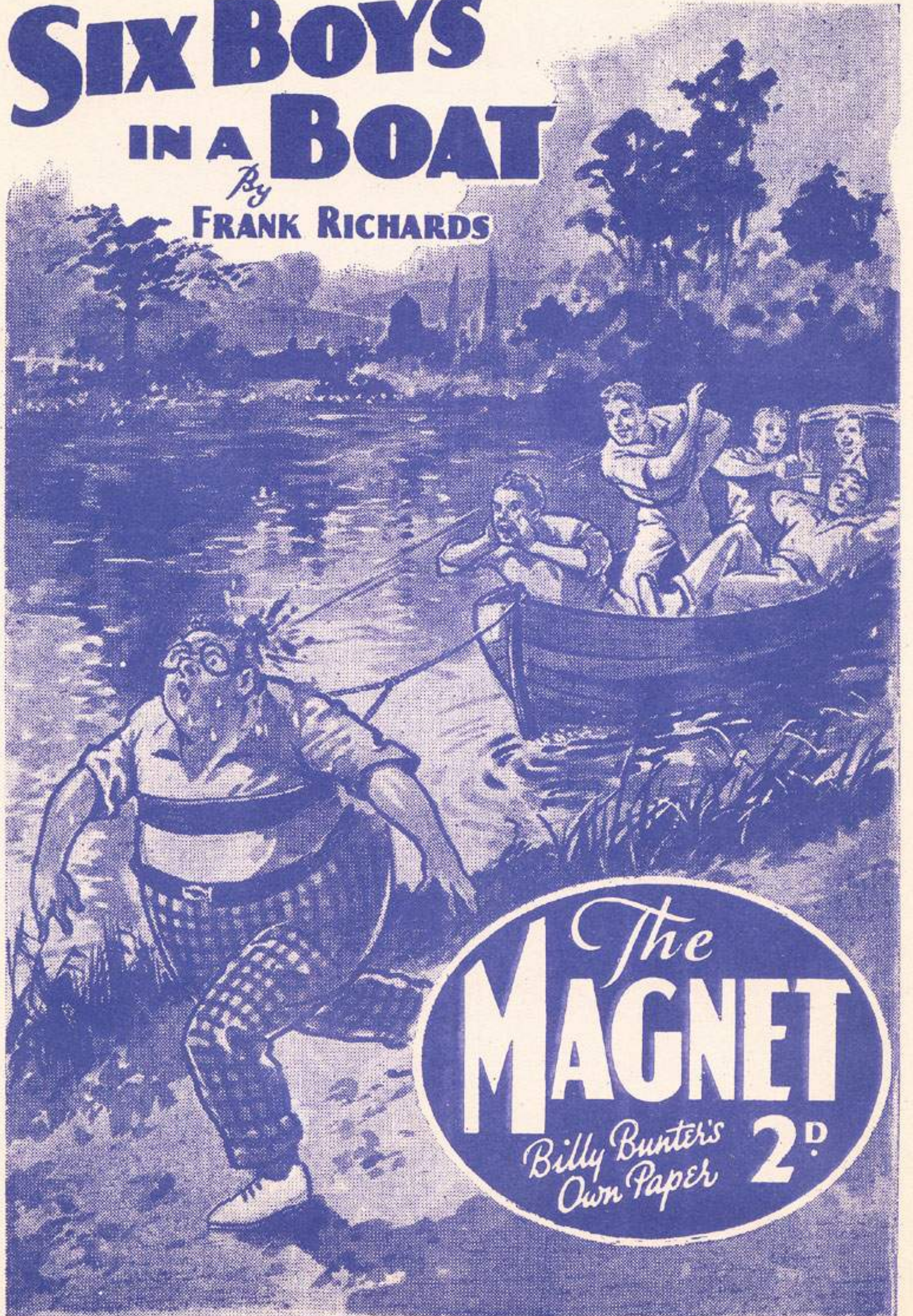


FUN AND ADVENTURE WITH HARRY WHARTON & CO.

SIX BOYS IN A BOAT

By
FRANK RICHARDS



The
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 STOP
PRESS
NEWS

THE HEAD TURNS UP TRUMPS!

Another amusing instalment of **DICKY NUGENT'S** serial featuring the chums of St. Sam's on a cannibal island.

Jack Jolly hauled himself up the rope ladder and dragged himself on to the deck of the *Mary Ann*. Then he pulled himself together and drew himself up to his full height.

"Ha, ha! I've pulled it off!" he muttered eggplantly. "It was touch and go in that shark-infested sea. Now I must go and touch the lever that works the hatches over the hold!"

The heroic kaptin of the *Fourth* crossed the deck, the moisture quickly drying off him in the hot tropical sunshine. By the time he reached the hatches he was as warm as toast—though a few seconds before he had been simply dripping!

Desprightly he tugged at the lever that opened the hatches. Too well he knew that if success was to crown his efforts each moment was preshus!

Over on the island from which he had just escaped his chums were prisoners in the hands of the savages. Worse still, Dr. Birchmall, the revered and majestick headmaster of St. Sam's, was at this very moment reposing in a stewpot, eggspeting at any moment to be cooked for his cannibal captors' supper!

Jack Jolly had no time for the Head. He had been a tirant and a booly to the St. Sam's fellows when the mutineers on the *Mary Ann* had made him kaptin; and he had acted like a complete idiot in allowing Hymer Kerr to take Mr. Fearless' plans. Still, Jolly was going to do his best to save the Head from the fate that threatened him. For Dr. Birchmall to be served up as the main dish at a cannibal feast would be just too tuff!

With a metallic clang the hatches rolled back. A shout of welcome came up from the darkness below as our hero went down the steps.

"Hip, hip!"
"Rescued at last, by gad! Hooray!"

By the dim light from the hatchway the kaptin of the *Fourth* soon severed the ropes that bound the prisoners. In a few minnits they were all on their feet, stretching their limbs, which had become somewhat cramped in the course of their long imprisonment.

"And now for news!" cried Mr. Fearless. "What has happened since those raskally mutineers put us down here? Where are the others?"

"They're in the hands of cannibals on an island near by," answered

Jolly. "The *Saucy Sal* is anchored beside us, and Hymer Kerr and his men are all prisoners with our fellows!"

"My hat!"
"Let us get bizzy, gentlemen!" cried Kaptin Goodfellow briskly. "We must make up a rescue-party immediately. Did the natives break into the ship's armoury, my lad?"

"No, sir," grinned Jolly. "They couldn't batter down the door."
"Eggcellent! I still have the key in my trowis pocket. Follow me!"

Kaptin Goodfellow led the way up the steps, and the freed captives followed him eagerly.

Rifles and ortomattick pistols and cutlasses were swiftly served out by the kaptin at the ship's armoury, and in a very short time the rescue party were lowering a cupple of boats to take them to the island.

Kaptin Goodfellow left the chief engineer and several of the crew behind to get up steam and to fix up a towrope between the two ships.

"Be ready to sail the moment we get back," he said. "We can't afford to take chances with those coffy-cullered raskals!"

"I, I, sir!"
The next moment the two boats were cutting through the water as the brawny seamen from the *Mary Ann* bent to their oars.

Not until the boats were grinding on the beach did the natives observe the approach of the raiders; but a wringing cheer from the rescuers soon made them look round. They fairly blinked at the uneggspeted site of a



rescue-party of white men landing under their very noses!

The men from the *Mary Ann* had arrived not a moment too soon, for the cannibals were in the very act of carrying Dr. Birchmall to the fire to be cooked. Another five minnits, and the Head of St. Sam's would have been boiled beef. But as it was, the natives dropped him like a hot cake!

Bang! Crash! Wallop!
"Yaroooo! Ow-ow-ow!" yelled the Head. Then he reckernised the newcomers and changed his tune completely. "Hooray! Pile in, you fellows!" he roared. "Teach 'em that cannibalism duzzent pay! Give 'em beans!"

It was a despright battle that ensued.

Showers of spears descended on the raiders; but forchuntily they were all accastomed to dodging darts in the games-room of the *Mary Ann*, and not a single spear found its billet.

That fusillade put the raiders on their metal, and they replied with a rain of hot lead. Their aim proved truer than the natives', a duzzen of whom hopped away hurriedly, yelling feendishly and holding their punctured anatomies.

The islanders, however, were game. Led by their chief, they charged, and furious hand-to-hand fighting was soon in progress.

Jack Jolly was in his element in this epic battle. He was here, there, and everywhere—tweaking a savage's nose here, slicing off another earring with his cutlass there, giving yet another a harty slap on the face somewhere else. On one occasion he tickled a great muscular cannibal in the ribs with the butt end of his ortomattick, and the man fell like a log, helpless with larfter.

The fight proved too hot for the islanders. Suddenly they started to retreat, and a few seconds later they turned tail and fled madly from the scene of the combat, leaving the raiders in undisputed possession of the beach.

Cheer after cheer rang out as the victors released the prisoners. Rescuers and rescued alike were awfully bucked. Some, in fact, were in favour of chasing the islanders and teaching them a much-needed lesson. But Kaptin Goodfellow was at once up in arms about this. He put his foot down sternly.

"Why worry about ignerant savages, gentlemen," he cried, "when we have enemies to deal with who should know better—mutineers and such-like?"

"Oh, my hat! Yes!"
"We'd forgotten that in all this egg-sitement, kaptin!" grinned Mr. Fearless. "You are quite right. Let's get back to the *Mary Ann*."

Half an hour later, with everybody aboard Mr. Fearless' yacht and Hymer Kerr's boat in tow behind, the *Mary Ann* sailed away.

It was then that Hymer Kerr and his hirelings lined up before him.

"Where are the plans?" was the question he shot at his crestfallen rival.

"I—I've lost them," phaltered Hymer Kerr. "They must have dropped out of my pocket on the island."

A groan burst from Mr. Fearless' lips. Then, to everybody's serprize, there was a chuckle from Dr. Birchmall.

"Don't worry, Mr. Fearless," he said. "I've got them!"

"You?"
"Little me!" grinned the Head. "I happened to spot them lying on the beach when I fell out of that beastly stewpot. Here they are!"

He passed over a sheaf of papers to Mr. Fearless, who glanced at them, and then performed the Highland Fling across the deck in sheer delite.

(Continued on page 27.)

MYSTERY, FUN, AND ADVENTURE ON THE RIVER THAMES!
ENJOY THEM ALL WITH—

SIX BOYS *in a* BOAT!



A Spot of Work for Bunter!

"ROT!" said Johnny Bull.
"But—" said Bob Cherry.

"Rot!"
"All very well!" said Frank Nugent. "But—"

"Rot!"
"What's the good of wasting time?" inquired Harry Wharton.

"Rot!"
"My esteemed Johnny—" murmured Hurræ Jamset Ram Singh.

"Rot!"
There was a certain sameness about Johnny Bull's remarks. But what they lacked in variety, they made up in emphasis. Every time Johnny Bull said "rot" he said it more emphatically than before.

Johnny Bull came from Yorkshire, so when he said a thing he meant it.

Four members of the Famous Five of Greyfriars could argue as much as they liked. Their arguments had precisely the same effect on Johnny as water on a duck.

The Greyfriars boat was at a stop. The Water-Lily, in which Harry Wharton & Co. were spending the summer holidays in a voyage up the Thames, rocked gently by the towpath.

In the stern sat Billy Bunter. Bunter was taking no part in the argument.

He was busy. Bunter had found a bag of oranges among the stores. He had the bag on his knees, and was disposing of the contents—at about the rate of an

Left on the towpath, Bunter shook his fist after the departing boat!

orange a minute! This was full-time occupation for Bunter's podgy jaws, and he had no leisure for conversation.

He was the subject of the argument.

Johnny Bull's view was that it was time that Billy Bunter did some work. The other fellows agreed, in principle. But they pointed out that making Bunter work was a harder task than doing the work themselves. Which, undoubtedly, was a fact.

"That fat frump," said Johnny, "hasn't put a finger to anything so far. Now he's going to tow, for a change."

