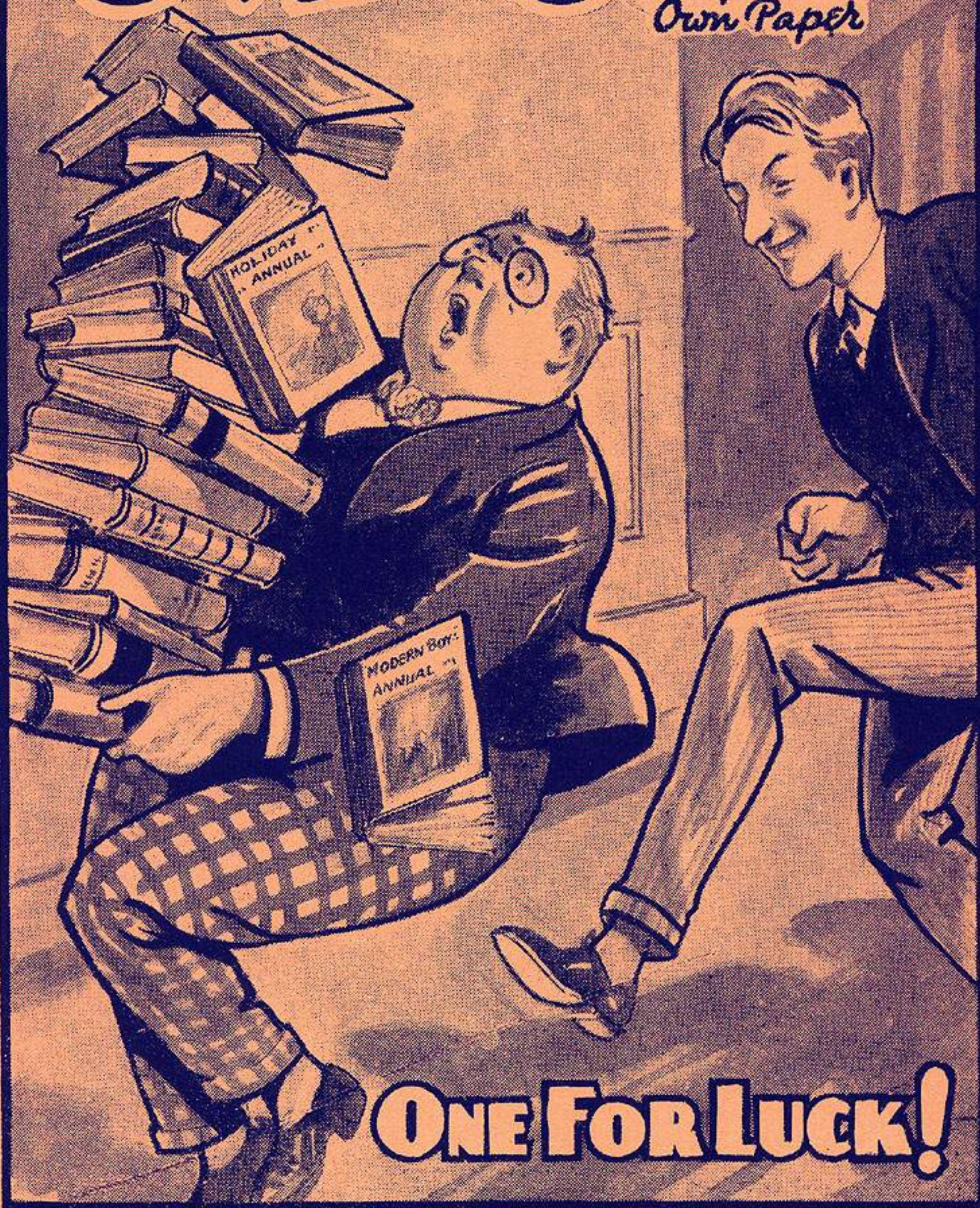


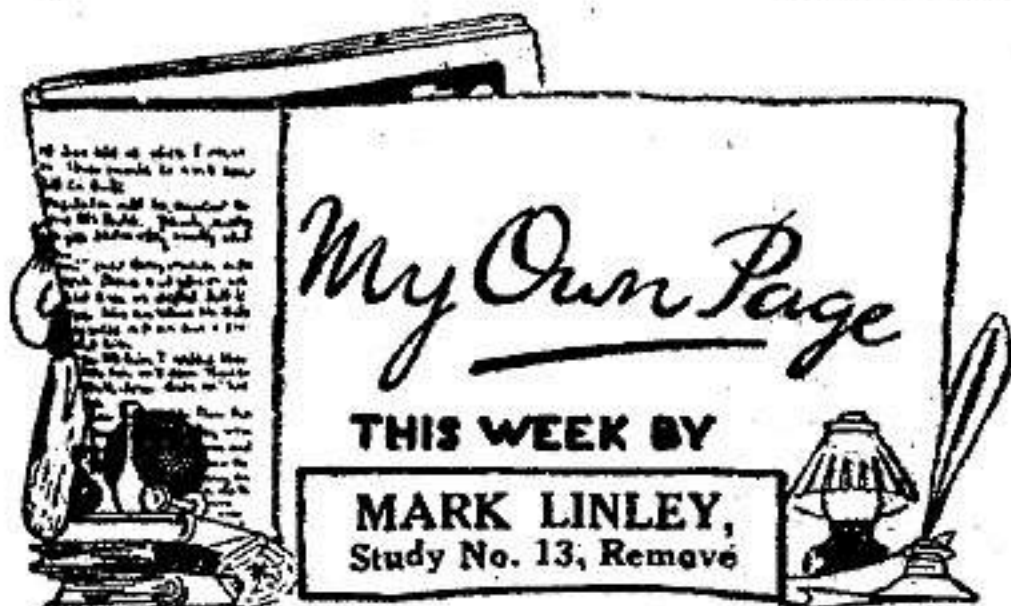
"SAVING BUNTER'S BACON!" Frank Richards' Latest School Yarn, Inside

The Magnet ^{2^D}

Billy Bunter's
Own Paper



ONE FOR LUCK!



THERE was a famous reply given by a London boy when asked if he could recognise people from other parts of England.

"Well, I know how to tell Lancashire people—they wear rosettes and carry rattles!"

It is a fact, of course, that London often has a Lancashire invasion on Cup Final day, and plenty of Lancastrians wear rosettes and carry rattles on the road to Wembley. But they do occasionally shed them when they get back to Preston, Bolton, or Manchester, where "life is real and life is earnest."

This is only one of many quaint ideas which a Lancashire fellow finds down south. There is a general belief that Lancashire is a county of black gloom, sooty rain, smoke, bleak poverty and squalid houses. I don't deny that all these things may be found in Lancashire, but not more than in any other industrial county. In the triangle formed by Manchester, Liverpool and Preston they are found quite often, because this was the seat of the great cotton industry which grew to an amazing extent in Queen Victoria's time.

There was then no question of town-planning or green belts. Ugly towns full of ugly houses were run up in next to no time to deal with the great influx of people who came to get rich in the cotton mills. Charles Dickens' famous story, "Hard Times," gives a good picture of the period, though he may have exaggerated it a little.

But even here—even in the middle of this industrial triangle—one comes across odd little bits of scenery, left over, as it were, from the Middle Ages. I am quite sure that Lancashire, at its very worst, is not so bad as some parts of London.

But that's only a small part of the story. Lancashire is a big county, and contains some delightful spots. Some of the stateliest of the stately homes of England are in Lancashire. Above all—in both senses of the phrase—there are the mountains and moors. They are always on the skyline, wherever you are. That is the great thing which London misses. To see the hills a Londoner has to travel about twenty miles through packed suburbs—a Lancastrian merely lifts his eyes. There they are, cool and blue, always on the skyline.

Something of the character of these eternal moors, bleak, wide, and empty, runs in the blood of Lancashire and Yorkshire folk. They are harder, rougher, more forthright than the Southerner. They have the wind and weather in their natures. But if they are grim, they are also humorous. I maintain that for true humour and good fun, Lancashire is the first county in England.

Watch us at play—oh, yes, we can play! You need only go to Blackpool or Southport to see that. It's a well-known fact—in Lancashire—that new amusements are always found **FIRST** at Blackpool. When a Lancastrian goes to Blackpool he goes with one idea—to enjoy himself. And he does!

Sometimes accidents happen—even at Blackpool—as in the case of Mr. and Mrs. Ramshotton, who lost their only son, Albert of that ilk, somewhere in the interior of a lion in the Blackpool Zoo. And then:

"The manager wanted no trouble.
He took out his purse right away
And said: 'How much to settle the matter?'
And Pa said: 'What do you usually pay?'"

That's typical Lancashire humour; we love to make fun of grim things.

COTTON? ROTTEN!

The grimmest feature of present-day Lancashire is the state of its trade. Cotton was our life-blood. Up to about twenty years ago our great mills chewed up the raw cotton and turned out fabrics by the mile. Lancashire cotton flowed all

over the world. It was one of the greatest trades of Britain—if not **THE** greatest.

Then, way up in Blackburn, they started a technical school to teach the manufacture of cotton fabrics. Japanese and other foreign students went there, learned the business, went home again, and began making cotton. They made it far more cheaply than we could, owing to their living conditions, which are so much lower than ours in Britain. Gradually our markets dropped and dropped. To-day, our mills stand idle. Many of them will never work again.

And all over Lancashire skilled men, who have served a lifetime in a highly technical business, have no work and no hope of getting any. My dad is one of them. Luckily, he now has an interest in a shoe-making business—like Dick Penfold's pater—and he can earn enough to keep the home fires burning. But he's one of the fortunate ones. Men as good as he are living in utter poverty, on the scantiest of food and clothes.

We have some excuse for being a little grim, don't you think?

But we Lancashire chaps aren't fond of "hard-luck stories," and we don't talk much about it. So let's forget it. Here's a poem. It's not up to Dick Penfold's standard, because—*Poeta nascitur, non fit!*—"The poet is born, not made." But what I see is this here—it's all my own work, anyway.

MY DREADFUL SECRET!

Fellows often ask me if I'm ill,
And if we have insanity at home;
They think perhaps I ought to take a pill,
Or go and show a specialist my dome.
They're rather scared of meeting me at night,
In case I should be violently unwell;
It's their opinion that I'm not quite right,
They say I ought to have a padded cell.

The reason why, you'll never, never guess—
It's such a dreadful secret, I may say,
I really almost shudder to confess

The crime that I'm committing every day.

I slink along the road with furtive eyes,
And try to keep my features out of view,

Because—and now get ready to despise—
I'M FOND OF READING LATIN, AND I DO!

There! Now I've got the secret off my chest,

You may agree it's terrible and sad,
By evil spirits I must be possessed,

Indeed, I'm quite indubitably mad!
Oh, readers, shake your heads in sad surprise,

And murmur: "No, it simply isn't true!"
Alas! In trembling tones this child replies:
"I'M FOND OF READING LATIN, AND I DO!"

(Slight pause to enable readers to swoon, faint, and throw fearful fits.)

METHOD IN IT!

Though this be madness, yet there's method in it. I hope one day to be a doctor. When I leave Greyfriars I shall go as a medical student at a London hospital. And doctors have to know Latin in order to baffle the chemist with their prescriptions.



Here's a sketch I made of the Grammar School at Lancashire's best-known town (on the music-hall stage)—**WIGAN!**

Seriously, though, I have always aimed to be a doctor. I like the idea of pushing a stethoscope into a patient's chest and commanding him to say "ninety-nine." Wait till I get Bunter in my surgery! I'll make the fat fooler cringe. I'll put him on a diet of breadcrumbs and weak water.

WISDOM FROM LANCS!

It's good to climb in t' world, but 'tis better to be on t' level.

T' prisons are full o' chaps who were out for a good time—and they won't be out for a good time!

Hard work doesn't always bring success, but success never comes without it.

T' first step to getting up in t' world is getting up in t' morning.



Mark Linley
REMOVE STUDY FORM NO. 13

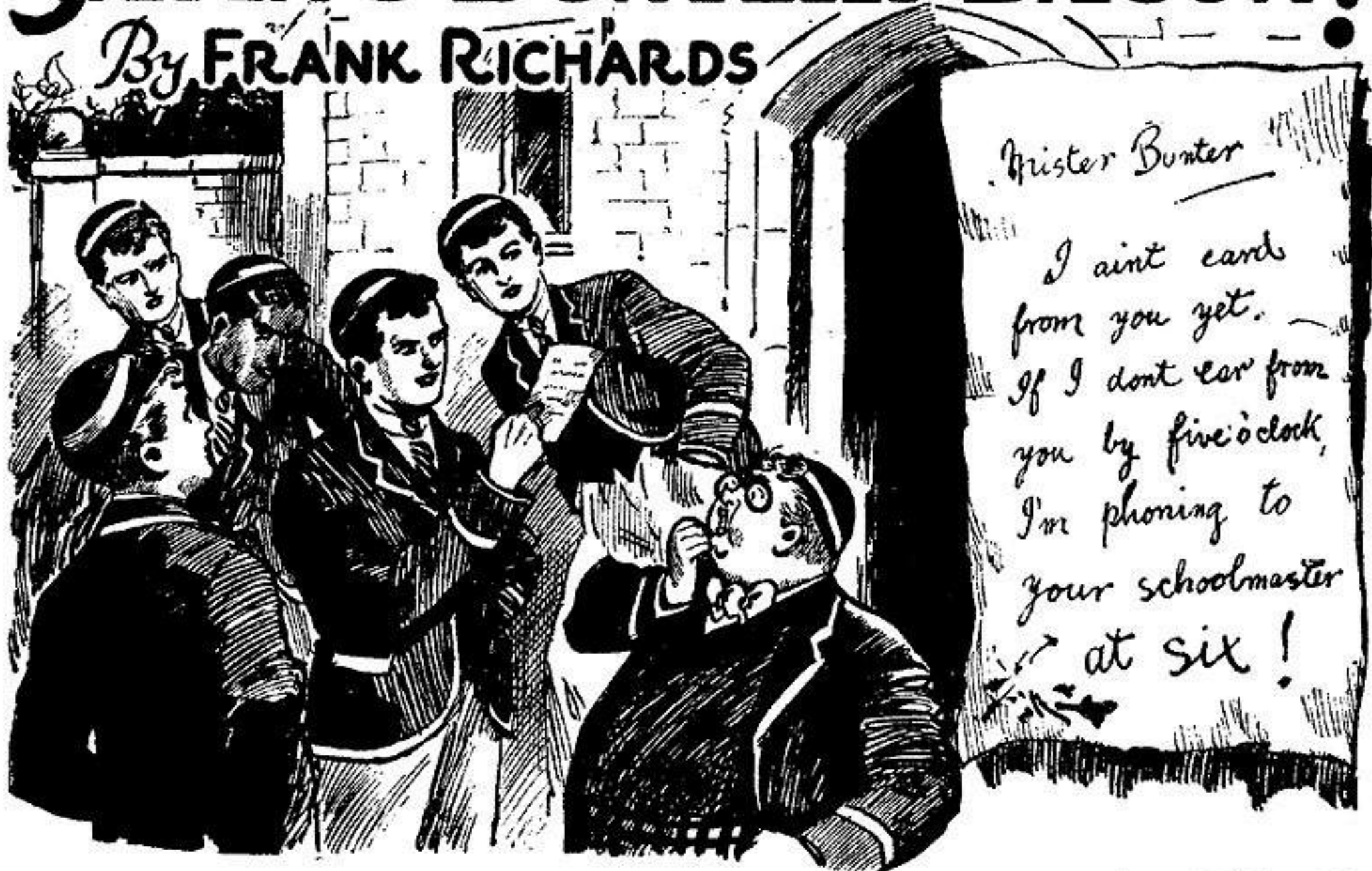
Mark is one of the few scholarship juniors at Greyfriars. His parents are poor, but that is largely owing to present conditions, for his father was a skilled operative in a Lancashire cotton mill until the slump set in and threw him out of work. Mark is a true Lancashire lad, full of grit, fond of work, always willing to lend a hand. He is a staunch friend and a sportsman in every way. When he first came to Greyfriars he had a hard fight against snobbery and sneers, but he took it quietly and calmly, until even the snobs themselves had to respect him. He is the best scholar in the Form. He also plays a rattling game of football. His best friend is probably Bob Cherry, who has always stuck to him through thick and thin—for Bob knows a good man when he sees him. Needless to say, Mr. Quelch has a high opinion of Mark Linley.

(Cartoon by HAROLD SKINNER.)

Spying and prying is Billy Bunter's long suit! But never before has this obnoxious habit landed the Owl of the Greyfriars Remove so deep in the mire as he finds himself this week. Fortunately, however, the Famous Five come to the rescue and succeed in—

SAVING BUNTER'S BACON!

By FRANK RICHARDS



Mister Bunter
I aint cards
from you yet.
If I dont ear from
you by five o'clock,
I'm phoning to
your schoolmaster
at six!

Billy Bunter handed the startling letter to the Famous Five for their inspection. "Read it!" he said. "Then perhaps you'll think about me a little, instead of about yourselves as usual!"

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Whose Half-Crown?

"THAT'S mine!" exclaimed Billy Bunter.

And he pounced.

Six or seven Remove fellows were standing, looking down at the round silvery coin that glimmered on the earth, in the Greyfriars quad.

It looked as if some fellow had dropped a half-crown, but not, apparently, one of the fellows on the spot, for no one made a move to pick it up.

It was quite different when Billy Bunter rolled along. Billy Bunter made a prompt move. He pounced like a hawk.

But promptly as Bunter pounced, he was not so quick as Bob Cherry. Bob extended a long leg, and clamped a boot on the coin, before the fat fingers of the Owl of the Remove could clutch it.

"Hold on—" said Bob. "Sure it's yours, Bunter?"

"Eh? Of course I'm sure!" yapped Bunter. "Take your hoof off it, Cherry!"

"Is the surefulness terrific?" inquired Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, with a dusky grin.

"You shut up, Inky! It's my half-crown—I dropped it in break this morning! Take your hoof off it, Cherry, you beast!"

Bob Cherry did not take his hoof off it. He kept his foot clamped down on that coin. Billy Bunter gave him a devastating blink through his big spectacles.

"Will you let me pick up my half-crown?" he roared.

"Got to make sure it's yours first, old fat bean!" said Bob, with a shake of the head. "You see, we know you!"

"I dropped it, on this very spot, when I came out after brekker this morning!" hooted Bunter.

"As well as in break?" asked Harry Wharton.

"I—I mean, in break—when I came out in break! I heard it drop—"

Super 35,000-word school story of HARRY WHARTON & CO., starring the Owl of the Remove.

"Then why didn't you pick it up?" asked Frank Nugent.

"I mean, I didn't notice it drop, at the time—"

"He heard it drop, but he didn't notice it drop at the time!" remarked Johnny Bull. "Sounds probable."

"It's mine!" roared Bunter. "If you don't let me have my half-crown, Cherry, I'll jolly well call Wingate, and he'll make you."

Bob shook his head again.

"If it's your half-crown, old fat man, you can have it," he answered. "But I jolly well think it isn't!"

"If you can't take my word about it, Cherry—"

"Well, I can't help having some doubts, in the circumstances," said Bob. "What do you fellows think?"

"The doubtfulness is terrific."

"I don't think it's Bunter's half-crown!" said Harry Wharton.

"I keep on telling you it's mine!" hooted Bunter. "Will you take your hoof off it or not, Cherry?"

"Not!"

"Beast! I tell you—"

"If it's yours, Bunter," said Harry Wharton, "where did you get it? You were trying to borrow a bob in break—you couldn't have had it then."

"I—I found it in my pocket! I'd quite forgotten I had it!" explained Bunter. "Then I dropped it! So—so I came along, thinking it might be lying here, you know."

"What a coincidence!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "I was just thinking that you might be lying here, old bean."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gimme my half-crown!" yelled Bunter.

"I'm absolutely certain that it isn't your half-crown, old fat man! You roll away."

Billy Bunter did not roll away. He gave Bob Cherry a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

"It's mine!" he roared. "If you think you're going to pinch my half-crown, you beast—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared all the Remove fellows gathered round the spot. For some reason—unknown to Bunter—his

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,614.

claim to that dropped half-crown seemed to strike them as funny.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" howled Bunter. "If you don't let me pick up my half-crown, you swab— If you fancy I'm going to let you pinch my half-crown—"

"Shut up!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, hastily, as a tall and angular figure, in cap and gown, came out of the House. "Here comes Quelch!"

"I don't care! I'm going to have my half-crown!" roared Bunter.

"Quiet, you ass—"

"Beast!"

"Don't get Quelch here, you blithering owl—"

"I'm going to have my half-crown!" bawled Bunter.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was not deaf, but had he been, he could hardly have failed to hear that excited roar. He gave the group of juniors a glance, and came directly over to them.

"What is this?" he rapped.

"Oh! Nothing, sir!" stammered Bob. "Only a joke on Bunter—"

"Tain't!" howled Bunter. "Call it a joke to stick your hoof on my half-crown? You take your hoof off my half-crown."

Mr. Quelch's face became very stern.

"Cherry! Have you placed your foot on a half-crown belonging to Bunter?" he demanded.

"Oh! No, sir!"

"Is there a half-crown there at all?"

"No, sir!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "Hark at him! I say, you fellows, you all saw the half-crown, and you all saw Cherry bung his foot on it. I say—"

"Cherry! Remove your foot, at once!"

"Yes, sir!"

Bob Cherry drew back his foot. That round, silvery coin, hitherto hidden, glimmered once more in the wintry sunshine.

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Cherry, you stated that there was no half-crown under your foot! What do you mean?"

"You—you—you see, sir—" stammered Bob.

"I see that there is a half-crown lying on the ground, and that it was hidden by your foot!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "Bunter, do you state that that is your half-crown?"

"Yes, sir—I dropped it after brekker—I mean in break! I kept on telling these fellows that it was mine. C-e-can I pick it up, sir?"

Mr. Quelch did not answer. His eyes were fixed, with a peculiar expression, on that coin. Something unusual about it seemed to strike the Remove master, whose vision was a good deal keener than the fat Owl's.

He stooped, and picked it up.

Then, at closer view, he discerned what there was of an unusual nature about that half-crown! It was not a half-crown at all. It was a circular disc of cardboard, evidently from the top of a milk-bottle, covered with silver foil!

At a short distance it looked just like a half-crown!

Mr. Quelch drew a deep breath as he gazed at it.

Harry Wharton & Co. watched him in silence. That little joke on Bunter had not been intended to be shared by a beak. It was Bunter who had brought Quelch there—and Quelch's expression indicated that Bunter was going to regret having done so.

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

"Yes, sir! May I have my half-crown, sir?" asked Bunter, still in happy ignorance of the real nature of that half-crown.

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Have you the impudence, Bunter, to tell me that this—this—this—"

"Eh? Oh! Yes, sir! I dropped it right on this spot—I heard it drop, only I didn't notice it at the time, and—and I—I—I was coming to look for it—I knew it was just here—that's it, sir!"

"Cherry! I disapprove of thoughtless jokes like this on a foolish boy like Bunter—"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"It's my half-crown, sir!" asserted Bunter. "Tain't a joke, sir—that's my half-crown that I dropped yesterday—I mean after brekker—that is, in break—"

"This is not a half-crown at all, Bunter!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "It is a disc of cardboard from a milk-bottle, covered with silver foil from a chocolate-box."

"Eh?"

Mr. Quelch threw it to the ground. Bunter blinked at it.

He did not seem to want to pick it up now. Bunter had no use for a disc of cardboard from a milk-bottle, covered with silver foil from a chocolate-box!

"Oh crikey!" he gasped.

"Bunter, you are untruthful—"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"You are unscrupulous—"

"I—I—"

"You will follow me to my study, Bunter!"

"Oh crikey!"

"Well," said Bob Cherry, as the fat Owl trailed dismally after his Form-master into the House, "some blithering idiots do ask for it, and do mistake!"

And a minute later a loud yell from Mr. Quelch's study announced that William George Bunter was getting that for which he had asked!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Sticky!

"I'VE a jolly good mind to thrash 'em all round!"

That dire threat was uttered in wrathful tones.

It was accompanied by a wrathful frown and a gleam in a pair of little round eyes behind a pair of big round spectacles.

So the juniors in the Remove passage ought really to have been impressed. Instead of which, they chortled.

"Look what they did!" continued Bunter. "Spoofing a fellow with a shud half-crown! I got two whops from Quelch! He made out that I never dropped a half-crown at all, just because he knew I hadn't, you know! That's the sort of justice we get here."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle!" said the wrathful Owl. "But I'll jolly well make those cads sit up! I've a jolly good mind to—"

"Gammon!" said Peter Todd. "If you've got a mind at all, old fat man, it isn't a jolly good one."

