remove master's look was grim. He seemed to have borrowed the petrifying glare of the fabled Gorgon.

The taxi stopped at the House. Mr. Quelch alighted—the centre of a hundred pairs of eyes. He glared back at the fat Owl. Bunter seemed unable to detach himself from his seat. What awaited him in the House was not attractive.

"Bunter!" rumbled Mr. Quelch.

"Oh dear! Yes, sir!" groaned Bunter.

"Why do you not alight? Get out of the cab at once!"

"Oh lor'!"

Bunter almost crawled out of the cab. He blinked round at the staring crowd of Greyfriars fellows dolorously.

"Go into the House, Bunter!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

Bunter breathed hard. There was a desperate gleam in his little round eyes, behind his big round spectacles. But if the fat Owl was thinking of an attempt to bolt, even at that moment, there was nothing in it.

"Loder, please take Bunter into the House!" rapped Mr. Quelch. "Take care that he does not elude you!"

"Certainly, sir!" said Loder of the Sixth.

He gripped Bunter by a fat arm.

"Ow!" squeaked Bunter.

"Come in, you young rascal!" said Loder.

"Oh lor'!"

Loder marched Bunter in. Then Mr. Quelch paid the taxi fare and followed. The Greyfriars fellows were left in a buzz.

Bunter was taken to his Form-master's study. He blinked dismally round that familiar apartment.

"You will remain here, Bunter, while I see your headmaster!" said Mr. Quelch sternly.

Bunter had a gleam of hope. There was a window, and if he was left there while Quelch went to see the Head—But that brief hope was dashed the next moment.

"Loder, will you kindly remain in this study until I return?" said Mr. Quelch. "I cannot trust this boy."

"Certainly, sir!"

"You will take every care that he does not leave this study, Loder. For some reason I fail to understand, the stupid boy seems bent on running away from school. You will take every care—"

"Rely on me, sir!"

"Very good, Loder."

Mr. Quelch quitted the study, shutting the door after him. Billy Bunter cast a longing blink at that door, and then at the window, which was wide open, letting in the bright July sunshine. If only he had had a chance to drop from that window and scud for the gates before Mr. Quelch came back to take him to the Head—

Loder, reading the thought in his fat face, grinned.

"Try it on!" he suggested.

"Beast!" groaned Bunter.

Loder rubbed his waistcoat reminiscently. Perhaps he was still feeling a twinge there.

"Get away from that window!" he rapped.

"I—I was only g-g-going to look out!" gasped Bunter. "I—I was only going to s-s-speak to Wharton, Loder! I—I wasn't thinking of jumping out! I—I say, c-c-can't I j-j-just look out of the window?"

Loder stepped to Mr. Quelch's table. The Remove master's cane lay there. Loder picked it up.

"Get away from that window!"

"I—I say—"

Swipe!

"Yaroooooh!" roared Bunter, as the cane landed on his tight trousers.

Swipe!

"Yoo-hoop!"

"Getting away from that window?" grinned Loder.

"Ow! Wow!"

Bunter got away from the window.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Neck or Nothing!

"THAL cad Loder—"

Loder of the Sixth gave a start as the voice floated—or seemed to float—in at the open window of Mr. Quelch's study. It was—or ought to have been—the voice of Bob Cherry of the Remove. Loder started, and his eyes gleamed.

"That rotter Loder—" said another voice; or, at all events, a voice that sounded like another—Harry Wharton's.

Loder stepped towards the open window, his jaw jutting and his eyes glinting.

The bully of the Sixth was aware that fellows in the Remove had no high opinion of him. Now they seemed to be carelessly letting him know what they thought of him! It was not safe for juniors to tell a Sixth Form prefect, invested with the power of the ashplant, what they thought of him!

A number of fellows had gathered in the quad, opposite Mr. Quelch's window. They were deeply interested in the recaptured Owl! Everybody in the Remove—and most fellows in other Forms—were discussing what was going to happen to Billy Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co. would willingly have given him an encouraging word—which was really kind of them, considering the trick the fat ventriloquist had played on them that day. But they discerned Loder of the Sixth in the study, evidently keeping watch on Bunter, so they did not come too near the window.

They were near enough, however, to meet Loder's angry glare as he put his head out.

"Wharton! Cherry!" rapped Loder.

Billy Bunter, in the study, breathed quickly. He knew, if Loder did not, that those voices at the window were a ventriloquial effect.

Getting away by the window was impracticable. But if Loder's attention was drawn to the window, there was a chance at the door.

Bunter was in a frame of mind now to take the most desperate chances. He had kept out of school, in the first place, merely to dodge Loder—now he had Mr. Quelch and the Head to deal with as well! He had, in fact, piled up so much trouble for himself at Greyfriars, that any refuge would have been welcome. And there was a refuge all ready, if he could get to it—the circus, where, instead of being a whopped schoolboy, he was going to be a big noise and a great gun—a change ever so much for the better! He was going on the circus bills as "Bunto the Boy Tamer!"—and he vastly preferred being Bunto the Boy Tamer, to being W. G. Bunter, flogged by his headmaster!

Stepping on tiptoe, suppressing his breathing, the fat Owl edged towards the door as Gerald Loder glared out of the window.

The two juniors, as they were called, came nearer. They wondered what Loder wanted.

"Yes, Loder," said Harry Wharton.

"I heard you—both of you!" snarled Loder. "I suppose you didn't think I should hear your voices, you young sweeps! Do you fancy you can call a Sixth Form prefect names like that?"

"Eh—like what?" asked Harry, in astonishment.

"We weren't speaking to you, Loder," said Bob, equally astonished. "I was just saying to Wharton that I wondered what was going to happen to Bunter."

"I heard you!" roared Loder.



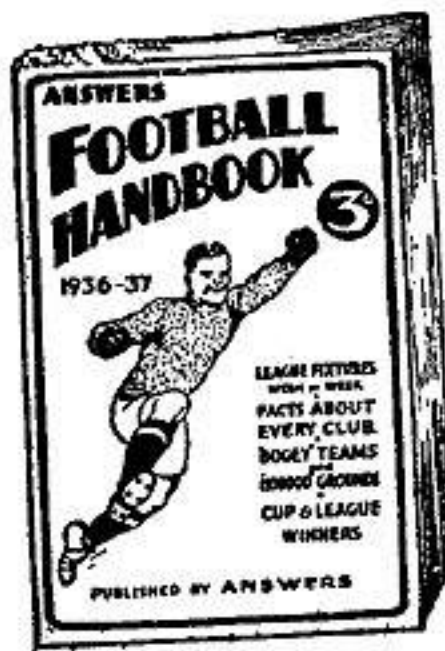
Get your copy to-day

ANSWERS FOOTBALL HANDBOOK

3d

AT ALL NEWSAGENTS AND BOOKSTALLS

ANSWERS FOOTBALL HANDBOOK puts you right about all the things you will want to know about the coming Football Season. The league fixtures are arranged so that you can keep a record of results. It gives the latest information about the clubs and players, also Cup Tie and International Match dates and a wealth of other useful information.



"Well, if you heard me, there's no harm in wondering what's going to happen to poor old Bunter, is there?" asked Bob.

"That will do, Cherry. Go to my study at once—both of you—and wait till I come there!" rapped Loder.

"What for?" demanded Wharton angrily.

"For calling a prefect names, you cheeky young rascal!"

"But we never—"

"That's enough! Go to my study at once!"

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry looked at him. They were strongly inclined to tell Loder to go and eat coke. Still, a prefect's order was a prefect's order, and Loder of the Sixth was a prefect. In expressive silence the two juniors turned away, and went towards the door of the House.

Click!

That sound greeted Loder's ears as he turned from the window. It was the sound of the study door shutting, and the key turning outside.

Bunter was gone!

Loder had been about a minute at the window, glaring out at the Removites, and, for that space of sixty seconds, rather forgetful of Bunter.

Sixty seconds had been enough for the fat Owl. Billy Bunter's movements generally rather resembled those of the tortoise than the hare. But Bunter was desperate now, and understudying the hare instead of the tortoise. Swiftly, silently, he changed the key to the outside of the lock, and popped out; and the door was closing on him, as Loder turned from the window.

With a gasp of wrath, Loder bounded across the study.

He grasped the door handle, turned it, and tugged. But as the door was locked on the outside, it did not budge.

He heard a breathless gasp without.

"Bunter!" roared Loder. "You young rascal! You—you've locked me in! You—you—you—Unlock that door at once! Do you hear?"

Bunter certainly heard. But answer there came none. Leaving the infuriated Loder tugging at a locked door, the fat junior scuttled down Masters' Passage.

Loder thumped frantically on the door.

"Open this door!" he bellowed.

"Let me out! Will you open this door, you young scoundrel? Bunter!"

Thump, thump, thump!

If Loder could have got at the fat Owl at that moment, Bunter would have had a sample of what was coming to him from the Head—a foretaste of the wrath to come. Fortunately, Loder couldn't. Stout oak and a strong lock stood in the way, and Loder, imprisoned in the Remove master's study, could only bang and bawl.

Bunter did not linger to listen.

He bolted.

He did Masters' Passage as if it were the cinder-path. In less than a minute the open doorway of the House was before him—the open quad beyond, brilliant with the sunshine of July.

But, alas! for Bunter. In the doorway stood the portly figure of Mr. Prout, master of the Fifth, in conversation with Monsieur Charpentier. Both the masters stared blankly at Bunter as he came bolting doorward.

"Goodness gracious!" ejaculated Prout.

"Mon Dieu! Ce garçon!" gasped Mossoo.

"Upon my word! The boy is running away again! And it is not ten minutes since he was brought in!"

boomed Prout. "Bunter! Boy, stop Secure him, Monsieur Charpentier Assist me to secure him!"

"Mais oui! Oui!"

Escape was barred. Prout and Mossoo made a dive at Bunter. In a moment hands would have been upon him.

Bunter swerved, and dashed for the staircase. In Masters' Passage Loder was bawling and banging, and two or three beaks were coming out of their studies, disturbed by the uproar. Hemmed in behind and before, it was the stairs or nothing for Bunter—and he took the stairs. Bunter usually did stairs very slowly; now he did them something like a flash of lightning.

"Bunter, stop!" boomed Prout, rolling in pursuit.

"Buntair! Zat you stop, viz you?" shrieked Monsieur Charpentier.

Bunter did not stop.

He bounded.