Bunter's mouth being full of orange, he could not utter the contemptuous remark that naturally rose to his lips, as he heard that. Billy Bunter could not see himself towing the Water-Lily. He hadn't towed it so far—and he was not going to begin now.

The Owl of the Remove felt no urge to make himself useful. His idea seemed to be that he was there purely for ornamental purposes.

"But look here—" urged Bob Cherry.

"Rot!" said Johnny.

"We want to get up to Boveney Lock before the end of the hols!" said Harry Wharton. "Bunter would do about a yard an hour."

"An inch, more likely!" said Bob Cherry. "You're right, Johnny—Bunter ought to do his whack—but he won't, so that's that!"

"Rot!" said Johnny. Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, look here, fathead, if you can make Bunter work, try your hand at it. If you get away with it, you can tell Quelch how it's done next term—he will be glad to learn how to make Bunter work."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Leave it to me, then!" said Johnny Bull. "Bunter's going to take us right round the Home Park, as far as Windsor. Leave it to me, and I'll see that he does."

"Go it!" said the Co.; and they sat down in the boat, leaving it to Johnny Bull to go it.

The Water-Lily, at the moment, was going up from Datchet to Windsor, round the big bend of Home Park. Every fellow had taken a turn at towing—except Bunter. Four fellows would rather have towed than undertaken the task of inducing Billy Bunter to put in a spot of work. But Johnny Bull was made of sterner stuff.

His comrades having left it to him, Johnny got on with it. They sat down to wait, fully expecting to re-

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Sparkling Long Yarn of the
Holiday Adventures of
Harry Wharton & Co.

main within a few yards of the same spot all the while Johnny was trying to make Bunter work. When Johnny had tired himself out at that impossible task, they were ready to go on again.

"Your turn, Bunter!" said Johnny tersely. "Here's the towrope."

Billy Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles.

"I'm eating oranges!" he answered with quiet dignity.

And Bunter started on another orange. It was only his eleventh, and he was far from finished yet.

It was obvious—to Bunter—that no fellow could be expected to tow a boat while he was eating oranges.

This, however, did not seem to be so obvious to Johnny Bull. He brought the end of the towrope along the boat to Bunter.

"Here you are!" he said.

Bunter did not answer this time. He couldn't! He had started on the orange. Bunter's method of eating an orange was to push his fat face into it. Having pushed that fat face in, speech was out of the question.

"Deaf?" asked Johnny.

Bunter guzzled orange.

"Take this line, you fat frump!"

Guzzle!

Four fellows looked on, smiling. They wished Johnny luck—but they did not expect him to succeed in a task beyond mortal powers.

Johnny, however, was prepared for drastic measures. As Bunter carried on with the orange instead of replying or making a move, Johnny dropped the towrope and grasped Bunter instead.

He grabbed the back of Bunter's head with one hand. With the other he squeezed the orange that the fat Owl was elegantly devouring.

"Gurrrrrggh!" gurgled Bunter.

The orange was squashed. Juice ran all over Bunter's fat chin and down his fat neck. Most of the orange was squeezed into his mouth. It was a mouth designed by Nature on generous lines; accustomed to taking in foodstuffs in bulk; but a whole orange was rather too much even for Bunter at one fell swoop.

The fat Owl gurgled and choked.

"Urrggh! Gurrggh! Beast! Wurrgh!" spluttered Bunter. "Leggo! Stoppit! I'm chock-chack-chock-choking! Yurrrrgh!"

Bunter jerked his fat head away from Johnny's grasp. He gasped and gurgled and spluttered. Bunter had really enjoyed his first ten oranges. He had not enjoyed the eleventh.

"Beast!" he howled. "Rotter! Grooogh!"

Johnny picked up the end of the towrope again.

"Here you are!" he said.

"If you think I'm going to lug this boat with a lot of lazy loafers in it, up this beastly river, you're mistaken!" roared Bunter. "I do practically everything as it is! You fellows have got me on this trip to do all the work! I might have expected it! But if you think I'm going to pull you along while you sit round and laze, I can jolly well say, plainly that— Leggo, you beast!"

Bump!

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Billy Bunter sat on the towpath, tipped over the side. He sprawled in rushes, and roared.

"Catch!" said Johnny.

He tossed the rope after Bunter. Bunter caught it—with a fat little nose, and another roar echoed over the Home Park of Windsor.

Bunter did not pick up the towrope! He roared, and he glared, and he sat. Johnny Bull picked up the boathook.

"Are you towing?" he asked.

"No!" roared Bunter.

Jab!

"Yaroooh!"

Bunter bounded up. He bounded out of reach of the boathook. Johnny gathered in the towrope and again threw the end of it to Bunter. It fell at the fat Owl's feet.

"Waiting!" he said.

"You can wait!" roared Bunter.

"I shall wait exactly half a minute," said Johnny Bull calmly. "Then I'm stepping ashore with this boathook! If you want to be helped on from behind, I'm your man!"

Billy Bunter looked at him. The glare he gave Johnny Bull almost endangered his big spectacles.

Then at length he picked up the towrope. With feelings too deep for words, he marched on with the rope! The Water-Lily rocked into motion again. Slowly but surely it rolled on up the Thames.

And Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, Bob Cherry, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh sat in the boat and gazed at a phenomenon they had never dreamed of seeing—Billy Bunter doing a spot of work!

A Bit of a Mix-up!

JOHNNY BULL sat at the tiller-lines, and smiled.

He had done it!

For the first time since that trip had started the Famous Five of the Greyfriars Remove were all sitting at ease, while Billy Bunter tugged at the towrope. Certainly, the boat was not making rapid progress. But it was making some. Really, towing was not hard work. The resistance of the water was not great; and sometimes a fellow hardly noticed that he was towing at all.

But he had, of course, to walk! Bunter would not have objected to a turn at towing so much if he could have towed sitting down. But nobody, so far, had invented a method of towing a boat sitting down. Bunter had to walk.

He walked.

Every now and then he cast a backward blink at the boat, his very spectacles glittering with wrath and indignation.

He would not have taken a single step—only he did not want Johnny to step ashore and help him on from behind with the boathook.

He stepped out—slowly! He stepped more and more slowly! The Water-Lily moved—not rapidly! And with every passing minute it moved less and less rapidly.

"Did any of you fellows bring a microscope?"

"What the thump do you want a microscope for?" asked Harry.

"To see how fast we're getting on."

"Well, we're moving!" said Bob Cherry, laughing.

"Are we?" asked Nugent doubtfully.

"We're going faster than this!" said Johnny cheerfully. He picked an orange out of the bag.

Whiz!

"Whoooooop!" roared Billy Bunter, as there came a sudden bang on a fat ear. "What's that? Something hit me—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you beast, are you shying things at me?" roared Bunter, glaring round at the Water-Lily.

"You've got it!" assented Johnny Bull. "Get on faster."

"If you think I'm going to race—" roared Bunter.

"I think I'm going to let you have a tomato-tin—next!" said Johnny. "That orange was only a hint. The tomato-tin comes next, if you don't buck up!"

Billy Bunter breathed hard and deep. And he bucked up! The orange had given him quite a strong hint. He did not want the tomato-tin.

"By gum! Johnny's getting by with it!" said Bob Cherry admiringly. "We're actually moving! Bunter's doing some work! What ass was it said that the age of miracles was past?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Water-Lily rolled on. It still rolled slowly. But it rolled. It was not likely to pass any other craft on the river. It was likely to be passed, a good many times. Still, it was moving.

"After all, we're not in a hurry!" remarked Bob Cherry. "We shall pass Eton, by the time Bunter's an old man!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hi!" came a shout from astern. "Hi! Look out! Hi!"

Another boat was towing up. It was not towing rapidly—only about three times as fast as the Water-Lily. Three fellows were sitting, or rather sprawling, in the boat, smoking cigarettes; and another fellow was towing.

"Look out, Bunter!" called out Bob Cherry. "Don't get those ropes tangled, for goodness' sake!"

Snort from Bunter.

Bunter did not mind if the tow-lines got tangled, always a possible disaster when one towed boat passed another, unless a fellow was careful. Indeed, Bunter would rather have preferred it, as it would have meant a halt while the lines were disentangled. Bunter was prepared to sit down for any length of time, while other fellows disentangled tow-lines.

"Duck!" said Bob, as the second boat overtook the Water-Lily, and the tow-line passed over the heads of the juniors.

"Oh gad!" came a voice from the other boat. "That's a crew of Greyfriars fags!"

The Famous Five looked round as

they heard that remark, in a voice they knew.

"Loder!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

It was Gerald Loder, of the Sixth Form at Greyfriars School, who sat at the tiller in the second boat—sprawling, with a straw hat on the back of his head, and a cigarette sticking out of the corner of his mouth.

The other two fellows in the boat were Hilton and Price of the Fifth.

"That gang!" said Price, staring at the Water-Lily.

Hilton glanced at the juniors, coloured a little, and dropped his cigarette over the gunwale. Price gave them an aggressive stare.

Loder honoured them with a scowl. Little troubles that had happened during the term seemed to revive in Gerald Loder's mind at the sight of the cheery crew of the Water-Lily.

"Keep that old tub clear!" snapped Loder.

"Have you bought the river, Loder?" inquired Johnny Bull.

Loder of the Sixth was a prefect at Greyfriars School, invested with the power of the ashplant! But in the hols, and on the River Thames, Loder of the Sixth was nobody in particular.

The Remove fellows were quite ready to make it clear to Gerald Loder that he was nobody in particular!

"What did you give for it, Loder?" asked Bob Cherry affably.

And the juniors chuckled.

Loder gave them another scowl, and called to the fellow with the towline on the bank.

"Get on, Walker! Push that fat fool out of the way!"

It was James Walker of the Greyfriars Sixth who was towing.

Billy Bunter blinked round. He was not disposed to get out of the way—even for Walker, who was a prefect at school.

Walker gave him assistance to do so, however, with a shove in his fat ribs.

"Ooooh!" gasped Bunter, as he tottered and dropped the rope.

Walker, grinning, stepped over it, as it lay on the towpath. Bunter grabbed it up again, as Walker had one leg over it, and the other about to follow. James Walker's second leg was caught in transit.

The rope caught his knee, and he stumbled, and landed suddenly on both knees.

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

That, Bunter thought, served the cheeky beast right.

Walker did not seem to think so. He seemed annoyed. On his knees, he made a swipe at Bunter.

Bunter promptly dodged, still holding the rope, and the sudden drag swept Walker's legs from under him. He measured his length on the towpath, with a roar.

Bunter did not wait for him to get up again.

The Water-Lily had steered in close, to give Loder & Co. room to pass! Bunter made a bound back into the boat before James Walker could gain his feet.

He took the end of the towline with him. That line was wound round Walker's legs—and as Walker staggered up and strove to disentangle himself, he succeeded in tangling his own line with the Water-Lily's.

"Get on, Walker!" called out Price.

"You silly fool!" howled Walker. "How can I get on, when I'm tied up in knots!"

"Oh, my hat! This is going to be a mix-up!" sighed Bob Cherry.

"What did you let them overhaul us for, Bunter, you lazy ass?"

"Beast!" hooted Bunter.

"Get those lines clear!" shouted Loder angrily, standing up in his boat. "You've done this on purpose, you young rascals."

"Oh, don't be a silly ass, if you can help it!" retorted Johnny Bull. "Think we want to stay in such company?"

"We're a bit particular whom we mix with on a holiday, Loder!" explained Bob Cherry. "We shouldn't like people to think we belong to your smoky lot."

Hilton grinned, and Price scowled, and Loder raved.

"Get those lines clear!" he roared. "What are you tottering about on the towpath for, Walker?"

"You silly idiot, I've got the dashed lines all round my dashed legs!" howled Walker.

The two lines were in a regular tangle now, and seemed to be trying to tie themselves up into a Gordian knot.

Walker on the bank, and Harry Wharton & Co. in the Water-Lily, set to work disentangling them—while Gerald Loder contributed a series of exasperated ejaculations.