"Hardly!" grinned Smithy.

"Yah! I've a jolly good mind to thrash 'em all round! But I won't," added Bunter generously.

At which there was another chortle. It was probable that, if Billy Bunter had started on that all-round thrashing it would have proved a painful process—not for the famous Co.!

"But I'll make 'em sit up!" declared Bunter. "I heard them say they were going out this afternoon. I can guess where they're going—the Cross Keys or the Three Fishers—"

"Silly ass!" said Peter.

"And they can jolly well see this sticking on their study door when they come in!" said Bunter, unheeding.

The fat Owl of the Remove had a sheet of impot paper in one fat hand and a bottle of gum with a brush in the other. Something was written in large capital letters on the sheet of paper. As Bunter held it up all the fellows could read it. It ran:

"PUBB-HAWNTING KADS!"

"Oh, my hat!" yelled Vernon-Smith. "Are you going to stick that on Wharton's door?"

"Just that!" declared Bunter. "They don't like being reminded of it! I'm going to rub it in—see? They make out that they were taking a short cut that time they were spotted at the Cross Keys—"

"So they were, you fat ass!" said Peter.

"Were they?" grinned Skinner.

"You jolly well know they were, Skinner!"

"I don't!" contradicted Skinner.

"And I don't, either!" declared Bunter. "Quelch can swallow that if he likes. Not me! I shouldn't wonder if that's where they've gone this afternoon, if a fellow kept an eye on them! Pub-haunting lot! They can see this when they come in. You fellows needn't mention that I did it."

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

Really, it was not necessary for any one to mention that Bunter had done it. Billy Bunter's spelling was his own—his very own! Any eye that had fallen on that placard could not have failed to spot Bunter's handiwork.

"Mind, I haven't waited till they were gone out before sticking this up," went on Bunter. "I'm not afraid of them. I can jolly well tell you. Still, you fellows needn't mention that I did it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter, with his devastating placard in one fat paw, and the gum in the other, rolled along to the door of Study No. 1, which belonged to Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent.

All eyes were upon him, and all faces wore extensive grins. Billy Bunter was always more or less entertaining, but on the trail of vengeance he was more entertaining than usual.

Remarkable as was the spelling of that placard, there was no doubt that it would have an annoying effect on Harry Wharton & Co.

The Famous Five did not like that pub-haunting story—which had haunted them ever since the day when they had, thoughtlessly and unluckily, taken a short cut by Cross Keys Lane, which was most severely out of bounds for Greyfriars fellows.

Bunter was going to rub it in! Two whops from Quelch for having lain claim to a cardboard half-crown had roused Bunter's ire.

Willingly and gladly he would have thrashed the Famous Five all round! That was what they really deserved for pulling Bunter's fat leg with a cardboard half-crown! But there were certain difficulties in the way of that enterprise.

This was easier—and, really, more effective! This would make the beasts sit up!

Grimly vengeful, Billy Bunter stopped at the door of Study No. 1 and dipped the brush into the bottle of gum.



Having gummed the back of the sheet, Bunter turned it round to stick on the door. Wharton glanced out. "What——" he began. "Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

At that moment the door opened, and "Haven't you gone out, you beast?"

Quite a little crowd of the Remove watched him with grinning interest. They were all the more entertained, because some of them knew that the Famous Five had not, as Bunter supposed, yet gone out!

Some of them knew that Harry Wharton at that very moment was in his study, finishing some lines for Quelch while his friends waited for him in the quad. It was really entertaining to think of what would happen if the captain of the Remove heard Bunter at his door and opened it while the fat Owl was at work!

There was a ripple of merriment as Bunter spread the paper against the door and proceeded to mop gum over it ready for sticking up.

Billy Bunter blinked round over a fat shoulder.

"You can cackle," he said, "but I'll bet those cads won't cackle when they see it! It will jolly well show them what we think of them. Mind you, don't mention that I did it, though."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter mopped gum. Having gummed the back of the sheet liberally he turned it round to stick on the door.

At that moment the door opened from within.

Harry Wharton glanced out into the passage.

"What——" he began.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Oh crikey! Haven't you gone out, you beast?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton stared at him. He had looked out to see what was going on—the sounds of merriment having penetrated into the study. He stared at Bunter and stared at the paper in his hand.

Bunter, paper in one hand and gum-bottle in the other, blinked at him in dismay. He was taken quite aback. His eyes almost popped through his

spectacles at the unexpected sight of the captain of the Remove.

"What the thump's that?" exclaimed Wharton. "What—— Why, you fat, frabjous, footling, foozling fat-head——"

"I—I—I wasn't going to stick this on your door, old chap!" gasped Bunter. "N-n-n-nothing of the kind, you know! I ain't going to stick it on your study door—I ain't, really!"

"You're not!" agreed Harry Wharton.

He reached out and grabbed the gummy paper from Bunter's fat paw with one hand. With the other he grabbed Bunter's fat neck.

Smack!

The gummy paper smacked on Billy Bunter's fat face—gummy side to his features! It stuck there.

"Urrgh!" gurgled Bunter. His voice came muffled through gummy paper. "Gurrgh! I say—— Wurrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oooogh! Ow! I say—— Wooogh!"

Bunter wriggled wildly as the captain of the Remove pressed the gummy paper hard on his fat features. It stuck to his little fat nose, and it stuck to his spectacles. He wriggled and gurgled.

"Urgh! Stoppit! I say, you fellows, rescue! Oooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton jerked the gum-bottle from the fat paw. He wedged it inside the back of Bunter's collar. The gum that had remained in it trickled down a fat back!

"Oooooogh! Groogh!"

"That's a tip, you fat chump!" said Wharton, and he stepped back into the study and shut the door—and sat down to finish his lines.

"Urrgh! I say, you fellows—— Oh crikey! Ooogh!" spluttered the hapless Owl.

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

Bunter stood masked with his own placard. His fat features were quite hidden by his own handiwork. His aspect really was extraordinary, and it made the Removites howl.

Billy Bunter wriggled and spluttered, and grabbed frantically at the gummy mask on his fat face. He grabbed it off at last, and stood gasping and blinking at the yelling juniors through gummy spectacles.

"Oh crikey!" he gasped. "Ow! I'm all sticky——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oggh! There's gum running down my back——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Urrgh! Beasts! Oh crikey!"

Billy Bunter, rolled up the passage to the tap at the end, followed by a howl of laughter. Bunter wanted a wash. Washing, especially extra washing, was not much in Bunter's line; but even Bunter realised that he needed a wash now. For the first time that term, Billy Bunter had a really good wash.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Shadowed!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Look back!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

Five juniors, sauntering along the road towards Courtfield Common, looked back.

They looked at a rather surprising sight.

Following them, on the road from Greyfriars School, came a fat figure, whose spectacles gleamed back the rays of the wintry sun.

But as the Famous Five turned and THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,614.

looked back along the road, that fat figure dodged into cover.

There was a tree handy by the roadside. Billy Bunter popped swiftly behind that tree as he saw the juniors turn.

That proceeding was surprising. It was puzzling. For the moment it did not occur to the Famous Five that Bunter was dodging out of sight, because a considerable portion of him was still in sight.

It was a rather slender tree. Billy Bunter was not slender. On either side of the tree Bunter was still visible.

"What on earth," exclaimed Harry Wharton, "is that game?"

Bob Cherry chortled.

"That fat chump," he answered, "thinks we're going on the merry rindan. He's shadowing us."

"Oh crumbs!"

"The crumbliness is terrific!" gasped Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

Harry Wharton laughed, and then he frowned. He had no doubt that Bob had guessed it.

Bunter still had it fixed in his fat brain that the Famous Five were bad hats, in the style of Skinner and Smithy, since that unfortunate episode in Cross Keys Lane.

Hardly a fellow in the Remove took that view. Even Skinner, who kept the story as alive as possible, did not really believe that the Famous Five went pub-crawling on half-holidays, or had racing transactions with Mr. Lodgey at the Cross Keys, or Joe Banks at the Three Fishers.

But that was Bunter's belief. Bunter fancied that he knew a thing or two. He was, in his own opinion, no fool. Quite a different opinion of

his intellect was held by all the rest of the Remove.

And Bunter at present had his podgy back up. The incident of the cardboard half-crown, and two whops from Queleh had annoyed Bunter. He had been still more annoyed by having his placard, which he had intended to gum on the door of Study No. 1, gummed on his own fat face.

Now he had set out to shadow the five bad hats, and fairly pin them down in their delinquency.

Not that Bunter thought of giving them away to the beaks. Bunter was no sneak. He was going to show them up in the Form for what they were. That was Bunter's vengeance for the cardboard half-crown and his other grievances.

Bunter was doing his shadowing in his own masterly way.

As the Famous Five were sauntering at an easy pace, the fat Owl was able to keep them in sight. When they looked round he dodged into cover. It did not occur to his fat brain that he was wider than the roadside tree behind which he so promptly dodged. A fellow could not think of everything.

The Famous Five gazed at him. Quite a lot of Bunter was visible on either side of that tree-trunk. He could not see the Famous Five, and he happily fancied that they could not see him—rather like the ostrich with his head in the sand.

"Ain't he a cough-drop?" inquired Bob Cherry. "Ain't he a prize-packet? Ain't he the jolly old limit? Ain't he some shadower, and then a few? Ferrers Locke, and Sherlock Holmes are fools to him. Would you

follows guess that he was in cover?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let's go back and boot him," suggested Johnny Bull.

"The bootfulness is the proper caper!" grinned Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"No fear!" answered Bob.

"Bunter's set out to shadow us. Let him keep on with it. We're not supposed to know—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We're going to Highcliffe," continued Bob. "Well, we can go round by way of Oak Lane—an extra mile won't hurt us. There's a gate to the Three Fishers in Oak Lane. We'll pass it, and dodge away across the common. Bunter will think we've gone in," Bob chortled. "Bet you he'll stick there and wait for us to come out—what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Co.

"Look!" gasped Nugent.

On one side of the tree-trunk, back along the road, came a sudden gleam of spectacles. Bunter was peering round the trunk to ascertain whether his quarry had got into motion again.

"Some detective!" gurgled Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five walked on their way. They were careful to keep at a moderate pace. They did not want that masterly shadower to be left behind.

When they reached the corner of Oak Lane they paused.

Their original intention had been to walk straight on by the road over the common to Highcliffe, where they were going to visit their friends, Courtenay and the Caterpillar, whom they had not yet seen that term.

Bunter probably would have been puzzled and disconcerted had they walked straight on, as he was convinced that they were heading for that disreputable riverside inn, the Three Fishers.

Now, however, he was neither puzzled nor disconcerted, for the five juniors turned the corner and walked into Oak Lane.

"Now put it on," murmured Bob.

And they ran.

Bunter was still rolling up the road towards the corner when the five juniors passed the gate of the Three Fishers on their left, and dodged off the lane into the thickets on the common on their right.

Behind a mass of hawthorn-bushes the Famous Five halted, in cover—rather more effective cover than Bunter's.

There they waited and watched.

Round the corner from the road came a fat figure. Once more they beheld a big pair of spectacles gleaming back the winter sunshine.

"Here he comes!"

"Quiet!"

There was a suppressed gurgle behind the hawthorns. Through the interstices of the thicket the juniors had a good view of Bunter.

The fat Owl came puffing and blowing on. He stopped as he reached the gate, and blinked round him.

He had lost sight of his quarry after they turned the corner. Now they were not in sight.

Had they kept on by the lane they could have been in sight ahead. Evidently they hadn't.

So Bunter had no doubt.

That they had dodged behind the hawthorns on the common, and were now watching him from a distance of no more than six or seven yards, was quite unknown to the fat shadower.

How'd you like to be at a School like this?

The school that is governed by schoolboys! Such is the new and amazing order of things at St. Frank's! The rebels of the school—styling themselves the Brotherhood of the Free—gain complete command, and proceed to run things their own way—with startling results! Read all about it in this powerful yarn!



SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY No. 360 Of all Newsagents 4d

It was clear to Bunter that they had gone in at the gateway in the long fence.

He rolled up to the gate and blinked over it. His podgy back was turned to the watchers in the hawthorns for a minute or so as he scanned the weedy grounds within.

They watched, greatly interested to know what the shadower's next move would be. It was clear that Bunter had no doubt that they had gone into those disreputable and forbidden precincts.

He turned from the gate at last. They saw a fat grin on his podgy features. His chuckle reached their ears.

"Copped 'em this time," said Bunter aloud. "Awful rotters! Pub-crawling on a half-holiday! Beastly lot of swabs. I wonder what Quelch would say, if he knew?"

"I wonder?" murmured Bob. And the Co. suppressed a chuckle.

"Talk about short cuts!" went on Bunter, communing with himself. "I wonder if they'd have the nerve to say they were taking a short cut by the Three Fishers, same as they did when that man Squidge spotted them at the Cross Keys? Well, I'll jolly well show them up this time! Gumming a fellow's chivvy! They'll jolly well jump when they see me here when they come out. Ho, ho, ho!"

Bunter rolled away from the gate.

At a little distance along the fence he took up his stand, leaning back against the fence, with his hands in his overcoat pockets, and his eyes and spectacles fixed in the direction of the gate.

Nobody could come out of that gate without being spotted by the watchful Owl.

Bunter had only to wait.

"Time we moved on!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Mind that fat ass doesn't see any of you! Keep the bushes between us and that jolly old shadower."

The Famous Five were very careful.

Bunter was blinking along the fence towards the gateway, and not glancing across the lane towards the open common. Still, they did not take chances. They kept the hawthorns very carefully between them and Bunter, as they moved away across the common.

At a safe distance, out of the fat Owl's vision, they broke into a run to make up for lost time. Bunter was left on the watch, and the Famous Five, chuckling, hoped that he would enjoy his afternoon!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Booting A Blackmailer!

BUMP!

"Strike me pink!"

"Oh, my hat!"

That little joke on Bunter had taken the Famous Five some distance out of their way and lost them some time, so they were putting on speed to get back to the Courtfield road, across a corner of the common.

And that was how it happened.

On a cold January day they would hardly have expected anybody to be sitting about on the wind-swept common. But somebody, it seemed, was.

They had almost reached the road when they came at a run through a straggle of frosty bushes, and two of them stumbled right over a man who was sitting on a log there, smoking cigarettes.

They stumbled over him before they had the faintest idea that he was there, and the man pitched off the log, with

Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull sprawling over him. The other three missed him, fortunately.

"Oh, sorry!" gasped Bob, as he scrambled up. "Never saw you!"

"Sorry!" gasped Johnny.

The man did not answer. He yelled. His cigarette had slipped into his mouth as he rolled over, and one end of it seemed to be hot.

He sat up dizzily, and spat out the cigarette. Then, as the juniors looked at him, they recognised him. They uttered his name together:

"Squidge!"

They knew that oily face, with its shifty eyes! A moment ago they had been prepared to be extremely apologetic for that little accident. Now they were more inclined to give Mr. Squidge some more.

It was the dingy rascal who, a week or two ago, had seen them taking that short cut at the Cross Keys, and demanded money from them "to keep it dark."

As they had pitched him into a ditch instead of complying with that demand, Mr. Squidge had reported them at the school, which had led to lines and detentions.

But that was not the worst of his offences.

One night he had spotted a sportsman of the Fourth Form out of bounds and grabbed him, with the same rascally intention of extorting money.

That sportsman had given Harry Wharton's name instead of his own, which had led to trouble for the captain of the Remove.

The matter had ended satisfactorily, but that did not alter the fact that Mr. Squidge's rascally attempt at blackmail had caused a lot of trouble.

Since then they had not seen him, and had supposed that he was gone from the neighbourhood. But here he was. He was not a nice man to see; but the Famous Five were rather glad to see him, all the same. They owed Mr. Squidge an account which this was an opportunity to settle.

"That rotter!" said Bob. "Glad I pushed you over, Squidge!"

"That rascal!" growled Johnny Bull.

Mr. Squidge tottered to his feet. He grabbed up his bowler hat, which had fallen off, and jammed it on his greasy head. He gave the Greyfriars fellows an evil look.

"You lot!" he said. Evidently he knew them again.

"Us lot!" agreed Bob.

"Where you running?" jeered Mr. Squidge. "Has your schoolmaster spotted you at a pub, like I did a week or two ago? Precious lot you are!"

Mr. Squidge had little faith in human nature. His way of life made him suspicious. He did not believe that they had been taking a short cut that day at the Cross Keys. Now he found them running from the direction of the Three Fishers, and drew his own conclusions.

"Schoolmaster arter you?" he jeered.

"What are you hanging about here for?" demanded Harry Wharton, without answering Mr. Squidge's question.

"Find out!" retorted Mr. Squidge.

"Looking for a chance at some other fellow in our school?" asked Bob. "You haven't made much out of that so far, Squidge!"

"Next time you try that game you'd better make sure you get the right name, you rascal!" said Harry Wharton contemptuously.

"If I 'ad a stick with me," said Mr. Squidge. "I'd lay it round the lot of you—'ard, too!"

"Well, I've got a boot with me," said

Bob, "and I'm going to lay it round you, Squidge—hard too!"

"Go it!" said Harry.

Mr. Squidge backed away in alarm.

"'Ands off!" he roared.

"That's all right!" said Bob. "Nobody's going to put a hand on you, Squidge—you're not nice to touch! You're going to get the boot!"

"And the bootfulness is going to be terrific, my esteemed and disgusting Squidge!" declared Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh.

Mr. Squidge made a rush to escape. Had Mr. Squidge met one of the juniors with a stick in his dinky fist, it would have been a different story. Now Mr. Squidge was only anxious to arrive rapidly at a different part of the landscape.

He ran. After him ran the Famous Five.

They were better sprinters than Mr. Squidge. Beer, whisky, cigars, and cigarettes did not help Squidge in the matter of wind. He was no sprinter. Even with a policeman behind him, he could not have put up much of a foot-race.

He puffed and he blew, and, cold as the day was, perspiration ran in streams down his oily face. He was in a fearful hurry to get out of the reach of lunging boots.

But he couldn't. He did his best—running, twisting, jumping like a kangaroo. But the juniors ran easily behind, letting out a boot in turn.

How many kicks Mr. Squidge gathered in that wild race he never knew. It seemed to him like millions.

"Keep orf!" roared Mr. Squidge wildly. "Blow you! I'll go to your schoolmaster! I'll go to the perlice! I'll— Oh! Wooh!"

"Keep it up!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Dribble him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you chuck it?" shrieked the hapless Squidge. "Will you leave orf? I ask yer, will you leave orf?"

"Not yet!" answered Bob cheerily. "We're going to make you tired of hanging about our school, Squidge!"

"The tirefulness is going to be terrific!"

"Give him a few more!"

"Ow! Oh! Ooogh! Yarooop!"

howled Squidge.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

As a welsher at the races, a pilferer when he had a chance, and a black-mailer when opportunity offered, it was probable that Mr. Squidge had been booted many times. But it was improbable that he had ever had such a booting as he was getting now.

Whether Mr. Squidge was hanging about the vicinity of Greyfriars in the hope of spotting another chance at petty blackmail or not, the Famous Five did not know, but it was likely enough. Anyhow, he had tried that game on once, and Harry Wharton had gone through an unpleasant time in consequence. So it seemed to the Famous Five quite a good idea to make him tired of Greyfriars School and Greyfriars fellows.

There was no doubt that Mr. Squidge was tired of them now. Boot after boot landed on his dusty trousers, and at every thud Mr. Squidge yelled and howled.

The chase went on for quite a distance—half-way back to the Three Fishers. Then the Famous Five at last gave it up. They were getting rather breathless; also, they were losing time. So they stopped at last, and Mr. Squidge flew on, unpursued and un-kicked.

"That will be a lesson to the rotter!" remarked Johnny Bull. "I fancy he won't want to worry Greyfriars any more after that."

And the chums of the Remove resumed once more their walk to Highcliffe.

Mr. Squidge flew on—till he discovered that he was no longer pursued. Then he came to a halt, and took a very necessary rest. For a long, long time Mr. Squidge leaned on a tree, and gasped and panted, and panted and gasped, and mopped his greasy brow with a dingy handkerchief.

When at last he moved again he slouched on in the direction of the Three Fishers. After that awful experience Mr. Squidge felt that he needed a drink.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Out Of Bounds!

"**G**OP em!" ejaculated Billy Bunter.

His eyes gleamed through his spectacles.

He felt that he was in luck!

He had been prepared for quite a long wait! But he had not had to wait long, when five schoolboys came out of the gate of the Three Fishers, and turned into the lane.

Billy Bunter grinned with satisfaction.

He had "got them"!

After this, those beasts were going to get the showing-up of their lives. All the Remove were going to know that Bunter had spotted them out of bounds at the most disreputable resort in the neighbourhood. The Three Fishers was, if possible, a little more malodorous than the Cross Keys. And there they came—right under Bunter's eyes and spectacles—and he grinned with gleeful triumph as they came down the lane towards him.

But that gleeful triumph died out of his fat face as they came nearer, and clearer to the view of the short-sighted Owl of the Remove.

For, on closer inspection, Bunter discerned the unexpected circumstance that they were not the Famous Five.

So far from being Harry Wharton & Co., they did not even belong to Greyfriars School at all!

They were Highcliffe fellows—five members of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe; which was not only a disappointing surprise to Billy Bunter, but rather alarming as well.

"Oh crikey! Pon's gang!" gasped the Owl.

There was nothing surprising in seeing Pon's gang going into the Three Fishers, or coming out therefrom. It was, in fact, quite a favourite resort of Ponsonby and his pals on a half-holiday.

Ponsonby, Gadsby, Monson, Drury, and Vavasour came down the lane in a bunch, staring at Bunter as they came.

They seemed pleased to see him.

Bunter, on the other hand, was far from pleased. Pon & Co., when they ran into a Greyfriars fellow on his lonely own, were liable to rag.

The fat Owl forgot the supposed delinquents for whom he was watching. He wished himself elsewhere—anywhere but where he was. But flight was impracticable; Bunter had too much weight to carry to hope to escape by flight. He could only hope that Pon & Co. were in a peaceful mood!

They halted as they reached the spot where Bunter stood, and gave him grinning looks.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,614.

"What's that?" asked Ponsonby.

"Escaped hippopotamus!" suggested Gadsby.

"Porpoise, I think!" remarked Monson.

"It's a Greyfriars cad, I fancy!" said Drury. "It hasn't washed—you can see that! I fancy it belongs to Greyfriars!"

"Absolutely!" chuckled Vavasour.

"I—I—I say, you fellows, you keep off!" bleated Bunter uneasily. "I say, I—I'm waiting for some fellows here—you keep off! They—they ain't far away!"

Ponsonby gave a swift glance round. From the fact that Bunter had been standing there, leaning on the fence, with his hands in his pockets, it looked as if he was waiting for somebody. If the fellows for whom he was waiting happened to be fighting men, Pon did not want to meet them.

No one, however, was in sight. Still, fellows might be quite near, though unseen, in the winding lane, and on the common among thickets and trees.

"I say, come on," said Vavasour, "no good hanging about."

"Yes; never mind that fat freak!" said Drury.

"Who are you waitin' for, Bunter?" asked Ponsonby. "Wharton's lot?"

"Yes!" gasped Bunter. "And I'll jolly well yell to Bob Cherry if you touch me, so there!"

Ponsonby set his lips. If Bob Cherry was within hearing a yell, Pon had no desire for a yell to summon him to the spot. At the same time, he was annoyed by the hint that he funked the redoubtable Bob—which, undoubtedly, he did!

"Oh, come on," said Monson, "we don't want a row with that gang, Pon!"

"We needn't waste more than a minute on that fat fozzler!" answered Pon. "Chuck his coat and cap over the fence!"

"I say——" gasped Bunter.

"Good egg!" grinned Gadsby. "Give him a climb! Think the fence will stand it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You keep off!" howled Bunter. "Look here, you beasts——"

But the Highcliffe fellows did not keep off. They did not intend to linger lest help should be at hand for the fat Owl. But they had a minute to spare for Bunter.

They grabbed him on all sides. Ponsonby snatched off his cap, and tossed it over the fence.

Then his overcoat was jerked off, and Pon folded it, to make it convenient for a throw.

Bunter yelled with alarm.

"Stoppit! I say, you fellows, I can't go in there for my coat—it's out of bounds! I say, I should get into a fearful row if I went in there! I say——"

Whizz!

The folded overcoat flew through the air and dropped on the inner side of the high fence.

Bunter gave a gasp of consternation as it disappeared.