Monsieur Charpentier dashed up the staircase after him. Mossoo was light and active. Prout, who was neither, lumbered more slowly in the rear. Bunter reached the landing above as Mossoo reached Bunter, and grabbed at a fat leg.

Without stopping to think, Bunter kicked out backwards.

"Ciel!" yelled Monsieur Charpentier.

Bunter's boot clumped on a Gallic jawbone. Monsieur Charpentier spun over. Yelling, he rolled.

Prout, following him up the stairs, had not, of course, expected that. He was quite taken by surprise as the French master crashed into him.

He made a frantic clutch at the banisters, and missed. Prout rolled, and Monsieur Charpentier rolled. They landed together at the foot of the staircase, winded to the wide, and gurgling horribly. Above, Bunter vanished, still going strong.

"Mon Dieu! Nom d'un nom!" spluttered Monsieur Charpentier. "On me tue! On m'assomme! Oooooogh!"

"I—I— Oooh! Oggh!" gurgled Prout.

"What—what has happened?" Mr. Quelch, coming back from the Head's study, halted, to stare at the startling scene. "Mr. Prout—Monsieur Charpentier, what—"

"Ciel! I am smash! I am keel! I die viz myself!" wailed Mossoo. "I am keeck on ze cheen! I am chuck down l'escalier—ze staircase! Helas! I zink zat I go to die!"

"But what—"

"That—that boy—that—that Bunter!" gasped Prout, sitting up dizzily. "That boy of your Form—that—that—that—"

"Bunter—Bunter is in my study. Surely—" Without waiting to finish, Mr. Quelch whisked away to his study.

Bang, bang, bang! came on the inner side of the door.

"You rotter! Let me out!" came Loder's roar. "Do you hear, you blighter? I'll smash you! I'll—"

"Loder," stuttered Mr. Quelch.

He turned back the key, and pushed the door open. Loder, about to charge into the passage with brandished fists, stopped suddenly as he saw the Remove master.

"Oh!" he gasped. "You— I—"

"Where is Bunter?" almost raved Mr. Quelch.

"He—he—he got out, and locked the door on me, and—"

"I left him in your charge. Have you been so stupid, so foolish, so—so insensate, as to allow that boy—"

"I—I—I couldn't help— I—I—"

"Fool!"

Seldom or never did Mr. Quelch use such an expression. But he was fairly

gounded now. He had seen the Head. Dr. Locke was prepared to deal with the truant. Quelch had come back to fetch him. The Head was waiting. He had to be left waiting. Bunter was on his travels again—where? No wonder Mr. Quelch forgot, at that moment, the calm and dignified mode of address proper to a Form-master.

"Fool!" he repeated.

"Look here—" gasped Loder.

"Dolt!" said Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—"

"Imbecile!"

Leaving it at that, Mr. Quelch hurried away to hunt for Bunter. Loder was left in no doubt as to what the Remove master thought of him.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Doggo!

TEMPLE of the Fourth stood at his study window, looking out, and grinning. Cecil Reginald Temple was rather amused.

There was a crowd in the quad, and excited voices floated up to Temple's ears. And the name of Bunter was, so to speak, the burden of the song. Bunter had been caught. Bunter had bolted again. Bunter's name was on every tongue. And Greyfriars resounded with the name of Bunter, as with Orinthia the rocks of old. Bunter had the house.

Where Bunter actually was, nobody seemed to know. But he was expected to come bolting out of the House every moment by a door, or by a window. It was known that Mr. Quelch was rooting through the Remove studies. But Bunter had not been seen since he had scampered up the stairs. Whether he was still in the House, whether he had got out, or whether he was just about to get out, nobody knew. But a swarming crowd watched for him, most of them laughing. And Temple, watching the exciting scene from his study window, grinned.

Interested in what he saw below in the quad, Temple did not notice a slight sound at his open doorway, behind him.

He did not know that a fat face, adorned by a large pair of spectacles, blinked into the study.

Neither was he aware that a fat fist was shaken at his back, as Billy Bunter spotted him standing at the window.

Quelch was in the Remove passage. It was for that precise reason that Billy Bunter wasn't.

Bunter was hunting cover. Evidently a Remove study was no safe cover. Bunter had dodged into the Fifth Form passage first, in the hope of finding concealment in a senior study. But the sight of Coker of the Fifth had caused him to dodge out again, faster than he had dodged in. An anxious blink along the Fourth Form studies showed him no fellow in sight; and Bunter tiptoed along by those studies, and blinked in at the first open door.

It was deeply exasperating to see a Fourth Form fellow in the room. Bunter wanted to spot an unoccupied study in which to park himself, until the hunt died down a little. Spotting Temple, he shook his fist at the back of that youth's unconscious head, and paused, irresolute.

Then there was a sound of footsteps in the direction of the stairs. Fellows were coming up.

Temple, leaning out of the study window, was still staring at the mob below. Bunter tiptoed in.

Cecil Reginald Temple, being, naturally, unprovided with eyes in the back of his head, did not see him. And Bunter took care that Cecil Reginald did not hear him!

He reached the study table. That table was laid for tea. There was a nice white table-cloth on it, which reached down low on all sides. Billy Bunter lowered himself on his fat knees and crept under the table.

Bunter was not considered bright in the Remove. But in these moments of stress, Bunter's fat brain was working at double pressure. The table-cloth afforded excellent cover—he was out of sight as soon as he was parked under that table. And the fact that a Fourth Form fellow was in the study, made it all the safer for him if he was looked for—so long, of course, as that fellow did not spot him hunting cover.

And Temple didn't!
Temple did not look round from the window till there was a tramp of feet at the doorway, and his study-mates, Dabney and Fry, came in.

Then Cecil Reginald turned, grinning, from the window. But before that, Bunter was safe out of sight.

"Have they got him?" asked Temple.
"Not yet!" grinned Fry. "Seen anything of him up here?"

"No! He can't be still in the House!" said Temple, little dreaming that the subject of his remark was within sound of his voice.

"I fancy he is!" said Fry. "Scuttled up into the box-rooms, perhaps!"

"What a game!" grinned Temple.
"Oh, rather!" chuckled Dabney.

"I don't envy him if Loder gets hold of him!" said Fry. "I hear that Quelch has been slanging Loder for letting him get away. He's been taking it out of Wharton and Cherry, of the Remove—whopping them in his study. I hear that they got six each for calling Loder names. Anyhow, he's in a fearful wax."

"Bunter's more likely to get six dozen!" chuckled Temple. "The fat idiot! All through his pinching my circus ticket last week, you know. Of course, I was going to kick him till he paid for it—not that he ever would! And it seems that he got Loder with a cricket-bat, thinking it was me—goodness knows how—but he's fool enough for anything. You can't get a Sixth Form prefect with a cricket-bat in the bread-basket, without something happening afterwards."

"I fancy he wishes by this time that he'd let Loder whop him!" grinned Fry. "Now he's got it coming from his beak, and the Head as well! Why, after all this rumpus, they'll fairly skin him!"

"I saw Quelch," said Dabney, "gnashing his teeth! Fairly gnashing them! I pity Bunter when he's found."

"If he's still in the House they'll find him!" said Temple. "Quelch won't leave much of him for the Head—and if he does, the Head won't leave much of him for Loder!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Temple & Co. sat down to tea. They chuckled as they sat. The wild adventures of the Owl of the Remove seemed to afford them entertainment.

But if they saw a comic side to the affair, that aspect was quite lost on Billy Bunter. The fat Owl perspired with funk as he squatted under the study table. The bare idea of meeting his Form-master's glinting eyes, made the fat Owl cringe. Billy Bunter would have given all the postal orders he had expected, all the time he had been at Greyfriars, only to be safe at Mucco.

lini's Circus—out of the vengeful reach of Form-masters, headmasters, and prefects.

Instead of which, he was squatting under Temple's study table, in momentary dread of discovery.

Three pairs of feet were pushed under that table, as Temple and Dabney and Fry sat down. Billy Bunter barely dodged them. There really was not a lot of room under a study table for a fat Remove and three pairs of Fourth Form boots! Every moment Bunter dreaded that a boot would clump on some part of his fat person and betray his presence.

There was a heavy tread in the passage.

Bunter's fat heart almost died in his breast. He knew that tread!

Temple, Dabney, and Fry jumped up as Mr. Quelch looked into the study. They suppressed their grins. Quelch's expression did not encourage grinning.

"Have you seen Bunter, of my Form?" asked the Remove master, in a voice that was not loud, but deep, and which sent a thrill of terror to a fat heart under the study table.

"No, sir; not since you brought him in, in the taxi!" answered Temple. "I saw him from my window—"

"He is probably concealed in some study," said Mr. Quelch. "I must search in every study—"

Bunter barely repressed a squeak of terror.

"He's not here, sir!" said Temple. "I've been in this room ever since you brought him into the school, sir!"

"You have not been out of the study, Temple?"

"No, sir; I was waiting for these chaps to come up to tea."

"Very good!"

Mr. Quelch passed on. He had plenty of studies to search, and did not want to waste time. As Temple had been in that study all the time, and had not seen Bunter, that was that!

The door closed on Mr. Quelch, much to the relief of the hidden Owl. When it was shut, Temple & Co. ventured to chuckle.

"Looks waxy, what?" grinned Temple.

"Just a few!" chortled Fry. "Poor old Bunter! He's a blithering idiot, and he's asked for it—but he will get all he's asked for, and some over, when Quelch gets hold of him."

"Oh, rather!"

The three juniors sat down to tea again. Temple's legs, which were rather long, were shoved under the table, and this time the squatting Owl did not succeed in avoiding a collision.

"Here, give a fellow room!" said Temple, as his boot clumped on something out of sight. "Keep your hoofs your own side, Dab!"

"Wharrer you mean?" asked Dabney.

"My feet are under my chair!"

"Yours, then, Fry!" said Temple.

"What the dooce are you sticking them right across here for?"

"I'm not, ass!" said Fry.

"Oh, don't be a fathead, old chap! I banged my foot on your hoof—"

"You jolly well didn't!"

"Well, I banged it on something," said Temple. "Is that your hoof, or isn't it?" And Temple kicked the unseen object with which his foot had collided under the table.

"Yaroooooh!"

It was a sudden yell.

Bunter had not intended to utter that yell. Far from it. He uttered it quite involuntarily and unintentionally, as Temple's boot banged on his fat waistcoat.

Temple jumped.