The lines were cleared at last, and Walker towed on, grunting. The seniors' boat rolled on past the Water-Lily; and, as it passed, Loder of the Sixth reached out, with a walking-cane in his hand, and swiped at the Water-Lily's crew.

At Greyfriars, Loder had whopping privs, and could order a junior to bend over. He assumed that privilege in the holidays, unexpectedly on the part of the Removes. The Water-Lily was stationary; the other boat gliding past as Walker pulled on; and Loder had only a few moments, but he made the most of them.

Swipe! Swipe! Swipe!

Loder got in three—one across Johnny Bull's shoulder, one on Bob Cherry's legs, and one on Harry Wharton's back. Then he was gone, grinning back as he glided up the Thames, and leaving the juniors' boat in a roar of rage behind him.

A Brush With the Enemy!

"O H!"

"Ow!"

"The cheeky rotter!"

Johnny Bull groped for the tomato-tin, which he had kept at hand in case Bunter needed further urging. He whizzed it after the seniors' boat.

But that boat was pulling ahead, and the missile dropped astern and was wasted in the Thames.

"The terrific toad!" exclaimed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh indignantly.

Bob Cherry wriggled. The cane had landed on his legs with a terrific swipe.

"By gum!" said Bob. "If Loder fancies he can come the prefect in the hols, he's got another guess coming! If we come across him again——"

"All Bunter's fault!" growled Johnny Bull. "If he hadn't been creeping along like a snail that boat wouldn't have overhauled us! I've a jolly good mind to bang his head on the gunwale!"

"Beast!"

"Get going, or I jolly well will!" roared Johnny.

Billy Bunter had sat down in the stern. His idea seemed to be that his spell of towing was over. He had towed for about fifteen minutes—and it had been a long quarter of an hour to Bunter.

He gave Johnny an indignant blink.

"If you think I'm going to lug this boat all the way up to Oxford——" he roared.

"You're going to take it up to Windsor! Get going!"

"Shan't!"

Johnny Bull made a step towards Bunter. The swipe from Loder's stick had not sweetened Johnny's temper, or made him feel any more patient with the fat slacker of Greyfriars. The expression on Johnny's face as he stepped towards the fat Owl caused Billy Bunter to change his mind suddenly. He rose and grappled the towrope.

"All right!" he said bitterly. "I'll do all the work! Sit round and loaf! It makes me tired to look at such a lazy lot! Leave it all to me!"

Bunter stepped ashore again. With deep feelings, he towed the Water-Lily on.

The Famous Five looked ahead—rather hoping to get within range of Loder's boat again. That was a very vain hope. James Walker was not exerting himself unduly; but Loder's boat was simply walking away from the Water-Lily. There was not a remote chance of letting Loder have a tomato-tin or an orange in the back of his neck.

Bunter rolled on, like a tired snail.

"Look here!" said Bob Cherry, at last. "This is all rot! You can take a horse to water, but you can't make him drink! The same applies to donkeys! Nobody's ever been able to make Bunter work! Chuck it!"

"Rot!" said Johnny Bull.

"Well, let's camp while Bunter's towing!" suggested Bob sarcastically. "He will still be in sight when we break camp to-morrow."

Johnny Bull was about to reply, when suddenly he clapped his hand to his cheek and ejaculated:

"Ow!"

"What's up?" asked Bob.

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"Something stung me! Must have been a beastly insect of some sort!" Johnny rubbed his cheek, and grunted.

"Ow!" ejaculated Nugent, clapping a hand to his nose. "What was that?"

"You, too?" exclaimed Bob. "I can't see any insects about—Ow! Wow!" He gave a howl, and clapped a hand to his ear.

"What the dickens——" exclaimed Harry Wharton. He stared round, and his eyes fell on a boat farther out in the river, overtaking the Water-Lily. "Oh! Those Highcliffe cads! Pea-shooting!"

"The esteemed and execrable Pon!" exclaimed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Monson, of Highcliffe, glared at the Greyfriars crew. Their boat, which was also named the Water-Lily, was half the weight of the Greyfriars Water-Lily, or less; and it was not loaded, except with Pon & Co.

It was coming up under oars, rowed by Ponsonby and Gadsby. Monson had a pea-shooter to his mouth, and it was from him that the fusillade was coming.

"Those cads!" hooted Johnny Bull.

"Those Highcliffe rotters!" exclaimed Nugent. "Give them something back—ow! Ow! Ow!" A pea stung him under the eye and he yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came from the Highcliffe boat.

It shot on before the Greyfriars crew could retaliate. The Famous Five cast deadly glares after it. They had had ructions on the river with Pon & Co. already; but the enemy had not had the best of it hitherto. Now they had the advantage, pulling a light boat, while the well-laden Water-Lily rolled at the end of a towrope.

"Well, they're gone!" grunted Johnny Bull. "This is getting nice—first Loder and his gang, and then that lot! What shall we run up against next?"

"We shall run up against the bank if you don't keep the tiller steady!" suggested Bob.

"Oh rats!" Johnny gave attention to the lines again, however. And he gave Bunter a roar. "Buck up, you frowsting frog!"

"Yah!" came back over a fat shoulder.

Other craft were coming up. Everything under oars naturally passed a towed boat; but the Greyfriars crew did not want to spend the day ducking under towlines from towed craft. They were not in a hurry—but they wanted to move on. But Johnny Bull's idea of making Bunter work did not seem to be turning out very successfully.

The more Bunter worked, the less he liked it! The more efforts he made, the less he felt disposed to make efforts. He slowed and slowed.

"Do you want me behind you with that boathook?" roared Johnny.

"Beast!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" howled Bob Cherry. "Look out!"

The Highcliffe boat was not, after

all, gone! Pon & Co. seemed out for fun that afternoon. There were plenty of other craft on the river, and, among them, the Greyfriars crew had not noticed that Pon & Co. had dropped back.

Now the Highcliffe boat shot by again; and as it shot by, Monson raked the Water-Lily with peas from his shooter.

Taken by surprise, the Greyfriars crew had not time to return the fire with anything in the shape of a missile. The Highcliffe Water-Lily shot on out of range before they could get into action.

"Ha, ha, ha!" floated back from Pon & Co.

The Highcliffe trio seemed to be enjoying this! Bob Cherry breathed hard through his nose.

"By gum! Let them try that on again!" he said; and he sat with a potato from the potato-bag in his hand, ready!

But Pon & Co. did not try it on again! They did not expect to get away with it a third time! They pulled on, and disappeared among the numerous craft on the broad, shining bosom of the Thames.

"Buck up, Bunter!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Yah!"

"Give me that spud, Bob!"

"Here you are!"

Whiz!

"Yaroooooh!" came from Bunter, as the potato caught him under a fat ear.

He stumbled and sat down on the towpath! He sat and roared! The Water-Lily slowed to a halt. Five exasperated glares were turned on Billy Bunter.

"Are you getting on?" bawled Johnny Bull.

"I can't!"

"Why can't you?"

"I've sprained my ankle, falling over!" explained Bunter. "The agony is fearful. I can't take a step!"

The Famous Five looked at him.

"Which ankle?" asked Harry Wharton.

"I forget. I mean the right ankle!" said Bunter hastily. "I'm sorry! I was just settling down to it! I rather like towing! But it's impossible for me to get on now. If you fellows are too lazy to tow, you'd better shove the oars out and pull! I shall have to sit down."

Four members of the Co. laughed. They had not really expected Johnny Bull to get away with the super-human task of making Bunter work. Johnny was a determined fellow; but it was plain that he had met his Waterloo.

"All right!" said Johnny Bull. "We'll pull for a bit! You fellows don't mind a spell of pulling?"

"Not at all!"

"Throw in that rope, Bunter!"

Bunter grinned and threw in the rope. Then he rose to his feet to get on board—untroubled, apparently, by that sprained ankle!

But he did not get on board! Johnny Bull shoved off the bank with an oar, and the Water-Lily rocked out into the Thames.

Billy Bunter eyed that proceeding in surprise.

"Here, hold on!" he hooted. "I can't jump that! How am I to get in, you fathead?"

"You're not getting in!" answered Johnny coolly.

"What?" yelled Bunter.

"Good-bye!"

"Johnny, old man——" gasped Bob.

"You can shut up!" said Johnny. "You agreed to leave this to me! This is how I'm doing it! Pull!"

"But——" said Nugent.

"Did you agree to leave it to me or not?"

"Yes, but——"

"Then shut up!"

"I say, you fellows!" yelled Billy Bunter, in great dismay, as the space between the Water-Lily and the bank widened and widened. "I say——"

"Walk on to Boveney!" called out Johnny Bull.

"What?" yelled Bunter. "Why, it's miles and miles and miles."

"About two! Look out for us on the other side of the lock!"

"Beast!"

"Pull!" said Johnny Bull.

Four oars pulled. The crew of the Water-Lily had agreed to leave it to Johnny, and they left it. Johnny steered, with a grim face: his crew, with grinning faces, pulled; and Billy Bunter, left on the towpath, shook his fist and blinked after the disappearing boat, with a blink of concentrated fury that almost cracked his spectacles.

A Lift for Bunter

"Hi!" Billy Bunter did not give care.

He did not know that that "Hi!" was addressed to him; neither did he care.

Bunter was rolling slowly and sorrowfully up the bank of the Thames. The Greyfriars boat had long been out of sight.

At first Bunter had not quite been able to believe that those beasts, unlimited beasts as they were, were really going to leave him to walk—with a sprained ankle, too!

But he had to believe it when the Water-Lily vanished amid the crowd of craft on the sunlit Thames, and did not reappear.

Bunter walked—slowly, and with deep feelings. It was a hot August afternoon. He perspired as he walked, and smacked at flies that took a fancy to his fat little nose. It was at least two miles to Boveney Lock. Each mile contained eight furlongs; exactly eight too many for Bunter. Really, it would have been better for Bunter to have towed the Water-Lily on as far as Eton and Windsor, only a quarter of a mile from the spot where he had—or hadn't—sprained his ankle. He would have been let off at that! Now he had two miles to do on his fat little legs!

He plugged on past Windsor Bridge, plugging on dolefully to Clewer. He looked neither to the right nor the left—uninterested in scenery, not wasting a single glance on Eton College, oblivious of green

woods and blue skies and shining river. And when a small boat pulled near to the bank, and the man in it regarded him with curious attention, and finally hailed him, he gave no heed.

"Hi!" came again. "You with the gig-lamps!"

Bunter plugged on. Possibly he did not realise that his big spectacles struck an observer as bearing some resemblance to gig-lamps. The man in the dinghy, pulling slowly to keep pace with Bunter, shouted again.

"Hi! Fatty! Bladder of lard! Hi!"

Billy Bunter blinked round at him at last. He gave a glare. He realised at last that he was being addressed.

Then he came to a halt and fixed

Spooner, eyeing him from the boat. "I fancy I know you again. You was one of that lot."

Bunter's fat lip curled in a sneer.

"Looking for a chance to pinch the Water-Lily again!" he asked. "Yah! If there was a policeman about, I'd give you in charge."

"Where's your pals?" asked Mr. Spooner.

"Find out!"

Shifty Spooner, from the dinghy, eyed him. Shifty was not a scrupulous man, and in a quieter spot he would probably have proceeded to find out by stepping ashore and taking Billy Bunter by his fat neck. But on an August day up the river, there were rather too many people about for that sort of game.

Shifty, apparently, was on the

"Where's that going to be?" asked Mr. Spooner. "To tell you the truth, sir"—Mr. Spooner's manner was also growing more civil—"I jest want a word with young Mr. Wharton about that boat! Only just a civil word, sir! There was a bit of a misunderstanding that time I see him at his school—and a civil word will set it right."

"If that's all——" said Bunter, blinking at him.

"That's all, sir!"

"Well, look here, I'm getting tired of walking it," said Bunter. "If you like to give me a lift in that boat, I'll take you there."