"Oh crikey! Beasts! Oh lor'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ponsonby & Co., laughing, went on their way down the lane. Billy Bunter stood blinking up at the high fence in utter dismay.

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Bunter.

He wished, from the bottom of his fat heart, that he had not set out to shadow the Famous Five that afternoon. Of course, he had never dreamed of foreseeing this awful catastrophe.

He could not go without his coat and his cap. It was altogether too jolly cold to go hatless and coatless. Already he was shivering in the sharp January wind.

Those beasts, of course, knew that! It was Pon & Co.'s idea of a joke, to make him enter a place that was strictly out of bounds—that a fellow might be flogged, or ever sacked for entering.

Bunter had to have his coat! He had to have his cap! And he had to go within the precincts of the Three Fishers to get them!

Pon & Co. disappeared, chuckling. Bunter was left blinking at the fence in dismay and consternation.

"Beasts!" he moaned.

He rolled along towards the gate. But he stopped again! Suppose he was seen going into such a place?

He stood for a moment of two in doubt! But a sharp gust of wind from the sea decided him, as it made his teeth chatter! He had to have that coat, and he had to have that cap!

He rolled on.

At the gate he stood for a moment or two thinking up and down the lane, and across the open common on the other side, to make sure that no one was at hand. Then he opened the gate and rolled in, letting it swing shut behind him.

His fat heart was thumping. The Famous Five, as he still believed, had gone into that very place—at the risk of the sack if they were spotted! That risk was terrifying to the fat Owl.

Certainly, if he was found out, he would explain what had happened—but even if he was believed, it would not be taken as an excuse for entering such disreputable precincts! And would he be believed? Only that morning, Quelch had caned him for untruthfulness! For some reason unknown to Bunter Quelch never placed any reliance on his word!

But he had to have that coat and cap! He lost no time! He plunged along the inner side of the fence in search of them.

The inner side of the fence was lined with draggled bushes and weedy shrubbery. It was not easy to find the exact spot.

Bunter had hoped to be only a couple of minutes inside! At the end of a quarter of an hour, he had found the coat, but was still searching for the cap.

He put the coat on, and hunted for the cap! He discovered, at long last, that it had hooked on a branch just out of his reach.

It was ten minutes more before he retrieved that cap! In a state of palpitating uneasiness, he jemmied it on his fat head. He was ready to go now, at all events. Gasping, he rolled back to the gate.

He reached it—just as someone else reached it from the outside!

Bunter put a fat hand on the gate from within, as Mr. Squidge put a dingy one on the gate from without.

They stared at one another across the gate.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter, as he recognised the oily face and cunning features of the man who had, the week before, come to the school to point out Harry Wharton as a breaker of bounds.

Mr. Squidge grinned.

He held the gate firmly so that Bunter could not open it.

"Copped!" he remarked.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Awful For Bunter!

MR. SQUIDGE grinned genially. He had seen Bunter before; though, even if he had not seen him at the school, he would have known that he belonged to Greyfriars by his cap.

Five Greyfriars fellows had booted Mr. Squidge across the common that



"Houtside!" said Gosling, giving Squidge a push as a hint to start. The next moment the school porter felt as if an air-raid had suddenly happened, as Squidge's fist shot out and sent him gasping and rolling at Mr. Quelch's feet.

afternoon! Now he had caught a Greyfriars fellow on the wrong side of the Three Fishers' gate! It was an immense satisfaction to Mr. Squidge.

He leaned his elbows on the gate, and grinned at the dismayed Owl.

"I—I say, you lemme gerrout!" gasped Bunter. "I—I'm in rather a hurry."

"I dessay!" agreed Mr. Squidge.

"Look here, you beast, let me get out! I shall get into a fearful row if I'm seen in here! Anybody might pass!" squeaked the terrified Owl.

"You young rip, you!" said Mr. Squidge.

He fairly gloated over his catch. This was a fellow quite different from Harry Wharton & Co. There was no danger of a booting, or a hefty punch. The fat Owl was almost collapsing with funk.

Anybody, as Bunter had said, might pass along Oak Lane. Sir Hilton Popper, who was a governor of the school, might pass—his mansion was on that very lane. A Greyfriars master, taking a walk, might pass. A Greyfriars prefect might pass on a bike. And there was Bunter—in full view!

His fat knees knocked together!

"I—I want to come out!" he wailed.

"I fancy you do!" grinned Mr. Squidge.

Leaning on the gate, he prevented the fat Owl from pulling it open. Bunter blinked past him, with a terrified blink, into the road!

If he was seen there—on the wrong side of the gate—in talk with that disreputable racing man—

There was a distant clatter of hoofs. A bony gentleman in riding clothes appeared up the lane, mounted—riding along towards the gate! One glimpse of Sir Hilton Popper's eyeglass was enough for Bunter.

He shot away from the gate.

He had to keep out of sight! He was safe out of sight when Sir Hilton came riding by. The horseman glanced at the gate and saw only Mr. Squidge there. He passed on.

Mr. Squidge opened the gate, stepped in, and closed it. He followed the shivering fat Owl along the thickets inside.

"Narrer squeak!" he remarked pleasantly.

"Oh crikey!" groaned Bunter.

He made a move to pass Mr. Squidge and get back to the gate, now that Sir Hilton Popper was gone.

Mr. Squidge stepped into his way with a threatening look.

"Old on!" he said.

Bunter held on! He had no chance of handling Mr. Squidge! He groaned with sheer horror at his position. Not only was he within the forbidden precincts of the Three Fishers, but he was now a dozen yards within—and a leering, foxy-faced rascal was barring his way out.

"This is going to corst yer something!" said Mr. Squidge.

"Oh crikey!" groaned Bunter.

That remark told him Mr. Squidge's game!

All the Remove knew that that oily rascal had attempted to extort money from Harry Wharton in the belief that he was the fellow he had copped out of bounds, and who had given him, as it turned out, a false name. Squidge was bent on playing the same game with the hapless Owl.

True, he was not likely to have much luck in extracting money from Bunter. Bunter's financial resources were limited to one penny.

Even that small sum would not have been in his possession, but for the fact that it was a French penny, which

Bunter, after a dozen attempts, had failed to pass on anyone.

A penny, especially a French penny, was not much in the way of plunder for a blackmailer!

In all his rascally career, it was probable that Mr. Squidge had never struck a more unpromising proposition!

Still, Squidge was unaware of all that—Bunter was a Greyfriars fellow, and some Greyfriars fellows had plenty of money. So far as Squidge knew, Bunter had plenty, or at least some!

"Ow much is it worth to you not to be given away to your schoolmaster?" inquired Mr. Squidge pleasantly.

Really, that was worth untold sums to Bunter! But all he had to offer Mr. Squidge in the way of current coin was a French penny!

"What about a fi'pun note?" asked Mr. Squidge.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I haven't got one! The—the—the fact is, I—I haven't got any money at all! Only a—a—a penny! Oh lor'!"

"Mebbe!" agreed Mr. Squidge. "I fancy they wouldn't leave much in your pockets at that show!"

He jerked his head towards the Three Fishers, visible in the distance through the leafless trees.

"I—I—I haven't been there!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—"

"No!" said Mr. Squidge pleasantly. "You come in 'ere jest to stroll about, what? I've met some liars in my time, I 'ave, and I don't say that I mightn't spill one myself occasional; but I never heard the like of that!"

"You—you see, I—I—"

"Yes, I see!" agreed Mr. Squidge. "I see that you're going to 'it some bad trouble at your school, young man, if

you don't make it square with yours truly. First of all, I'll 'ave your name."

"I—I—I'd rather not mention my name, if—if you don't mind!" moaned Bunter.

"I 'dossay!" grinned Mr. Squidge. "But I'll 'ear it, all the same! Cough it up, my fat pippin!"

Back into Billy Bunter's mind came the recollection of the trick played by Aubrey Angel of the Fourth! This same blackmailing rascal had caught the sportsman at the Fourth out of bounds and compelled him to give his name—and Aubrey had given Harry Whar-ton's!

Bunter did not think of giving Whar-ton's! But still less did he think of giving his own! He decided on Wingate's!

Wingate was in the Sixth Form and captain of the school! Wingate had a punch like the kick of a horse, and was exactly the fellow to deal with a man like Squidge, if he turned up at Greyfriars!

Borrowing Wingate's name would not, so far as Bunter could see, do Wingate any harm—but it would do Squidge a lot, if he tried to collect a fiver from the captain of Greyfriars!

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Wingate!"

"Your name Wingate?"

"That—that's it! N-n-now let me go!"

"No 'urry!" grinned Mr. Squidge. "I've been 'ad once! I ain't being 'ad in the same way again! Not Tommy Squidge. P'r'aps you've got a letter in your pocket, with that there name on it!"

Bunter groaned! He had a letter in his pocket; but the name on it was W. G. Bunter!

Mr. Squidge reached out an unwashed hand and jerked a handkerchief from Bunter's pocket. There were initials in the corner, and the artful Mr. Squidge grinned at the "W. G. B."

"'B' stands for Wingate, what?" he asked agreeably.

"Oh, no!" gasped Bunter. "I—I mean, my—my name's Brown! See?"

"Strike me pink!" gasped Mr. Squidge. "You mean that your name's Brown, says you!"

"Ye-e-es—Walter Gilbert Brown—W. G. B.—" gasped Bunter.

Mr. Squidge gazed at him.

Bunter was hopeful; he had made his new name fit his initials. There were two Browns at Greyfriars—Tom Brown in the Remove, and a Brown in the Fifth—neither of whom had the initials W. G. So it seemed all right to Bunter!

It did not seem all right to Mr. Squidge! Even had he been of a trusting disposition—which he was not—Mr. Squidge would hardly have believed that the fat Owl's name was Wingate for one minute—and Brown the next! It was really expecting too much!

"Well, Mr. Wingate-Walter-Gilbert-Brown, you take the 'ole cake, you do!" said Mr. Squidge. "Now, are you going to show up a letter or something, or are you going to wait till I knock that fat nose of yours through the back of your fat 'ead?"

Bunter decided to show up the letter—without waiting for that performance!

Mr. Squidge grinned at the address on the envelope.

"'W. G. Bunter'!" he said. "That's more like! A bloke's leg ain't going to be pulled twice in the same way—not Tommy Squidge's! Now, Mr. Bunter, I don't want to be 'ard on a young covey, giving of him away to his schoolmaster! I never was a 'ard bloke—not Tommy

Squidge! Mebbe you'll be dropping me a friendly line at the Cross Keys in Friardale."

"Oh, yes!" gasped Bunter. "Certainly!"

"And mebbe you'll shove a fipun note in the letter!" suggested Mr. Squidge.

"Oh crikey!"

"And mebbe you'll let me keep this 'ere letter of yours, till I 'ear from you, as a sort of keepsake of a 'appy meeting!" suggested Mr. Squidge.

He slipped it into his pocket as he spoke.

"Oh lor'!"

"Now," said Mr. Squidge, "you can 'ook it! I advise you to let me 'ear from you soon! Hurtherwise, I shall 'ave to call in at your school, and you can tell your schoolmaster jest where you was when you 'anded me that letter!"

"I—I say!" gasped Bunter.

"You can 'ook it!" said Mr. Squidge.

He slouched away—heading for the Three Fishers and the drink he so badly needed.

Billy Bunter gazed after him in horror.

Mr. Squidge had been done in the matter of Angel of the Fourth; but he had taken exceeding care not to be done again this time! He had Bunter's right name, and he had a letter of Bunter's to show, if necessary, as a proof of the meeting. He had the hapless fat Owl in a cleft stick!

If Bunter, during the next few days, came into possession of a fiver, it was a good game for Mr. Squidge!

But Bunter was about as likely to come into possession of a five-pound note as of the Kingdom of Ruritania, or the Island of Baratania! Until he received his next allowance—which amounted to two shillings—Billy Bunter's wealth was likely to be limited to a French penny!

It was not really a promising prospect for Mr. Squidge!

But Bunter, of course, was not bothering about Squidge's prospects in the blackmail line! Bunter was wholly and solely concerned with his own prospects—which seemed awful!

"Oh crikey!" groaned Bunter.

And he hooked it!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Beastly For Bunter!

"SQUIDGE!"

"What?"

"I—I—I mean——"

"Wha' do you mean, Bunter?"

It was English history, in the Remove-room, the following morning.

On the subject of English history, as on most subjects, the powerful brain of William George Bunter was more or less a beautiful blank.

Billy Bunter learned as much as Mr. Quelch could cram into his unrecptive head, but he indemnified himself by forgetting it as soon as possible.

So Bunter, when he was asked a question, might really have answered almost anything. He was capable of telling his Form-master that it was Pontius Pilate who sat in the neat-herd's hut and watched the cakes burn, and that it was Christopher Columbus who said "Kiss me, Hardy!"

Bunter had often made surprising answers, but he had never made so surprising an answer as he made now, when Mr. Quelch requested him to state the name of the general who led the army of Scotland southward at the time of the Restoration.

Bunter, no doubt, had heard of General Monk. Indeed, he would have heard of him in that lesson had he been listening to Quelch's words of wisdom.

He hadn't been!

Since that meeting in the grounds of the Three Fishers the day before, Billy Bunter had been thinking of one person, and one person only, and that was the unscrupulous and iniquitous Mr. Squidge.

Squidge filled his thoughts with uneasiness and dread. Squidge was running in his mind as he sat in class that morning. If he heard Quelch's words of wisdom, he did not heed them.

Perhaps Quelch noted that he was inattentive. He barked a question at him quite suddenly. Bunter answered, "Squidge." That name was in his fat mind, and it rolled off his tongue.

"I—I—I mean," stammered the wretched Owl—"that is, I—I don't mean——"

All the Remove looked round at Bunter.

Most of them remembered that name. They remembered the visit of Mr. Squidge to that Form-room to point out the breaker of bounds. Evidently Bunter was thinking of that oily gentleman; but why, was rather a mystery.

Quelch's gimlet eyes fixed on Bunter, almost boring into him. He remembered that name, also. He remembered, too, that Mr. Squidge was a most disreputable person—the kind of person with whom no Greyfriars fellow should ever have established contact.

"Explain yourself at once, Bunter!" he rapped.

"I—I—I didn't mean Squidge, sir!" gasped the hapless Owl. "I—I don't know anything about Squidge, sir! I—I've never even heard the name!"

"Wha-a-t?"

"I mean, if I have, I've forgotten it, sir!" said Bunter anxiously. "I—I—I meant to say Oliver Cromwell, sir."

"You meant to say Oliver Cromwell?" repeated Mr. Quelch, almost forgetting Squidge at that.

"Yes, sir. Is—isn't that right?"

"Upon my word! We are dealing with the period following the death of Cromwell, and you——"

"Oh! I—I didn't mean Cromwell, sir!" groaned Bunter. "Of—of course, it wasn't Cromwell, if he was dead! Oh, no! I really meant to say—lemme see—it was—was—was Judge Jeffreys, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Bunter, are you not aware that it was Monk who was in command of the army of Scotland at the time of the Restoration?"

"W-w-was it, sir?" Bunter stared. "I—I shouldn't have thought it was a monk, sir."

"A-a-a what?"

"A monk, sir. Of course, I know there were military monks at one time in the Crusades, and all that; but——"

"The general's name was Monk?" almost shrieked Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, was it? Of—of course, I remember now perfectly, sir. I know all about General Monk."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Quelch grimly. "Then you will kindly tell me all you know about General Monk, Bunter."

The Remove fellows listened with keen interest. Many of them were not fearfully keen on history, as they got it from Quelch. But Bunter's history was always worth hearing.

"Oh, yes, sir!" bleated Bunter. He blinked at his Form-master, cudgelling his fat brains for something about Monk—quite a stranger to him. "He—he commanded the army in Scotland, sir, at the time of the Revolution——"

"The what?"

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Rally Round!

"I mean the Restoration. He won the Battle of Bannockburn—"

"He did—what?" gurgled Mr. Quelch.

"I—I mean, he lost it, sir!" gasped Bunter, seeing that he was on the wrong tack. "He was defeated at the Battle of Bannockburn by—by Sir Walter Raleigh—"

"Bless my soul!"

"And—and as he lay dying on the battlefield of Zutphen, sir, he said: 'Had I but served William Rufus as I have served Oliver Cromwell, he would never have said: 'Take away that bauble!'"

Mr. Quelch gazed at that hopeful member of his Form. The Removites gurgled. This was really unusually rich, even for Bunter! Clearly the fat Owl had something on his fat mind!

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Quelch at last. "Bunter, you will be detained after class! This ignorance—"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"This crass stupidity—"

"Oh, sir!"

"You have been giving no attention whatever to the lesson, Bunter."

"Oh, yes, sir! I heard every word you said. I wasn't thinking about Squidge, or—or anything, sir."

"You will be required to explain your reference to that person, Bunter. Now be silent."

Bunter was glad to be silent. Out of class silence was not his long suit, but in class he preferred to play the part of the shy, unnoticed violet.

When the Remove were dismissed, Billy Bunter nourished a faint hope that he might be able to roll out after the other fellows, unnoticed by Quelch. That hope was very faint, and it was nipped in the bud.

"Bunter, you will remain!"

Bunter groaned and remained.

"And now, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch, fixing his gimlet eyes on the worried fat Owl when the Form had gone out, "you will explain what you have had to do with the man named Squidge."

"Oh, nothing, sir! I've never seen him."

"You saw him, Bunter, the day he came here last week and made an inaccurate statement regarding Wharton of this Form."

"Oh, I—I mean, I—I haven't seen him since, sir!"

"That man," said Mr. Quelch, in a deep voice, "is a very disreputable character, Bunter. He affected to report a Greyfriars boy for having broken bounds from a sense of duty; but, having seen him, I had no doubt that his motives were bad—very bad. No Greyfriars boy could possibly be allowed to have word with such a man—indeed, I scarcely see how he could encounter him unless out of school bounds. Have you been out of bounds, Bunter?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"I warn you, Bunter, that if it should transpire that you have any connection of any kind with such a man the consequences will be very serious."

"Yes, sir—I mean, no, sir! C-c-can I go now, sir?"

"You may not go, Bunter. You will remain at your desk and write out fifty times, General Monk was in command of the army of Scotland at the time of the Restoration. Then you may go."

"Oh lor'!"

Mr. Quelch, with a very searching glance at the dismayed fat face, left the Form-room.

"Beast!" breathed Bunter, when he was gone.

And he settled down to the weary task of writing "General Munk was in command of the Army in Skotland at the time of the Resterashun" fifty times.

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Cut!"

"I say, don't be beasts!" groaned Bunter.

The Famous Five had gathered to tea in Study No. 1 in the Remove. There was a cake for tea, and when Billy Bunter appeared in the doorway they naturally concluded that he had scented the cake.

Bunter was not persona grata in that study. Really he could not expect a hearty welcome there, after his proceedings with his gummy placard the previous afternoon.

True, that placard had been gummed on Bunter's features instead of on the door, as intended. But the Famous Five were fed-up with that pub-haunting story, and every member of the Co. had a boot ready for Bunter if he rolled in.

But the dismal and woebegone expression on the fat face disarmed them as they looked at him.

Bunter did not even blink at the cake! He did not seem to notice that there was a cake there at all! It was not, after all, the cake that had drawn him like a magnet.

"What's the row, you fat ass?" asked Bob Cherry, always good-natured. "Coker of the Fifth after you for dipping into his hamper?"

"Worse than that!" groaned Bunter.

"Loder of the Sixth on your track?"

"Worse than that!" groaned Bunter.

"Oh crumbs! There isn't anything worse than Loder of the Sixth!" said Bob, staring at him. "He's the limit."

"I—I—I say, you fellows, do stand by a pal!" mumbled Bunter. "It's not often I want to borrow money, as you know—"

"What?"

"Help!"

"Oh, really, you know! I'm up against it!" groaned Bunter. "I simply must have five pounds."

"Five whatter?"

gaspd Bob.

"Pounds!"

"And you've come to this study for it?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Yes, old chap."

"Well, you can have all the pounds I've got!" said the captain of the Remove, laughing.

"All I've got, too!" grinned Frank Nugent.

"Well, I've got one," remarked Johnny Bull, "but I'm not giving it away."

"One's no good!" said Bunter. "I want five!"

"Why not say five hundred?" asked Bob. "You're just as likely to raise it, in the Remove."

"Didn't you fellows win anything yesterday?" asked Bunter.

"Win anything?" repeated Wharton, blankly.

"Well, I mean to say, you can't all have lost money," argued Bunter. "Was it billiards, or banker, or what?"

"Billiards," stammered Wharton, "or banker? Do you think they play billiards and banker in Courtenay's study at Highcliffe?"

"I mean, you were at the Three Fishers, you know," said Bunter, blinking at him. "No good telling whoppers about it, because I shadowed you all the way there! You fellows never knew—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I jolly well knew where you were going, and I shadowed you! I was jolly well going to show you up in the Form, but—but now I—I won't—"

"Thanks!"

"The thankfulness is terrific!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"One good turn deserves another,"

(Continued on next page.)



JAMES GOT THEM FREE!

Ludo, Halma, Snakes and Ladders, Draughts . . . all in one big Compendium of Games. He saved only 22 Bournville Cocoa coupons, and Cadbury's sent him this thrilling Gift (No. 825).

Why not ask your mother to get Bournville Cocoa? By saving the coupons you can treat yourself to free gifts too. If you post the form below, Cadbury's will send you the Bournville Gift Book, and a free coupon as well.

BOURNVILLE COCOA 6d. per 1/4 lb.

POST COUPON FOR YOUR FREE COPY

To 'NEW GIFTS' Dept., CADBURY, BOURNVILLE. Please send me the 44-page Book of Gifts with free coupon. (Please write in BLOCK LETTERS).

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

Post in unsealed envelope (postage 3d.). This offer applies in Great Britain and Northern Ireland only.

HAVE YOU GOT YOURS?

Write for Catalogue of Riley "Home" Billiard Tables NOW!

E. J. RILEY, LTD., Belmont Works, ACCRINGTON, or Dept. 30, 46-47, Newgate Street, London, E.C.1.

All applications for Advertisement Space in this publication should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, The MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon St., London, E.C.4.

said Bunter. "I'll keep it dark—fearfully dark, just to oblige you fellows! If any fellow asks me whether I know that you went pub-crawling yesterday, I'll say no! There!"

"You blithering, burbling bandersnatch!" said Bob Cherry. "We went over to Highcliffe yesterday and walked round by Oak Lane, to pull your silly leg! We were watching you from the common, when you planted yourself there to watch the gate—and we left you to it. Understand now, fathead?"

"He, he, he!"

"What are you gurgling at, you podgy image?"

"Well, that ain't a bad yarn," admitted Bunter. "Tain't true, of course—but it's not bad! Only, you see, I know!"

"Kill him, somebody!" granted Johnny Bull.

"I ain't going to say anything," went on Bunter. "I wouldn't give a pal away. But did you win anything?"

The Co. gazed at him!

"If you did, you might help a chap out of a fearful fix!" said Bunter. "Dash it all, you can't all have lost money there! What do you go for, if you only lose your money?"

The Co. continued to gaze at him. Evidently it was firmly fixed in the fat Owl's mind that they had been on the razzle the previous day, at that delectable establishment, the Three Fishers!

Bunter was not going to believe that his masterly shadowing had been spotted, and his fat leg pulled. Bunter knew what he knew—or, rather, what he didn't know!

"If you had any luck," continued Bunter, "it will come in jolly useful! I simply must have a fiver! I say, you fellows, it may come to the sack if I don't get it! I might be turfed out of Greyfriars! Think of that!"

"No such luck!"

"Beast! I mean, look here, old chap, I'm in an awful scrape! What would you fellows feel like if you'd been spotted there yesterday, and it might come to Quelch or the Head?"

"We weren't there!" yelled Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"We were at Highcliffe, you frabjous owl!" said Harry.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"I'm going to boot him!" said Johnny Bull, rising to his feet.

"Beast! I say, you fellows, I jolly well think it's up to you to rally round after all I've done for you! A fiver will see me through! Well, if any of you won a packet yesterday at billiards or banker or nap, you know—"

"You blithering owl, can't you get it into your wooden nut that we were only pulling your silly leg, and never went near that show at all?" howled Bob Cherry. "Can't you take a fellow's word, you pernicious porpoise?"

"Oh, yes! Of course I take your word, old chap! Sit down, Bull, you beast! Still, if you won a packet—"

Billy Bunter blinked round hopefully at five faces.

It was improbable, of course, that schoolboys who went blagging at a place like the Three Fishers, would find the financial results beneficial. Generally they would lose money—even Bunter understood that!