"What the dooce—" he stuttered.

"Great pip! There's something—somebody—" ejaculated Fry.

"Who—what—" gasped Dabney.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He was discovered! Evidently there was no rest for the wicked! Temple leaped to his feet.

"Who is it—is it Bunter? Can that fat idiot—I say, root him out, if it's Bunter! Bag him!"

Bunter had no time to lose. He acted promptly. There was a sudden up-ending of the study table. Crockery and foodstuff shot off in a shower on all sides as the table rocked. A pat of butter landed on Temple—the milk-jug on Fry, and a shower of crashing crocks on Dabney.

Crash! Clatter! Crash! Smash!

Wild howls rose from Temple & Co. A fat figure leapt for the door.

"Bunter!"

"Scrag him!"

"Collar him!"

Bunter tore open the door and darted into the passage. He slammed the door after him, and fled.

Mr. Quelch, stepping out of a study farther up the passage, gave a jump at the sight of the fat figure bolting out of Temple's room.

"Bunter!" he roared.

He rushed down the passage. Bunter was in full flight. After him rushed the Remove master. Temple's door whirled open, and Temple, Dabney, and Fry came rushing out—red with wrath.

They were after Bunter! But it was Bunter's Form-master they met, crashing into him as he passed the study.

Mr. Quelch went spinning! Round him spun the three Fourth Formers. There was a heavy bump as the Remove master sat down.

"Oh gad!" gasped Temple, staggering against the wall. "Quelch! Oh crumbs!"

"You—you—you—" spluttered Mr. Quelch. "You were hiding Bunter in your study—you have—you young rascal—you—"

Mr. Quelch scrambled to his feet. He delayed only one moment, to deal Cecil Reginald Temple a sounding box on the ear. Then he scudded after Bunter. But the fleeing Owl had not lost a second. He had turned the first corner—and was gone!

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Luck at Last!

"I SAY, you fellows!"
Five fellows started, and stared.

Then they all ejaculated, together:

"Bunter!"

Harry Wharton & Co. had come up to tea in Study No. 1—a rather late tea. Bob Cherry hurled the door open and the chums of the Remove came in—into an apparently empty study. So they were startled to hear a fat, gasping voice, and stared round them blankly.

But the next moment the Owl of the Remove was revealed. His fat face and glimmering spectacles peered out from behind the door.

Evidently, Bunter had taken refuge in that study and had dodged behind the door as it opened.

"I—I say, is that beast coming?" breathed Bunter.

"You fat ass—" exclaimed Harry.

"Don't shout, you dummy!" gasped Bunter. "Is Quelch coming?"

Bob Cherry closed the door quickly.



"Is that your hoof, Fry, or is it not?" said Temple, as he kicked the unseen object with which his foot had collided under the table. "Yaroooooooh!" There was a sudden yell, and Temple jumped. "What the dooce—" he stuttered. "Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter, from his hiding-place under the table.

Everybody but Bunter realised that the sooner he was found, the better it would be for him. But he did not want to be found; and it was not for other fellows to give him away.

"We passed Quelch on the landing, as we came up!" said Frank Nugent.

"Oh crikey!"

"Trot out, you fathead!" advised Johnny Bull. "The longer you keep up this game, the worse you will get it at the finish!"

"Beast!"

"Look here, Bunter—" began the captain of the Remove.

"I got away from him in the Fourth!" groaned Bunter. "I—I came here because I knew he'd been through the Remove studies. Is—is he coming back?"

"You howling ass, Quelch will root after you till he grabs you!" said Harry. "How long do you think you can keep this up, you chump?"

"I—I say, if I had a chance of getting out of school it would be all right!" groaned Bunter. "I—I say, can't you fellows help me get away?"

"Help you run away from school, you fathead!" gasped Bob.

"Yes! You see—"

"Hark!" whispered Nugent.

Footsteps—well-known footsteps, came along the Remove passage. Billy Bunter hastily backed behind the door again, so that it would hide him if it opened. He squeezed himself into as small a space as possible.

"Oh lor!" groaned Bunter. "I—I say, you fellows, that's Quelch. I—I say, if he comes in here, don't you give me away."

"I suppose he's going through the studies again," said Harry. "If he is, he will start with this—"

"Keep it dark!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say, if he looks in, tell him—tell him you saw me in the Fifth Form

passage, see? Say—say you were just coming to tell him! Say you saw me hiding out of sight under Coker's table—"

"Oh crumbs!"

Billy Bunter hardly breathed. Evidently, Quelch was going through the Remove again, and if so, he was sure to begin at the first study in the passage.

The fat Owl blinked round desperately through his big spectacles.

"I—I say, you fellows, d-d-do you think I could get up the chimney?" he gasped.

"Oh crikey!"

But there was no time for that desperate resource, even if the fat Owl could have made up his mind to it.

The footsteps stopped at Study No. 1 and the door opened. Billy Bunter gave the Famous Five an agonised blink of entreaty, as the opening door shut him off from view.

Mr. Quelch stepped in. His gimlet eyes gleamed round the study; but did not, of course, penetrate the oaken door that was, fortunately, between him and Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co. stood respectfully at attention. It was extremely awkward for them. They certainly did not intend to give the hunted Owl away; but if Bunter was found there, it meant trouble. And he was certain to be found, if Quelch looked for him.

"Have you seen Bunter?" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"Bunter, sir!" stammered Wharton.

"I believe the stupid boy came in this direction," said Mr. Quelch. "He was hiding in a Fourth Form study a short time ago."

"We—we've only just come up, sir—"

"He may be here without your knowledge. He appears to have been hiding in Temple's study without the know-

ledge of the Fourth Form boys there. I shall search every study in the passage, beginning with this!" said Mr. Quelch.

Behind the door, Bunter fairly quaked. He was hardly more than a foot from his Form-master, with only the door between. Quelch had only to make a few steps farther into the study and glance round. The fat Owl wished, at that awful moment, that he had tried the chimney! It was a spacious, old-fashioned chimney; and in July, of course, there was no fire in the grate. But it was too late to think of that.

But it was not too late to think of another resource. Bunter's fat brain was working now, not merely at double, but at treble and quadruple pressure. He remembered his ventriloquism. He hadn't clambered into the chimney. But Quelch might be made to believe that he had!

Mr. Quelch stepped farther into the study. As he did so, a fat squeaking voice was heard:

"Oh crikey! This beastly chimney's full of soot!"

Mr. Quelch started violently.

"What—what—what is that?" he ejaculated. "Is that Bunter? Upon my word, is it possible that that foolish, that utterly stupid boy has climbed into a chimney?"

He crossed the study hastily and stooped before the grate.

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at one another blankly. They, at all events, knew that Bunter was not in the chimney!

"Bunter!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. He was shouting up the wide, black orifice of the old chimney. "Bunter! Come down immediately."

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Bob Cherry.

(Continued on page 28.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1482.

CAPTAIN VENGEANCE!

By John Bredon.

Masterly Bluff!

WITH all lights carefully shaded, the pirate cruiser *Vengeance* ploughed her way through the starry splendour of a tropic night like a black and shadowy ghost as her armoured stem reft the shimmering witch-fire of the Indian Ocean.

In the little saloon below the cruiser's bridge sat Von Eimar, the twentieth-century pirate, chewing contentedly at a choice cigar as his monocle flashed in the lamplight.

Von Eimar was feeling well pleased with himself—and not without reason. Twelve hours had passed since weighing anchor at the Island of Pai Yang. Within a few more hours they would make the pirates' secret base of In-accessible Island.

The raid upon Pai Yang had been a success in keeping with Von Eimar's widest anticipations. In the jewels that he had stolen from the tombs of the ancient kings he had a fortune that should make every man aboard his pirate warship rich for life. Whether Von Eimar actually intended that it should be divided up among all those greedy hands of his pirate crew is another matter. None could guess at the treacherous thoughts that were passing in his cunning brain.

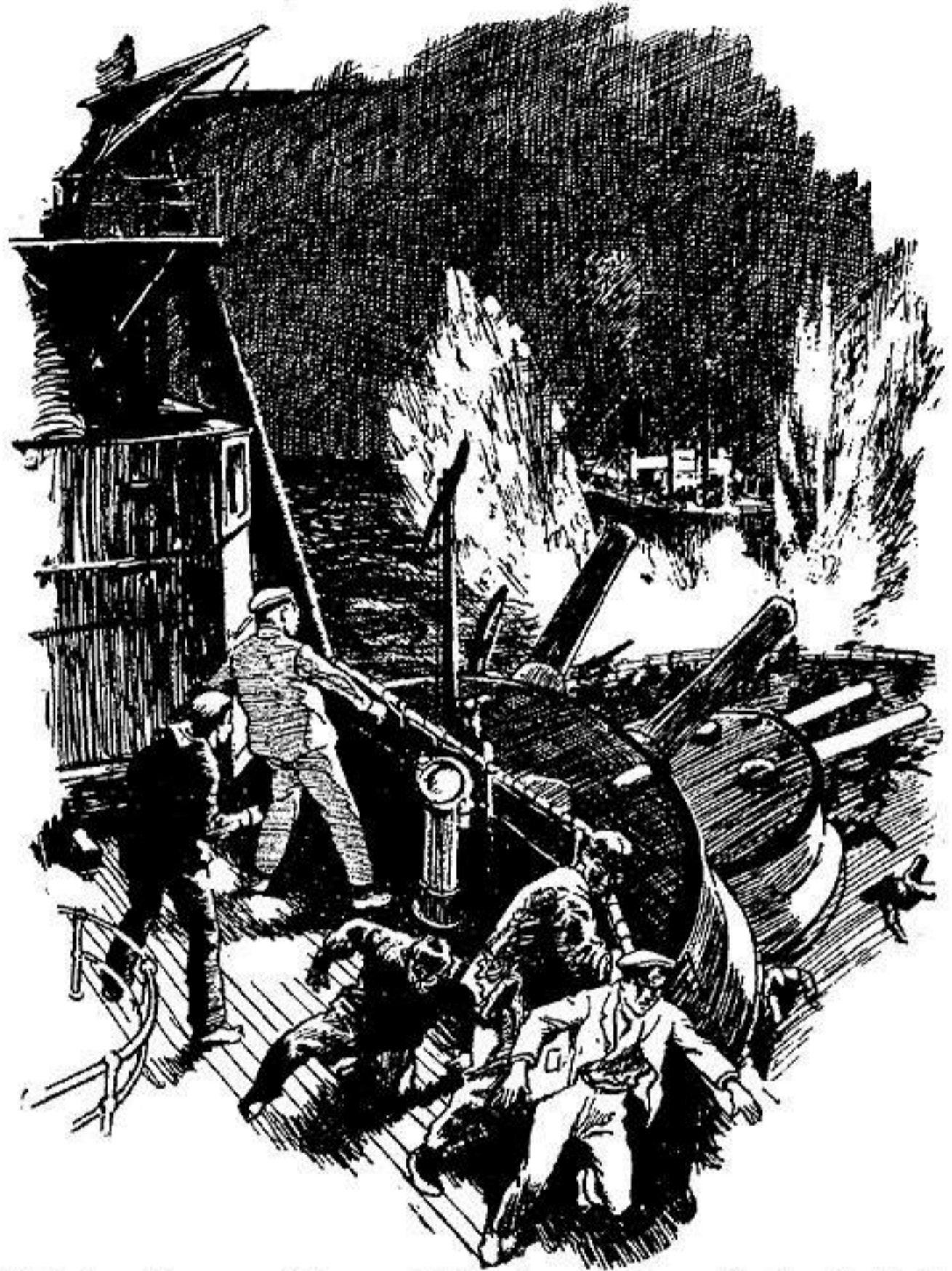
Nevertheless, Von Eimar's good humour did not serve to dispel the glum silence that bound the tongues of his companions as they sat with him at the table.