Mr. Spooner did not wait for Bunter to say that twice! He pushed the dinghy close in.

"Jump in, sir!" he said.



As the Highcliffe boat shot by, Monson raked the Water-Lily with peas from his shooter!

his eyes, and spectacles, on the man in the boat.

He had seen that man before. He had seen him cutting across the quadrangle at Greyfriars School, with the Famous Five after him. He had glimpsed him once since, on a dark night. He knew who he was—the man named Spooner, who was called "Shifty" Spooner, who had once been the owner of the Water-Lily, and who had twice tried to pinch that boat since the Greyfriars fellows had had it on the Thames.

Bunter gave him a look of disdainful contempt. He had heard all about Mr. Spooner, who had pinched a tenner from Lord Mauleverer at Greyfriars. Mr. Spooner, who had only recently come out of the stone jug, had lost no time in qualifying for another spell of residence in that abode.

"Oh! You!" jeered Bunter. "Haven't you gone back to chokey yet?" This was tit for tat, for the "bladder of lard."

"You was one of them!" said Mr.

crack of the Water-Lily again. For whatever mysterious reason he wanted the boat that had once been his—in the days before he had gone to chokey—he was fearfully keen on it.

"Where did you pinch that dinghy?" went on Bunter. "I'll bet it doesn't belong to you."

That was probably a safe bet. It was very likely that that dinghy only belonged to Mr. Spooner by nine points of the law—possession!

"Pack it up, fatty!" snapped Mr. Spooner. "Look 'ere, ain't you along with that party now, or what?"

Billy Bunter blinked at him. Spooner evidently was anxious to pick up the Water-Lily again—obviously with the hope of pinching it. Having sighted Bunter, he hoped that he was on the track. It occurred to Billy Bunter's fat brain that this might be a rather useful meeting.

"I'm walking this bit," he said, a little more civilly. "I got tired of the boat! I'm joining them again later at their camp."

Bunter clambered in, and sat down in the stern seat. He sat down with the immense relief of a fellow who had walked half a mile!

Mr. Spooner pulled on.

Billy Bunter settled down comfortably. This was ever so much better than walking up to Boveney.

The Owl of the Remove was not bright—indeed, he was almost every known kind of an ass. But even Bunter was not ass enough to believe that Shifty Spooner only wanted to overhaul the Water-Lily for the sake of a civil word with young Mr. Wharton. Mr. Spooner wanted to spot the Greyfriars camp, with the idea of dropping in under cover of darkness and pinching the Greyfriars boat—and the fat Owl knew that, just as well as if Shifty had told him so.

But if Mr. Spooner liked to fancy that he had pulled the wool over his eyes, Mr. Spooner was welcome to indulge that fancy. Bunter was getting a lift up the river, which

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was all that Bunter cared about. Once past Boveney Lock, he was going to be done with Mr. Spooner!

Shifty could see, by looking at Bunter, that he was a fathead. Only one glance was needed for that. But he overlooked the fact that obtuseness is often accompanied by a vein of slyness. Shifty was not, as a matter of fact, making a fool of Bunter—Bunter was making a fool of Shifty!

"T'other side Boveney, I s'pose, sir?" said Shifty Spooner, as the dinghy drew on towards the lock.

"Right up to Taplow!" answered Bunter breezily.

Where the Greyfriars party were going to camp that evening, Billy Bunter had not the faintest idea. If he had known, he would not have told Mr. Spooner. But Bunter's fat brain was working now with great astuteness.

"I've got to ask the man at the lock!" he explained. "They're going to leave word for me there! You'll have to land me for a few minutes before we go through."

"All right!" said Mr. Spooner.

Billy Bunter contrived not to grin. He did not want to make Mr. Spooner suspicious.

Shifty was a good oarsman. He had good speed out of the dinghy. A little distance short of the lock Bunter signed to him to pull in. Shifty swerved to the bank and held on.

Bunter heaved up his weight. "I shan't be many minutes!" he said. "Wait till I come back."

"Right-ho!" said Mr. Spooner.

Bunter stepped out. He rolled away. There were a good many people on the bank, near the lock. Bunter disappeared among them.

Mr. Spooner waited.

He waited patiently at first. Then he waited impatiently. He was likely to grow very impatient indeed if he waited there till Bunter came back!

Bunter Is Not Tired!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, in surprise.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Bunter!"

"The esteemed Bunter!"

Above Boveney Lock the Water-Lily had tied up. It was tea-time, and the Famous Five had tea on the boat while they waited for Bunter.

They did not want to lose Bunter. Or, to be more exact, they did want to lose Bunter, but felt that they oughtn't! Bunter had been given a two-mile walk as the penalty for his slacking, and they hoped that the lesson would do him good. Johnny Bull felt sure of it. If it failed he was prepared to carry on the instruction.

But the chums of the Remove, of course, expected a long wait. If Bunter did two miles in two hours—or even in three—it would be something like a record for Bunter. They did not expect to see him by tea-time. They hardly expected to see him till the shades of night were

falling fast! And when they did see him they expected him to be crawling like a very tired slug, bowed down almost to earth with the awful exertion of walking two miles.

Instead of which—

Here was Bunter, much sooner than expected, and not looking a worn-out wreck at all! He rolled along cheerily as if he had sat down during that trip, instead of walking. He was blinking round for the boat! Beasts as they were, Bunter had no doubt that they would stop to pick him up again on the farther side of Boveney, and he was looking for them.

The fact was that Mr. Spooner, in his light dinghy, had covered the ground, or, rather, the water—very much faster than the Water-Lily. So Bunter, after all, was not far behind. Indeed, Mr. Spooner had settled down to wait for Bunter below the lock about the same time that the Famous Five had tied up for tea above the lock. Had Mr. Spooner gone through instead of waiting for Bunter, he would infallibly have spotted the Water-Lily.

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter waved a fat hand and blinked quite cheerily at the crew of the Water-Lily. "Waited long?"

"Not so long as we expected," said Bob, staring at him. "Are you still alive, Bunter, or is it your ghost?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Must be his ghost!" said Frank Nugent. "Bunter couldn't have walked two miles in the time and lived to tell the tale."

"Nearly dead, I suppose?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Eh? Think a couple of miles is anything to me?" asked Bunter, as he clambered in. "I was glad to stretch my legs a little. I enjoyed that walk."

"And you're not tired?" ejaculated the captain of the Remove.

Bunter sniffed contemptuously.

"You fellows might be tired after a spot of walking," he answered. "You're rather a soft lot. Tired!" Bunter laughed. "I just strolled it! Has it really taken you all this time to pull this little bit? Must be a slack lot! I say, pass the ham and eggs this way! I'm not tired, but I'm hungry!"

The Famous Five could only gaze at him. Bunter had, in fact, got tired over the half-mile he had done. But he had recovered during the other mile and a half in the dinghy. Now he was not tired at all. Walking past the lock had not tired even Billy Bunter.

It was really surprising. A mile was more than enough for Bunter. Two miles were more than enough to make him conk out. They had expected him to arrive almost crawling on his hands and knees. And here he was fresh as paint! It was really mysterious!

Tea over, the tea-things were packed up and the crew of the Water-Lily prepared to start again.

"So you're not tired?" asked Johnny Bull grimly.

Bunter gave a careless laugh.

"My dear chap, ten miles wouldn't

tire me! Two is merely a joke! Tired! He, he, he! Don't be funny!"

"All right. Then you can take your spot of towing!"

"Oh! I—I mean, I'm fearfully tired—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Worn out—tired to the bone!" said Bunter hastily. "I could hardly put one foot before another! Absolutely fagged!"

"Where's the boathook?" asked Johnny.

"Look here, if you think I'm going to tug this rotten boat all the way to Cricklade—" yelled Bunter.

"Here's the boathook!"

"I—I say, you fellows, I—I'd like to tow, but—but look here, hadn't we better put on a spot of speed? You don't want that man Spooner dropping in at our camp to-night?" urged Bunter.

"Spooner!" repeated the Famous Five.

"Yes. You know he's after this boat. Well, suppose he nosed out our camp, and got away with it?"

"Have you seen Spooner on the river?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Oh! No. But I—I shouldn't wonder if he's waiting just below the lock this very minute!" said Bunter.

"Better get clear off, I think. We don't want him spotting us and following us to our camp, and all that, like he did before."

"We don't, certainly!" said Harry Wharton, staring at the fat Owl. "If that rascal is after us again we'd rather give him a miss. But—"

"Gammon!" said Johnny Bull. "Get hold of that line, Bunter."

"I tell you he's waiting just below the lock!" roared Bunter. "He mayn't wait much longer, and when he comes through he will spot this boat. He will guess that I ain't coming back, and—"

"What the thump are you burbling about? Did you speak to him?"

"Oh, no! Not a word! I never told him I'd come back after speaking to the lock-keeper, or—or anything! In fact, I—I haven't seen him at all! Still, I shouldn't wonder if—if he's there!"

"You burbling bloater!" howled Bob Cherry. "What have you got to do with Spooner, and why did you tell him you were going back?"

"I—I didn't! Besides, he might have cut up rough if I hadn't," said Bunter. "He looks a beast, and I fancy he'd have been jolly shirty if he knew that I'd pulled his leg, you know."

"You pulled Spooner's leg?"

"Well, he fancied that I was going to take him to your camp!" chuckled Bunter. "That's why he gave me a lift in his boat, of course!"

"He gave you a lift in his boat!" roared Bob. "That's why you're not tired, is it?"

"Oh! No. I—I walked all the way up from Windsor. Every inch of it! I'm not tired because I'm so jolly fit, you know, not a frowsting slacker, like you fellows! I never told him I'd take him to your camp, and he never gave me a lift in his dinghy, and I never left him waiting below the lock for me to come back!

Nothing of the kind! I walked every inch—"

"We might have guessed that he'd pinched a lift from somebody, as he didn't crawl in on his hands and knees!" said Bob Cherry. "So the fat ass diddle Spooner out of a lift!"

Harry Wharton looked down the river towards the lock. There were almost innumerable craft on the water, and Spooner, in his dinghy, might have been among them, but the captain of the *Remove* could not pick him out. Probably he was still waiting below the lock for Bunter.

"I say, you fellows, better buck up!" said Bunter. "If we tow, that man Spooner will spot us, and we shall get woke up in the night with the beast coming after the boat. I—I'd tow you like—like anything, but I think we'd better keep clear of that villain Spooner."

"Kick him!" said Bob.

"Yaroooh!"

"We may as well keep clear of the man, if we can," said Harry Wharton. "There's a bit of a breeze coming up the river. Stick up the mast, and let's try the sail. We haven't sailed the *Water-Lily* yet, since the day we tried her at old Baker's place at Friardale."

"Good egg!"

Billy Bunter settled down on cushions. He did not care a bean whether the *Water-Lily* went by sail or by oars, or indeed, by towing, so long as he did not have to tow. The Famous Five stepped the mast, spread the sail, and picked up the breeze. The *Water-Lily* began to cover the water at a spanking rate.

"I say, you fellows, better keep on past Taplow!" said Billy Bunter.

"Why past Taplow, fathead?"

"Well, that man Spooner may have thought from something I said that we should be camping about Taplow," said Bunter. "Better cut on farther—see?"

"How many more lies did you tell him?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, if Spooner's going to hunt for us round Taplow, we'll run on past Cookham, and leave him to hunt," he said.

And the *Water-Lily* was still under sail and sweeping along as gracefully as a swan when the Greyfriars crew ran past Cliveden Woods, and left Cookham astern. How long Shifty Spooner was likely to wait for Bunter below Boveney Lock nobody knew; but when he came through at last and started looking for the *Water-Lily* in the region of Taplow, he was not likely to have much luck. Taplow was a good mile and a half astern of the *Water-Lily* when the breeze dropped and the sail was taken in, and the Greyfriars crew looked for a camp.

Sauce For The Gander!

"WALK?" said Billy Bunter.

He seemed unable to believe his fat ears.

Whatever Billy Bunter was going to do those hols, he was not going to walk, if he could help it.