Still, it seemed to him that at least one out of five might have had some luck! And if even one of them had had luck to the extent of five pounds it was all right! It did not matter what the others had lost, if one of them had won

a packet to the tune required by Bunter.

Unfortunately for Bunter, though no doubt fortunately for themselves, the Famous Five had not gone blagging at all. Still more unfortunately for him, they were fearfully exasperated by his persistent belief that they had gone blagging.

"I mean, to say, I think a fellow's pals ought to rally round when a fellow's in an awful hole!" said Bunter. "You can't all have lost! I mean, you haven't got my brains, I know; but you ain't fools enough to stick to pub-crawling if you all keep on losing your money at it! That stands to reason! Well, I think you might—yaroooop!"

Billy Bunter quitted Study No. 1 with startling suddenness. He quitted it with a whiz and landed in the Remove passage with a tremendous bump!

He roared!

"Now all boot him together!" said Bob Cherry. "Wait a minute, Bunter! Now, then, all together—"

Bunter did not wait a split second!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Sword Of Damocles!

"GOT it yet?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was quite a joke in the Remove the next day.

It was no joke to Billy Bunter! But to the other fellows, there seemed something very comic in the fat Owl's quest of a fiver!

All the Remove had heard of it by that time! There was hardly a fellow in the Form that Bunter hadn't asked.

Bunter's manners and customs, as a borrower, were well known in his Form. He had wonderful skill, and he extracted small sums from a sixpence to a half-crown often and often. All these small sums Bunter was going to settle on the arrival of a postal order that he was expecting.

But quite a Brobdingnagian postal order would have been required to settle all those accumulated sums. Besides, the postal order didn't come!

But well as they knew their Bunter, he surprised them now. It was unusual for even Bunter to run into pounds when he wanted a little loan. And five pounds was quite a sum—it was, in fact, a small fortune to most Lower Fourth fellows.

Few Removites could have obliged Bunter with such a loan if they had wanted to over so much! And few, if any wanted to.

Plenty of fellows did not have so much as five pounds in a whole term. Few juniors could ever finger a whole fiver all at once. Three fellows in the Remove, at the most, ever had fivers, except upon specially rich and rare occasions.

So Bunter's request to be lent a fiver was taken hilariously. Had he gone up to ten bob or even a pound it would not have been so surprising. But a fiver was the limit!

Nobody lent him a fiver. But a good many fellows, meeting him in the passages or the quad, asked him whether he had got it yet—and chortled.

Lord Mauleverer had, probably, a fiver or two. But though Bunter often touched Mauly for shillings and half-crowns, his lordship drew the line at quids, let alone fivers!

The Bounder was said to have fivers, and even tenners. It was rumoured that he sometimes had a "pony." But no crumbs were likely to fall from that rich man's table in Bunter's direction. Monty Newland was believed to be

wealthy. But he seemed to have no desire whatever to whack out his wealth with Billy Bunter.

Up and down the Remove, Bunter had gone, in quest of the fiver, with no result beyond adding to the gaiety of existence in his Form.

But the general merriment did not bring a single smile to Bunter's fat face. The sword of Damocles was suspended over his fat head!

Time was getting on! It was now two days since he had met Mr. Squidge, and that horrid man would be expecting his letter, with a "fipun" note in it.

Bunter—had he had any cash—would have been exactly the fellow that Mr. Squidge liked to meet! He was scared out of his fat wits, and could he have obtained a fiver, by hook or by crook, it certainly would have gone to the oily man at the Cross Keys.

Indeed, he would have sent all he had now if it would have kept Squidge quiet. But it was clearly useless to send the greedy Squidge a French penny!

That it would be equally so to pay a blackmailer anything at all, the fat Owl did not comprehend.

Certainly, had Mr. Squidge received five pounds from Bunter, Bunter would not have been likely to see the last of him. It would have whetted Squidge's appetite for more, and he undoubtedly would have haunted Bunter like an oily ghost!

The fat Owl was more likely to get rid of him by paying him nothing!

But the wretched Owl remembered, with a shiver, that Harry Wharton had refused to pay him anything, and that his visit to the school had followed.

That had not hurt Wharton, as it had transpired that he was not the fellow who had been copped out of bounds.

It was different in Bunter's case! He had been copped out of bounds, and in a particularly insalubrious spot! If Squidge turned up at the school again, Bunter's number was up!

Had Bunter possessed as much common sense as the average rabbit, he would have gone to his Form-master and told him the whole story. But common sense was very uncommon with Bunter.

He had to get hold of a fiver somehow, to keep that awful beast Squidge quiet, and it did not even occur to his podgy brain that would not have been the end, but the beginning!

That day passed without disaster, but the fiver was as far off as ever.

On Saturday morning, Bunter greeted the winter dawn with a dismal blink. He hardly dared hope that Squidge would wait over the week-end.

In break, that Saturday morning, Bunter hunted for Lord Mauleverer once more. Mauly eluded him successfully. He was asking Harry Wharton whether he had seen Mauly anywhere, when Skinner of the Remove called out:

"Somebody you know, Wharton?"

Harry Wharton glanced round

A figure with an oily face and a rakish bowler cocked on one side of a greasy head stood in the gateway, locking in!

Gosling came out of his lodge with the obvious intention of shifting that unsavoury visitor on the spot.

Bunter gave the figure a startled blink.

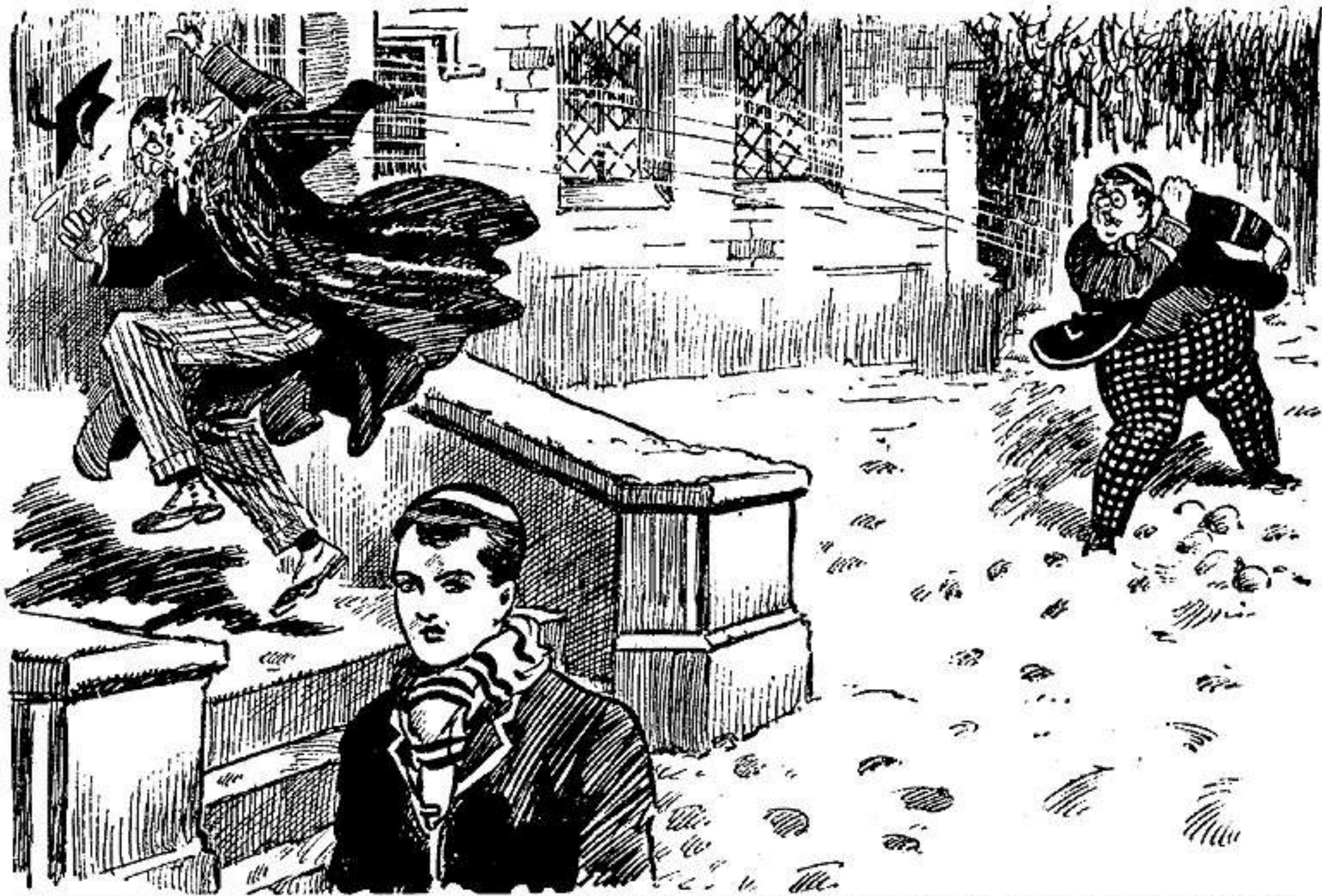
He clutched Wharton's arm.

"I—I—I say, who's that?" he gasped.

Wharton's brow darkened.

"That rotten rascal Squidge!"

"Squidge! Oh crikey! I'm done for!" moaned Bunter.



The snowball flew—but not in the direction designed by Bunter. It shot off at an unlooked-for angle, when Bunter's fat paw released it. Instead of hitting Mauleverer, it caught Mr. Quelch full in the face!

Harry Wharton did not heed him. He cut away towards the gate, in which direction other fellows were heading. Why Squidge was there was a mystery to Harry, but if he wanted another booting, another was ready for him.

But it was no mystery to Bunter!

Squidge had said that he would come if he did not get that "sipun" note! He had come! The sight of him almost paralysed the fat Owl. He blinked at the squat figure, the rakish hat, the oily face, from the distance, like a fat rabbit fascinated by a serpent. Then, turning, he bolted.

Really, if Squidge had come to denounce him, it was not much use to bolt. But the terrified fat Owl followed his instinct in moments of danger—and bolted at top speed for the House!

Mr. Quelch had spotted that squat figure from his study window. He was coming out to inquire, when Bunter went in. Quelch met him in the doorway as he went in—like a runaway locomotive! Bunter did not even see Quelch before he crashed.

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Quelch, as he staggered.

"Oooogh!" spluttered Bunter, as he reeled from the shock.

Mr. Quelch sat down! Bunter, tottering, blinked at him dizzily.

"Bunter!" gasped the Remove master.

"Oh crikey!"

"Boy!"

Bunter rushed on.

Quelch made a grab at him, as he rushed. But the fat Owl circumnavigated his Form-master and bolted for the stairs.

"Bunter!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

Bunter flew up the staircase at a rate which really looked as if the law of gravitation had ceased to exercise its influence on heavy objects! Seldom, or

never, had Bunter lifted his weight at such a rate.

Mr. Quelch staggered to his feet. He gurgled for breath.

"Bunter!" he shrieked.

Bunter vanished.

Mr. Quelch, breathing hard, stepped out into the quad, and hurried down to the gate.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Shifting Mr. Squidge!

"HOUTSIDE!" said Gosling.

Gosling's manner was brief. It was not polite. Gosling had little politeness to waste on anybody, least of all a man like Squidge.

The Greyfriars porter had seen that oily man once before, when he had had instructions to let Mr. Squidge in. He had no instructions to let him in now. And he did not mean to let him in.

But Mr. Squidge did not seem to want to enter. From the gateway, he had a view of a considerable part of the quadrangle and the school buildings. That view seemed to satisfy Squidge.

In point of fact he had not, as the terrified Owl supposed, come there to give his victim away. He had come there to give his victim the impression that that was why he had come!

Not having heard from Bunter, Mr. Squidge was there to remind Bunter of his unsavoury and obnoxious existence!

He was going to give the hapless Owl away if he did not pay up! But he was in no hurry to kill the goose that was, he hoped, going to lay golden eggs! The sight of him, Squidge fancied, would scare that fat young covey into toeing the line! So there he was!

"You 'ear me?" said Gosling. "Wot I says is this 'ero—houtside!"

"Who's inside?" asked Mr. Squidge coolly.

"Ho!" said Gosling.

Squidge had him there!

Outside that gate was the king's highway! Any citizen had a right to walk on that highway; even an unwashed and frowsy citizen like Mr. Squidge. He was standing at the gateway looking in, that was all.

"You move hon!" said Gosling.

"I'll move on," said Squidge, "jest when I chooses to move on! Not afore, so you can put that in your pipe and smoke it, old 'un!"

Harry Wharton arrived at that stage of the argument. His chums were at his heels, and a dozen other fellows gathered.

"You'll move on now," said Harry, "and sharp's the word!"

"Oh! You!" said Squidge. "You lay a 'and on me, young feller-me-lad, and I'll 'ave you run in! Can't a man stand in a public road if he likes?"

"A public-house is more in your line!" remarked Bob Cherry. "You're a blot on the landscape, Squidge! Get out of it!"

"Are you going?" snapped Wharton.

"No!" retorted Squidge defiantly.

"I ain't going!"

"Bump him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good egg!"

"Bag him and bump him!"

The Famous Five grasped Mr. Squidge all at once. Vernon-Smith and Peter Todd lent a hand, though it really was not needed. Earth and sky swam before Squidge's dizzy eyes as he was plucked off his feet.

"Strike me pink!" yelled Squidge.

"Leggo!"

Bump!

(Continued on page 16.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1.614.



(Continued from page 13.)

Mr. Squidge smote the hard, unsympathetic earth! He smote it hard, and he bellowed.

It was his first experience, probably, of the process of bumping. He did not seem to find it agreeable. He bellowed, and he bawled.

"Up with him!"

"Up he goes!"

"Give him another!"

"Strike me pink and blue!" spluttered Squidge. "Yarooop!"

Bump!

"Yurrrrrrrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give him some more!"

"Go it!"

Bump!

"Oh, my eye! Oh, yow! Gooooogh!" gasped Mr. Squidge. "'Ands orf! I keep on telling yer, 'ands orf! Strike me pink and yeller! Ooogh!"

"Give him a few more!"

Up went Mr. Squidge, wriggling like an eel and yelling frantically. But before he could bump again, Mr. Quelch arrived, breathless.

"Stop! Release that man at once! How dare you make such a scene at the school gates! Release him instantly!" thundered the Remove master.

"Oh, yes, sir!"

Mr. Squidge was released instantly. As he was a foot off the ground when he was released, that sudden release was neither grateful nor comforting to Squidge. He sprawled on the earth and yelled.

"Now, what does this mean?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch angrily.

"Backing up Gosling, sir!" said Vernon-Smith meekly. "Gosling told that loafer to go, and he wouldn't!"

"Which he wouldn't, sir!" said Gosling. "And wot I says, sir, is this 'ere—"

"You boys should not have touched him!" said Mr. Quelch, frowning. "However, the man certainly has no business here. Mr. Squidge—I think your name is Squidge—why have you come here?"

Squidge sat up, gurgling. Then he staggered to his feet, his oily face red with rage. He stood spluttering for breath.

"Shall I get his hat, sir?" asked the Bounder. Squidge's hat had rolled into the road.

"Please do so, Vernon-Smith."

Smithy got the hat—perhaps it was by accident that he trod on it before he picked it up. It was as much like a concertina as a hat when the Bounder politely handed it to its owner.

"Now, my man—" said Mr. Quelch.

"Not so much of your man, Mister Schoolmaster!" gurgled Squidge.

"Them young 'ounds—"

"Kindly do not use such expressions to me!" rapped the Remove master.

"You had better go, and at once!"

"I'll go," roared Mr. Squidge, "when it soots me—and not afore! Who are you. I'd like to know? Ole figgerhead!"

is a gownd like an ole woman! Yah!" Mr. Quelch's face crimsoned. His scholastic gown ought really to have impressed Squidge with respect, if not with awe. Apparently it didn't! Squidge's remark was most disagreeable.

Squidge, really, had not come for a shindy. He had intended to hang about and let Bunter see him, as a strong hint that that fiver had better be forthcoming. But the bumping had roused his temper—never very good! He was, in fact, now in a boiling rage, and ready for a row with anybody. He glared defiance at Quelch.

"Old figgerhead!" he repeated. "For a pint of beer, I'd set about yer, and push yer face through the back of your 'ead! Schoolmaster, says you! Nice schoolmaster that can't keep his schoolboys out of pubs! Yah!"

"How dare you!" gasped Mr. Quelch, crimson with mortification. "Go away! Go away this instant!"

"Shan't!" retorted Mr. Squidge.

"Shall we move him on, sir?" asked Bob Cherry eagerly.

"You will do nothing of the kind, Cherry! Stand back!"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"As for you, Mr. Squidge," said the Remove master, coldly and contemptuously, "I am aware of your character! Had I been aware of it earlier, I should certainly never have listened to a word from you. Now go!"

"Houtside!" said Gosling; and as Mr. Squidge stood where he was, defiant, Gosling gave him a push, as a hint to start.

The next moment Gosling felt as if an air-raid had suddenly happened.

Squidge gave him his right and then his left, so rapidly, that Gosling did not see them coming! Gosling, gasping, rolled at Mr. Quelch's feet.

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "I—I—"

"Rescue!" shouted the Bounder.

There was a rush. The juniors were not, perhaps, fearfully concerned for Gosling, but they were quite keen to give Mr. Squidge a little more. They rushed at Squidge rather like a tidal wave!

Mr. Squidge jumped back

"'Ere, 'ands orf!" he roared.

But it was not hands off—it was hands on. It was several pairs of hands on, and with vigour.

Struggling and yelling, Mr. Squidge was spun off his feet in a twinkling.

Mr. Quelch opened his lips—and shut them again. Really, he could not forbid the boys to defend that ancient institution, Gosling, against a ruffian like Squidge. Gosling was sitting up, dizzily, feeling his ancient nose, to ascertain whether it was still there! Squidge disappeared under a wave of juniors.

Wild yells and howls came from the midst of the mob. Finally, Squidge emerged from the hilarious crowd and flew up the road.

He no longer seemed to have any desire to remain. He stood not upon the order of his going, but went at once! And he went at a terrific burst of speed—hatless, without waiting for his hat!

"After him!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Stop!" Mr. Quelch found his voice.

"Stop! Come in at once—all of you! Stop!"

Reluctantly, the juniors obeyed their master's voice. Still, it was probable that Mr. Squidge had had enough! It was clear, at least, from the speed with which he negotiated Friardale Lane that he did not want any more!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter In A Bad Box!

HARRY WHARTON had a thoughtful expression on his face when the Remove came out after dinner that day.

There was football that afternoon, but the captain of the Remove was not thinking, at the moment, of Soccer.

A much less agreeable and much less important matter occupied his mind—by name, W. G. Bunter.

He recalled Billy Bunter's words, and Bunter's frantic bolt, when the oily and gingy Squidge had appeared in the gateway. Bunter's fright at the sight of the oily rascal shed a new light on his desperate attempts to borrow a fiver, up and down the Remove, during the past few days.

Wharton had not forgotten his own experience at the hands of Mr. Squidge. It looked to him as if Bunter was going through something of the same kind—though how, or why, was rather a puzzle.

"Where's that fat ass?" he asked, as he joined his friends in the quad.

"Bunter?" asked Bob. "In the tuckshop, if he's got any tin!"

"He hadn't any yesterday."

"He's seen Manly since then."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, let's look in the tuckshop," he assented.

"What tho' thump do you want Bunter for?" asked Johnny Bull.

"I think the fat chump has landed himself in trouble," answered Harry. "He bolted like a runaway car when that rotter Squidge showed up this morning. I've heard that he's got lines for barging into Quelch—he was in such a hurry. And why has he been trying to get hold of five pounds?"

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob Cherry. "Has that mooching villain copped him out of bounds like he did Angel of the Fourth? Bet you it wasn't after lights out if he did—Bunter ain't the man to get out of bed if he can help it!"

"There's something up," said Harry. "If that brute is threatening Bunter, the sooner we look into it, the better!"

"Hear, hear!" agreed Bob.

And the Famous Five went to look for Bunter.

They found him outside the tuckshop. Apparently, he had not seen Manly lately, as he was not inside.

Bunter was leaning on the front of Mrs. Mimble's establishment. He was not gazing at the good things within. His fat brow was disunal; his little round eyes, behind his big round spectacles, had the pathetic expression of an expiring codfish.

Clearly, Bunter was worried and troubled—to such an extent that he was not even thinking of tuck!

He blinked at the Famous Five as they came up with a lack-lustre blink.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob.

"Enjoying life?"

"I say, you fellows, c-c-c-can you lend me a fiver?" groaned Bunter.

"Hardly!"

"I'm done for!" moaned Bunter.

"Has that man Squidge got anything to do with it, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton. "Has he copped you out of bounds, like he did that Fourth Form sweep, Aubrey Angel?"

"I haven't been out of bounds! If he says he copped me at the Three Fishers, 'tain't true, of course!" said Bunter hastily. "I don't go pub-crawling like you fellows, you know!"

Grunt from Johnny Bull.

"Let's get along to the changing-room," he suggested.

"Yes—go and play football!" said Bunter bitterly. "Fat lot you care if a fellow's bunked! Talk about Christopher Columbus fiddling while Constantinople was burning!"

"When did you go out of bounds, you fat ass, and where was it?" asked Harry patiently.

"Never!" said Bunter. "I'm not your sort, as I've told you! Still, that beast might make out that he saw me at the Three Fishers last Wednesday!"

"That day you were shadowing us?" grinned Bob.

"It was all your fault!" hooted Bunter. "If you hadn't played that rotten trick with a cardboard half-crown, I shouldn't have shadowed you, to pay you out! Then it wouldn't have happened! Oh lor'!"

"But what happened?" asked Harry.

"Oh, nothing!"

"Why does that man Squidge make out that he saw you at the Three Fishers, then?" asked Harry, still patient. Job-like patience was required in dealing with William George Bunter.

"I dare say he fancies I'm your sort!" explained Bunter. "He may have seen you going in, you know! May think we're birds of a feather."

"You burbling idiot—"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I think you might rally round a chap, after landing him in an awful hole like this!" said Bunter indignantly. "It was all your fault that I was there at all, watching for you to come out."

"No harm in Squidge or anybody else seeing you outside the place," said Harry. "Any fellow might walk about Oak Lane."

"I know that! But he's going to make out that he saw me inside," groaned Bunter. "Of course, I wasn't inside! Besides, how could I get out when he was holding the gate?"

"You weren't inside, but he stopped you from getting out!" gasped Frank Nugent.

"Yes, the beast—hung on the gate from outside, you know! I was jolly nearly spotted when old Popper came along, but I dodged away just in time. Old Popper would have told the Head at once if he'd seen me there. You fellows know what an interfering old ass he is. He would have made out to the Head that I was there, you know, if he'd spotted me."

"Oh crikey!"

"You howling ass, what did you go in for?"

"I didn't!"

"What?"

"Don't you fellows get making out that I did!" exclaimed Bunter anxiously. "I don't want to be talked about in the Form, like you fellows. Quelch might get to hear of it."

"And that's the chap we're trying to help!" said Bob. "Sort of encouraging, ain't it?"

"The best thing you can do," said Bunter, "is to stand me a fiver! If you haven't got it, you can borrow it of Mauly! Mauly would lend you a fiver, Wharton!"

"I can see myself cadging from Mauly to give you a fiver!" said the captain of the Remove. "Is that what Squidge has asked for?"

"I've nothing to do with Squidge! I haven't been out of bounds, and he never spotted me at the Three Fishers the day he saw me there. Nothing of the kind! I'm not of your kidney, I'd like you to know."

Harry Wharton breathed hard and deep.

"Can you get it into your fat head that we want to help you out, if we can?" he asked. "Squidge tried to

blackmail me, after that cad Angel gave him my name when he was caught out at night. Is he trying the same game with you?"

"Well, he wants a fiver to keep it dark!" confessed Bunter. "Not that there's anything to keep dark! Still, I want to let him have the fiver to keep him quiet."

"So that's it!" said Johnny Bull. "Well, you blithering owl, if you let him have a fiver, he would want a tenner next—and if he got the tenner, he would want a pony! You can't pay him anything."

"I'm not going to be sacked to please you, Bull!" hooted Bunter. "I thought he'd come for me when I saw him this morning. He will come back if I don't let him have the fiver he wants, or at least, something off it."

"He will come back all the more if you do."

"Beast!"

"And you say you weren't in the place at all?" snorted Johnny.

"No; nowhere near it."

"Then you've only got to tell Quelch so! He wouldn't take that scoundrel's word, even against yours!"