Von Eimar dined well and sumptuously. The rarest wines, that had once belonged to Governor Zarda, of the penal colony on Nemesis Island, or to Admiral Mericski, of the Varland Navy, filled the glasses that sparkled with the silver table service upon a snowy cloth. His chef had been a maitre-d'hotel in Paris before spying activities had landed him on Nemesis Island. His steward was a soft-footed Japanese who glided about as unobtrusively as a cat.

Yet neither Von Eimar's wines nor his jovial banter had any effect upon Ronald Westdale, his English gunnery lieutenant, or Dr. Nieuwe, the notorious doctor poisoner, or on Roy Drake, his boy prisoner. While Chu Ho Shan, the wealthy Chinese jewel merchant of Pai Yang, who was concerned in a surreptitious deal with Von Eimar to dispose of the stolen gems, spoke a little in his fluent English, but not a great deal.

"Come, come, gentlemen!" blandly interposed Von Eimar at length, beaming over the table. "Why this glumness? Why all this melancholy? One might think that we were all prisoners again on Nemesis Island, instead of having just brought off the greatest coup of our generation. Our names will ring through history—the twentieth-century pirates who plundered Pai Yang. Why, what is this?"

The saloon door had been flung violently open. On the threshold stood Killer Moran, American ex-gangster and Von Eimar's discontented lieutenant, with a gun at his hip, his little eyes almost hid under a beetling scowl. Over his shoulder loomed the swarthy face and gaudy scarf of Luis Ramiro, and



The pirate cruiser groaned in every bolt, plate, and girder as the torpedo blasted a breach in her steel-cased hull!

behind, blocking the doorway, crowded a round dozen of men whom Roy Drake recognised for the worst ruffians of even that cutthroat crew—and every man had his hands upon the guns belted to his waist.

Over crashed a chair as Von Eimar started to his feet.

"Donnerwetter! What is this, Moran?" cried the pirate chief, his cold eyes snapping evilly. "Your place is on the bridge. Why have you left your watch? What do you want? Answer me, you dog!"

Killer Moran advanced a step into the cabin, his jaw hardening, fingers crooking about the butt of his gun as he half drew it from its holster.

"Yeah, I'll answer yuh, cap'n," he sneered fiercely. "We boys are a deppy-tation. That's what it is, sirrec. We've come for a chat with yuh."

Holding his gun in his right hand, he pointed with his left towards the tough bunch of rascals at his back.

"We're dissatisfied with yore handlin' o' this outfit, cap. An' we're here to tell yuh so, straight from the shoulder, an' no soft love words about it, either!"

"Well?" Von Eimar never looked more formidable than he did just then.

His veins stood out on his forehead like great, knotted cords as he fought down his rage. "Well, say on, Moran!"

Roy Drake, Dr. Nieuwe, Ronald Westdale, and Chu Ho Shan looked on in tensed silence.

"First of all, yuh kin cut out all the rough stuff, cap." Significantly Moran half jerked his gun from its sheath. "We're all packin' artillery, as yuh perceive. One jerk for a gun, an' yuh're qualifyin' for the red-hot parade. Yep, sir! We're determined, we are, cap. an' that's why we've come prepared for eventualities."

Insolent and swaggering as he was, he yet avoided those cold, narrow eyes of Von Eimar that seemed to bore right through him.

"Item No. 1, Von Eimar, we demand an election for a noo cap'n," Moran went on. "We're about sick o' yuh an' yore high an' mighty ways. Second, we wants yuh to hand over them 'rocks'—them sparklers we took from Pai Yang. We yants yuh to hand 'em over to a body o' trustees for the hull crew. An' third, we wants to have a heart-to-heart talk wi' yuh about thet Dutch guy yuh allowed to escape at Pai Yang. Thet Dutchy will squeal about our secret

hide out on Inaccessible Island. An' yuh let him free on purpose—we all knows that—because yuh wanted him to blow the gaff about that young Britisher pup hyar."

With one calloused finger he pointed towards Roy Drake.

"That boy's the son o' yore enemy, Morgau Drake, o' the British Secret Service," Moran went on vehemently. "Yuh wanted Dutchy to tell the world that he's joined this crew o' his own fancy—that's yore revenge upon Morgan Drake. Ay, but when yuh let him loose yuh didn't care two hoots that yuh put ev'ry man's head of us into a slip-knot! But yuh have, an' well yuh knows it, Von Eimar. We'll have half the war-ships in the world nosing round Inaccessible Island now—because o' yuh!"

"So!" commented Von Eimar, as Moran paused for breath. "And is that all?"

"That's all—an' enough, too!" The Yankee plug-ugly snarled between yellow, broken teeth. "Enough for us to put a stopper on yore tricks, Von Eimar!"

A growl from the rest of the convict-merchants supported him.

"So that is it, hein—you pig-dogs?" softly asked Von Eimar. He gave a short, hard laugh. "You fools—you miserable, half-witted rats out of the gutter! Did you think that you could surprise me—me, Von Eimar? Did you suppose that I had not foreseen this—that I could not read your fourth-rate minds like print, you sons o' scum? Now I will tell you the truth, and you can chew hard on it, like the mongrels that you are!"

Above his high white collar rolls of fat quivered as he laughed in the depths of his thick neck. He polished his monocle with a white handkerchief, jammed it back into his eye, and puffed at his cigar before resuming. The faces of the intruders showed that his cool, imperturbable confidence and evident contempt of them had not been without effect.

"In the first place, I am not resigning the captaincy, for the simple reason that I am the only one among you fit to command—the whole lot of you haven't the wit to command a hen-roost! Who was it that organised the mutiny on Nemesis Island, and captured this cruiser without having to fire a single shot? Was it you, Moran? No! It was I, Von Eimar!"

With a plump hand he slapped his massive chest.

"Who was it captured the Sylvia Bay, with its bullion worth over a hundred thousand pounds? Who was it saved your lives when you were bombed by the Dutch aircraft—when you came crawling to me on your hands and knees, begging me to surrender so that you could drag out your worthless lives on Nemesis Island again? Who was it shot down those Dutch war-planes? Who led you to the secret harbour on Inaccessible Island? Who led you to the capture of Pai Yang and its treasures? Why, Von Eimar, of course—the only man among you with more brains than would fill a thumbnail. Can you manage without me? If you were to shoot me now, as I stand—which you daren't, you white-livered lot of cowards—you'd cut off your right hand with your left, and well you know it, you snarling curs!"

He paused, mopping his broad brow, while the malcontents glanced at one another doubtfully, cowed by one man's forceful personality.

Killer Moran's countenance was black with dismay and chagrin.

"That disposes of your first point," continued Von Eimar. "As to your second—well, here's the answer to that.

I'm keeping the jewels till we break up our association, when we share out the spoils. And where am I keeping them, you'd like to ask? Well, I tell you the answer to that one. Not where you can find them, you may be perfectly sure of that! You dummies, you might murder me, you might run this ship ashore, and pull her to pieces, every bolt and plate, and then you'd never find where I've hid them! D'ye think I'd be fool enough to keep the jewels in the safe in the captain's cabin, with every other man of this ship's crew an expert safe-cracker?" He laughed outright into their blank faces. "That's my trump card. I've got the whip-hand of you, you scum—and, Donner! I mean to keep it. Shoot me, and you shoot the only man who can save your dirty necks and share out the jewels at the same time. Now get out of my sight, the lot of you!"

He stood before them, grinning triumphantly, as they lowered their gaze and fumbled nervously with the guns at their belts.

One by one the would-be mutineers faltered and slunk out of the saloon. Killer Moran alone was left.

The gunman stood with twitching limbs, his face working convulsively in an agony of baffled rage and fear.

"Well, and what are you toying with that gun for, Moran?" asked Von Eimar, scoffing. "Are you thinking of bumping me off—me, Von Eimar? Why, you daren't look me in the face and shoot, though I am unarmed—you haven't the pluck, Killer Moran!" His voice was charged with withering disgust. "Take yourself away, you low skunk of the gutter!"

"Durn yuh!" blazed the American gunman, and then, not daring to meet Von Eimar's cold eyes, he left the saloon and followed his fellow-ruffians down the passage-way.

Von Eimar had quelled the incipient mutiny simply by his masterly bluff!

The Killer Draws His Gun!

THAT skunk Moran is still hatching mutiny. Von Eimar!" It was Ronald Westdale speaking, in the chart-room of the Vengeance, as the cruiser plunged on towards Inaccessible Island, now a humpy shadow under the light of the moon. "I should say that he has a hundred malcontents with him already—perhaps half the crew! He's desperato with fear, remember. Every minute that passes, his tongue is at work, blackguarding you, and enlisting new recruits. What d'you say, Von Eimar? Shall we stamp it out before it gets any further?"

"My dear Westdale," remarked Von Eimar pleasantly, "how many times have I not had to curb your youthful impetuosity? 'Stamp it out,' you say? Excellent! But how? Moran and Ramiro are skulking down in the fo'c'sle, and even such primitive brains as theirs will have realised the necessity of mounting a couple of machine-guns to protect their stronghold. To attack now would be to play into their hands. They would now us down like corn!"