It was the following day, after lunch. Having run on to Marlow in the morning, the Famous Five had tied up by the bridge, and were going for a walk. Round about Marlow and Cookham, and the ancient village of Cookham Dean, was some of the loveliest scenery of the Thames valley, and the Famous Five were not going to pass it by like the idle wind which they regarded not. There was going to be an afternoon's walk before they towed on up the Thames.

"Walk!" repeated Bunter.

He rejected the idea with scorn.

"Like to sit in the boat while we're gone?" asked Harry.

"If you mean that you want to leave me to mind the boat while you're amusing yourselves, all right," retorted Bunter. "It's the sort of thing I expect of you."

"Fathead!"

"Beast!"

"Come on," said Bob. "If you'd like to come, Bunter, we'll roll you along like a barrel, if you're too lazy to walk."

"Yah!"

Johnny Bull fixed a grim look on the fat Owl. Since his rather dubious success the previous day Johnny had said nothing more about making Bunter do any work. His chums concluded that he had given it up as a bad job.

But Johnny was a stickler. That morning the boat had been towed—not by Bunter. Once it had been rowed—not with an oar in Bunter's fat hands. Lunch had been prepared—not by Bunter. Bunter had devoured the lion's share—that was all he had had to do with the lunch.

"Wash up while we're gone, Bunter," said Johnny Bull, "and put the things away tidily."

Bunter looked at him witheringly.

"So that's the game, is it?" he asked, with deep scorn. "You're not only going to walk off and leave me to mind the boat, but you expect me to do all the work while you're gone. You can expect!"

"I shall expect!" said Johnny calmly. "You've done nothing since ten minutes' towing by the Home Park at Windsor yesterday. Now you're going to wash up. Let me find anything unwashed when we come back and I'll dip your head in the Thames!"

"Beast!"

And the Famous Five walked off, leaving Billy Bunter to go to sleep in the boat—and if he dreamed, not to dream of washing up.

"Trot through Marlow first," said Bob. "I want to do some shopping. I expect I can buy a pea-shooter in Marlow."

"What the dickens do you want a pea-shooter for?" asked Nugent.

"Next time we meet Pon & Co. on the river. Sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander," answered Bob.

And in Marlow Bob bought his pea-shooter and a supply of peas—ready for the next brush with the enemy on the river.

Then the juniors walked by country lanes, by hill and dale, strolled through the beautiful Quarry Woods, sauntered round the Swiss-like village of Cookham Dean, and

then, by devious way, walked back to Marlow. And, spotting a little red-tiled, rose-clad inn, with a sign creaking on the branch of a tree in front, they agreed unanimously that rest under that tree with ginger-beer by way of refreshment was the very best of good ideas.

So they sat down on the bench under the shady branches, and a plump waiter brought them ginger-beer, and they proceeded to dispose of the same with cheery satisfaction.

At a little distance from where they sat, was an open window, and from the sound of clicking that echoed therefrom they were aware that it opened from a billiards-room.

That did not interest them much, till suddenly a head appeared at the window and a hand with a cigarette in it knocking off the ash.

They stared at the head.

The fellow at the window, having knocked off the ash, turned back without glancing in their direction. He had not noticed the fellows sitting under the tree; but they had noticed Cecil Ponsonby of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe.

"Dear old Pon!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Blagging as usual," grunted Johnny Bull. "A quid on the game, I dare say. I suppose we can't go in and boot him?"

"Hardly!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Pon will keep."

Bob Cherry grinned and drew his pea-shooter from his pocket. And his comrades grinned as he quietly approached the open window where Pon's face had been seen.

Virginia creeper hung in masses all round that window, and it was easy for Bob to look in without revealing himself.

In the room were three fellows—Pon and Gadsby and Monson. A red-faced marker sat half asleep; but otherwise the Highcliffe trio had the room to themselves.

Ponsonby and Monson were playing; Gadsby leaning by the marking-board smoking. Pon was smoking, too, while he waited for Monson to finish a break.

"Rotten cloth!" Pon heard from Monson, as he stepped back, laid down his cue, and picked up a cigarette.

"I find it all right," grinned Pon. "You're clumsy, old bean! Get ready to cough up that quid."

Grunt, from Monson.

Pon leaned over the table to take his shot. As he did so he gave a sudden jump and a startled howl.

"Ow!"

"What on earth's up?" asked Gadsby, staring at him. Ponsonby clapped his hand to his nose.

"Somethin' stung me!" snarled Pon. "Gad! It felt like a wasp! Ow! Is my nose marked?"

"Can't see anything."

Pon waved his cue in the air to drive away that wasp, or whatever it was. Then he leaned over to take aim again.

"Yoo-hoop!" he howled suddenly, and his cue clattered on the cloth as he clapped his hand to his ear.

"What the thump—"

"Ow! I'm stung!" howled Pon. "Stung in my ear!"

"What rot!" said Monson. "I can't see any wasp. No insects in the room at all that I can see. I—Yaroooooh!"

Monson jumped almost clear of the floor as a sudden sting came on his chin. He clasped his chin and rubbed it.

"You got it, too?" jeered Pon. "Serve you jolly well right!"

"Blessed if I can see—" began Gadsby, and he broke off with a howl. "Ow! What's that? Ow! My ear!"

"Oh!" roared Pon. "Oooh!" He dabbed his nose and then his neck. "I'm not standin' this! They've no right to have the place full of insects. Here, marker, get up, and wave somethin' about, and clear off those insects."

The sleepy marker blinked at him. "I don't see—" he began.

"Oh crikey!" howled Monson, as a sting came in the middle of his features. "Oh! Ow! That was a mosquito—"

"Ooooooogh!" spluttered Gadsby.

"Oh gad!" howled Ponsonby. "There it is in my ear again! Oooooogh!"

The Highcliffe nuts forgot billiards. Ponsonby and Monson waved their cues about to drive off those troublesome insects—Gadsby brandished a straw hat. There was a sudden yell of laughter from the open window.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Pon & Co. spun round. They stared and glared at Bob Cherry, with a pea-shooter in his hand, and behind him four laughing faces.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Greyfriars juniors.

"Those Geryfriars cads—pea-shooting!" yelled Ponsonby.

"Sauce for the gander, old bean!" chortled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ponsonby, with a furious face, gripped his cue and rushed to the window. Five fellows backed, laughing, out of reach as the butt of the cue lashed out of the window in Pon's furious hand.

Bob Cherry clapped the pea-shooter to his mouth again. As Pon leaned out, cue in hand, he let him have a whizzing volley. Peas spattered all over Pon's enraged face—and he popped back from the window with a howl of rage.

"Happy meeting!" grinned Bob Cherry, as he slipped his shooter into his pocket. "Dear old Pon looked quite shirty! It's more amusing to be the shooter than the shootee, my beloved 'carers."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Famous Five, chuckling, resumed their walk back to Marlow, quite pleased with that lucky meeting, and with having given Pon & Co. some of the same.

Not A Winner!

"WASHED up?"

"Yes!" said Billy Bunter, with dignity.

"You've washed up!" ejaculated

Bob Cherry. "Then that's not you—that's your ghost! If you've done a spot of work, you're dead—you could never have survived it! Avaunt!"

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

"You silly ass!" howled Bunter.

If it was Bunter's ghost, it was a very substantial spectre, and it had been eating jam! On the other hand, it seemed improbable that, if Billy Bunter really had done some work, he lived to tell the tale!

"Well, if you've washed up, all right!" said Johnny Bull. "But I'll look—"

"I hope you can take my word, Bull!"

"I don't think!"

"It's no good looking for the things," said Bunter, as Johnny was about to open the hamper in which the campers parked the crocks. "I—I washed them up on the bank, and—and just as I'd finished, a—a tramp came along and stole them."

"What?" roared the Famous Five.

"It's no good yelling at me!" said Bunter peevishly. "He was too big for me to handle, or, of course, I'd have knocked him down! He pinched the lot."

"He pinched the crockery!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Yes—everything we'd used at lunch—plates, knives, forks—the whole lot!" said Bunter. "Just after I'd washed them up."

"You bloated bloater!" roared Johnny Bull. "What have you done with them?"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Has he parked them out of sight, so that we shan't see that they're not washed?" asked Nugent.

"I've told you that a tramp pinched the lot—" roared Bunter.

"All right!" said Johnny Bull. "A tramp pinched the lot, did he? Then we'll walk straight to the police station in Marlow to give a description of that tramp!"

"Oh! I—I never noticed what he looked like!" gasped Bunter. "I—I mean, it—it wasn't a tramp at all! It was that man Spooner."

"Spooner!" shrieked Bob Cherry.

"Yes—he found the boat here, and I—I drove him off!" explained Bunter. "He was going to pinch the boat, like he tried to do before, but I—I drove him off with—with an oar! I—I fought like a lion! And—and then, he—he bagged all the crocks, and walked them off, just—just out of revenge, you know."

"Where are they?" roared Johnny Bull.

"I've told you that a tramp—I mean, that man Shifty Spooner—walked them off!" roared back Bunter. "Not my fault—you shouldn't clear off and leave a fellow in the lurch—"

"What on earth has he done with them?" asked Bob. "Has he chucked them away, to save the trouble of washing them up?"

"Oh, really, Cherry! That man Spooner—"

"Why, there they are!" yelled Johnny Bull. He pointed to the shallow water between the boat and the bank.

Glimmering under two feet of water, plates and dishes and cutlery could be seen! The Famous Five gathered to stare at them. So did Bunter! But it seemed that, though plain to the view of the five, they were invisible to the short-sighted Owl!

"I—I say, you fellows, they—they ain't there!" gasped Bunter. "I—I can't see them! I expect you can see fishes, or—or something!"

"So Spooner walked them off—and I suppose they swam back?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I mean—" Bunter realised that the missing crocks were in view, and from the bottom of his fat heart he wished that he had taken the trouble to pitch them out into the river, instead of just dropping them in. "I—I mean—it was that Highcliffe lot—"

"That Highcliffe lot?" said Bob Cherry dazedly.

"Yes—Pon's gang—they—they came along just after I had washed up, and—and chucked the whole lot into the water!" gasped Bunter.

"Ye gods!"

"I couldn't stop them—the three of them, you know! I couldn't handle more than two of them at once!" explained Bunter.

"You couldn't handle half a one of them, you fat scoundrel!" said Bob. "We met Pon & Co. a mile from here, and left them there—"

"Oh! I—I mean—"

"Well, what do you mean?"

"It—it wasn't the Highcliffe lot! I—I wonder what made me say Pon and his lot?" gasped Bunter. "It was Loder—"

"Loder!" yelled the Famous Five.

"Yes—he—he came up in his boat, you know, and—and chucked all those crocks into the river, because you cheeked him yesterday," stammered Bunter. "I—I couldn't stop him! I—I'd have knocked down Hilton and Price, but—but Loder's a prefect, you know."

The Famous Five regarded Bunter with a fixed gaze.

They were not distrustful or suspicious fellows. But really they could not swallow any of Bunter's varied yarns—and more especially, they could not swallow all of them!

"Well!" said Bob, with a deep breath. "Ain't he the limit?"

"If you fellows think I chucked those crocks away to save washing them up, I can only say—Leggo my neck, Bull, you beast!"

Johnny Bull did not let go Bunter's neck. He jerked him to the gunwale.

"Get those crocks out!" he said grimly.

"How can I get them out?" howled Bunter. "I should get wet."

"You should have thought of that before you chucked them in. Get going!"

"Leggo!"

"Going?" hooted Johnny Bull.

"No!" roared Bunter.

"You jolly well are!"

Splash! Bunter jolly well did! There was almost a waterspout as



"Ow!" gasped Ponsonby, in the billiards-room, dropping his cue suddenly, "Somethin' stung me!"

the fattest figure in the Thames valley landed in the water.

"Yurrgh! Groooogh! Ooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A fat hand clutched the gunwale. A wet face, and streaming spectacles, blinked into the boat. Bunter stood up to his fat waist in water.