"Yes, only he's got the letter," moaned Bunter.

"The letter!" exclaimed Bob. "What letter?"

"You see, I had to let him have it! He wouldn't believe that my name was Wingate when I told him—"

"Great pip!"

"He saw my initials on my hanky," moaned Bunter. "So he knew that my name began with a B. So I told him it was Brown, and he wouldn't believe that, either!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"He made me show him a letter with my name in the address, and—and then he kept the letter!" mumbled Bunter.

"It's a letter from my pater. If he shows it to Quelch it will prove that he did meet me, you see, and that I gave it to him. Otherwise, of course, I could tell Quelch that I'd never seen the man. I suppose he would take my word—he knows I'm truthful, I hope."

"He—he—he knows you're truthful!" moaned Bob Cherry. "Help!"

"Well, you've got into a bad box this time, and no mistake!" said Harry.

"The brute caught you at the Three Fishers, and he can prove it. No good your telling lies to Quelch, you fat ass—he would see through them at once. The best thing you can do now is to go to Quelch and make a clean breast of it, before that villain gives you away."

"Think I want to be sacked?" howled Bunter.

"It won't be the sack, if you own up! Quelch knows what a fool you are—how could he help knowing, when you're in his Form? You'll get off with a whopping."

"You—you—you idiot! Think I want to be whopped?"

"You jolly well do, if you go pub-crawling!" growled Johnny Bull. "And the bigger the whopping the better."

"I never went pub-crawling, you beast!" howled Bunter. "I keep on telling you I ain't your sort! I say, you fellows, do you think Quelch would believe that I went in to fetch my coat?"

"You went in to fetch your coat?" repeated Nugent. "Did your coat walk in first and you after it?"

"Oh, really, Nugent! That cad Ponsonby chucked my coat over the fence, and my cap, too! I went in to fetch them," explained Bunter. "That's how it happened! Think Quelch would believe it?"

"He might, if it's true," said Harry dubiously. "Is it true?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Well, you're such a fearful fibber—"

"I mean to say, a chap's in a difficulty," groaned Bunter. "Quelch doesn't trust my word—that's the real trouble. I wish we had a beak like Capper! He believes anything the Fourth Form chaps tell him! Quelch doesn't!"

"I don't think even Capper would believe anything you told him, old fat man. You go over the limit."

"Even if he did swallow it," went on Bunter, "he would make out that I oughtn't to have gone into the place, even to get my coat—on a cold day, too, you know! But would he swallow it? He's doubted my word before—lots of times! Only the other day he said he was caning me for untruthfulness, about that cardboard half-crown, you know! That's the sort of beak we've got! Distrustful, you know."

"But is it true?"

"That's rather an insulting question, Harry Wharton. It's perfectly true! I never was in the place at all, and I only went in to get my coat! A chap can't do more than tell the plain truth, I suppose!"

"Ye gods!"

"I ain't going to Quelch!" said Bunter decidedly. "I jolly well know he wouldn't believe me. Why, you fellows don't, well as you know me. If my own pals can't take my word, what can I expect from a beak? But if that awful beast Squidge gives me away, what's going to happen?"

"Go to Quelch—"

"Shan't!"

"And tell him the truth—or as much truth as you can possibly get out without making yourself ill—"

"Beast!"

"That's the only thing to do now. And the sooner you do it, the better!"

"You fellows coming?" called out Vernon-Smith, from the distance. "If you're going to play Soccer, it's time to change."

"Coming!"

"I say, you fellows—I say—Beasts! Don't cut off while a fellow's talking to you!" roared Bunter.

But the Famous Five did cut off, at the call of Soccer. They disappeared in the direction of the changing-room; and Billy Bunter was left, once more, to his doleful and dismal meditations. The sword of Damocles, in the shape of the oily Squidge, was over his fat head—and there was no doubt that Bunter was in a bad box!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

No Sale!

PETER TODD thought that it was absolutely rotten luck, when he captured an accidental lack, in that Soccer game with the Shell, early in the match.

It was quite accidental—the sort of thing that might happen to any footballer; and Hobson of the Shell was fearfully sorry that his hoof had landed on Peter's knee!

That, however, did not alter the fact that Peter was crooked, and had to hop off, and stay off. In the changing-room, as he anointed that knee with embrocation, and then changed, Peter bemoaned his sad fate.

A little later, however, he discovered that the unlucky accident was not so altogether unlucky.

Being out of the footer, and walking or standing about being rather painful

with a game knee, Peter bethought him of certain lines overdue, for Quelch; and decided to improve the shining hour by going up to his study and getting them done.

He limped up the stairs, and limped along the Remove passage; and arrived at the door of Study No. 7, in happy time to see his fat study-mate, Billy Bunter, emerging from that study.

Peter had no objection to Bunter emerging from the study. In fact, as he was going to be in the study himself, he preferred Bunter to emerge, liking his room ever so much better than his company. Had Bunter emerged from that study empty-handed, Peter would have seen his departure with satisfaction.

But Bunter was not empty-handed. In Bunter's fat hands were a pile of books.

As Peter came limping up the passage from the stairs, Bunter, emerging from the study, turned in the other direction with that pile of books—so large a pile that both hands were required to support it, and the stack leaned back against his podgy chest, under his fat chin.

Peter stared hard.

He knew those books, or most of them. The biggest was a large, gilt-edged volume which bore the attractive title of "High-minded Henry, the Boy Who Was Always Good." This entrancing volume had been presented to Peter by a kind aunt at Christmas, who thought she knew what boys liked in the way of reading.

Peter had not yet perused "High-minded Henry." It was improbable that he ever would peruse it. He was not in the least interested in the wild adventures of that youth. He lived in hope of swopping "High-minded Henry" for something less high-minded, but more useful. It had cost his kind aunt ten-and-six, and was quite a handsome volume to stick on a shelf for a fellow who preferred to look at books from the outside.

That valuable volume was the foundation of Bunter's pile. Next to it came a "Holiday Annual," rather worn, having passed through the hands of many readers. Next to the "Holiday Annual" came a "Modern Boy's Annual." Superimposed were no fewer than six other volumes which did not belong to Peter Todd, and certainly not to Billy Bunter.

Peter was not a suspicious fellow. But he could not help suspecting that Bunter was not carrying off all those books to read at once.

Peter's expression became grim.

"Hold on!" he rapped.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. He blinked round in alarm, and his pile nearly toppled over. "Oh! Is—is that you, Toddy? Ain't you playing football?"

"Do I look as if I am?" inquired Peter.

"I—I thought—I—I mean—I say, Peter, I wouldn't slack!" urged Bunter. "Go and join up, old chap! Don't slack about! I wouldn't!"

"You frabjous cuckoo!" said Peter. "I've got a bang on the knee, and I've had to hop off."

"Well, that's all very well, old chap, but I wouldn't make a fuss about a bit of damage if I were you! Brace up, you know, and bear it!"

"You wouldn't make a fuss about a boot landing on you?" breathed Peter. "No fear!"

"Let's see!" said Peter; and he shot out his sound leg.

His boot landed on the tightest

trousers at Greyfriars School with what a novelist would call a sickening thud.

The yell that emanated from Billy Bunter woke all the echoes far and wide. It rang in all the studies. It caused Fisher T. Fish to stare out of the doorway of Study No. 14, at the end of the passage. It fairly boomed.

Bunter seemed to have changed his mind all of a sudden about not making a fuss about a boot landing on him.

He yelled and yelled, and staggered and tottered, and the stack of books went over with a crash. They strewed the floor of the Remove passage. Bunter did not heed them. He wriggled and yelled.

"Don't you call that making a fuss?" inquired Peter.

"Ow! Yow! Wow!" roared Bunter. "Beast! Keep your hoofs to yourself, you swab! Oh crikey!"

"And now——" said Peter.

"Yaroooooh!"

"And, now, what are you doing with my books?"

"They ain't your books, you beast! That 'Modern Boy' is Dutton's, and the Latin dictionary is Wharton's, and——"

"What are you doing with them?"

"N-n-nothing! I'm not taking them to Fishy's study, if that's what you think. I hope you don't fancy that I'd sell a fellow's books while he's playing football, Peter Todd."

"I guessed that one!" agreed Peter. "Now pick up those books, and take them back into the study!"

"Look here——"

Bang!

Peter's boot landed again, and there was another frantic yell from the Owl of the Remove. Peter had one game leg, but the other appeared to be in great form.

"Have a few more?" asked Peter genially.

Billy Bunter gave him a deadly devastating blink. Peter had arrived on the scene at a most unfortunate moment for the fat Owl.

With the Remove fellows playing football and hardly a fellow in the studies, Bunter had expected a clear field.

Fisher T. Fish, the business man of the Remove, would buy or sell anything. He did not give high prices, but in the present state of Bunter's finances, all was grist that came to his mill.

If he could raise a pound to send to that iniquitous and greasy rascal, Squidge, it might keep him quiet, Bunter hoped. This was Bunter's way of raising the pound.

Bunter's ideas on the subject of property were extraordinary. Still, even Bunter was not going to pinch those books. He was going to sell them to Fishy—and get them back when his postal order came. It was merely a temporary transaction.

It was fearfully annoying for Peter Todd to barge in just as Bunter had got loaded with his cargo. Bunter realised that it was not much use to explain to Peter how temporary that transaction was.

He guessed that Peter wouldn't want his books sold, not even "High-minded Henry," ever so temporarily.

So, after a devastating blink at Toddy, Bunter gathered up the books and carried them back into the study from which he had emerged.

Peter pitched his "Holiday Annual" and "High-minded Henry" back on the bookshelf, and followed it with "Modern Boy's Annual," which belonged to Tom Dutton.

"The others ain't yours, Peter," said Bunter. "You let the others alone—see?"

"I'm going to see that you do that!" said Peter. "Take them back to the studies where they belong!"

"Oh, all right!"

Bunter loaded himself with books and rolled out of the study. To his intense annoyance, Peter limped after him.

"I—I—I say, Peter, you've got rather a game leg," said Bunter. "Haddn't you better sit down and rest it?"

"After I've seen you take those books back!" agreed Peter.

"Look here, you beast—— Ow! Keep off, you rotter! I'm taking them back, ain't I?" yelled Bunter.

Two studies had to be visited to dispose of that collection of volumes. Three of them belonged to Lord Mauleverer; the others to Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent. With Peter limping astern, Billy Bunter bore them home, and landed them where they belonged, with growing exasperation in his fat face.

In the Remove passage, when the delivery was completed, he glared at Peter with a glare that might have cracked his spectacles.

"Beast!" he breathed.

"Nobody in my study is going to be sacked for pinching, old fat man!" said Peter genially. "Just to fix that in your memory, I'll give you a few more!"

Peter got in three before the fat Owl escaped.

Bunter did the Remove staircase two at a time, yelling, and Peter limped away to Study No. 7 and lines.

Between Latin lines and twinges in his knee, he forgot Bunter. Bunter did not forget Peter so soon. He had taken away with him some painful reminders of Peter.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Narrow Escape!

THAT Billy Bunter aimed the snowball at Lord Mauleverer, Mr. Quelch was not likely to guess.

Quelch was nowhere near Mauly when he got it in his majestic ear. Bunter was what the Remove fellows called cack-handed in such matters.

There had been a snowfall overnight, and on Monday morning the quad was thick with it when the Remove came out after breakfast.

Quelch, standing in the doorway, was sniffing in the frosty morning air.

Some of the juniors, in the distance, were snowballing. But Quelch, of course, was not expecting snowballs.

It was the unexpected that happened.

Billy Bunter was exasperated. Before prayers and after prayers that cold and frosty morning he had tried to corner Lord Mauleverer, and each time Mauly had successfully dodged him. After breakfast, in the quad, he nearly got him; but Mauly walked off—actually walked right off, heedless of the voice of the charmer.

Really, it was no wonder that Bunter's temper failed him, with so many worries on his fat mind. He grabbed up snow, and aimed a snowball at the back of Lord Mauleverer's disappearing head—just to teach the beast!

The snowball flew—not in the direction designed by Bunter. It shot off at an unlooked-for angle when Bunter's fat paw released it.

Where it went Bunter did not know. A single blink revealed that Lord Mauleverer was walking on, untouched, and, in fact, unconscious that he had been snowballed at all.

But a moment or two later Bunter



With a grim expression, Mr. Quelch stepped silently to the door and jerked it suddenly open. There was a startled yelp as a stooping fat figure tottered into the doorway and bumped at the Remove master's feet. "What does this mean, Bunter?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

learned, with horror, where that snowball had gone, and where it had landed.

"Bunter!"

The fat Owl spun round towards the door. His eyes almost popped through his spectacles at the sight of Quelch, his face crimson, scraping snow from an ear.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

"Bunter, how dare you?" thundered the Remove Form-master.

"I—I—I didn't!" stammered Bunter.

"What? I saw you!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "I saw you gather up the snow, and deliberately throw the snowball! How dare you, Bunter? Go to my study at once, and wait for me there!"

"I—I—"

"Go!" rapped Mr. Quelch, in a voice that made Bunter jump.

And the Owl of the Remove tottered into the House, and repaired to his Form-master's study. Quelch was left extracting snow.

Billy Bunter waited in his Form-master's study—not happily.

True, he could explain to Quelch that it was an accident—a sheer accident. But even if Quelch believed him, he was beast enough to think that that sort of accident ought not to happen.

Bunter waited in great uneasiness.

Quelch seemed in no hurry to come. That, of course, was like the beast—keeping a fellow in suspense.

Bunter, as he waited, naturally blinked round the study. That was quite a natural proceeding on Bunter's part, inquisitiveness being second nature to him. He blinked at Quelch's table, and the papers thereon, and so he came to notice a heap of letters that lay there.

Quelch, as Form-master, had to give letters for his Form the "once-over," before they were put up in the rack, for the Remove fellows to take down

in break. These were the letters—a dozen or so of them—ready for him to glance at when he came in.

Bunter's fat fingers immediately began to sort them over.

He hoped to see a letter for himself among them. Hope springs eternal in the human breast. And Bunter's celebrated postal order, if it came at all, could never have come more opportunely than now.

"Oh!" breathed Bunter, as he came on a letter addressed to himself.

For a second he hoped that it was a letter from home, and that it might contain that long-expected postal order. But he realised at once that it was not so good as that—that it was, in fact, ever so much worse.

His eyes grew big and round with alarm behind his spectacles as he blinked at that letter.

It was not from Mr. Bunter. It was not from any member of the Bunter clan. The scrawling hand was unfamiliar, but he could guess whose it was. The letter was addressed:

"Mister W. G. Bunter,
Greyfriars School,
near Friardale."

The postmark was Friardale.

Billy Bunter's fat heart almost died within him.

That grubby envelope, that scrawling hand, the lingering scent of tobacco that clung to it, and the local postmark, could not fail to fix Quelch's attention when he looked over the letters.

Mr. Squidge probably did not know, and perhaps did not care, that letters for schoolboys at a school like Greyfriars were glanced at before they passed into the boys' hands. Such a letter as this Bunter knew would never pass Quelch's scrutiny. He would be called upon to open that letter in his Form-master's presence.

The game was up.

Owing to so many mean beasts refusing to hand over their cash to Bunter, who wanted it so much, and above all owing to that fearful swab, Peter Todd, who had nipped in the bud his masterly scheme for raising the wind on Saturday afternoon, the fat Owl had been unable to keep Squidge quiet.

A pound on account might have done the trick, and postponed the evil day, at least. Now Squidge had written to Bunter at the school. If that letter fell into Quelch's hands the fat Owl was lost. And any minute he might come into the study.

"Oh crikey!" groaned Bunter.

Squidge, after his warm reception on Saturday morning, did not seem to want to come near Greyfriars fellows again. So he was dealing with Bunter by post, ignorant, or careless of the fact that schoolboys' correspondence was supervised.

But Quelch had not seen the letters yet. They had been placed on his study table ready for him, but he had not yet dealt with them. That saving circumstance occurred to Billy Bunter's fat brain.

He grabbed that letter.

A fellow had a right to his own letter. Bunter jammed it into his pocket. It was as good as the sack if Quelch saw it. Bunter was not going to be sacked if W. G. Bunter could help it. But it was an awfully narrow escape.

He rolled away from the table to the window. He did not want Quelch to see him standing near that pile of letters when he came in.

It was luck—Bunter realised that—that Quelch had sent him to wait in the study. Otherwise, he would never have seen that letter, and got hold of it in time. Still, he did not antic-

pato with any pleasure what was coming to him, and the suspense of waiting was really painful.

"When is that beast coming?" hissed Bunter. "How long have I got to stand here waiting for that old goat, Quelch?"

It was like Bunter to utter that reflection aloud as the study door opened to admit his Form-master.

"Upon my word!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

Bunter spun round.

"What did you say, Bunter?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, nothing, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I never spoke—not a syllable! I—I only said I—I wondered how long my dear master would be, sir."

"Bless my soul!"

"I—I—I never chucked that snow-ball at you, sir! I—I was chucking it at Mauleverer, sir, and—and it missed—"

"It is quite possible, Bunter, that you are clumsy enough, and stupid enough for that to be true. But what was the epithet I heard you apply to me as I entered the study?"

"Not you, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I was thinking of another old goat, sir—"

"What?"

"I—I was, really, sir!"

Mr. Quelch picked up his cane.

"Bend over that chair, Bunter!"

Swipe, swipe, swipe!

"You may go, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch, frowning.

Bunter went, wriggling.

The study door closed on him, and Mr. Quelch sat down to glance over the heap of letters. And it was fortunate—very fortunate—for Bunter that Quelch did not know exactly how many letters ought to have been in that heap.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Nothing Doing!

"**P**ERHAPS," said Billy Bunter bitterly, "you fellows will play up now."

He held out a letter for the inspection of the Famous Five, when the Remove came out in break that morning.

They stared at it, and at him.

Every fellow in the Form had noticed that there was something amiss with Bunter that morning. Quelch had noticed it, and given the fat Owl several sharp glances.

In break, Harry Wharton & Co. had intended to punt a footer, which was quite an agreeable occupation on a cold and frosty morning—much more so than conversation with William George Bunter.

However, they allowed the woe-begone fat Owl to nobble them. The ancient text enjoins us to "suffer fools gladly," and if they could not quite do it gladly, they tried to do it patiently.

Bunter's look was reproachful and bitter.

Billy Bunter's own affairs were to him the most urgent and important affairs in the universe. He never could get it into his head that they were not quite so urgent and important to other people. Bunter concentrated all his thoughts on the comfort and benefit of W. G. Bunter, and cheerfully expected others to do the same, which, very often, others didn't.

It was quite common, in fact, for a fellow to think about his own affairs, and not Bunter's at all, which seemed shockingly selfish to Bunter.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,614.

However, the Famous Five disregarded the punt-about now, and gave the dismal fat Owl their attention. The grubby letter, extended in Bunter's grubby fat paw, was apparently of a disastrous nature.

"Read it," said Bunter, in the same bitter tone, "then perhaps you'll think about me a little, instead of about yourselves as usual."

A fellow could not have asked more earnestly to be booted; but instead of booting Bunter, the chums of the Remove perused the letter. It was rather a startling letter. It ran:

"Mister Bunter,—I ain't 'card from you yet. If I don't 'ear from you by five o'clock, I'm phoning to your school-at six."

There was no signature, but the Famous Five knew that scrawling hand. They had seen it in Mr. Squidge's missives to Wharton a week ago. This was a word from Squidge—apparently his last word.

"How on earth did you get this?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Eh? It came by post this morning," answered Bunter.

"It passed Quelch?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"I found it in his study before he looked at the letters! Jolly lucky, wasn't it?" said Bunter. "Quelch would have wanted to know, if he'd seen that list on the envelope!"

"You bagged this letter without Quelch knowing?" gasped Nugent.

"It's my letter, ain't it?" grunted Bunter. "Think I was going to leave it there for Quelch to nose into?"

"Oh, my hat!"

Certainly, it was Bunter's letter. But taking a letter before the same was "passed" by the Form-master was rather a serious matter. Still, probably it would have been a still more serious matter for Bunter had that extraordinary missive fallen under Quelch's gimlet eyes.

"Now what's going to be done, you fellows?" asked Bunter.

"Looks to me as if you are!" said Johnny Bull.

"The donefulness of the esteemed Bunter is going to be terrific!" remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"I've done a lot for you fellows, one way or another!" said Bunter bitterly. "I don't expect gratitude; I know you too well! But you can't let me down over this! If that beast phones Quelch this afternoon I'm done for! I've got to bar him off! Can't you fellows see that?"

"And what business is it of ours?" roared Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Easy does it, old chap," said Bob. "No good expecting Bunter to have any sense. Still, I don't see what can be done—except that he mustn't give that blackmailing brute anything."

"He wants five pounds to keep it dark," said Bunter. "But a pound or two on account would keep him quiet, very likely! How much can you fellows lend me?"

"Not a bad threepenny-bit to give to that rascal!" answered Bob.

"You'd rather see me sacked?" sneered Bunter.

"Much rather, old fat man."

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"Well, of all the beasts!" gasped Bunter. "Look here, have a little sense! You could borrow a few quid of Mauly, Wharton—"

"I'll watch it!"

"And Smithy would lend you something—he wouldn't lend me anything, because he makes out that I don't

square—but he would lend you something if you asked him very civilly—"

"Anybody feel like cadging very civilly from Smithy?" asked Bob. "Don't all speak at once!"

"And there's Newland, too," pursued Bunter, unheeding. "I jolly well know he's got lots of money. He won't give me any—he's a Jew—"

"Oh crikey! Would you give him any if you had any?"

"I wish you'd keep to the point. You could borrow some from Newland—he would lend you some."

"Let's lose no time!" said Johnny Bull, with withering sarcasm. "Let's go round and cadge from every fellow that's got any money, and give it to Bunter!"

"I'm not asking you to give it to me!" said Bunter scornfully. "I shall settle up every sixpence when my postal order comes. You know that."

"That's a tip!" said Bob. "Ask Squidge to wait till your postal order comes! He will have died of old age by then, and you'll be done with him."

"Beast! Are you fellows going to play up, or ain't you?" hooted Bunter.

"You burbling fathead!" said Harry.

"There's only one thing to be done! Go and tell Quelch the whole thing—"

"Don't be a silly ass, if you can help it!" howled Bunter.

"If it's true that you went into that show after your cap and coat, you will get off with a whop or two, or perhaps only lines! If it isn't, you'll get a jolly good hiding for pub-crawling, and you jolly well deserve it. But if you wait for Squidge to give you away, it may be the sack."

Billy Bunter blinked at the Co. Wharton's advice was sound; it was, indeed, the only thing to be done in the circumstances, and the Co. nodded assent to it. But Bunter had no use for good advice.

"You mean, you're going to be mean?" he asked.

"If I had my pockets stuffed with banknotes, I wouldn't give you sixpence to hand to a blackmailer!" answered Harry. "If you had the sense of a white rabbit, you'd know that giving such a man anything would only make him ask for more."

"Well, look here," said Bunter, "there may be another way out. You fellows make out that you were at Highcliffe the day you went to the Three Fishers last week—"

"We were at Highcliffe, you footling fathead!"

"Will the fellows there say so if they're asked?"

"Of course they will, ass!"

"That's all right then," said Bunter. "Suppose I went to Highcliffe with you that afternoon—"

"You didn't!"

"For goodness' sake don't keep on wandering from the point. Suppose, when Squidge tells Quelch, you fellows all bear witness that I went to Highcliffe with you that afternoon? That will put the kybosh on Squidge!"

"Wha-a-a-t?"

"The difficulty is that he's got that letter of mine," went on Bunter. "But suppose I dropped it, and he picked it up? One of you fellows can say that you saw me drop it, see?"

"Oh crikey!"

"Of course, it would be stretching a point," admitted Bunter. "Still, you fellows ain't so particular about such things as I am. I'd rather pay the man and have done with him. Still, if you fellows swear—"

"You're enough to make any fellow swear, and no mistake!" gasped Bob.

"If you fellows swear that I was at Highcliffe that afternoon—"

Bunter got no further.

At that point Johnny Bull's boot was introduced into the discussion! There was a thud and a bump and a roar. Bunter rolled and spluttered.

Leaving him to roll and splutter, the Famous Five went to join in the punt-about.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter On The Spot!

MR. QUELCH was surprised. Likewise, he was annoyed. He could not understand Bunter.

After class that day Quelch had gone to his study. He had some work to do there—about thirty Latin proses to correct for his Form. It was not a light task, nor a specially agreeable one.