"But they're getting stronger," urged Westdale. "Moran's as cunning as a weasel. He'll wait until he gets a majority on his side—and he will before long, for he's telling them that you've hidden the jewels to keep for yourself—and then there'll be the devil to pay! We must crush him now. By daybreak he'll be strong enough to show his hand—"

"And then he will cut his own throat," concluded Von Eimar for him.

"Patience, Westdale, patience is my motto. Moran is our best ally. Like most of his kind, gifted with a low type of cunning, he is transparent as crystal to a man with brains. When Moran strikes, I shall strike—and I shall have to strike only but once!"

"And there's Dr. Nieuwe," pursued Ronald Westdale. "I don't trust him, Von Eimar—I don't trust him one inch. A poisoner! You know that type, captain. He's pretending to be on your side, fawning on you like a dog, but I'll bet all the years of my life he's secretly hand-in-glove with Moran and his mutineers: He's waiting his chance to stab you in the back—"

"Precisely." Von Eimar nodded agreement. "Dr. Nieuwe has an intellect of a far higher order than a plug-ugly like Moran; but, like a snake, he couldn't go straight if he tried. Never mind, Westdale, I have our amiable doctor in line." He paused a minute, thinking. "Where is Chu Ho Shan and young Roy Drake?"

"In the saloon. But—"

"Very well. Join them there, Westdale, and leave me to deal with the situation."

"Leave you here, Von Eimar? But they may revolt any minute now—"

"I shall know how to deal with them." Cheerfully Von Eimar patted his English lieutenant on his broad shoulder. "Go down to the saloon, Westdale, and wait till I summon you. I particularly want to disarm suspicion. Dietz has the helm—good! Krunow, the bo'sun, is standing by with a dozen trusty men. That is all I shall require. Wait in the saloon until you are wanted, Westdale."

Westdale shrugged his shoulders. At the chart-room door he side-stopped a pace to avoid Dr. Nieuwe, who entered with his usual soft, cat-like tread, stroking his short "Imperial," his black, beady eyes glittering behind his gold-rimmed pince-nez.

"Ah, this is a bad business, Von Eimar," Westdale heard the famous, or infamous, criminal-doctor remark; and then, as he descended the bridge-ladder, the chart-room door closed behind Dr. Nieuwe, to shut off the rest of his conversation.

In spite of Von Eimar's injunction, Westdale lingered a minute or two beneath the bridge, waiting in the shadow of a deckhouse, with his troubled gaze upon the black outline of the chart-house in the soft tropic twilight.

Standing as he did by the starboard bridge-ladder, he was unable to see two dim, stealthy figures that padded noiselessly across the deck-plates to port, under the shadowy gun-turret.

Westdale was about to return to the saloon when he heard the creak of a door being opened, and glancing up, he saw, in the yellow glow that streamed from the chart-room, a figure in a peaked cap and white uniform jacket.

A harsh voice rang through the soft sigh of the night wind:

"Von Eimar! Drop him, Ramiro!" Simultaneously, twin spurts of orange flame split the soft blue dusk with a series of staccato reports, as the white-clad figure suddenly crumpled, sagging over the bridge-rail with a groan, and then sank in a heap on to the bridge floor.

Up the ladder bounded Ronald Westdale, automatic in hand, fierce anger in his heart.

"We've got him, Killer!" cried the shrill Latin accents of Luis Ramiro, and by the glow of the binnacle lamp Westdale saw two dark figures bending over that fallen and huddled form,

while Dietz still gripped the wheel-spokes stolidly.

"I fear you were too hasty!" drawled a familiar, sardonic voice from the charthouse door. "You are mistaken. I am Von Eimar. That whom you have just shot is your own friend, Dr. Nieuwe!"

The Strange Yacht!

THERE came a clatter of accoutrements with a padding of bare feet across the deck-plates, as Krunow, the Finn bo'sun, appeared with a number of armed men, as if from nowhere.

"Secure them, bo'sun!" Von Eimar gestured towards the stunned and stupefied murderers, who stood with their discharged pistols still gripped in their hands, gaping foolishly.

Moran and Ramiro were seized from behind, their arms twisted, their wrists locked in handcuffs. Krunow then stood stolidly to attention, waiting for orders.

"Ah, Westdale, you here?" Von Eimar smiled behind his gleaming monocle. "You were quick, but you were not needed, my friend. We have our two birds fast. Very neat, is it not? I told you that Moran was transparent as crystal. They were lurking in the shadows at the head of the port bridge ladder, ready to shoot me down like a dog when I emerged. Dr. Nieuwe had planned with them. He was to follow behind me—politely, of course!"

"But I, too, can be polite, Westdale. I saw through the doctor's little game. I was so polite that I requested him to go out first—at the point of a gun! He was hoist, as you say, with his own petard. Moran and Ramiro mistook their confederate for me, as I intended that they should. The rest you may guess!"

Roy Drake and Chu Ho Shan, roused by the sound of shots, came out from the saloon and mounted the bridge ladder, staring at the strange scene.

From mess-decks and fo'c'sle also swarmed the crew, bare-headed, bare-chested, massed upon the foredeck beneath the bridge.

"What are you going to do with the mutineers, Von Eimar?" asked Westdale, sheathing his gun.

Von Eimar smiled.

"Cannot you guess?" he answered gently.

Killer Moran, recovering his wits, let out a torrent of oaths and curses in red-hot Chicago dialect. Krunow promptly struck him in the mouth with the butt of a gun, and the mutineer staggered back to the bridge-rail.

Luis Ramiro, all the courage oozed out of him, slumped down to the bridge-plates on flexing knees, jabbering incoherently.

"Pipe all hands to quarters, Krunow!" snapped Von Eimar. "Then have a running-tackle rove to the yard-arm. The crew shall see their would-be leaders dancing the airy jig inside five minutes!"

The convict-pirates, silent and scared, listened without a murmur as Von Eimar leaned over the bridge-rail to address them. Except for the binnacle lamp, the cruiser was shrouded in darkness, and it was a misty blur of faces that stared upwards to the master-pirate from the foredeck.

"Men!" cried Von Eimar harshly, pointing to the two prisoners as they stood between their guards. "You see here two mutinous thugs that attempted to murder me to-night! Some of you were aware of that intention!"

His cold, merciless eyes roved over the rows of upturned faces massed beneath him, and he smiled bleakly as he noticed many faltering and uneasy expressions among the crowd.

"When first we made our escape from Nemesis Island, you all agreed that I should be leader. I warned you of the consequences should any one of you disobey an order or question my authority! I have nipped this mutiny in the bud. Dr. Nieuwe has already paid with his life for his share in the conspiracy. Has any man of this crew a word to say before I order these two mutineers to be strung up to the yard-arm?"

Not a man spoke. Not one dared to whisper, as Von Eimar stood upon the bridge looking down upon them, monocle agleam, one stout hand resting upon the butt of the automatic belted to his waist.

Von Eimar waited a full minute, smiling sardonically upon his cowed crew, then turned upon a heel.

"Bo'sun," he rasped sharply, "take these two men to the gangway and—"

"TOM MERRY'S BODYGUARD!"

By Martin Clifford

Barred from playing cricket— forbidden to leave the school precincts, with a 'tec to guard him night and day! Is Tom Merry threatened with some fearful peril? No, it's just his guardian's kind solicitude for his health and safety! Read all about it in the sparkling, long, humorous yarn in this week's grand number of our popular companion paper. In addition, there is a great story of the Greyfriars chums, entitled:

"HARRY WHARTON'S CHALLENGE!"

By Frank Richards,

which tells of their early schooldays. Every "Magnetite" is reading this wonderful yarn.

Ask for

The GEM

On Sale Now Price 2^d

Before the condemnation passed his lips there came a lusty hail from the look-out at the mast-top.

"Steamer on the starboard beam, sir!"

Every face was turned to the shimmering radiance of the sea. There, a few miles distant, dim and ghostly in the starry night, loomed a trim, white vessel, steaming along without any lights, and with a thick plume of smoke issuing from her single funnel.

One lengthy stride brought Von Eimar to the bridge-end.

"My night-glasses—quick!"

A quartermaster passed him his binoculars, and, adjusting the lenses, Von Eimar focused them upon the strange steamer.

"A yacht!" he exclaimed exultantly. "A gentleman's pleasure ship—a millionaire's toy! Some fool, whoever the captain is, steaming through these seas without lights. We're in luck!"

He swung round to the waiting bo'sun.

"Krunow, take these two rats to the brig; I'll attend to them later. Lock them up and make them secure. Westdale, quartermaster, master-at-arms, attend to me!"

Killer Moran and Luis Ramiro, so unexpectedly reprieved, were lusted down the ladder to the cruiser's brig below decks.

Roy Drake, standing beside Chu Ho Shan, listened as Von Eimar turned to address the crew once more.

Intent as he was, the boy did not observe the strange, puckered smile upon the face of the Chinese jewel merchant as he watched that oncoming white yacht.

Torpedoed!

"**M**EN," cried Von Eimar, with a swing of his arm towards the strange white yacht, "here's our chance of escape.

dropped right into our lap! I told you that it was my intention, after the raid upon Pai Yang, to seize the first steamer that crossed our course, so that we could transport ourselves and our booty to some port in South America where we can be safe. This is the very ship for our purpose. Our piratical career is now finished. We'll scuttle the Vengeance, load on to the yacht the bullion that we took from the Sylvia Bay, and then quit these seas for ever!"

A wild, hoarse cheer came from the crew of convict pirates.