"Urrgh! I say, you fellows, I'm wet!" roared Bunter.

"Is the Thames wet?" asked Bob.

"Eh? You silly idiot! Yes, of course it is!"

"Then keep out of it another time!" advised Bob. "Collect the crocks, old fat bean, now you've gone in for them."

"I haven't!" yelled Bunter.

"You have!" said Johnny Bull. "You're not coming back into this boat till you've handed every one of them in."

"Beast!" shrieked Bunter. "I shall catch cold."

"Then the sooner you get going, the better!"

"I say, you fellows, I dropped them in by accident—entirely by accident," wailed Bunter. "I never did it to save washing up! I—I was lifting them into the boat, and—and my foot slipped, and—and they dropped in—"

"Was that before or after the tramp and Spooner walked off with them, and Pon & Co. chucked them in, and Loder chucked them in?" asked Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm coming into that boat!" shrieked Bunter.

"Do!" said Johnny Bull, picking up the boathook. "You'll be glad to get out again!"

"Beast!"

"Better get going!" chuckled Bob.

"No good standing there like Venus rising from the waves, old fat man—you don't look a bit like Venus."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter gave the boat's crew a deadly glare through his big spectacles. His deadliest glare was bestowed on Johnny Bull—and the boathook! Then he stooped and groped.

It was not easy work, groping in two feet of water after the crockeries, the knives, and the forks. It was ever so much harder a task than washing them up would have been. But it was not the first time that Billy Bunter had found it harder to dodge work than to get it done.

That brilliant idea of dropping the crocks overboard to save the trouble of washing them up was evidently not a winner! If the Famous Five had believed that a tramp had walked off with them it would have been all right! But they hadn't—especially with the crocks lying there under their noses!

Bunter fished up plate after plate, dish after dish, knife and fork after knife and fork. He splashed, he gasped, he gurgled, he groped; he gave the fellows in the boat the deadliest blinks; but it had to be done, and Bunter did it. He was kept busy for quite a long time, but not till the last article had been groped for and found was the hapless fisherman allowed to crawl back—dripping—into the Water-Lily.

For the next half-hour Bunter was busy towelling and changing. And it seemed probable that whatever might be Bunter's next dodge for eluding his turn at washing up, he would not drop property overboard. Once was enough for Bunter—he did

not want to go fishing for crocks in the Thames any more.

Quite a Pound's Worth!

"WHAT a topping spot to camp!" said Bob Cherry. "Tip-top!" said Harry Wharton. "But—"

"The topfulness is terrific; but the butfulness is also great!" grinned the Nabob of Bhanipur.

The towpath was on the Berkshire side; but it was at the Buckinghamshire side that the crew of the Water-Lily were gazing. There was a breath of wind on the river, and they had the sail up—gliding along at an extremely leisurely pace—about as fast as if Bunter had been towing—and looking for a spot to camp as they glided.

The Bucks shore was very inviting—and the special spot upon which they now fixed their eyes was very attractive indeed.

A delightful little backwater gleamed under shady branches. Looking into it they could see green trim lawns on either side. In the distance was a house almost hidden by trees. The crew of the Water-Lily gazed at that delightful scene with longing eyes. No tripper on the Thames could ever have desired a more attractive spot for a camp.

But it was evidently private property, and it was doubtful, to say the least, whether the owner of that property would have welcomed campers if asked in the most polite manner.

Across the mouth of the glimmering backwater was a heavy iron chain. It would have been easy to

lift it, and pass under. But on the bank, prominent among greenery, a blot on the landscape, was a board, bearing the words so familiar to sojourners in the Thames valley:

**"TRESPASSERS WILL BE
PROSECUTED!"**

And this particular board bore a further inscription, in order to leave no doubt on the subject:

**"WITH THE UTMOST RIGOUR
OF THE LAW!"**

So the Famous Five gazed, rather like a quintet of Peris at the gate of Paradise, but did not think of landing.

But as a young man was sitting in a canoe tied up to the bank, just by the opening of the backwater, they glanced at him.

If he belonged to the place, and if he was the sort of chap who was hospitable to campers, they were not unwilling to catch his eye.

"I say, you fellows, that's a topping place!" Billy Bunter turned his spectacles on it. Ever since he had done that fibbing act, Bunter had been grumpy and grouchy. But the prospect of landing for supper cheered him. "I say, let's get off there, shall we?"

"Trespassers will be prosecuted, old fat bean!" said Bob.

"Rot!" grunted Bunter. "These hogs oughtn't to be allowed to grab the river banks and make out they're private property. Might as well grab the seashore and say it's private property. They'll be grabbing the air next, and charging us for breathing it."

"True, O king!" said Bob. "But that chain, and that board, don't look as if they want visitors. Must push on."

The young man in the canoe glanced round at the Water-Lily as it surged slowly by. He was smoking a cigarette, and reading a newspaper which the juniors noticed was the "Racing Record." He was apparently a young man interested in geegees. He was rather well-dressed, and had an eyeglass in his right eye. He scanned the party in the Water-Lily, with the aid of that eyeglass.

"Lovely afternoon," he remarked pleasantly, as the Water-Lily drifted slowly by his canoe.

"Topping!" answered Bob Cherry. "Camping out?" added the young man.

"Looking for a camp now?"

"Then I shouldn't wonder if we can do business," said the young man in the canoe. He laughed. "You wouldn't guess that I was sitting here waiting for custom, would you? But that's the size of it."

"Oh!" said Harry Wharton. "Is that your place?"

"Exactly—if I can call it mine, now I've let it. These are hard times, my young friend," said the young man in the eyeglass. "We have to make a little where and how we can. I'd be glad to give you free leave to camp for nothing—I've done

it often enough, in more prosperous days; but times change."

The crew of the Water-Lily exchanged glances. They were quite willing to pay for the privilege of camping, if the amount was reasonable. It was worth something to camp in that delightful spot, and if they hired it they would have it to themselves with no danger of being crowded by other parties. And they had been looking for a camp for a long time now, without spotting a suitable spot. This looked like a happy chance.

They dropped the sail and held on to the tied canoe. They were more than ready to talk business.

"I hate to mention it," said the young man in the eyeglass apologetically, "but things being as they are financially, I make a regular thing in the summer of letting this place to camping parties, and I shall have to ask you to pay if you land here. You see, it's business with me."

"We quite understand," said Harry Wharton. "We're quite willing to pay for camping; it's only reasonable. May I ask the figure?"

"A pound!" said the young man in the eyeglass.

"Oh!"

"I hope you don't think it's too much," said the young man, "but you can guess that with the rates on the house it doesn't leave a lot over, even if I get a camping party every day—which, of course, only happens in August. I've sometimes sat here for three or four evenings without picking up business. I don't exactly like to put up a sign, you know—"

"O.K.!" said Harry Wharton. "A pound did, in fact, seem a little steep for permission to camp; but there were five fellows to whack it out. We'll be jolly glad to land here, Mr.—"

"Egerton!" said the young man. "The place is called Egerton Lawn. You won't mind keeping clear of the house—I've let that to a party for the week; but it's understood that I reserve the garden this side of the trees for letting to campers. Keep this side of that row of yews, and you'll be all right."

"Right as rain!" said Bob.

The Water-Lily nosed in to the bank.

The young man in the canoe slipped his newspaper into his pocket.

"I'm sure you'll excuse me if I mention that it's money down," he remarked. "Don't think I don't trust you—I can see that you're a decent lot—but in the way of business, you understand—"

"That's all right!"

Harry Wharton sorted out a pound note and passed it to the young man in the canoe.

"Thank you very much!" said Mr. Egerton. "I hope you'll find yourself quite comfortable here—and, maybe you'll call again another time if you're satisfied. You might mention the place to any friends of yours who use the river."

"Certainly," said Harry.

The young man untied his canoe.

Having done the business for which he had been waiting, he was evidently going. He raised a straw hat politely to the Greyfriars crew, and paddled away.

"Decent sort of chap!" said Bob Cherry. "Come down in the world, I suppose—lots of people like that these days."

"Well, it's one way of making a living if a man happens to own riverside property," said Harry. "I think we're rather in luck. A pound is a bit steep—but it's a lovely spot. We're getting a pound's worth."

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

Bob Cherry leaned over and grasped the chain and lifted it. With the mast down, the Water-Lily glided under the chain and pushed into the backwater. Under a big chestnut-tree that grew close by the water the juniors stopped and tied on to a post.

Even Billy Bunter gave a grunt of satisfaction when they landed. Nothing could have been pleasanter than the green, soft lawn sloping down to the water, shaded by trees, almost barred off from the house in the distance by a row of ancient yews.

The stove, the crocks, and the provisions were sorted out. All the crew were ready for supper—especially Billy Bunter. A savoury smell of cooking soon mingled with the scent of flowers from the garden.

The Greyfriars fellows ate their supper and enjoyed it. Then they sat resting and chatting in cheery mood, before putting up the tent. It was very agreeable to sit there after a solid supper and watch the river in the gorgeous sunset, and the various craft gliding by.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry, as a sound of footsteps fell on his ears. "Here comes somebody down from the house."

The juniors glanced round.

A fellow smoking a cigarette came through the yews. They stared at that fellow.

They had almost forgotten the existence of Loder of the Sixth. Now they were reminded of it! For the fellow who came through the yews was Gerald Loder!

Loder Begs For It!

LODER was walking with his hands in his pockets, the cigarette in his mouth, and was not looking towards the Greyfriars camp. It was clear that he did not know that the juniors were there.

They all gazed at him in surprise.

The young man in the eyeglass had told them that he had let his riverside house to a party for the week. Certainly it had not occurred to the juniors that that party was Loder's party. But it seemed that it was—from the sight of Gerald Loder strolling and smoking in the garden.

"Well, my hat!" murmured Bob. "Fancy meeting that lot here!"

Johnny Bull's face set grimly. Johnny remembered the swipe that had landed on his shoulders the previous day. Wharton and Bob had similar recollections.

"That cheeky bully!" grunted Johnny. "What about up-ending him into the water?"

"Good egg!" said Bob.

"Well, it would serve him right!" said Harry slowly. "But we don't want a row here, old beans. Better keep the peace, I think—if Loder steers clear."

Grunt from Johnny Bull. He was not much disposed to keep the peace with the bully of the Greyfriars Sixth, who had swiped him in the boat. However, he acquiesced.

"Rotten, that crew being here," said Frank Nugent. "Can't be helped—we can keep clear of them! This side of that row of yews belongs to us, so long as we camp here—from what the man Egerton said."

"Loder's trespassing!" grinned Bob.

"We'll tell him so, if he starts trouble!"

The juniors watched Gerald Loder curiously. He had not observed them yet. He was sauntering down to the bank of the little backwater, a short distance away, and not till he turned his head was he likely to see their camp.

He reached the bank and turned—and saw them! Blank surprise was written on his face at the sight of them. He stared in angry astonishment. Then he came along the bank with a quick stride.

"You cheeky young rascals!" he exclaimed. "Do you mean to say that you've had the neck to camp here?"

"Sort of!" assented Bob.

"You've camped here!" exclaimed Loder, as if he could hardly believe it. "You've pushed past that chain, on to private property!"

"Why not?"

"Why not?" repeated Loder. "If I had a stick with me, I'd pretty soon show you why not! Get out of it! You're the cheekiest crew at Greyfriars—but I never fancied you'd have a neck like this."

"The neckfulness is not terrific, my esteemed Loder!" remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur. "We have a preposterous right to camp here."

"Don't give me any lip! Pack up and go!" snapped Loder.

Harry Wharton laughed. He was not likely to take any heed of such an order, after paying cash down for permission to camp.

"Think again, Loder!" he suggested.

"Do you mean to say that you won't go?" roared Loder.

"Yes; I mean exactly that!" assented the captain of the Remove. "Like your cheek to ask us, I think. Do you fancy that you can come the prefect in the hols, the same as at school? Think again!"

"You can't!" said Johnny Bull.