Some of those proses, especially Bunter's were perpetrated in a variety of Latin that would have made Quintilian stare and gasp! Few of them were really satisfactory to an exacting Form-master. Quelch was a dutiful and careful beak, and he gave every paper careful attention. Interruptions, naturally, he did not want.

And he was interrupted over and over again—by Bunter!

Soon after five o'clock Bunter tapped and blinked in, and gave a start at the sight of Quelch. He seemed to have expected to find the study empty. However, he explained that his watch had stopped, asked Mr. Quelch the time, and beat a retreat.

That was Bunter's first call. His second was a quarter of an hour later. This time he came prepared. He had a Virgil under his arm; and, finding Quelch still there, requested his Form-master to elucidate a passage therein.

This Mr. Quelch was only too willing to do, especially as it was the first time that Bunter had ever displayed any interest in Virgil. He gave Bunter five minutes of his valuable time.

Still, he was getting a little suspicious.

His suspicions strengthened when, ten minutes later, he heard a stealthy sound in the passage outside his door and a rattle of the door-handle as a clumsy head knocked against it.

Somebody was there, peeping through the keyhole—obviously to discover whether the Remove master was still in his study!

With quite a grim expression, Mr. Quelch stepped silently and rapidly to the door and jerked it suddenly open.

There was a startled yelp as a stooping fat figure tottered into the doorway, and bumped at the Remove master's feet.

Quelch glared down at it.

"What does this mean, Bunter?" he thundered.

"Oh crikey! N-nothing, sir!" gasped Bunter, scrambling up in a great hurry. "I—I wasn't looking through the keyhole to see if you'd gone, sir! I—I fell against the door and—"

"Take a hundred lines, Bunter!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

Bunter retreated once more.

Quelch closed the door and returned to Latin proses with a frowning brow. He was surprised, and he was annoyed.

Plainly, Bunter had some design on that study! He was fearfully anxious to know whether, and when, Quelch left that study. The only explanation Quelch could think of was that the fat junior intended to play some trick in

the study after his Form-master had gone.

Quelch, of course, had not the faintest idea that he was going to get a ring on the telephone at six o'clock. He would have been aware of it had he seen Mr. Squidge's letter that morning. But he had not seen that letter, so he knew nothing of the intentions of Mr. Squidge.

Bunter knew only too well!

There was, so far as Bunter could see, only one thing to be done. He had to intercept that telephone-call and prevent it from reaching Quelch's ears!

It was rotten luck for Quelch to be sticking in his study like this! He might have been in Common-room, or jawing in some other beak's study, or gone to see the Head, or gone for a walk—he might have been doing any of these things, and any of them would have suited Bunter. But instead of doing any of them, there he was, sticking in his study—just to annoy Bunter, as it seemed!

Had the study been untenanted, Bunter's idea was to wait there, grab the receiver the instant the bell buzzed, before it reached any other ears, and take the call himself! That would bar off Squidge—for a time, at least!

But this plan could not be carried out with Quelch sitting at his study table, mooning over Form papers!

With a hundred lines to the good—or the bad—Bunter rolled away to the corner of the passage, to keep an eye on Quelch's door from that coign of vantage. Surely the beast would clear off before six?

But Bunter was unable to ascertain whether the beast cleared off or not, for a few minutes later Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, came rolling down the passage.

"Old Pompous" fixed a disparaging eye on the lingering fat Owl.

"What are you doing here, Bunter?" he boomed.

"Oh, nothing, sir!"

"Are you not aware, Bunter, that juniors are not allowed to loiter in this passage?"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Then go away at once!" snapped Mr. Prout.

There was no help for it! Bunter had to go—and Prout watched him go, with a suspicious eye!

Bunter gave Prout ten minutes to get clear, and then he came cautiously back. Prout was gone. But had Quelch gone also? That Bunter did not know, and he could only ascertain by investigation in Quelch's study.

His previous visits of investigation to that study had discouraged him. But time was getting close now. It was a quarter to six—and at six that ring was due from the Cross Keys in Friardale!

Bunter fairly shuddered at the thought of Quelch hearing what Mr. Squidge had to tell him over the wires.

Was Quelch there? If he was, was he ever going? Was he already gone? He was already late for tea in Common-room, and it was difficult for Bunter to understand anybody being late for a meal, if he could help it.

Probably he was gone. Fervently hoping so, Billy Bunter tiptoed down Masters' Passage to Quelch's door.

He dared not peer through the keyhole this time. Quelch had spotted him last time. But he listened, with his extensive fat ears, intently.

In the intense intentness of his listening, the fat Owl pressed a fat ear to the old oak. He could hear no sound from Quelch. Was he gone—and already with the other beaks in Common-room?

Bunter was almost sure—but not

quite. He listened, with painful intentness—and he was still at it when the door suddenly opened from within and Mr. Quelch walked out.

He had not gone to tea! He was just going!

This time he had not heard Bunter outside, so he walked out of the study in happy ignorance that there was a fat Owl in the way—until he walked into him! Then, of course, he knew, as he bumped into Bunter, and sent him staggering across the passage.

"Ooogh!" gasped Bunter

"Bunter!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, in great exasperation. The gimlet eyes fairly glittered at the gasping Owl.

"Oh! No, sir! Yes, sir! Oh crikey!"

"Why have you come here, Bunter?"

"I—I haven't, sir—"

"What?" almost roared Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I mean—"

"It is perfectly plain to me, Bunter, that you designed to play some disrespectful trick in my study!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "That is the only possible explanation of your extraordinary antics."

"Oh! No, sir! Oh!"

"Now, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch grimly, "go into my study!"

"Eh!"

"Go into my study at once!"

Bunter rolled into the study.

Quelch stepped in after him. He did not, to Bunter's relief, pick up a cane. He opened a Latin grammar.

"You may pull a chair to the table, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch, in the same grim tone. "You will sit here, Bunter, while I am at tea in Common-room—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"You will remain till I return—"

"Oh!"

"... and write out the whole conjugation of amo, in every mood and tense, from beginning to end—"

"Oh crikey!"

"If you have not written out the whole conjugation by the time I return, I shall cane you! I shall probably be half an hour."

Bunter, provided with impot paper, pen, and a Latin grammar, sat at his Form-master's table.

Mr. Quelch turned to the door.

The fat junior had chosen to come to that study again and again, without rhyme or reason; and now he was booked to stay there, with a Latin conjugation to keep him company.

No doubt Mr. Quelch thought that quite an excellent way of making the punishment fit the crime.

He smiled grimly as he quitted the study, shutting the door and leaving Bunter to it.

"Oh, jiminy!" gasped Bunter.

He grinned at the door after it had closed on his Form-master.

It was ten to six! Quelch was going to be away half an hour, and Squidge was going to ring up at six! Bunter was not only in his Form-master's study to intercept the call when it came, but he was there by his Form-master's orders!

No wonder he grinned! This was something like luck!

Bunter did not bother about that conjugation, either its moods or its tenses! He stood by the telephone, waiting for the first buzz, ready to grab off the receiver when it came!

Mr. Quelch, at tea in Common-room with the other beaks, little dreamed how he had played into the hands of that fat and fatuous member of his Form!

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Stalling Off Squidge!

BUZZZ!

Bunter grabbed the receiver at the first tinkle.

Seldom rapid in his movements, he was like greased lightning at that warning buzz from the telephone, and he stopped it before it had a chance of reaching other ears.

It was ten minutes past six! Mr. Squidge, evidently, was no whale on punctuality, and was reckless of the fact that procrastination is the thief of time. He had said six in his letter—and now it was ten-past. But there it was at last, much to Billy Bunter's relief. It would have been really awful had that call been delayed till Quelch came back.

"Hallo!" squeaked Bunter into the transmitter.

"Allo! Mr. Quelch?" came a voice with which the fat Owl was only too well acquainted.

Bunter's podgy knees knocked together. He had wondered, and dreaded, whether Squidge would carry out the threat in his letter. Evidently Squidge was going to do so.

Disappointed in his hopes of blackmail, the oily rascal was going to give the fat Owl away!

All that Mr. Squidge had received so far, on Bunter's account, was the handling at the school gates on Saturday morning—which, of course, was not at all what he wanted, and far from satisfactory to him.

If he could get nothing, he was going to make himself as unpleasant as he could, and here he was, on the phone to Quelch, unaware, so far, that he was not addressing Mr. Quelch, but a bright member of his Form!

"I got something to tell you, Mr. Quelch, sir," went on Squidge. "I was treated rough the other day when I come along; but I ain't the bloke to let that stand in the way of a matter of duty! I got to put you wise about a boy of yours going to a pub up the river!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. His head fairly swam at the thought that Quelch might have been there to hear that! Fortunately, Quelch wasn't!

"Name of Bunter," went on the voice from the Cross Keys. "Ketched him there, I did, last Wednesday afternoon as ever was, and made 'im give me 'is name. It's a fair cop this time, not like it was afore, when a bloke give me the wrong name. I made that young covey give me a letter with his monicker on it, and 'ere it is, this 'ere minute, in my 'and!"

"I—I—I say——" gasped Bunter.

"You 'ear me, sir!" went on the oily rascal at the Cross Keys. "I'm giving it to you straight! I saw that young covey in your class the day I come to the school about young Wharton! Know him anywhere!"

"I—I——"

"If you want me to describe him, easy enough," continued Mr. Squidge, still under the impression that he was speaking to Mr. Quelch. "A fat young covey, a good bit like a pig on its 'ind legs——"

"Look here——" gasped Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove did not like that description. He certainly did not recognise it as his own, whether Mr. Quelch might have done so or not!

"With a big pair of blinkers sticking on a nose like a pimple!" went on Mr. Squidge. "And fat! A walk round 'im would be all the exercise I want, and some over!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,614.

"You cheeky 'east!" gasped Bunter. There was a startled exclamation at the other end.

"Hi! 'Go's speaking?"

"I'm speaking!" yapped Bunter. "I got your letter this morning!"

"That young Bunter?"

"Yes!"

"Strike me pink! What you doing on that phone, I'd like to know? I've rung up to put your schoolmaster wise, you young rip!"

"I—I say, I—I'd rather you didn't speak to Quelch!" gasped Bunter. "If—if you don't mind, I'd much rather you didn't!"

"Blow me tight! Mebbe you wouldn't!" jeered Mr. Squidge. "I give you a chance! I ain't 'eard from you! Didn't I say what would 'appen if I never 'eard from you? Well, now it's 'appening!"

Bunter was only too well aware of that, and only too glad that it was not happening for Quelch to hear it!

"I—I say, it—it's all right!" he gasped. "I'm a bit short of money at present—it doesn't often happen, but—but that's how it is at—at the moment. But—but I'm expecting a postal order."

"Ho!" said Mr. Squidge.

Greyfriars fellows would not have been much impressed by that statement. But Mr. Squidge, of course, had never heard of the celebrated postal order that Billy Bunter was expecting.

"It's from one of my titled relations," further explained Bunter. "I can't quite make out why it hasn't come—but—but it nasn't!"

"Ow much?" asked the greasy voice from the Cross Keys.

"Ten bob!"

"That ain't no good to me!"

"I mean, a pound!" gasped Bunter. "I meant to say a pound! Exactly a pound! I—I'll post it on the minute it comes!"

Grunt over the wires!

"Fi'pun is what I says!" answered Mr. Squidge.

"Oh, yes! Later!" gasped Bunter. "I—I generally have a few fivers, but—but just at present—the—the fact is, I—I've written to my Uncle William to ask him for the fiver, but—but it hasn't come yet!"

"Ho!"

"It's all right, you know! I've got a lot of rich relations, and they send me no end of tips," groaned Bunter. "I—I—I'm generally rolling in money! Fellows borrow of me right and left! That—that's why I'm rather short at the present moment!"

"Well, I ain't the man to be 'ard on a young covey!" came Mr. Squidge's voice, more placably. "If that's 'ow it is, I'll give you a chance!"

"That—that's exactly how it is!"

"Well, mebbe the pound would do to go on with. When's it coming?"

"Saturday!" Bunter hoped, at least, that his long-expected postal order might arrive that week!

"I ain't waiting till Saturday!"

"I—I mean Friday!"

"Nor I ain't waiting till Friday!"

"I—I mean, I—I'll phone home, and—and ask them to send it sooner, if—if you'll wait, Mr. Squidge!"

"I'll give you a chance, young man," said Mr. Squidge. "If I 'ear from you on Wednesday, all right! If I don't, look out for squalls at your school!"

"Oh! It—it's quite all right!" gurgled Bunter.

"I 'ope, on your account, that it is!" said Mr. Squidge. "Don't you forget to let me 'ear from you Wednesday! Hutherwise, you'll see me at your school!"

And Mr. Squidge, to Bunter's immense relief, rang off.

The fat Owl replaced the receiver and wiped a perspiring fat brow.

He had stalled off the iniquitous Squidge at least till Wednesday. Something might turn up by that time, Bunter hoped. At least, he had warded off the blow that had been about to fall!

"Oh lor'!" groaned Bunter. "If—if if my postal order doesn't come——"

He could not help feeling that perhaps it wouldn't! It so often hadn't!

Still, he was done with Mr. Squidge for the present. That was a great relief. He sat down at Quelch's table to get some of that beastly conjugation done before Quelch came back.

He was half through when his Form-master came in. Luckily for Bunter, Mr. Quelch was in a benign mood, after tea and a chat in Common-room. He glanced at the fat Owl's unfinished scrawl, and dismissed him.

Billy Bunter rolled away from the study, relieved, but apprehensive. The sword of Damocles had not, after all, descended, but it was still suspended over his fat head! If his postal order did not arrive by Wednesday——

Bunter could only hope that it would arrive. If it didn't, Squidge would—and that was too awful to think of!

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Clock That Did Not Go!

"L END me——"

"Fathead!"

"Will you lend me——"

"Rats!"

"That clock!" said Bunter, getting it out at last.

"Oh!" said Harry Wharton, in surprise. "Not a fiver?"

"No; just that clock."

After class on Tuesday, Wharton and Nugent were in their study, the former engaged in rather warm argument with Peter Todd.

Peter was still limping a little with a game knee. But Peter was convinced that he would be all right on Wednesday afternoon for football. Harry Wharton was not convinced—and Peter was engaged in convincing him.

Billy Bunter barged in and interrupted.

On the mantelpiece in Study No. 1 was a handsome little travelling-clock. It was a nice little clock that folded up in a nice leather case, and it had been a Christmas present to Wharton from his affectionate Aunt Amy. Wharton was not very keen on lending it to anybody; still, he was an obliging fellow. And it was quite a relief to find that Bunter only wanted to borrow a clock, and not a fiver!

"You see, I'm going to do some physical jerks, and I want to time myself," explained Bunter; which was quite a surprising explanation, for physical jerks were not at all in the fat Owl's line.

"Do you good!" agreed Wharton. "You can have it, old fat man—don't try winding it or messing about with it—you know what an ass you are!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Buzz off!"

Billy Bunter picked up the little clock, folded it in its case, and put it under a fat arm. Then he rolled out of the study.

Wharton turned back to Peter.

"Sorry, old man," he said. "It's only a match with the Fourth to-morrow, but you can't play footer on one leg,



Slipping out of his coat, Squidge bounded away, breathless, gurgling, and fled for the gates. After him went the crowd of Greyfriars juniors, in full cry. "Bag him!" cried Bob Cherry.

even with Temple's lot. What are you grinning at?" he added.

Peter, during the argument on the subject of that game knee, had been serious and earnest, indeed excited. Now, for some reason, he was grinning, almost from ear to ear.

"After all, clocks were made to go!" he remarked.

"What about it?"

"That one's gone!" remarked Peter.

Wharton and Nugent looked at him. "What the dickens do you mean?" asked the captain of the Remove.

"Why shouldn't I lend Bunter my clock?"

"No reason at all! But how long have you lent it to him for?"

"Not very long, I suppose, if he's doing physical jerks! He's not likely to keep that up long!"

"You haven't lent it to him till his postal order comes?" asked Peter.

"No, ass!"

"I fancy you have!" grinned Peter. "Bunter's borrowed that clock on the Kathleen Mavourneen principle—it may be for years, and it may be for ever! He was borrowing books the other day on the same principle, and I stopped him. If you want to see that clock again, you'd better get after it!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Wharton.

He stepped to the study door, and looked up the passage.

Billy Bunter had not gone into his own study, Study No. 7. He had rolled on right up the passage; and Wharton had a disappearing glimpse of him going into Study No. 14—the study that belonged to Fisher T. Fish, the business man of the Remove.

Harry Wharton stared blankly for a

long moment. Then, as it dawned on him, he cut up the passage.

If this was Billy Bunter's latest method of raising the wind, as evidently it was, he was going to be stopped quite suddenly.

The door of Study No. 14 was ajar. A nasal voice floated out as the captain of the Remove approached.

"It sure ain't a bad little clock, ho. I guess I could go to fifteen shillings for that clock!"

"Oh, really, Fishy—"

"Take it or leave it, big boy!"

"Look here, you beast, that clock cost as least four pounds—"

"Buying and selling are different propositions, I guess!" answered Fisher T. Fish, through his nose. "I might be a whole term selling that clock, too. Guys don't want clocks a whole heap."

"Make it a pound!" urged Bunter. "You see, I want a pound specially! I've been disappointed about a postal order—"

"I guess—"

Fisher T. Fish did not finish guessing! The door was hurled open, and the captain of the Remove stepped in.

"Oh erikey!" gasped Bunter, in alarm. "I—I—I say, old chap, I—I wasn't going to sell that clock to Fishy! I—I—"

"You fat villain!" roared Wharton. "I—I—I ain't going to sell it, really, you know!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I really ain't—"

"Say, what you horning in for?" demanded Fisher T. Fish, staring at the captain of the Remove. "It don't worry you none if Bunter sells me his clock, I guess."

"Not at all! But I guess and calcu-

late that it worries we a whole heap, if he sells my clock," answered Harry.

"Yourn!" ejaculated Fisher T. Fish. "Oh, wake snakes! Why, you gold-jarned clam, if I'd coughed up fifteen bob for that pesky clock, I'd have had this here guy moseying along to say it was his'n! I guess—"

"Look here, you beast, you lent me the clock, didn't you?" hooted Bunter. "It's only till my postal order comes! It's just temporary! I'm expecting a postal order—"

"You burglarious bloater—"

"Look—here, you—leggo!" roared Bunter, as the captain of the Remove grasped him by the back of a fat neck. "Ow! Leggo!"

"You were going to sell that clock!"

"Ow! No! Yes! Wow!"

"And you were going to buy it, Fishy?"

"Yep! I guess I never knew—"

"You'd better make sure next time!" said Harry Wharton, grasping the business man of the Remove with his free hand, and jerking him out of his chair.

"Say, you goob, you leggo a guy's neck!" yelled Fisher T. Fish, as he spun dizzily in the grasp of the captain of the Remove. "Aw! Carry me home to die! I guess if you don't leggo a guy's neck, I'll sure make potato-scrappings of you! You hear me whisper?"

Bang!

With Bunter's collar in one hand, and Fishy's in the other, Harry Wharton brought two heads together with a resounding concussion.

Two fearful yells were blended into one!

"Yarooooop!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,611.

"Woooooooooooh!"

Bang!

"I say! Oh crikey!"

"Aw, wake snakes!"

With a swing of his right arm, the captain of the Remove sent a fat figure sprawling on the study floor. With a swing of his left, he sent a lean one sprawling across it!

Billy Bunter and Fisher T. Fish mixed up on the floor, yelling.

Harry Wharton picked up the clock from the table and walked out of the study with it, leaving Bunter and Fishy to sort themselves out.

"Oooogh! Gerroff!" moaned Bunter.

"Gee-whiz! I'll say this is the bee's knee!" gurgled Fisher T. Fish, as he scrambled breathlessly up. "I'll tell a man, this here is the elephant's side-whiskers! Urrh!"

"Oh crikey! Owl! Wow!" gurgled Bunter, sitting up. "Owl! Beast! I say, has that swab taken that clock away—after lending it to me, you know! Oooogh! I say—Owl! Wharrer you kicking me for, you beast?"

Fisher T. Fish did not explain why he was kicking Bunter! He just kicked! He kicked and kicked, and the hapless Owl rolled out of the study, yelling on his top note!

In Study No. 1 that clock adorned the mantelpiece once more. Bunter had intended to raise the wind, but he had raised rather a whirlwind. Clocks were made to "go"—but that clock had not, after all, gone!

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

All Up With Bunter!

"ONE for me?" asked Bunter eagerly.

It was break on Wednesday morning. Some of the juniors were looking in the rack for letters, among them, needless to say, Billy Bunter!

Bunter generally rolled along in the lingering hope that his celebrated postal order might have arrived at long, long last! But never had the Owl of the

Remove been so eager as he was on this particular morning!

"I say, you fellows, is there one for me?" bleated Bunter anxiously.

"None for you, old fat man!" answered Bob Cherry.

"Oh lor'!"

"The Duke of Bunter de Grunter has forgotten you again!" said Skinner sympathetically. "These noblemen are fearfully absent-minded!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!" groaned Bunter.

The unhappy Owl's fat face looked as long as a fiddle. It was his last chance, and it had failed him! Really, it had not been much of a chance! There was not a lot of probability about that postal order.

Such as it was, it had failed!

Billy Bunter blinked at the rack. He blinked at the letters. But any amount of blinking could not change one of those letters into one for W. G. Bunter. There was nothing for Bunter, and the game was up.

Harry Wharton glanced at the fat Owl, as he rolled out dismally into the quad. With football and other matters to occupy his mind, the captain of the Remove had plenty to think about, other than Bunter's affairs; still, he had not forgotten the scrape into which the fat Owl had landed himself.

He followed Bunter out and tapped him on a fat shoulder.

Billy Bunter gave a dismal blink.

"Beast!" he groaned. "It's all your fault! If you hadn't been mean about that clock—"

"You howling ass! Look here," said Harry, "you can't, and shan't, send any money to that rascal Squidge. But it looks to me as if he's chucked it. He said in that letter that he would ring Quelch on Monday, but nothing seems to have happened."

"That's because I took the call!" groaned Bunter.

"Oh, my hat! You did!" gasped Wharton.

"Think I was going to let him get Quelch! I got the call, in Quelch's study, and put him off till Wednesday!" groaned Bunter. "He—he—he said he

would come here if he didn't hear by Wednesday! I'm done for! Oh lor'!"

Bunter gave a deep, dismal groan.

"Well, he hasn't come yet!" said Harry. "There's still time for you to go to Quelch first—"

"Beast!"

"If what you told us about Ponsonby is true, it will be an excuse—Quelch will go easy, if he believes it—"

"Think he will?" groaned Bunter.

"Um!"

Harry Wharton could hardly answer that question in the affirmative, as he had strong doubts himself.

True, it was just one of Pon's rotten tricks—the sort of thing Pon would consider a joke. But, unfortunately, Bunter's statements, on any subject, were hardly worth the breath he wasted in uttering them.

"The beast would say he didn't if he was asked!" groaned Bunter. "It would get him into a row at his school if he owned up to playing a rotten trick like that very likely. Think he would?"

"Um!" said Wharton again.

"It's your fault," said Bunter bitterly. "If you hadn't gone pub-crawling last Wednesday, I wouldn't have been there at all."

"You blithering bloater, you've landed in this from your spying and prying," said Harry. "Look here, if Squidge said he would come to-day, very likely he will come! I've no doubt the miserable worm is ratty at not getting anything out of you. Speak to Quelch as soon as we go into third school—"

"Beast! You want me to be flogged or sacked! Well, I ain't going to be flogged or sacked to please you, so don't you think it!" yapped Bunter.

"You howling ass, can't you see it's the only thing to be done, and that you haven't much time left?"

"Yah!"

When the bell rang for third school, Bunter rolled in, dismally, with the rest of the Remove, but not with any intention of speaking to Mr. Quelch.

Had he had any such intention, the expression on Quelch's face, as he let his Form in, would have discouraged him. The Remove master was looking uncommonly grim.

"Ware beaks!" murmured Vernon-Smith, as the juniors took their places. "Henry looks shirty!"

Third lesson did not begin at once. Mr. Quelch glanced over his Form, and fixed his eyes on the fattest member thereof.

"Bunter!" he said, in a deep voice.

"Oh crikey!"

Bunter was not going to speak to Quelch! But it seemed that Quelch was going to speak to Bunter! That grim expression on his countenance was evidently on the fat Owl's account.

"I have received a call on the telephone this morning," said Mr. Quelch, "from a man named Squidge."

"Oh lor'!" moaned Bunter.

Evidently Mr. Squidge had given up hope of hearing from Bunter, and realised that the fat Owl had only been putting him off! That, probably, had made the unpleasant Squidge more vicious than ever! He had phoned again—and this time the fat Owl had had no chance of intercepting the call.