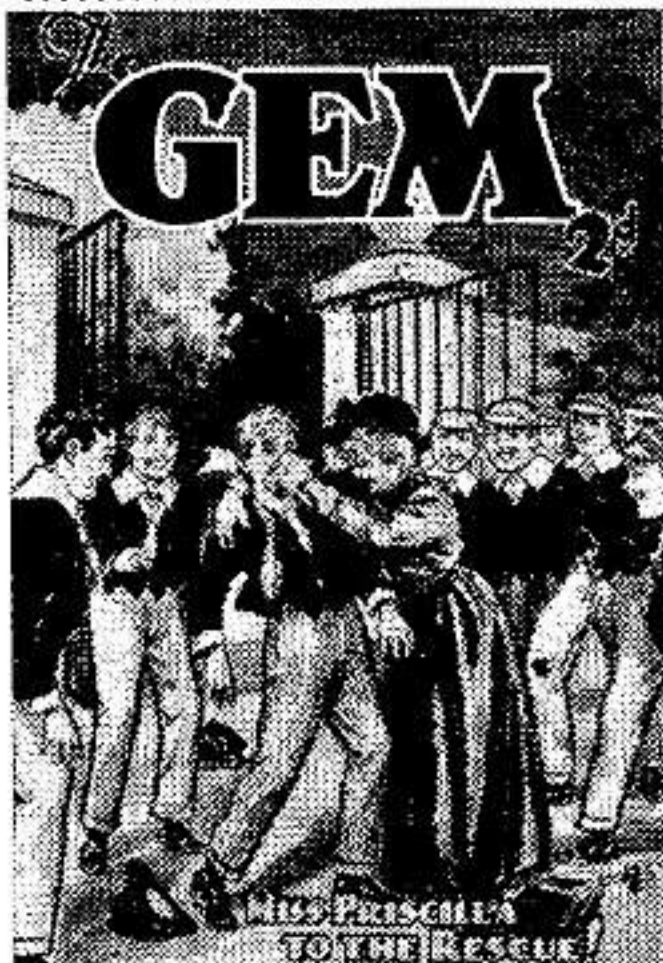
Von Eimar turned to Ronald Westdale.

"This is your business, Westdale. See to your guns. Send a shot across the yacht's bows as a signal for her to heave-to. Do no damage if you can help it, though. We don't want to arouse suspicion if we meet with any craft on our way to South America."

"I'll see to it at once!" exclaimed Westdale. Half-way down the bridge ladder he paused, flinging one last glance over his shoulder. "But what about the yacht's crew, Von Eimar?" he asked. "What will you do with them? We can't carry them with us to South America as prisoners. Will you maroon them on some island?"

A strange, hard smile flickered across the countenance of Von Eimar.

"Maroon them—yes, of course! That will be the best way to silence their tongues while we make our escape. We'll maroon them, Westdale—at the bottom of the sea!" he added below his



breath, as Westdale clattered down the rungs.

Roy Drake watched the bustle and excitement aboard the cruiser. A bugle sounded. Men ran to and fro, arming themselves from rifle-racks. Behind the superstructure ports, gunners manned the quick-firers and machine-guns. Signalmen climbed to the mast-top.

In the sighting-hood above the forward gun-turret, Westdale, with ear-phones on his head in communication with Von Eimar, supervised his range-finders and barked out orders to the men handling the big eight-inchers below him.

All was in readiness. Below, in the engine-room, a bell clanged, as the gigantic twin engines moved to a swifter beat, screws churning in a maelstrom of snowy froth, as the pirate warship surged forward on an altered course to swoop upon her prey. In the black, hot, glaring stokehold the black squad toiled to build up the fires.

Aloft in the circular control-top stood Von Eimar, surrounded by terminals, indicators, telephones, and telegraph dials, one brawny hand upon the speaking-tube that communicated with Dietz in the lower steering-room. His brows were bent, his eyes narrowed, his lips drawn back in an implacable snarl as he peered through a sighting-port at the yacht, steaming slowly on, and apparently all unconscious of danger. A real, ruthless pirate and scourer of the seas looked Von Eimar at that moment.

Roy Drake, standing disregarded on the bridge, glanced around. He was thinking of seizing a signal-lamp to warn those aboard the yacht of their impending peril.

As he did so, however, he caught a glimpse of the yellow, placid countenance of Chu Ho Shan.

Was it a shade of triumph, of exultation, that he saw in that usually immobile Oriental countenance? The boy could not be sure. The almost imperceptible animation vanished from Chu's face as if wiped away with a duster, leaving it cold and impassive as before.

Roy opened his mouth to speak.

Chu's fingers, from beneath his loose sleeve, gripped him by the shoulder.

"Do not interfere, my boy. Let events take their course," whispered the Chinaman. And again Roy cudgelled his brains to remember where before he had heard that hauntingly familiar ring in Chu Ho Shan's voice.

In the control-top, Von Eimar spoke across the telephone wires to his gunnery lieutenant.

"Let them have it, Westdale!" he barked, as the cruiser raced alongside the silent yacht, a cable's length to starboard. "One shot across her bows. I'll signal them a Morse message by flash-lamp that they'll be sunk if they send out an S O S!"

Westdale transmitted the order to his waiting gunners below.

Crash!

Shuddering echoes thrashed across the ocean as an eight-inch shell went screaming through the night over the strange yacht's bows.

Then an amazing thing happened.

Instead of heaving-to, round swung the yacht immediately, so that her sharp, narrow bows were presented towards the cruiser's broadside, offering the smallest possible target.

A small deckhouse on her fo'c'sle collapsed, to reveal a long steel tube pointing towards the cruiser.

Von Eimar, seeing this, gaped with sheer astonishment. Then, recovering his breath, he prepared to yell out an order to the helmsman through the speaking-tube.

Before the words passed his lips, however, something like a long, silvery fish leaped from the muzzle of the tube on the yacht's fore-deck, and, taking the sea with a plunge, rushed across the surface towards the cruiser.

"Mein Gott! A torpedo!" So stunned was Von Eimar that he forgot his intended order. "Tricked! What devil's craft is that?" Then, remembering, he almost screamed down to Dietz in the steering-room: "Port your helm! Hard-a-port! Himmel! They've got us!"

Slowly the Vengeance swung round as Dietz threw over the helm.

Too late! The pirate cruiser escaped the mortal wound amidships for which the torpedo was aimed, but as her head went about there was a stunning, rending concussion, a fountain of flame, smoke, and upsplashing water, and the vessel groaned in every bolt, plate, and girder, as the unexpected projectile blasted a breach in her steel-cased hull.

Roy Drake was flung violently against the bridge tarpaulin. As he regained his feet, bruised and dazed, the Vengeance careened over at an alarming angle, for a great rent had been shattered in her bows and the water was thundering hungrily in.

Chu Ho Shan leaned upon the cruiser's bridge-rail and, watching the yacht as she heaved slowly upon the gentle swell, laughed musically and with quiet satisfaction.

"The Ship's Going Down!"

WITH an icy calm, even though his pirate warship was slowly and steadily sinking beneath his feet, Von Eimar stood on the forebridge and issued his orders.

On the decks, wildest confusion held sway. The convicts abandoned their posts in a mad rush as the ship heeled over, slipping, sprawling, with the decks tilted at a sharp angle, and the turret-guns pointing to the sea.

Striding to the rail, he drew his automatic, sighted it deliberately, and fired at one of the foremost in the rush.

With a groan the man slumped over and rolled in the scuppers, bleeding from a wound in the shoulder.

"You cowardly rats!" Von Eimar glared down over the rail, with bared teeth. "Stand to your quarters! All isn't lost yet! Have you forgotten the water-tight compartments?" He waved a hand islandwards. "Over there is Inaccessible Island. If you do your duty we'll be able to navigate her through the channel, and beach her on the rocks. Krunow! Take your gun! Shoot any man that shirks his duty!"

Stilled by Von Eimar's dominant personality, the panic subsided to a muttered heaving and shuffling upon the canted decks; and then, as Krunow and his mates got among them with fist and gun, the convicts returned quietly, if sullenly, to their stations.

Von Eimar uncapped the engine-room speaking-tube and barked a question down to Mikhail Lebedoff.

"How is it down there, Lebedoff?"

A murmur floated up the pipe.

"The forward compartment is flooded, sir. The water-tight bulkheads are closed, but there's no saying how long they'll stand the pressure. The water's getting through somewhere, I can't tell where as yet. It's pitch black down here—all lights are fused!"

"Very well, do what you can! Barricade the forward bulkhead. I'll send you help immediately. I'm steering straight for Inaccessible Island. If you can keep the engines going at five knots for an hour or so, we'll about do it!"

Von Eimar plugged the speaking-tube with a snap, and turned to Ronald Westdale.

"Take a party of the steadiest men, Westdale, and help the engineer to carry on. You'll have to sheer up that bulkhead somehow. I mean to run the Vengeance ashore at Inaccessible Island, and beach her on Shark Reef."

"Very good, Von Eimar," returned Westdale, promptly, and saluting, he turned to go.

Von Eimar jerked a fat thumb over his shoulder towards Roy Drake.

"Take that boy with you, Westdale. He may as well take his chance of drowning as of hanging."

Roy caught a fleeting, sidelong glance from Chu Ho Shan as he descended the bridge ladder. He could not be sure, but he fancied that the Oriental flashed him a look of encouragement in the darkness.

Over the calm, dark sea his glance wandered in a last look which might well be his own. The strange, white yacht, having discharged her deadly harbinger of destruction, was standing by a cable's-length distance. What sort of vessel was this, ostensibly a gentleman's pleasure yacht, that was armed with guns and torpedo-tubes like a small cruiser?

He had scant time for such reflections.

Down through the engine-room hatch he descended, into a world of black shadows, gushing water, cries of frightened men, with jets of scalding steam from broken pipes hissing through the sound of groaning, straining plates and startling rivets. Water from the yielding bulkhead was already splashing around in the blackness of the engine-room and stokehold.

The ensuing hour was one destined to live for ever in Roy Drake's memory.

Crouching on hands and knees in the swirls and eddies, in a dim alleyway that was but faintly illuminated by the rays of a hurricane-lamp swinging from a ring-bolt, he assisted the perspiring, half-naked firemen and the engine-room hands to prop up the bulging, metal bulkhead with struts of timber and mountains of coal.

The minutes dragged by in slowly measured-out degrees, every second an hour of suspense. Already the swamping waters had rendered the dynamos useless, and when the lamp flickered out, as it did in half an hour, they were left in total darkness. Still they worked at the barricade.

Slowly the Vengeance forged along at a bare five knots, with Mikhail Lebedoff in the engine-room compartment, anxiously watching his gauges. They were no more than two miles from Inaccessible Island, but the winding, intricate channel between the coral reefs made the distance more than twice as long.

Suddenly, one of the engine-room greasers, whose nerves had been strained to breaking-point, let out a shrill, screaming cry in the darkness and gurgling water.

"The bulkhead's giving way! We're lost! The ship's going down!"