"You can go and eat coke, Loder!"

"What?" roared Loder.

"Coke!" said Johnny.

"You're on private property here!" yelled Loder.

"Yes, we know all that."

Loder of the Sixth stared at them. He was angry; but he seemed as much astonished as angry; the juniors did not know why. If he was

astonished at their disregarding the fact that he was a prefect at school, he could be as astonished as he liked! Nobody cared.

"Don't play the goat, Loder!" said Frank Nugent. "There's no need to row! You and your party are at that house, I suppose! Well, you keep to the other side of that row of yews, and we'll keep to this side, and it will be all right."

"Keep to the other side of that row of yews!" stuttered Loder. "Are you mad, or what? Why should I?"

"Do you want the whole place?" asked Bob.

"Eh? Of course I want the whole place! What do you mean, you cheeky young idiot?"

"I say, what a greedy pig!" said Billy Bunter, with a scornful blink at Loder through his big spectacles. "I say, fancy the greedy pig wanting the whole place! Yah!"

Loder came nearer to the camp. His look was so dangerous that the Famous Five rose to their feet.

They were ready to overlook what had happened in the boats the day before, for the sake of peace. But if Loder was determined on hostilities, they were ready to give him all he wanted, and a little over.

Bunter sat where he was. Bunter was not disposed for a scrap, after the supper he had packed away. He was more than willing to leave that to the Famous Five! He contented himself with blinking scorn at Loder—a greedy pig, in Bunter's opinion, for wanting the whole place.

"I've had enough of this!" said Loder, between his teeth. "I can't quite understand this dashed impudence, cheeky gang as you are! But I've had enough of it—get out!"

"Rats!"

"The ratfulness is terrific."

"If I'd brought a stick with me, I'd thrash the lot of you before you go!" roared Loder. "I'll use my boots on you if you don't pack into that boat this minute!"

"Two can play at that game!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Kick off, old bean, and we'll play up!"

"Get on that boat!" bawled Loder.

"Bow-wow!"

"I'll chuck you on it then, one after another!"

"Go it!" said Bob, grinning. "You're biting off a lot, Loder—more than you can chew, I fancy! But go it!"

Loder went it! He was plainly in a towering rage, not only at the defiance of the juniors, but at finding them there at all. That, in the opinion of the Removites, was sheer cheek!

If he had hired the riverside villa, as seemed to be the case, they had hired the camping ground; and the idea of abandoning what they had paid for was hardly to be entertained. A whole army of Loders would not have made them abandon their rights. If Loder insisted on trouble, he could have it.

And he did! He rushed at Harry Wharton and grasped him, to begin by chucking the captain of the Remove into the Water-Lily.

Wharton gave grasp for grasp.

And his comrades rushed at once to his aid! Loder spun him towards the water—but he had not covered a yard, when he was stopped by the clutch of many hands.

Loder went headlong over, bumping on the greensward. He roared with fury as he bumped.

For two or three minutes there was a terrific struggle on the bank of that little backwater of the Thames. Then Loder was flattened out, face-down in the grass, and Bob Cherry sat on his shoulders and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh stood on his legs, and Frank Nugent held him down by the ears.

One by one, the Sixth Form man certainly could have dealt with the juniors. But they were not likely to let him deal with them one by one! In bulk, they were too many for the bully of the Sixth.

"Keep him there!" said Johnny Bull, grimly. "Wait till I get a stick out of the boat! He landed three swipes yesterday—I'm going to hand them back, as he asks for it."

Loder roared.

"If you dare——"

"You'll see in a minute!" said Johnny Bull.

He jumped into the Water-Lily. Loder struggled and heaved; but he was safely pinned. Johnny came back with a stick.

The Famous Five had been prepared to forget, if not forgive, those swipes in the boat, to keep the peace. Loder insisted on war; so he was getting his swipes back! All the Co. agreed with Johnny.

"Keep clear, you fellows!" said Johnny, as he swung up the stick.

Swipe!

The yell that Loder gave, as the swipe descended on his trousers, rang over the Thames.

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter. "I say, you fellows, give him six! Loder gives fellows six at school! Give him six! He, he, he!"

Swipe!

Loder roared and heaved and rocked. But he was jammed down, his furious face buried in grass-roots.

Swipe!

Wild and frantic splutters came from Loder, as he chewed grass. He wriggled and writhed and kicked and squirmed.

"That's the three!" said Johnny. "Returned with thanks, Loder!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now let him rip!"

Gerald Loder was released. He staggered to his feet in a wildly dishevelled and untidy state, ruffled and tumbled, panting with rage.

He glared at the Famous Five. A Red Indian on the warpath had nothing on Loder for ferocity at that moment.

Evidently he could barely restrain himself from rushing at the juniors, hitting out right and left. They faced him coolly, quite prepared to stop a rush and give Loder some more, if he wanted more.

But Loder did restrain his fury. He did not want to be upended again and sample a few more swipes! Three seemed to be enough for him.

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Harry Wharton pointed to the rows of yews across the garden, a dozen yards from the bank of the backwater.

"Get going!" he said. "Don't come this side of those yews again, Loder. We're fed up with you; and if you trespass here again, you'll get ducked! That's a tip! Now clear!"

"Hook it!" snapped Johnny Bull.

Loder gurgled with fury.

"You—you wait a few minutes!" he panted. "Wait till I come back with the others—just wait! I'll thrash you all round and throw your rubbish into the river! Just wait a minute or two—"

He rushed away, spluttering fury, and disappeared past the yews.

An Advance In Force!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. stood looking after Loder till he had disappeared. Then they looked at one another.

Billy Bunter, with an effort, heaved up his weight.

"I say, you fellows, I think I'll get on the boat!" he remarked.

Bunter was not willing to move after supper. He had intended to sit at ease while the other fellows put up the tent and then crawl to repose. But Loder's threat of coming back with the others spurred Bunter on to make a reluctant effort. The boat seemed rather preferable to the shore if wild and whirling hostilities were going on.

"Well, this is rather a go!" remarked Bob Cherry. "Think Loder's pals will back him up in trying to shift us?"

"We're not shifting!" said Johnny Bull, in a deep growl.

"No fear! But if we've got four seniors to handle, we've got a big order on hand!" said Bob.

Harry Wharton knitted his brows.

The Famous Five were all fighting-men; and they were full of pluck. And they were quite determined not to be driven out of their camp. But it was no use supposing that they could stand up in battle to four big seniors—they couldn't.

If Walker, Hilton, and Price backed up Loder in that lawless attempt to drive them off, the outlook was serious.

"One thing's settled," said Harry. "We're not going! I hardly think Loder's friends will back him up in such a thing! It's sheer hooliganism. We've as much right here as they have—they've hired the house, and we've hired this part of the grounds. Egerton put that quite clear—all on this side of the yews is ours."

"The clearfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "But the esteemed Egerton is not here now to interfere, and—"

"The fact is, they'd be too tough for us!" said Bob. "Remove can't scrap with Fifth and Sixth. But we're not going."

"We're not! I can't think they'll go to extremes," said Harry. "We could call in a policeman to stop them—if there were one within a mile—but we've got to stand up for ourselves! We're going to. If that bully

takes the law into his own hands, we're standing our ground."

"Hear, hear!"

"Get on the boat till we see how it's going to turn out!" said the captain of the Remove. "We couldn't stop a rush here—but we can keep them off the boat if they try to get at us."

"Good egg!" agreed Bob.

Some of the camping paraphernalia had been landed. The juniors tossed it back into the Water-Lily and went on board, untying the painter.

They punted across the little backwater, leaving a space of six or seven feet of water between the boat and the bank. The Water-Lily was tied up to a branch that jutted overhead from the big chestnut-tree.

In that position, the campers were well placed to resist an attack in force, if it came.

But they could hardly believe that Loder's friends would back him up in such an utterly lawless proceeding. Loder was frantic with rage, and likely to stop at nothing—but it was probable that Walker, Hilton, and Price would have cooler heads. It was true that there was no help at hand—no one to intervene—but something, surely, was due to law and order.

Anyhow, the Famous Five were standing up for their rights to the last shot in the locker. Not so long as they could resist was the bully of the Sixth going to turn them out of their camp.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here they come!" said Bob, at last.

From the direction of the distant house, four figures came in sight. Gerald Loder was in the lead, with a big, thick stick in his hand. Walker, Hilton, and Price followed him, each of them armed with a walking-cane.

Obviously, it was a war-party! Loder, Walker, and Price were looking fierce; only Hilton had an expression of faint amusement on his face.

"That looks like business!" said Bob.

"Oh crikey!" said Billy Bunter. He blinked over the gunwale at the advancing party, in alarm. "I—I say, you fellows, think we'd better go?"

"Fathead!"

"Well, look here, there's four of them, all tremendous big chaps!" said the fat Owl. "You can't handle them!"

"We'll try!" said Harry.

"Get hold of something, you fat ass, and back up!" growled Johnny Bull. "Are you going to leave it all to us?"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Shut up, anyhow!"

"Beast! I say, you fellows, Loder



"Don't give me any lip!" snapped Loder. "I

and Walker are prefects, after all," said Bunter uneasily. "And—and—and I don't like the look of those sticks they've got in their paws."

"You'll like them still less if they get to close quarters," said Bob cheerily. "Better lend a hand keeping them off."

"Well, I don't see how we're going to keep them off!" said Bunter. "I think we'd better push o t, before they get here. What do you fellows think?"

"I think you're a funky fat toad!" answered Bob.

"I think I'll bump you over if you don't shut up!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

Nobody but Bunter was thinking of retreat—formidable as the enemy looked. And retreat was impossible for the fat Owl, unless he took to the water! Billy Bunter had to make up his fat mind to it.

Loder & Co. arrived on the bank.

Loder, clearly, was disappointed at finding the campers out of his reach. He halted on the bank and stared across at the boat, scowling.

Bob Cherry sorted out his peashooter and a supply of peas. But he held his fire for the present. The juniors were not going to begin hostilities.

"So you're not gone!" hooted Loder.

"The gonefulness is not terrific, my esteemed bullying Loder!" sneered the Naob of Bhanipur.

"Dashed if I ever heard of such cheek!" said Price of the Fifth. "You fags mean to say that you're sticking here, after Loder's ordered you to go?"

"Loder can order us to go till he's



"Pack up and go!" Harry Wharton & Co. merely
ughed.

black in the face, answered Harry Wharton. "It won't make any difference."

"Well, that takes the biscuit!" said Walker. "Of all the nerve—"

"I'll give them something to cure all that!" said Loder, between his teeth.

"Look here, you kids!" drawled Cedric Hilton. "You can't do this sort of thing, you know. You really can't."

"Guess again!" said Bob.

"Not that they're doin' any great harm, Loder," added Hilton. "Why not let them camp here for the night?"

"Don't be a fool!"

"Oh! Thanks!" yawned Hilton.

"I've given them a chance to go, and they've refused, and they've handled me!" roared Loder. "Think I'm letting them stop after that? I'm going to thrash them all round, pitch their rubbish in the Thames, and clear them off!"

"We shall be here while you're doing it!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Jump on board!" invited Bob Cherry.

Loder did not seem disposed to jump across six feet of water from the bank. And the water, though not deep, was rather too deep for wading with comfort.

"Hadn't you better chuck it?" suggested Harry Wharton. "We're going to keep our own ground—"

"Your own ground?" asked Hilton, raising his eyebrows.

"Yes—this side of the yews. You men can have the other side! Why not steer clear of one another?"

"You cheeky young cad!" exclaimed Price.

"You can shut up, Pricey!" said Bob. "Nobody wants to hear from you."

"Are you afraid that we shall wander round and see your little games, and mention it next term at Greyfriars?" inquired Johnny Bull sarcastically. "What are you up to here, you measly crew of blackguards—banker, nap, or bridge, along with the smokes?"

Price gave him an evil look, and Hilton laughed. There was no doubt that Johnny's surmise was correct; any holiday party led by Gerald Loder was fairly certain to be of a rorty variety.