"I should take no notice of any statement made by such a character," continued Mr. Quelch. "But there are certain circumstances which leave me no choice in the matter. This man states, Bunter, that he saw you, and spoke to you, within the precincts of a disreputable place called the Three Fishers, last Wednesday."

STARTING TODAY!

AIR-ACE

BIGGLES

in

"WINGS OVER SPAIN"

by Flying Officer

W. E. JOHNS

Biggles is the most popular flying man in the world. If you've never met him, here's your chance! Share his adventures in war-stricken Spain . . . learn the hazards of modern air fighting with a master, and at the same time sample the thrills of a Secret Service man's life—today in MODERN BOY!

This great issue also includes yarns by Percy F. Westerman, George E. Rochester and Charles Hamilton—so don't miss it on any account!

MODERN
BOY

Of all Newsagents. Every Saturday 2d



"Did-dod-does he, sir?" stuttered Bunter.

"He does, Bunter! He states that he made sure of your name, as he was deceived on a previous occasion by a boy who gave Wharton's name, and that you showed him a letter addressed to yourself, which he retained as evidence."

"I—I—I never—"

"Do you deny this, Bunter?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Bunter.

It hardly occurred to Bunter that he was speaking untruthfully. All he was thinking of was dodging the sack or the birch! For that important and urgent purpose the wretched Owl was prepared, like the witness in the old story, to swear "in a general way, anything."

Mr. Quelch gave him a very searching look.

"Very well," he said. "I trust that you are speaking the truth, Bunter! I hope so very sincerely!"

"Oh! Yes, sir! I—I never do anything else, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I'm rather more particular than most of the fellows, sir."

"The man has offered to call here and prove his statement," said Mr. Quelch. "I have directed him to do so."

"Oh crumbs!"

"You will not go out of gates this afternoon, Bunter."

"It—it—it's a half-holiday, sir—"

"You will not go out of gates!" repeated Mr. Quelch. "You will remain in the school in case you are required. The man will call during the afternoon, and you will be within gates, Bunter."

"Oh, yes, sir!" moaned Bunter.

"We shall now proceed!" said Mr. Quelch, dismissing the subject.

What Mr. Quelch thought on the matter was not to be read in his face. Probably he was keeping an open mind and leaving the decision till he saw Squidge. But that was no comfort to Bunter!

The game was up—when Squidge came!

Third school that morning was dismal enough to Bunter. When the Remove were dismissed he rolled out, in the depths of woe. Even dinner brought him no comfort. There was steak-and-kidney pie for dinner—generally sufficient to draw a smile of beautiful happiness to Bunter's fat face. But he did not smile now! He hardly seemed to notice whether it was steak-and-kidney pie or not!

He ate hardly enough for three fellows! The worry on his fat mind was beginning to affect his appetite!

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

The Last Chance!

"YOU fellows keen on footer this afternoon?"

Harry Wharton asked that question after dinner. It drew four surprised stares from his friends.

"It's only the Fourth!" he added hastily. "Not much of a game."

"It's football!" said Bob. "Football's football, even with Temple's fozzling rot! What are you driving at?"

"Bunter—"

"Blew Bunter!" hooted Johnny Bull.

"Bless him!" said Bob.

"You heard what Quelch said in third school!" said Harry. "That fat chump's number is up when that villain Squidge blows in."

"Well, what about it?" grunted Johnny Bull. "If a chap crawls into a pub he can take what's coming to him, can't he?"

"Bunter says he went in for his coat

and cap because that sweep Ponsonby chucked them over the fence."

Snort from Johnny Bull!

"Bunter would say anything!" he grunted. "Anything but the truth, I mean! He couldn't manage that!"

"Well, yes, but if it's true it will help him out," said Harry. "It sounds like one of Pon's tricks; and we know that lot were out of gates at Highcliffe last Wednesday, because they came in while we were there. What about a run over to Highcliffe on the jiggers? The snow's cleared off, and it's a fine day for a spin—"

"Think Pon will tell you, if you ask him?" grunted Johnny Bull. "He tells whoppers like Bunter, only he's worse, because he's got sense enough to know better."

"We may screw it out of him, all the same!" said Harry. "I think it's very likely true, from the way that fat ass sticks to it—I hope it is, at any rate. Look here, Bunter's a blithering idiot, and it's up to sensible fellows to lend a silly fathead a hand."

"I'd rather lend him a boot!" said Johnny. "But let's go! If Bunter's told the truth for once, it ought to come out, if only to show what he can do when he tries."

"Let's!" agreed Bob.

It was easy to arrange. A Soccer match with Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth did not loom very large in the eyes of the Removes. Vernon-Smith was more than willing to captain the side—and Peter Todd was made happy, as the Bounder decided that, limp or no limp, he was good enough for the Fourth.

Harry Wharton & Co. left Smithy arranging his team, and went for their bikes.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Talk of grampuses and you hear them grunt!" said Johnny Bull, as Bunter rolled after the five.

"I say, don't clear off, you fellows!" squeaked Bunter, coming up breathless. "I say, I've got another idea—and I hope you fellows will back me up this time. I say, I told that beast Ponsonby that I was waiting for you that day his gang chucked my coat over the Three Fishers fence—and, I say, suppose you'd seen them doing it?"

"We didn't!"

"I know that, but you might have," urged Bunter. "Well, suppose you did! I can tell you just what to say—there were five of the beasts, and I thought it was your lot at first, when I saw them coming out at the gate of the Three Fishers—Pon and Gadsby and Monson and Drury and Vavasour. You know that gang—well, suppose you saw them—"

"The seefulness was not terrific!" grinned Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"How you fellows jaw!" said Bunter impatiently. "Can't you ever keep to the point? Suppose you saw them at it? How's Quelch going to know you didn't?"

"You fat scoundrel—"

"Oh, really, Bull! I think you fellows might go to Quelch and say—Beast! Rotter! Swab! Leggo my nose, Bull, you rotter! Wow!"

Johnny Bull let go that little fat nose, after pulling it, and the chums of the Remove went to the bike-shed. Bunter was left rubbing that fat little nose and breathing wrath and indignation.

Harry Wharton & Co. wheeled out their machines and rode away at a good pace by the road to Courtfield Common.

Whether Bunter's tale was true, and whether, if true, it would be confirmed by Ponsonby, they could not be sure; but they were at least going to do their best for the dolorous fat Owl.

But, as it turned out, they had no need to go so far as Highcliffe School. As they neared the corner of Oak Lane they sighted a bunch of cyclists coming on from the opposite direction and turning the corner into the lane.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob. "Pon & Co.! Guess where they're going!"

That was not difficult to guess. Oak Lane led to the river and the bridge, and it was possible that the knuts of Highcliffe were going for a spin. But it led also, much nearer at hand, to the gate of the Three Fishers, and that was a much more likely destination for Pon & Co. on a half-holiday.

"After them!" said Harry. "We've got to catch them before they get into that den—we can't go in after them."

"Put it on!" said Bob.

The five Highcliffians turned the corner and disappeared. But the Greyfriars cyclists shot swiftly on, swept round the corner after them, and sighted them again.

Ponsonby glanced back. He spoke to his companions, and Gadsby, Drury, Monson, and Vavasour all glanced back in their turn. Then they put on speed, pedalling away as if on the race track.

Evidently they did not want a meeting with the Famous Five of Greyfriars, and they could see that the latter were in pursuit.

"Go it!" said Bob, and he drove at the pedals, and his bike fairly flew.

After him flew the others, going strong.

The gateway of the Three Fishers was no great distance ahead. Once inside the fence Pon & Co. would have been safe from fellows who had no desire to risk being copped for pub-haunting. But the Highcliffians had little chance in a race with the Famous Five. The five overhauled them, hand over fist.

"Hold on!" roared Bob.

Pon & Co. did not hold on! They flew!

Bob Cherry, ahead of his comrades, rode alongside Ponsonby, who gave him a hostile glare.

"Stop!" gasped Bob.

Instead of stopping, Ponsonby reached out and gave him a sudden thump in the ribs, which sent him rocking off his bike. Then he pedalled furiously on, after his comrades.

"Owl!" gasped Bob.

His machine rocked and wobbled, and nearly went over. But he righted it, and dashed on, crashing into Pon's rear wheel.

There was a startled yell from Ponsonby as his bike rocked in turn. Pon did not succeed in righting it. He whirled over and crashed, and bike and rider sprawled in the road.

Bob jumped down and landed on his feet as Pon landed on his back.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

Play Up, Pon!

PONSONBY sprawled and yelled beside his jingling bike.

Harry Wharton & Co., coming on fast after Bob, jammed on their brakes and jumped just in time.

They all jumped down and surrounded Pon as he sat up panting for breath and scowling like a demon in a pantomime.

Ahead, near the Three Fishers gate, the other four Highcliffians halted and dismounted. They looked back along the lane—in a very uncertain way! Pon was in the hands of the Greyfriars enemy—but his comrades seemed in no haste or hurry to rush to the rescue.

"You rotters!" panted Pon. He staggered to his feet gasping and rubbed places where he had banged on his bike on the road. "You Greyfriars cads, you—"

"Pack that up!" growled Johnny Bull with a warlike look. "You're not dealing with a fat ass like Bunter now—any more of that, and you'll get it pushed back down your neck!"

Ponsonby gave him an evil look. But he did not give the Famous Five "any more of that."

"What do you want?" he snarled. "What do you mean by stopping me and knocking my bike over?"

"What did you mean by ragging Bunter last Wednesday?" retorted Harry Wharton. "One good turn deserves another; and the same rule applies to a bad turn!"

"We never hurt the fat idiot!" growled Ponsonby. "If he's told you we did, he's telling lies! We never laid a finger on him."

The Famous Five exchanged quick looks. Harry Wharton's remark had been dictated more by the wisdom of the serpent than the innocence of the dove! It had been intended to draw the truth unconsciously, as it were, from Ponsonby, and it had succeeded perfectly.

"Do you think I'd punch that bladder of lard?" added Pon. "He would burst if I did! I tell you we never touched him."

"You touched his cap and coat!" "Well, we did not hurt him!" snapped Ponsonby. "Have you come here to kick up a shindy because of a lark on that fat chump? I suppose he got his cap and coat back again?"

Evidently Pon had the impression that the Famous Five were taking up the cudgels for Bunter on account of that rag a week ago. He was anxious to make it clear that it was only a lark.

"That does it!" said Bob. "It does!" said Harry. "It was a rotten trick, Ponsonby, to throw his cap and coat over that fence and make the fat chump go in after them. But we haven't come here to kick up a shindy about it, so don't worry."

Ponsonby picked up his fallen jigger. He was glad and relieved to hear that there was to be no shindy. Pon preferred odds on his side when he engaged in a shindy.

"Hold on, though," went on Harry. "We're not finished yet!"

"My friends are waitin' for me," muttered Pon uneasily.

"They will have to wait! Look here Ponsonby, Bunter was seen in that show when he went in after his overcoat, and he's up for a row."

"More fool he!" said Ponsonby, shrugging his shoulders.

"Well, he's a fool right enough, but he's not going to get a Head's flogging because you played that trick on him. Will you come back to Greyfriars with us and tell Quelch what you did?"

Ponsonby stared. "No!" he answered emphatically. "I jolly well won't!"

"Not if we ask you nicely?" said Bob. "Play up, Pon!"

"Oh, don't be a fool!"

"It's up to you, Ponsonby!" said Harry Wharton quietly. "You needn't be afraid of getting into a row at your school. Quelch won't make a fuss about it, and if you go and tell him what you did—"

"I'm not so sure of that! Anyhow, I've got an engagement this afternoon!"

"Can't you wash it out?" asked Bob. "No!"

"Oh, all right! One of you fellows hold his bike for him!" said Bob. "Will

you take your coat off, Pon? You can't scrap in a coat."

"I'm not going to scrap, you dummy!"

"You are!" answered Bob pleasantly. "You're going to do the right thing by Bunter, or you're going to put up your hands and take the biggest hiding I can give you. You're going to play up or pay up!"

"Hear, hear!" grinned Johnny Bull. "The hear-hearfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "Shall I hold your ridiculous jigger, my esteemed Ponsonby?"

"Hand it over!" said Nugent. Ponsonby did not hand over his jigger. He held on to it and eyed the Famous Five with an evil eye.

Whether Billy Bunter was in a row for having gone after his cap and coat that day a week ago, Pon did not care a straw. And he did care about joining his friends and playing the giddy goat in the billiards-room at the Three Fishers. On the other hand, he did not want a scrap with Bob Cherry, the hardest hitter in the Greyfriars Remove.

He had stopped some of Bob's punches before, and he did not want to stop any more of them. Very much, indeed, he did not.

There was a pause while the dandy of Highcliff breathed hard. But the more he thought of it, the less he liked the prospect of a scrap.

"If that fat fool's in a row, I don't mind telling his beak what happened last week!" he said, at last suddenly. "It was only a lark, as I've told you! We never touched the silly idiot—only chucked his things over the fence to give him a climb."

"It's a pretty serious lark for Bunter, as it's turned out!" said Harry. "It won't hurt you to put Quelch wise."

"I'll come." The Famous Five had had no doubt that Pon would come, after Bob had said his piece! He was not doing it with a good grace; but so long as he did it, that was all they wanted.

Pon glanced round at the group of Highcliffians, waiting uneasily near the Three Fishers gate.

"See you fellows later!" he called out; and he turned his machine round in the road.

Gadsby & Co. stared. Pon gave them no further heed, but mounted his machine and rode down the lane with the Famous Five.

Pon was far from keen on what he had undertaken to do; and possibly the idea was in his mind of dodging the Greyfriars fellows en route if a chance came his way. But if he had that idea, he had to abandon it. Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent rode on either side of him, Bob Cherry rode ahead, and Johnny Bull and the Nabob of Bhanipur brought up the rear. Pon could hardly have been more safely guarded.

A quarter of an hour later, they reached the school; the bikes were put up, and Ponsonby walked to the House with the Famous Five.

A good many glances were cast on them; it was very unusual to see the chums of the Remove in company with Pon.

The Co. waited at the door, while Harry Wharton went into the House with Ponsonby, and tapped at the door of his Form-master's study.

"Come in!" Mr. Quelch was in the study, in rather grim expectation of a visitor! But it was an unexpected visitor he saw, as Wharton opened the door.

"What—" he began.

"Ponsonby has something to tell you, sir!" said Harry.

"Indeed! You may come in, Ponsonby!" said Mr. Quelch.

And Ponsonby came in; and the Remove master listened, in astonishment, but also in relief, to what the dandy of Highcliff had to tell him.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

Exit Mr. Squidge!

GOSLING frowned when he saw Mr. Squidge.

He had far from a pleasing recollection of that gentleman.

However, he had orders to let Mr. Squidge in, and he let him in.

Mr. Squidge gave him a cool nod and a wink in exchange for his frown, which intensified the frown on Gosling's frosty brow.

"You!" grunted Gosling.

"Me!" agreed Mr. Squidge. "Not 'arf, old covey!"

"You can go to the 'ouse!" grunted Gosling.

"And without asking your leave, neither!" retorted Mr. Squidge independently.

And he walked on—and nearly walked into a fat figure.

Billy Bunter was watching the gates in a state of palpitating dread, his eyes almost popping through his spectacles at the sight of Squidge.

"I—I—I say—" gasped the forlorn Owl.

Mr. Squidge gave him a contemptuous leer.

"You look out!" he said ominously. "You're for it, you ave, and so I tell you! P'raps you'll be sorry now I didn't 'ear from you?"

"I—I—I've been disappointed about that postal order!" groaned Bunter. "I—I say, if—if you'll wait till to-morrow I'll—"

"Think you can pull a bloke's leg twice?" asked Mr. Squidge derisively. "You look out for what's coming to you!"

And Mr. Squidge slouched on, leaving the fat Owl with his podgy knees knocking together.

Trotter showed Mr. Squidge in to the Remove master's study—with a very curious look at the visitor.

Squidge arrived at that study about half an hour after the previous visitor had gone! Harry Wharton & Co. had only been just in time!

Mr. Quelch rose to his feet as Squidge entered. He gave his visitor a glance of the strongest disfavour.

Squidge, without removing his hat, gave him a cool nod.

"'Ere I am," he announced. "I said I'd give you a look-in, sir, and 'ere I am! That fat young covey, name of Bunter—"

"You stated on the telephone," said Mr. Quelch coldly, "that you had seen the boy Bunter within the precincts of the Three Fishers last Wednesday."

"Right on the nail!" agreed Mr. Squidge.

"You stated that you had taken a letter from him which you can produce as proof."

"On the nail agin!" assented Mr. Squidge.

"Kindly produce it!"

"'Ere you are!" said Mr. Squidge cheerfully.

He kindly produced it and laid it on the Form-master's table.

"Copped him fair and square, I did!" said Mr. Squidge affably. "Hanging about that there pub, he

was! "Orrid young character, and no mistake! I been rather busy or I'd 'ave let you know afore! But 'ero I am, sir, putting you wise, which is a man's dooty in such a case."

"Perfectly so!" said Mr. Quelch. "But as it happens, I have now received information from another quarter and have no doubt that Bunter was in those precincts. It transpires, however, that he went in only for the purpose of recovering his coat and cap which a malicious boy had flung over the fence."

"Strike me pink!" said Mr. Squidge. "I've 'eard some thin yarns in my time, but that's the thinnest!"

"I am convinced," said Mr. Quelch icily, "that this is correct! It was very foolish and very reprehensible for Bunter to enter such a place for any reason whatsoever; but I have no doubt that his motive was as I have stated. Had I been aware of this earlier, I should not have allowed you to call here."

"Blow me tight!" said Mr. Squidge. "But now you are here," went on Mr. Quelch in a rumbling voice, "I have another matter to refer to. My head boy, Wharton—"

"Young 'ound!" interjected Squidge. "Pitching into a bloke—"

"Silence! Wharton has made a statement to me with regard to your attempts to extort money—"

"Which I ain't—"

"I have a suspicion—a very strong suspicion," said Mr. Quelch sternly, "that you have haunted the vicinity of this school with the deliberate intention of finding some excuse for such extortion—"

"P'r'aps you can prove it!" sneered Mr. Squidge.

"This," said Mr. Quelch, unheeding, "is called blackmail, and is very severely punished by the law. I have decided, therefore, to give you into custody—"

Mr. Squidge jumped.

"Wot?" he howled.

"And charge you!" continued Mr. Quelch icily. "I have already telephoned for a constable—"

"Eh?"

"Who may be here any moment—"

"Strike me pink and blue!" gasped Mr. Squidge. "I come 'ero to put you wise, that being a man's dooty—"

"If you have acted from a sense of duty, you have nothing to fear from the law, which is designed to uphold every citizen in doing his duty!" said Mr. Quelch grimly. "If otherwise, I have no doubt that you will be— Stop!"

Mr. Squidge did not stop!

He fairly bounded.

The door flew open, and Mr. Squidge flew out of the study; and a streak of greased lightning had nothing on Squidge as he went down the passage!

Evidently Squidge did not want to wait for that constable to arrive! It was clear that he disliked policemen! Probably he had established contact with them before and derived no pleasure from the contact.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

He stepped to his window and threw up the sash. Squidge was already bolting out of the House—stared at by twenty or thirty fellows in the quad.

"Stop that man!" shouted Mr. Quelch. "Detain him!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Squidge!"

"Collar him!"

"Bag him!"

The Famous Five led a rush.

Mr. Squidge flew for the gates. His

hat flew off, but he did not stop for it. He bounded on! Every moment he dreaded to see a blue tunic and a helmet. He fairly whizzed!

At least a dozen fellows grabbed him! There was a wild and whirling tussle, for a few hectic minutes, and then Squidge, desperate, broke loose and bounded on—leaving a collar in Bob Cherry's grasp, a tie in Johnny Bull's, and a coat in the grasp of several fellows. Slipping out of that coat, Squidge bounded away; breathless, panting, gurgling, and fled for the gates. After him went the whole crowd, in full cry.

"After him!"

"Bag him!"

"Snaffle him!"

But fear, apparently, lent Mr. Squidge wings! He reached the gateway, hardly a yard ahead of clutching hands. He shot out of the gateway like a pip from an orange, and went down the road at a terrific burst of speed. Hatless, coatless, collarless, tieless, dismantled, and dishvelled, Mr. Squidge burst through hedges and vanished over fields.

"Well," gasped Bob Cherry, as he

MORE PRIZES FOR OVERSEAS READERS!

Third "Armaments Race" Result and Scores!

The prizes for the highest combined totals of BATTLESHIPS and TANKS stamps in the third "Armaments Race" Contest for Overseas readers have been awarded as follows:

FIRST PRIZE OF £2 to:

Tan Sip Chew, 48, Shanghai Road, Singapore, Straits Settlements, who submitted a combined total of 1,255 stamps.

SECOND PRIZE OF £1 to:

J. O'Connor, Rydal Mount, Palmer Street, Durban, Natal, South Africa, who sent the next-best total of 1,208 stamps.

TWENTY-SIX PRIZES OF 5s. each are awarded to those readers who submitted totals down to, and including, 555 stamps, and A PRIZE OF 2s. 6d. is awarded to each of the one hundred readers who submitted totals down to, and including, 345 stamps.

turned back from the chase. "I fancy we've seen the last of that sportsman, at any rate! Think he's likely to call again?"

"Hardly!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "I think we're done with Squidge this time!"

"The donefulness is terrific!"

There was no doubt that Mr. Squidge was done with. He was not likely to be seen near Greyfriars again; and Police-Constable Tozer looked round Friardale for him in vain. Mr. Squidge had departed, in haste; probably the saddest and sorriest blackmailer that ever was!

THE TWENTY-SECOND CHAPTER.

Bunter All Over!

BILLY BUNTER blinked in at the doorway of Study No. 1.

The Famous Five had gathered there to tea after the hurried departure of Mr. Squidge.

They were discussing that hurried departure, with many chuckles, when the fat Owl appeared in the offing.

They gave him cheery smiles.

They had saved Bunter's bacon. They had cut football that afternoon to do it; it was, perhaps, doubtful whether Bunter was worth it. But they had done

it, and it was all clear now for the fat Owl. And in the innocence of their hearts they supposed that Bunter had rolled in to thank them for their happy intervention which had saved his fat bacon.

That, however, was a little mistake on their part!

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, here's the old barrel!" said Bob Cherry. "All serene now, old fat man!"

"The serenefulness is preposterous, my esteemed idiotic Bunter!" beamed Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"You've had a close shave, you fat ass!" said Johnny Bull. "Better let it be a lesson to you."

"Seen Quelch?" asked Nugent.

Grunt from Bunter!

That grunt, and the frown on his fat brow, indicated that Bunter had not, it appeared, rolled along in a grateful or thankful mood.

"Yes, I've seen Quelch!" he grunted.

"Then it's all right now!" said Harry Wharton.

"Is it?" grunted Bunter.

"Well, isn't it?"

"Perhaps you call it all right for a fellow to get five hundred lines!" said Bunter sardonically. "I don't!"

"You've got off with lines?" asked Bob.

"Got off? Call it getting off to be landed with five hundred lines!" hooted Bunter. "The least you fellows can do is to do the lines for me! I think that's the very least you can do."

The Famous Five gazed at him. Only too clearly, Bunter had not come to thank them for their services. He appeared to be suffering under a sense of very deep injury!

"I've had a jaw!" he went on. "I don't mind that so much! Beaks will jaw—there's no stopping 'em! Quelch jawed me for ten minutes by the clock! He said I shouldn't have gone into the Threo Fishers, whether Ponsonby chucked my coat in or not—on a cold day, too, you know!"

"Neither should you, fathead!"

"I told him I never went in," continued Bunter. "He took no notice of that—absolutely no notice! Might have been speaking to a stone image! Then he began to jaw me about untruthfulness—me, you know! I don't know why he started on that subject again."

"You don't know?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"No—except it seems to be his favourite subject! From what I can make out, you fellows got that Highcliffe cad, Ponsonby, here, to tell him about chucking my coat over the fence! That did it! After that Quelch wasn't going to believe that I never went into the place at all! He prefers that Highcliffe cad's word to mine!" said Bunter bitterly.

"You—you—you benighted chump!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Can't you see that that's what's pulled you through. If Quelch hadn't got the facts from Ponsonby you'd have been up before the Head, and sacked or flogged."

"Pity we butted in!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Well, I'm glad you can see that, Bull, at any rate!" said Bunter, blinking at him. "Giving a fellow away to a beak—"

"Giving you away?" gurgled Nugent.