And running through the man's tortured cry came the sullen, thunderous surge of water in the forepeak, and the crash of sundering plates and girders as the sea poured in.

(Will Von Eimar succeed in beaching the Vengeance on Inaccessible Island, or will the pirate cruiser sink with all hands into the vast depths of the Indian Ocean? Make sure you read the concluding chapters of this powerful story in next week's MAGNET.)

BILLY BUNTER'S BUNK!

(Continued from page 23.)

"Do you hear me, Bunter? I know that you are there! I command you to descend at once!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I can't, sir!" came a gasping voice, apparently from the black interior.

"What? Why cannot you, Bunter?" snapped Mr. Quelch. "If you have climbed up, you can certainly climb down. I order you to do so at once!"

"Shan't!"

"What?" stuttered the Remove master. "Did—did you say shan't, Bunter?" He glared ferociously into the chimney.

"Yes, I did!" came back the voice. "Yah!"

"Upon my word!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "This passes all bounds! Bunter, come down out of that chimney this instant. This instant!"

Harry Wharton & Co. stood silent, gazing at Mr. Quelch's back, as he stooped before the fireplace. From behind the door, a fat face and a big pair of spectacles glimmered, and Billy Bunter blinked at his Form-master's back. But Quelch did not turn his head. He knew—or fancied he knew—where Bunter was, and he did not think of turning his head.

"Bunter!" he roared.

"Yah!"

"You—you shall be flogged! You—you shall be expelled!" gasped Mr. Quelch, stuttering with wrath. "Such insolence—such defiance—Bunter, descend from that chimney immediately!"

Mr. Quelch's infuriated roar boomed up the chimney. It did not have the effect of dislodging Bunter, who was not there. But it had the effect of dislodging particles of soot, which descended in a shower over the upturned face of the Remove master.

"Urrrgh!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Wurrgh!" He dabbed at soot. "That—that insolent boy is—is actually throwing down soot at me! Bunter, you shall be flogged—flogged most severely—immediately you are in my hands; you shall be—wurrgh! Gurrgh! Urrrgh!"

Billy Bunter stepped softly from behind the door. He stepped round the door. He stepped into the Remove passage.

Harry Wharton & Co. watched him—

in frozen silence. Had Quelch looked round—

But Quelch was not looking round! "Bunter!" He roared up the chimney again. "Bunter! You utterly stupid boy, you cannot escape from your hiding-place—I shall remain here until you descend! Do you hear me, Bunter? I shall not stir from this spot until you come down! Come down at once! Answer me, Bunter!"

But there was no further answer from the chimney! Billy Bunter was tiptoeing away up the Remove passage as fast as a fellow could go on tiptoe! A dozen Remove fellows saw him as he went, and chuckled. But Mr. Quelch had no chance of seeing him. Mr. Quelch was still shouting up the chimney of Study No. 1.

"Bunter! Bunter! Will you descend? I command you to descend! Cannot you understand that I shall wait here till you descend? It will be better for you, Bunter, to waste my time no further. Do you hear me?"

The chimney echoed with a hollow boom, and more fragments of soot floated down. But there was no other reply.

Harry Wharton & Co. stepped quietly out of the study, leaving Quelch to it. They had to suppress their feelings—it was no time for laughter, in Quelch's presence, at least! But they had a feeling that they would burst, if they did not laugh. They retreated into the passage, and Wharton drew the door shut. Mr. Quelch was left to watch that chimney, like a cat watching a mouse-hole for a mouse that was not there!

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Oh crikey! Oh dear! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where's Bunter? Seen that fat idiot, you fellows?"

"He's gone up to the box-room!" said Peter Todd. "What's Quelch up to?"

"Listen!" chuckled Bob.

The Remove fellows gathered round the door of Study No. 1 to listen. From within, the voice of Mr. Quelch was heard in a roar that would have done credit to one of Marco's lions.

"Bunter! You young rascal! Bunter! You—you insolent young knave! Come down out of that chimney! I command you to descend from that chimney! Do you dare to disobey your Form-master, Bunter? Upon my word! If you do not immediately descend from that chimney—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter! Descend! Descend at once!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was quite an entertainment to the Remove! Mr. Quelch was far from intending to be a humorist, but he was setting his Form in a roar.

In the study, Mr. Quelch roared up the chimney—in the passage, the Remove fellows roared with laughter—and from the box-room window, a fat and breathless Owl clambered over the leads, clambered down to the ground, and bolted! The coast was clear, at last, for Bunter, and Bunter did not lose the chance. The Remove master was still shouting up the chimney in Study No. 1 when Billy Bunter hit the open spaces.

"Where's Bunter?"

Once more that question was asked up and down Greyfriars School.

Where was Bunter?

For quite a long time, Mr. Quelch supposed that that hopeful member of his Form was parked in a study chimney! He was quite puzzled when further investigations revealed that Bunter was not there. But where was he?

He was no longer at Greyfriars. That was certain. He had not gone home—that was equally certain. He could not be found. He could not be heard of. In likely and unlikely places he was sought—but a circus was so extremely unlikely a place, that nobody thought of looking there! Harry Wharton & Co. had their own ideas on that subject—which they kept to themselves. Nobody else thought of Muccolini's Circus for a moment.

Billy Bunter, of the Remove, seemed to have disappeared from existence. And so, in fact, he had—Bunto the Boy Lion-Tamer coming into existence in his place! How long that change of identity would remain a secret, Billy Bunter did not know, but he hoped for the best, and perhaps it was just as well for Bunter that he was not accustomed to bothering about the future.

THE END.

(Now look out for the next yarn in this grand series, entitled, "FROM SCHOOL TO CIRCUS!" You will vote it one of the funniest yarns you've read for a long time, chums, so to avoid disappointment make sure of your copy now!)



6ft. long.
6/9
Carr. Paid

SPUR PROOF TENTS

Made from specially Proofed Canvas, complete with 3-Piece Jointed Poles, Guy Lines, Pegs and Runners. Packed in waterproof holdall with handle. Size 6ft. x 4ft. 3 x 3ft. 6, with 6in. walls. Carriage Paid.

GEORGE GROSE • LUDGATE CIRCUS

NEA BRIDGE, LONDON, E.C.4.

BLUSHING.—FREE to all sufferers, particulars of a proved home treatment that quickly removes all embarrassment, and permanently cures blushing and flushing of the face and neck. Enclose stamp to Mr. A. TEMPLE (Specialist), Palace House, 126, Shaftesbury Avenue (2nd Floor), London, W.1. (Established 30 years.)

TALL Your height increased in 12 days or no cost. New discovery adds 2-5 ins. I gained 4 ins. Guaranteed safe. Full Course, 5/- Details: J. B. MORLEY, 8, Bream's Buildings, London, E.C.4.

AIR PACKET FREE! Including TRIANGULAR, Iran, Roumania AIR stamps, also Balloon stamps, over 55 different, ALQUITES, BULGARIA. Postage 2d.; request approvals.—ROBINSON BROS. (A), MORETON, WIRRAL.

ALL applications for Advertisement Space in this publication should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, The MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

XMAS CLUBS

SPARE-TIME AGENTS WANTED

for OLDEST, LARGEST and BEST CLUB. Write for Giant Art Catalogue and full particulars. No outlay. Excellent Commission. **FREE GIFT TO ALL APPLICANTS!** SAMUEL DRIVER, Ltd., Burton Road, LEEDS.

BE MANLY I promise you Robust Health, Doubled Strength, Stamina, and Dashing Energy in 30 days or money back! My amazing 4-in-1 Course adds 10-25 lbs. to your muscular development (with 2 ins. on Chest and 1 in. on Arms), also brings an Iron Will, Perfect Self-control, Virile Manhood, Personal Magnetism. Surprise your friends! Complete Course, 5/- Details from privately.—**STEBBING INSTITUTE** (Dept. A), 28, Dean Road, LONDON, N.W.2.

STAMMERING! Cure yourself as I did. Particulars Free.—FRANK B. HUGHES, 7, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, LONDON, W.C.1.

BLUSHING, Shyness, "Nerves," Self-Consciousness, Worry Habit, Unreasonable Fears, etc., cured or money back! Complete Course 5/-. Details—L.A. STEBBING (A), 28, Dean Road, London, N.W.2.

BE TALLER! Inches put you miles ahead! Increased my height to 6ft. 3ins. Thousands gratified clients since 1907. Ware worthless imitators. 6d. stamp brings details.—BOSS, Height-Specialist, SCARBOROUGH.

STAMPS 300 DIFFERENT, incl. Airmail, Beautiful Uncommon Sets, Pictorials, Colonials. Price 6d. (Abroad 1/-).—W. A. WHITE, ENGINE LANE, LYE, WORCE.

LET'S BE JUST TO LODER!

Urges PETER TODD

I really think it's time we gave Loder his due. He's not so black as he's painted. To hear the average Remove chap talk about him you'd think Loder was a villain of the deepest dye. But I maintain that he has his good points.

For instance, I once saw him give a three-penny-bit to a street beggar. Quite a nice big-hearted gesture, what? It's true that it was a dud he'd been trying to get rid of in shops for weeks; but you can hardly say he's not charitable now, can you?

Then again, chaps tell you he's harsh with fags; but when Gatty burned some toast for him in my presence the other day, I received quite a different impression. I fully expected to see him give Gatty a dozen with the ashlant. But he didn't. He only gave him eleven.

Another thing they accuse Loder of is cowardice. It was this that made me particularly interested to see what he'd do one day when there was an alarm of fire at the Court-field Cinema. "Naturally," I thought, "he'll be the first man out of the building." It was a revelation to me to find that he was not the first man out. As a matter of fact, he was the second.

I could give you plenty of other examples to show you that Loder is a lot better than he's supposed to be. But probably it's unnecessary; I expect I've said enough already to convince you.

(What an optimist!—Ed.)

"INDIGNANT."—"Since Coker punched my nose, I've made up my mind to make him smart."

"Fraid you'll find that absolutely impossible, old sport!"

THE DETT-DODGER of ST. SAM'S!

Another Snappy Instalment of Dicky Nugent's Full-of-Fun Serial, "Doctor Birchermall's Dubble!"

"Played, Jack Jolly!" "Oh, well hit, sir!" "Hooray!"

Professor Willknot Birchermall pawed, as these cries fell on his ears.

He was taking a stroll round the playing-fields. There was a cheerful grin on his skollarly face and a lump of toffy inside it. The thoughts of the new headmaster of St. Sam's were of the plezzantest possibul kind.