"Well, what do you call it?" demanded Bunter indignantly. "You fetch that Highcliffe cad here to give me away—"

"Oh, scissors!"

"Fat lot of good it was my telling Quelch that I never went near the place,"

after what he heard from Pon!" said Bunter. "You fellows meant well, I dare say—but you've dished me all right! I've got five hundred lines!"

"You'd have got the sack if we hadn't brought Pon here!" shrieked Bob. "I'm rather sorry we did now!"

"Quech says they're to be handed in by Saturday!" went on Bunter. "Well, my idea is this—you fellows do a hundred each! You've landed me in this, and now it's up to you to do the lines, at least! It's no good telling me you meant well—I dare say you did, but that won't do five hundred lines. You see that, I suppose?"

"This is what we cut footer for!" remarked Johnny Bull. "It was worth it—what?"

"Slaughter him!" said Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, you fellows, I'm not going to bear malice for what you've done—"

"You—you—you're not going to bear malice!" murmured the captain of the Remove, like a fellow in a dream.

"No; some fellows would, but I never was a chap to owe grudges! You've got me five hundred lines, but so long as you do the lines, that's all right! I'm ready to forget and forgive," said Bunter generously, "and I'll prove it by staying to tea with you! I say, is that all the eggs you've got?"

"That's all," said Bob. "But you can have the lot, Bunter! In fact, you're going to have the lot!"

"Well, that's all right!" said Bunter cheerfully. "Where's the saucepan? I'll boil them—"

"They're not going to be boiled."

"Eh? I don't want them raw!" said Bunter, staring. "I say—Woouoooooh!"

Crash! Squash!

Billy Bunter jumped clear of the floor as he got the first egg! He bounded for the door, as he got the second.

He did not wait for the rest!

THE END.

(Next week's grand story of Harry Wharton & Co. is entitled: "LODER LOOKS FOR TROUBLE!" Boys, you're on a winner here—so be sure to order your MAGNET well in advance!)

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.

MY postbag this week is one of the most interesting I have received for a long time. And I must thank all those readers, who did not ask for a personal reply, for the very nice things they say about the MAGNET.

Naturally enough, I am always pleased to hear your praises—and your criticisms, too! It is only by knowing exactly what my readers prefer that I am able to keep the Old Paper slap-bang up to scratch! Never be afraid to write me, chums, whether it be bouquets or brickbats you want to throw.

A reader, who signs himself "A Keen Magnetite," tells me that he has been an ardent reader of the MAGNET for the past fifteen years. Good! I hope this chum will go on reading the paper for the next fifteen years—and longer!

"Really grand stuff, these yarns of Harry Wharton & Co.," was the opening paragraph of the next letter I opened—this one from Ronald Baker, of Sevenoaks. "I've read many school stories in my time, but I can honestly say that not one of them came up to Frank Richards' high standard."

You're telling me, Ronald! And now let me tell you this. Our school stories are going to remain "grand stuff." If only you could read the yarns I've got in store for you! But there, you'll read them all in due course, and you'll thoroughly agree with what I say. If there is any author who can spin a better school yarn than Frank Richards, I'd like to meet him!

An interesting query comes from a reader who is anxious to obtain a post in one of the London banks. In fact, he asks me which one I think is

the best. Well, chum, as there are over fifteen hundred banks in London, I don't feel disposed to name any particular one. I will say this, though—they'll all be pleased to take care of your money—that is, if you have any you want looking after. Yes, it is essential that you matriculate or get a Schools Certificate before making your application. But don't let this dishearten you. Carry on with your swotting, and you'll make good. Apply by letter about a month prior to your seventeenth birthday, and the best of luck to you!

As you know, the MAGNET goes to press some few weeks before publishing date. Therefore, I have been unable to thank earlier the vast numbers of readers who sent me Christmas cards. I take this opportunity right now.

Looking forward to next week's MAGNET? I'll bet you are! Well, there's another rollicking fine story in store for you. It's entitled:

"LODER LOOKS FOR TROUBLE!" and, of course, it's by your favourite author, Frank Richards. He's got several O.K. surprises for you—and K.O. surprises, too! Yes, Gerald Loder, the bully of the Sixth, asks for trouble, and gets it—a smashing punch that knocks him out! The dirty deed is done in the dark! Who's the culprit? That what all Greyfriars wants to know. The identity of the assailant remains a secret. Don't miss this sensational school yarn, chums, whatever you do. "My Page" will be taken over by Peter Todd, so you can expect some real classical stuff! The "Greyfriars Herald," as usual, will contain interesting contributions by Dick Russell and other favourites.

YOUR EDITOR.

BOYS! BOYS!! CUP-TIE NEWS! OFFICIAL!!

YOU CAN ENJOY REAL CUP-TIE THRILLS and excitement galore with the FAMOUS "NEWFOOTY" GAME. SMASHING SHOTS, tricky passes, DASHING PLAYERS FOLLOWING BALL, great saves, HIGH SHOTS, LOW SHOTS, Fouls, Offside, Penalties, CORNER KICKS, etc. 22 SPECIAL MEN, BALL and GOALS. OVER 2,500 BOYS IN "NEWFOOTY" PLAYERS' ASSOCIATION. Played on an ordinary tablecloth. ACTUAL FOOTBALL RULES ADAPTED TO IT. Boys and parents write: "WONDERFUL," "MOST THRILLING," "MARVELLOUS," "JUST LIKE FOOTBALL," etc. Hundreds of testimonials. PLAYED THROUGHOUT BRITISH ISLES AND ABROAD. Buy yours now. ONLY 2/-, or DE LUXE SETS 3/11 and 5/- SUPER SET, WITH CLOTH, 10/-. SPECIAL CLOTHS, SEPARATELY, 5' x 3' marked out, 3/6 each, or plain 2/11. PLUS 4d. POSTAGE AND PACKING ON ALL ORDERS.

POST ORDERS, with P.O., to W. L. KEELING, The "Newfooty" Co., 38, BARLOW'S LANE, FAZAKERLEY, LIVERPOOL, 9. GUARANTEED NEAREST APPROACH TO ACTUAL FOOTBALL YET INVENTED OR MONEY REFUNDED.

ROYAL NAVY

No previous experience required.

An opportunity occurs for men between the ages of 17½ and 22 to enter as Seamen for Special Service, for 7 years Service in the Fleet and 5 years in the Reserve, from age of 18 or date of entry if above that age.

GOOD FOOD. GOOD PAY. GOOD FRIENDS.

A CHANCE TO SEE THE WORLD.

Ask at the Post Office for a copy of "The Royal Navy as a Career and How to Join It," which gives full particulars and address of nearest Recruiting Office, or write to the Recruiting Staff Officer, R.N. & R.M. (N), 85, Whitehall, London, S.W.1.

506 STAMPS FREE!

MOZAMBIQUE, JAPAN, GREECE, etc., 2d postage abroad 1/- P.O. Request approvals—A. EASTICK, 22, BANKSIDE ROAD, BOURNEMOUTH.

60 Different FREE, including Horseman, Soldier, PERAK, Scarce Airmail, PHILIPPINE Islands, Bohemia, 50 different, Pictorial Trinidad, ANZAO (Genotaph). Postage 2d., request approvals—ROBINSON BROS. (A), MORETON, WIRRAL.

FOOTBALL JERSEYS & SHORTS

Write for List



All colours & designs
15/-
Dozen
Postage 9d.



NAVY or WHITE
10/6
Dozen
Pairs
Postage 9d.



GEORGE GROSE LTD LUDGATE CIRCUS
NEW BRIDGE ST LONDON, E.C.4

FREE STAMPS.

100 different stamps free to all applicants for approvals. Opportunities of obtaining further gifts. Send now to—

E. W. FRENCH, 100, Heights, Northolt Park, Middlesex.

BLUSHING,

Shyness, "Nerves," Self-Consciousness, Worry Habit, Unreasonable Fears, etc., cured or money back! Complete Course, 5/-. Details—

L. A. STEBBING, 28, Dean Road, London, N.W.2.

STAMPS

FREE. 38 CATALOGUED 12/6, including 12 K.G. VI issues, Jubilee, Coronations, Colonials, etc., to approval applicants sending 2d.—P. COCKRILL, 13, MONTRELL ROAD, LONDON, S.W.2.

BUNTER PREFERS BULLIES
BRAWNY—NOT BRAINY!

Says BOLSOVER MAJOR

When fellows go off the deep end about me because I'm a bully, neck, and per- they're making a jolly big mistake. There are worse things than being an ordinary common or garden bully like I'm supposed to be. If you don't believe me, ask Bunter!

That pie-faced Porpoise had the nerve to help himself to three sausage-rolls from my study yesterday. As soon as I found out what had happened, I was after the fat robber like a raging lion! After a short, sharp chase, I ran him to earth near the gates. Now, if it had been left to me, I should have just whopped him in the good old-fashioned way. I suppose nambypambies of the Remove would have called it bullying; but there would have been nothing terrible about it. I should probably have pulled his hair, tweaked his nose, whirled him in a few seconds, and at the end, Bunter would have rolled back to the School House little the worse for it.

The GREYFRIARS HERALD

No. 328.

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

January 21st, 1939.



H. VERNON-SMITH'S
WEEKLY SPORTS SHORTS

Junior footer in the schools has started the new term by breaking a record. Out of the five games played this week, no less than four resulted in draws! This, mark you, with the leaders, St. Jim's and Greyfriars, both playing at home!

So far as our own game with St. Jude's is concerned, I have positively no excuses to offer. It would be easy to invent some excuses—that we hadn't settled down to the new term or that Hazel- alone, in goal, was sickening for a fouch of 'flir, or something equally glib. But I prefer to face the fact; and the fact on this occasion was that St. Jude's played rattling good football and we were not quite good enough to beat them.

This match confirms an impression I have had several times during the present season that the gap between the teams at the top and those at the bottom is not so great as the margin of points might lead you to think.

The "booby" teams at their best (pardon the term, St. Jude's!) can always give the leaders a run for their money, and the champions can never look on a game as a foregone conclusion.

Chastened by our disconcerting start, we may hope now to get back to form with a rush.

We can console ourselves, anyway, with the reflection that we played with just as much skill and zest as last term, and if we had been opposed by a team less obviously at the top of their form than St. Jude's were, we should certainly have won.

Another consolation derives from the fact that St. Jim's, at the top of the table, fared no better against Rookwood. After a very hard tussle they managed to force a draw of three goals each.

The First Eleven opened the new term well with a 3-1 victory against Bagshot on the latter's ground. Wingate scoring all the goals. Anticipating that Greyfriars would lose this game, I had prepared a scheme for offering to lend Wingate six of our best players for the next First Eleven match, but the offer will be left over now till a more favourable occasion.

The only remaining item of footer news this week concerns Coker's appearance on the Fags' Sports Ground as referee for the game between the Third and the Second. A record crowd watched this affair, attracted by the expectation of fun. They were not disappointed!

Coker awarded three free kicks to the wrong side, disallowed two goals, for reasons known only to himself, and finished up by scoring for the Second himself! The game ended with the enterprising ref. being rolled in the mud by the Third while the crowd cheered themselves hoarse! Good old Coker!

I am squeezing in the results this week, as well as the table. Here they are.

RESULTS. GREYFRIARS 2 ST. JUDE'S 2; ST. JIM'S 3 ROOKWOOD 3; HIGHCLIFFE 3 RYLCOMBE G.S. 0; REDCLIFFE 0 CLAREMONT 0; BAGSHOT 1 ABBOTSFORD 1

CHAMPIONSHIP TABLE.

Goals P. W. D. L. F. A. Pts 1. ST. JIM'S 11 9 1 1 29 12 19 2. GREYFRIARS 11 7 4 0 32 8 18 3. BAGSHOT 12 5 3 10 13 14 13 4. HIGHCLIFFE 12 5 3 2 23 19 13 5. ROOKWOOD 10 5 2 3 21 15 12 6. ABBOTSFORD 13 3 2 7 14 26 8 G.S. 10 2 2 6 13 23 6 8. REDCLIFFE 10 2 2 6 9 16 6 9. ST. JUDE'S 11 2 2 7 13 26 6 10. CLAREMONT 10 1 1 5 7 22 6

FROM ONE CHUM TO ANOTHER

With would-be contributors dropping into Study No. 1 at the rate of four an hour and other callers enlisting my support for theatricals, chess tournaments, debates, mock trials, and goodness knows what else, I begin to feel that I'm back at school with a vengeance!

A junior captain's lot is not a happy one—that is, if he objects to hard work, performed in frantic spasms with streams and streams of callers in between times! Fortunately for my peace of mind, I like both hard work and callers; and though I often find it hard to preserve the necessary balance between the two, I can assure you that I wouldn't change places with any man at Greyfriars!

The old school has begun the new term in a cheery atmosphere of optimism and enthusiasm. Perhaps it seems like that to me chiefly because it's the way I feel myself; but I think it's a fact all the same. Lengthen out, the cuckoo is heard again, all the heralds of the coming summer gradually make their appearance. So it's only natural that chaps should be infected with a little extra pep.

I look forward myself to lots of good times on the playing fields, a certain amount of diligent study (not too much, of course!) and plenty of adventures, misadventures, thrills, scrapes, japes, rags, larks, and any other old thing that comes my way!

Last, but not least, I look forward to spending all the time I can possibly spare on the congenial task of producing each week a "Greyfriars Herald" that shall surpass all its predecessors!

There used to be a formula for repeating to yourself at bedtime which was supposed to work wonders with people who wanted to improve themselves. The formula was: "Every day and in every way I am getting better and better."

Flattering readers have told me at times that the "Greyfriars Herald" cannot possibly be improved. But in spite of this, I am going to adopt as my editorial slogan this year an adaptation of this formula. Here it is: "Every week, from tag to tag, our readers are getting better and better—value!"

LEARNING TO SHAVE!

On the command brushes into their shaving-mugs as one man. "Squad—lather chins!" ordered Stewart.

The brushes were whipped out like lightning. In fact, the movement was a little too smart for comfort, any time you pass the Shell bath-room, to hear orders like these being rapped out in the crisp tones of a sergeant-major. You'll know that you are listening to the Shell Shaving Squad!

Stewart is the genius the Shell have to thank for this original wheeze. Interviewed by a "Greyfriars Herald" reporter just before he took his class, Stewart said that it was his aim to make every fellow in the Shell proficient in the art of shaving.

"Face-fungus is no asset," Stewart said, as he zealously stropped a safety-razor. "And many Shell chaps have enough face-fungus round their chins to cover a medium-sized lawn! I'm out to get rid of it."

But won't your chaps learn shaving in any case, without all this mass-instruction bizniz?" our reporter inquired. "Well, yes—in time. But it's such a dashed slow process. Everybody learns to shave in the end, of course. But they usually take about a year to become really adept at it—and in the meantime, our chins are a disgrace! My shaving squad are taking the short cut to the desired 'short cut,' so to speak!"

The Shaving Squad began to roll up for instruction just then. Our reporter stood aside to watch. He had to admit that there was a military precision about their movements that was most impressive. After Stewart had given his preliminary instruction, he and several blobs settled on the walls and ceiling. One blob settled on Stewart's eye and made him yelp!

Then the Shell Shavers set to work to cover their chins with a foaming lather of soap. Those who tried to talk at the same time, got soap in their mouths. After they had done the job to their instructor's satisfaction, they trotted out safety-razors and got down to the real business of the day. It was all done quite efficiently and without much letting of blood. Then—a couple of squeezes from a sponge and a quick towelling and the squad had finished!

Inspecting them afterwards, our reporter really couldn't say that he noticed a lot of difference about the chins apart from a few cuts and an unusually ruddiness about the skin. But the face-fungus, if any, was certainly conspicuous by its absence. We hear that the Fourth, just to show what they think of Stewart's movement, are organising a beard-growing campaign. But we shall believe this when we see their beavers! --and not before!

DEBATERS COME INTO THEIR OWN!

In the recesses of Sixth Form debates, this sound is usually described as "cheers!"

Silently leaving the seniors to their solemn show, our representative trotted along to the Third Form Room to see how he reacted to debating in the fog world. The first thing that struck him, as he walked into the kids' quarters was an ink pellet. Next instant, he was knocked off his feet by Tubb and Bolter, who were fighting a wild and whirling battle all round the Form-room.

"Here, chuck it, you young idiots!" he gasped. "I thought this was supposed to be a debate!" "What about it?" retorted Wingate minor. "Don't they look as if they're debating?"

"Well, hardly! But I'll take your word for it!" Our representative hastily dodged, as the combatants swayed towards him again. "Can you tell me, by the way, what's the subject of their debate?" "Certainly!" grinned Wingate minor. "The motion is 'That this House believes in preserving peace at any price!'"

The entire Form at that moment decided to join in the debate on the same lines as their principals. And the "Greyfriars Herald" representative wisely beat a hurried retreat. That's all we have to say about debating this week, thank you!

From the Sixth Form Debating Society down to the Third Form Speakers' Circle they are all in a healthy flourishing condition. Parliamentarians of the future may be seen any night of the week, arguing on a variety of subjects.

Of course, there are differences between the various societies. Between the institutions of the Sixth and the Third, for instance, is fixed a very wide gap. A representative of the "Greyfriars Herald" had an illustration of this when he happened to visit both these societies in the course of one evening.

The atmosphere of the Prefects' Room, where the Sixth were debating the proposition "That life is but an empty dream" was distinctly chilling. Our representative, almost by instinct, crept in on tip-toe and clutched nervously at one ear, as he sought out a seat for himself in the shadows.

What exactly they were talking about while he sat there was not very clear to him, but there were a lot of "Haws" from the various speakers, while the listeners, at odd intervals, gave vent to a languid "Hah!" We believe the latter to be a Sixth Form pronunciation of "Hear, hear!"

Prefects' Popular Pastime—and Fags, Too!

There are no less than five separate and distinct debating societies in the school at present.

Never before were Greyfriars chaps so keen on the noble art of self-expression. Never before were the debating chambers of the school so well patronised.

Debating societies in the past have been somewhat anaemic affairs, given to coming to life for a brief span in the autumn term and then flickering out of existence for another year. Not so the debating clubs of the present term!

From the Sixth Form Debating Society down to the Third Form Speakers' Circle they are all in a healthy flourishing condition. Parliamentarians of the future may be seen any night of the week, arguing on a variety of subjects.

Of course, there are differences between the various societies. Between the institutions of the Sixth and the Third, for instance, is fixed a very wide gap. A representative of the "Greyfriars Herald" had an illustration of this when he happened to visit both these societies in the course of one evening.

The atmosphere of the Prefects' Room, where the Sixth were debating the proposition "That life is but an empty dream" was distinctly chilling. Our representative, almost by instinct, crept in on tip-toe and clutched nervously at one ear, as he sought out a seat for himself in the shadows.

What exactly they were talking about while he sat there was not very clear to him, but there were a lot of "Haws" from the various speakers, while the listeners, at odd intervals, gave vent to a languid "Hah!" We believe the latter to be a Sixth Form pronunciation of "Hear, hear!"

Tutor's View: "Face Fungus No Asset!"

On the command brushes into their shaving-mugs as one man. "Squad—lather chins!" ordered Stewart.

The brushes were whipped out like lightning. In fact, the movement was a little too smart for comfort, any time you pass the Shell bath-room, to hear orders like these being rapped out in the crisp tones of a sergeant-major. You'll know that you are listening to the Shell Shaving Squad!

Stewart is the genius the Shell have to thank for this original wheeze. Interviewed by a "Greyfriars Herald" reporter just before he took his class, Stewart said that it was his aim to make every fellow in the Shell proficient in the art of shaving.

"Face-fungus is no asset," Stewart said, as he zealously stropped a safety-razor. "And many Shell chaps have enough face-fungus round their chins to cover a medium-sized lawn! I'm out to get rid of it."

But won't your chaps learn shaving in any case, without all this mass-instruction bizniz?" our reporter inquired. "Well, yes—in time. But it's such a dashed slow process. Everybody learns to shave in the end, of course. But they usually take about a year to become really adept at it—and in the meantime, our chins are a disgrace! My shaving squad are taking the short cut to the desired 'short cut,' so to speak!"

The Shaving Squad began to roll up for instruction just then. Our reporter stood aside to watch. He had to admit that there was a military precision about their movements that was most impressive. After Stewart had given his preliminary instruction, he and several blobs settled on the walls and ceiling. One blob settled on Stewart's eye and made him yelp!

Then the Shell Shavers set to work to cover their chins with a foaming lather of soap. Those who tried to talk at the same time, got soap in their mouths. After they had done the job to their instructor's satisfaction, they trotted out safety-razors and got down to the real business of the day. It was all done quite efficiently and without much letting of blood. Then—a couple of squeezes from a sponge and a quick towelling and the squad had finished!

Inspecting them afterwards, our reporter really couldn't say that he noticed a lot of difference about the chins apart from a few cuts and an unusually ruddiness about the skin. But the face-fungus, if any, was certainly conspicuous by its absence. We hear that the Fourth, just to show what they think of Stewart's movement, are organising a beard-growing campaign. But we shall believe this when we see their beavers! --and not before!

STOP PRESS NEWS

Junior footer in the schools has started the new term by breaking a record. Out of the five games played this week, no less than four resulted in draws! This, mark you, with the leaders, St. Jim's and Greyfriars, both playing at home!

So far as our own game with St. Jude's is concerned, I have positively no excuses to offer. It would be easy to invent some excuses—that we hadn't settled down to the new term or that Hazel- alone, in goal, was sickening for a fouch of 'flir, or something equally glib. But I prefer to face the fact; and the fact on this occasion was that St. Jude's played rattling good football and we were not quite good enough to beat them.

This match confirms an impression I have had several times during the present season that the gap between the teams at the top and those at the bottom is not so great as the margin of points might lead you to think.

The "booby" teams at their best (pardon the term, St. Jude's!) can always give the leaders a run for their money, and the champions can never look on a game as a foregone conclusion.

Chastened by our disconcerting start, we may hope now to get back to form with a rush.

We can console ourselves, anyway, with the reflection that we played with just as much skill and zest as last term, and if we had been opposed by a team less obviously at the top of their form than St. Jude's were, we should certainly have won.

Another consolation derives from the fact that St. Jim's, at the top of the table, fared no better against Rookwood. After a very hard tussle they managed to force a draw of three goals each.

The First Eleven opened the new term well with a 3-1 victory against Bagshot on the latter's ground. Wingate scoring all the goals. Anticipating that Greyfriars would lose this game, I had prepared a scheme for offering to lend Wingate six of our best players for the next First Eleven match, but the offer will be left over now till a more favourable occasion.

LEARNING TO SHAVE!

On the command brushes into their shaving-mugs as one man. "Squad—lather chins!" ordered Stewart.

The brushes were whipped out like lightning. In fact, the movement was a little too smart for comfort, any time you pass the Shell bath-room, to hear orders like these being rapped out in the crisp tones of a sergeant-major. You'll know that you are listening to the Shell Shaving Squad!

Stewart is the genius the Shell have to thank for this original wheeze. Interviewed by a "Greyfriars Herald" reporter just before he took his class, Stewart said that it was his aim to make every fellow in the Shell proficient in the art of shaving.

"Face-fungus is no asset," Stewart said, as he zealously stropped a safety-razor. "And many Shell chaps have enough face-fungus round their chins to cover a medium-sized lawn! I'm out to get rid of it."

But won't your chaps learn shaving in any case, without all this mass-instruction bizniz?" our reporter inquired. "Well, yes—in time. But it's such a dashed slow process. Everybody learns to shave in the end, of course. But they usually take about a year to become really adept at it—and in the meantime, our chins are a disgrace! My shaving squad are taking the short cut to the desired 'short cut,' so to speak!"

The Shaving Squad began to roll up for instruction just then. Our reporter stood aside to watch. He had to admit that there was a military precision about their movements that was most impressive. After Stewart had given his preliminary instruction, he and several blobs settled on the walls and ceiling. One blob settled on Stewart's eye and made him yelp!

Then the Shell Shavers set to work to cover their chins with a foaming lather of soap. Those who tried to talk at the same time, got soap in their mouths. After they had done the job to their instructor's satisfaction, they trotted out safety-razors and got down to the real business of the day. It was all done quite efficiently and without much letting of blood. Then—a couple of squeezes from a sponge and a quick towelling and the squad had finished!

Inspecting them afterwards, our reporter really couldn't say that he noticed a lot of difference about the chins apart from a few cuts and an unusually ruddiness about the skin. But the face-fungus, if any, was certainly conspicuous by its absence. We hear that the Fourth, just to show what they think of Stewart's movement, are organising a beard-growing campaign. But we shall believe this when we see their beavers! --and not before!