"Ha, ha!" he was saying to himself. "I'm a clever 'un, and no

mistake! After being sacked from St. Sam's for croolty, I've got my job back again by pretending to be a more kind-hearted member of the Birchermall famby—and not a sole suspects the truth! My creditors will get the dickens of a shock when they here of my change of eydentify! It duzzent half make me larf when I think of it! Ha, ha, ha!"

Then the Head heard the cheers from the Junior kriket pitch, and



No. 196.

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

July 11th, 1936.

he pawed to look at the game. The Fourth were playing the Fifth, and Jack Jolly, the Fourth kaptin, was giving the seniors plenty of leather-chasing. He had nocked the ball over the roof of the pavilion umpteen times already, and he looked in the mood to go on doing it for the rest of the afternoon!

A roughish twinkle came into the Head's eyes, as he saw how the game was going. Krickets was a game he never could resist. Making a megga-fone of his hands, he hailed the kaptin of the Fifth, who looked somewhat like a grease-spot after his efforts to bowl out Jack Jolly.

"Want any help, Bowncer?" he called out.

Bowncer, who was not in the best of moods,

looked round with a frown.

"Yes, sir," he shouted back "You'll help a lot 'ou take your face mewhere where I can't it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" It needed a effort for Professor Birchermall to keep a lily smile on his fizzog, but somehow he managed to do it. In old days when he had a Doctor Birchermall, he would have birched his fellow black and blue for such cheek. But the new carricket he had adopted did allow him even to talk about birches; so kept his beaming smigging as he walked to the pitch.

"My poor bowncer!" he mermered. "You are cheezy to a headmaster. It's not your fault; it's simply a symptom of the age. Open your mouth and shut your eyes, Bacer!"

"Look here," began Bowncer.

"There! You'll soon be better now!" boomed the Head. "Give me the ball, Bowncer, and I'll see if I can bowl Jolly while you're getting your breath back!"

The Head then re-leeved Bowncer of the kriket-ball and prepared to bowl out the grinning kaptin of the Fourth, who was waiting patiently at the other end of the pitch.

Bowncer turned as red as a pony. Usually, he was as obstinate as a mule, but he didn't feel like kicking, if it

was going to land him in the sanny. "All right, sir; I'll do it," he said horsely; and with that he opened his mouth and closed his eyes. The next instant the Head had whipped out the big bottle of medicine he always carried with him and was poring out a quantity into a big tablespoon.

"Grooooo! Help! Ow!" shrieked Bowncer as the vile concoction trickled down his throat.

"There's Doctor Birchermall that owes us all the munny!" they cride. "Constable, arrest that man!"

The perliceman rushed on to the pitch with the others at his heels. Blissfully ignerant of their arrival, the Head took a short run, then whirled back his hand before bowling.

Professor Birchermall was fairly taken aback when he turned round and saw what he had done. For a moment the thought occurred to him that he was bowled out himself! But a little reflection convinced him that his visitors had not guessed his secret, and his face showed no fear as he helped the perliceman to his feet.

"Beg pardon, officer, I'm sure," he grinned. "I meant to bowl forwards, not backwards. In any case, I didn't dream there was anyone behind me! Having settled that, mite I ask what is the meaning of this introsion?"

The perlice-constable rubbed his dammided nasal organ and glared. "The meanin' is this 'ere," he growled. "I've come to arrest you in the name of the lor!"

After touring the Greyfriars Photographic Exhibition, I'm firmly convinced that most of the camera-fends at this school are in need of a few hints. Here are one or two that occur to me:

1. If you suffer from trembling fits, let someone else hold the camera.
2. For preference, do not take several photographs on the same portion of the film.
3. Before you take the photograph, decide whether it is to be upright or lengthwise. On the slant midway between the two is not recommended.

Careful attention to these three rules would make the dickens of an improvement in the show. As it is, you get an impression that most of the pictures on view have been taken through a distorting mirror.

The "hit" of the show is undoubtedly Coker's exhibit. Admiring crowds stand in front of it at all hours, studying the marvellous detail and marvelling at the futuristic note that Coker has introduced into his camera work.

The picture is of a sort of nebulous white cloud in the centre with a lot of odd noses and mouths and eyes dotted about all over the place.

The title of it, by the way, is "Portrait of Myself."

and disbelief was displayed in every dial. "It's a swindle!" cried Green, the fruiterer. "You're trying to twist us! Why, you're more like Doctor Birchermall than he was himself."

Where's your proof that you're only his cuzzin?" The Head smiled.

"That's easy," he said. "The fakt is, gentlemen, that although my cuzzin and I are as like as two peas on the surfiss, we're as different as chalk and cheese underneath!"

Doctor Birchermall was a tirant and a broot. I, Professor Birchermall, am as kind-hearted as they make 'em! If you want proof—ask these boys!"

"Is it true, what your headmaster says?" asked Waters, the milkman.

"Yes, rather!" shouted the crowd, without the slightest hezzitation.

"I—I'm afraid we've dono you an injustiss, sir," mermered Burns, the baker. "It's you being so much like your cuzzin that's the cause of the trouble. Do you happen to know where he has gone?"

"Haven't the phog-giest!" grinned the Head.

"Then we won't waste your time any longer. Sorry and all that, sir!"

"Hip, hip, hooray!" he chortled. "That's done my creditors in the eye! Now I can sit back and enjoy life with a clear consence!"

But the Head's trub-bles, had he known it, were by no means over yet!

(Don't miss next week's hilarious instalment, boys.)

BRAVE BUNTER SAVES STRANGER FROM SEA

True Hero's Modesty



Bunter displayed the typical modesty of a true hero when he rescued a gentleman from the sea last week. He didn't say a word about it at Greyfriars and, but for the rescued man turning up at the school yesterday, we should never have heard a word about it!

Even then Bunter did his best to keep it dark. He spotted the stranger crossing the quad on crutches, and, having briefly greeted him, tried his hardest to pilot him away from the curious crowd. But the stranger wasn't having any.

"This brave lad," he said, addressing the crowd, "is evidently bent on dragging me away before I get a chance of telling you how he saved my life. But I refuse to go before I tell you something of his courage in risking his own life in order to save that of a total stranger."

"Eh?" "You talking about Bunter, sir?"

"I shall never be able to repay him," said the stranger, smiling affectionately at Bunter. "Yet, after it was over and I asked him what he would like,

all he could think of was something to eat."

"Well, that sounds like Bunter, anyway!" "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where did it happen, sir?" asked Dick Rake.

"I will tell you gladly, in order that you may know what a brave young fellow you have in your midst. It was at Pegg and—"

"Look here, I'd rather you didn't tell 'em," murmured Bunter, but the stranger went on, unheeding:

"And I had been climbing up the cliffs to secure some photographs of seagulls' nests, when I slipped and fell, hurting my foot so badly that I was quite unable to move. Suddenly, in utter horror, I realised that the tide was coming in rapidly! In half an hour, I should be covered with water—drowned! I called out desperately. At first there was no answer save the echo of my own voice; but after some time this brave lad's voice came floating to me on the breeze and soon, scorning the fearful peril of the relentless waves, he appeared. It was touch and go, I can tell you; a few more minutes and it would have been

all up! But Bunter just dragged me to safety in time!"

"Just where did it happen?" asked Bob Cherry.

"About a hundred yards west of Pegg beach."

"What was the time?" "Four o'clock, I heard a church bell chime as I lay there and—"

"I say, sir," gasped Bunter, "what do you say to a snack at the tuckshop? Mrs. Mimbles got some new jam puffs in and they're prime!"

And Bunter succeeded in dragging away the man he had rescued at last. And the rest of us politely waited till they were out of earshot and then had a real good cackle.

We happened to know that the tide never comes in as far as the foot of the cliffs at that particular spot; and in any case, four o'clock on the day of the "rescue" happened to be high tide!

There was no longer any mystery about why Bunter had been so unaccountably modest over his "brave" deed!

Rake Means to Rough It!

Says WILLIAM WIBLEY

"What are you doing in the summer vac?" I asked Rake the other day. "Brighton or somewhere, I suppose?"

You should have seen the look Rake gave me! Full of scorn and contempt and what not, it was. I crowned it with a mocking laugh.

"Brighton! Margate! Huh! I'd watch it!" he cried. "Rooting up and down a crowded prom in spotless clobber! Watching pierrots and putting pennies in fat-headed automatic machines! No fear! That's not good enough for me!"

"Oh! Sorry!" I gasped. "Going for a cruise, perhaps?"

"Not likely! Sitting around in stuffy dining-caloons in evening dress and playing potty deck games! Not good enough, thanks! Much too civilised and conventional!"

A sort of blinding flash

of inspiration came to me.

"Ah! I see!" I smiled. "You're going back to nature?"

"Just that," said Rake, with sort of gloating grin. "Back to the great outdoors where men and women and you can live a primitive, naturs healthy animal way. That's my idea of holiday, Wib!"

"Lot to bid for it, too," I admit. "Going on your own or with some pals?"

"Oh, there'll be plenty of others in holiday camp. You can have a look at the prospectus if you like."

And Rake pulled out his pocket and brought out a book, printed on art paper and lavishly illustrated with photographs.

I had a look through it and I must say I can't

imagine a jollier way of going back to Nature than by going to this particular seaside holiday camp.

There are brick-built bungalows instead of tents, all luxuriously furnished and with a radio in each, not to mention hot and cold running water. There's a central block of buildings containing dining-halls, gym., cinema, reading-rooms and lounges.

There's a service of limousines for pleasure trips on land and speed-boats for the sea. And the servants and waiters are recruited from the best hotels in the country.

I can assure you, chaps, one look through that little book was sufficient to turn me into an enthusiastic admirer of Rake's intention to rough it this coming vac!

"There's Doctor Birchermall that owes us all the munny!" they cride. "Constable, arrest that man!"

The perliceman rushed on to the pitch with the others at his heels. Blissfully ignerant of their arrival, the Head took a short run, then whirled back his hand before bowling.

The next instant, a serprizing thing happened. Quite by accident, the ball slipped out of the Head's grasp and whizzed backwards—and, as luck would have it, the constable's nose was right in the line of fire.

"Bang!" "Yarooooooo!"

The perliceman hit the turf with a yell of aggerny. The crowd gasped; then they yelled.

"Well bowled, sir!" "Right on the wicket!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