Loder seemed at a loss for a few minutes, now that the campers were on board the Water-Lily and out of immediate reach. He glanced round him, apparently for a missile. A wooden tent-peg, overlooked by the campers, lay in the grass. Loder grabbed it up.

Whiz!

Five fellows promptly dodged the missile. It dropped into the boat—on a head that was ducked below the gunwale. Billy Bunter was in what cover he could

get! It did not save him from a tent-peg dropping on him.

"Yaroooh!"

Bunter roared and bounded.

Johnny Bull picked up that tent-peg! He whizzed it back at Loder, and caught him under the chin.

Loder's roar came like an echo of Bunter's.

"Go it, you men!" roared Bob. "They've started—we carry on! Pile in!"

He started with the pea-shooter. Loder, rubbing his chin, started rubbing his nose, too, as a pea stung on it. Then he jumped back and backed out of range, spluttering with rage, peas from the shooter stinging him right and left as he retreated.

The other fellows joined in at once. An orange from Nugent's hand caught Price in the eye—and Price did not back away—he ran! A tomato from Johnny Bull squashed in Walker's neck, and Walker roared and jumped away. A tent-peg knocked Hilton's straw hat off!

The dandy of the Fifth stooped, picked up his hat, and bowed politely.

"Thanks!" he drawled.

Then he put on his hat and sauntered after his friends, in quite a leisurely way, leaving the crew of the Water-Lily laughing, and refraining from letting him have any more as he went.

"First round to us!" said Bob.

And the crew of the Water-Lily waited for the second round.

The Battle of the Backwater!

LODER & CO. stopped at a little distance, out of effective range, and the juniors watched them in angry and excited consultation.

Loder's face was red with rage, Price and Walker looked savagely angry; only Hilton was smiling, as if looking on the whole affair as more or less of a joke.

The juniors could not hear what was said, but they gathered, from the enemy's looks and gestures, that Hilton was on the side of peace, and was being savagely snapped at by the others. The slacking dandy of the Fifth was no man of war, though, from what the juniors knew of him, they had no doubt that if it came to grips, Cedric Hilton would show more pluck than the other three all put together.

The consultation broke up at last; Loder, it appeared, had given his orders, and the others were going to carry them out.

They separated. Walker and Price headed for a little wooden bridge at some distance up the backwater, and crossed the stream.

That meant that the attack was coming on both sides at once. This was good strategy, as it forced the Water-Lily to shift away from the opposite bank and come nearer to Loder's bank.

The juniors punted the boat into mid-stream, tautening the cord tied to the branch above.

But the little stream was so narrow that this left only about three feet of water on either side of the boat—an easy jump.

So far, so good—for Loder!

Still, the position was strong. As the enemy came with sticks in their hands, the Famous Five, also grasped sticks, ready to give tit for tat.

Loder and Hilton advanced when Walker and Price were ready on the other side. But Loder's strategy was not exhausted yet. As he came to the bank, Cedric Hilton clambered into the big chestnut-tree that overhung the backwater, and to a branch of which the boat's painter was tied.

"Oh!" murmured Bob, as he watched that manoeuvre.

Loder had planned rather well.

Hilton, crawling out on that long thick branch, was able to drop right down into the boat! He could not be reached till he dropped!

With the dandy of the Fifth dropping from above, while attack came simultaneously from both sides, the position looked rather more precarious.

Once at close quarters, there was no doubt that four big and hefty seniors were more than a match for five juniors of the Lower Fourth—very much more than a match! If Loder & Co. succeeded in boarding the Water-Lily, the game was up for Harry Wharton & Co.

"I say; you fellows," bleated Bunter, as he blinked up and glimpsed Hilton in the tree. "I say, they—they're coming! I say, let's cut—Yaroooh! I say, you beast, if you kick me again, Bull, I'll—Yoo-whooop!"

"Stand to it, you men," said Harry Wharton quietly. "I think we can keep them off—we're going to try, anyhow! Stand up to them, and wherever you see a head, hit it!"

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"What-ho!"

The captain of the *Remove* divided his forces, as Loder had done. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull were posted on the starboard side, to face Walker and Price. Wharton and the nabob stood on the port side, to face Loder. Frank Nugent was posted amidships to keep an eye on Hilton above.

"You fellows ready?" called out Loder.

"Say when!" called back Walker, across the water.

"You ready, Hilton?"

"Oh, quite!"

"Go for them!" shouted Loder.

And he rushed, whirling his stick.

"Back up!" roared Bob. "Give 'em jip!"

"Whop 'em!" roared Johnny Bull.

Loder, slashing with his stick, jumped at the *Water-Lily*. Possibly he expected Wharton and Hurree Singh to back away from that rather reckless charge. But they did not back an inch. Wharton's stick met Loder's with a crash, and both flew from the hands that held them—then Loder came sprawling over the gunwale, and the *Water-Lily* rocked wildly.

As he sprawled, his legs in the water, Harry Wharton and the nabob grasped him and pinned him to the gunwale. Combining their efforts, they shoved him back.

On the other side, Walker and Price rushed—but they did not make reckless jumps like Loder! They did not seem to have the nerve for it. They leaned over from the bank, slashing and lunging with their sticks.

That was a game at which Bob and Johnny could play equally well. Johnny caught a lick from Price that made his head sing; but Stephen Price, leaning over to land it, toppled on the water's edge. Before he could recover his balance, Bob Cherry landed a lick on his hand, and Price, with a yell, went in, splashing headlong into the water.

Walker, capturing a jab under the chin from Johnny the next moment, jumped back.

Price, spluttering, went floundering past the boat, howling wildly for help. He clutched at the bank, and Walker—perhaps not sorry for an excuse to relax hostilities—ran to grasp him and pull him out.

The attack on the starboard side had fizzled out completely. But on the port side, Wharton and the nabob had their hands full with Loder; and, from the branch above, Cedric Hilton dropped right into the boat, and as Nugent ran for him, gave Frank a tap on the chest that laid him on his back.

Hilton turned to take Wharton and the nabob in the rear; and had he done so, Loder certainly would have got aboard.

It was fortunate for the crew of the *Water-Lily* that Bob and Johnny had dealt with the starboard attack and were free to turn to the aid of their comrades.

As Hilton turned on Wharton, they turned on Hilton; as he grasped at Harry's collar to drag him over, they grasped at Hilton, and it was Cedric

Hilton who went over, with a crash and a yell.

The *Water-Lily* was rocking so wildly that the gunwales alternately dipped to the stream, and water splashed on board. Hilton, crashing down, rolled over helplessly in the rocking boat.

He was not given a chance to rise. Bob Cherry pounced on him instantly, and planted a knee in his waistcoat.

"You look out, Johnny!" he panted. "Leave him to me."

Johnny manned his gunwale, ready for Walker and Price. Bob yelled to Bunter.

"Back up, Bunter! Come here!"

"Oh crikey!"

"Come and sit on him, you fat ass!" yelled Bob.

Billy Bunter blinked at him, but he did not stir. Johnny Bull turned, and, without taking his eyes off the enemy, landed a lick from his stick on Bunter's fat head.

"Yarrop!" roared Bunter.

"Back up!" hooted Johnny.

"Beast!"

Johnny, still watching the enemy, landed another lick! Billy Bunter roared, and rolled into the fray. He did not want to sit on Hilton; but sitting on Hilton was rather preferable to those licks from Johnny's stick.

Hilton was struggling fiercely to rise. All his slacking dandyism was gone now, and he was the most dangerous of the enemy; and Bob, pinning him down, had hard work to keep him there.

"Buck up, Bunter!" he yelled.

Billy Bunter sat on Hilton. He sat on his chest, and from the dandy of the Fifth came a gasping gurgle. Bunter was no fighting-man, but as ballast, he had no equal. Flattened under that hefty weight, the dandy of the Fifth fairly collapsed.

"Urrgh!" he gurgled.

"Stick to him, Bunter!" gasped Bob.

He looked round breathlessly. Price had crawled out of the water and was limping along the bridge—evidently having had enough. He was going back to the house for a towelling and a change.

Walker, on the bank, was flourishing his stick, but not coming to very close quarters with Johnny Bull, who exchanged brandishes with him, watching him like a bulldog. James Walker did not look very dangerous.

Neither was Loder very dangerous now. Wharton and Hurree Singh were shoving him off the gunwale, and he was up to his shoulders in water, hanging on desperately, but with very little chance of getting into the boat.

Nugent was on his feet again, gasping from the punch he had received, but ready for more. He fastened a grasp on Hilton, as the dandy of the Fifth struggled under Bunter.

Bob Cherry grabbed a bag of tomatoes from the stores. He joined Wharton and the nabob, leaned over, and squashed a tomato in the middle of Gerald Loder's features.

Loder spluttered frantically. Another tomato was squashed into

his mouth, as he spluttered, and Loder gurgled horribly.

"Go it, old man!" gasped Harry.

Another tomato was squeezed into Loder's left ear, then another into his right! Then a couple went down his neck.

By that time, Loder had had enough tomatoes. He let go his hold on the boat, and went floundering up to his neck. Spluttering, he dragged himself out of the water on to the bank.

A tomato caught him in the back of the neck as he went. He glared round in breathless fury, and another landed in his eye. Then Loder jumped away—and retreated out of range.

Hilton was struggling. But there were plenty of hands to deal with Hilton now. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh proceeded to trample on his thrashing legs. Nugent had his wrists, and Bunter was lodged on his chest. Cedric Hilton was about as safe as he could be!

Bob turned his attention to Walker—still keeping up a long-range game of brandishing and parrying with Johnny Bull. A tomato landing under Walker's chin was followed up by another in his eye, and another in his ear. James Walker ceased to brandish—he retreated at a run, the rest of the tomatoes squashing on him as he went.

"Who wins?" grinned Johnny Bull.

"The winfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "We have confounded their absurd politics and frustrated their knavish tricks."

"Hurrah for us!" chortled Bob.

The crew of the *Water-Lily* had won the battle of the backwater. Price had already gone back into the house—Walker joined Loder, both of them keeping their distance—and Cedric Hilton lay gurgling and gasping, a prisoner on board the *Remove* boat! It was a complete and overwhelming victory—and the crew of the *Water-Lily* rejoiced.

A Startling Discovery!

HILTON of the Fifth gurgled for breath.

Billy Bunter had settled down comfortably on his chest. Bunter was grinning cheerily now. The victory having been won, and the enemy driven off, Bunter was bucked, and was no longer eager for retreat.

"Gerroff!" gurgled Hilton.

"Shan't!" retorted Bunter. "I say, you fellows, we've beaten them!"

"You had a lot to do with it!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull! I've got this Fifth Form cad!" said Bunter. "I say, what about ducking him? I say, I'll pull his nose."

Hilton dodged and twisted his head frantically as a fat paw grabbed at his nose! Bunter was not the man to spare a beaten foe—rather was he the man to make that beaten foe squirm!

But the fellows who had, so to

speak, borne the heat and burden of the day were not disposed to give the fat Owl his head! Bob Cherry reached out with a foot, poked the fat junior in the ribs, and tipped him over before he could capture Hilton's nose.

Bunter rolled and roared.

Hilton sat up. He did not look much of a dandy now. He was wet and grimy, ruffled and rumped, breathless and panting and perspiring. He looked rather a wreck—and he felt one.

The Famous Five grinned at him cheerily.

"Don't get up!" said Johnny Bull.

"Why not?" snapped Hilton.

"Because I shall knock you down again, if you do!" said Johnny, coolly. "You got on this boat of your own accord, and you'll stick here as long as we choose. If there's going to be more trouble, you're going to be tied up, to keep you out of mischief."

"Right as rain!" agreed Bob. "Keep there, Hilton!"

Hilton shrugged his shoulders. He sat in the bottom of the boat, looking curiously round at the juniors. He was completely in their hands, and it did not look as if his comrades were coming to the rescue. In point of fact, they could not have rescued him had they been disposed to make the attempt—which, obviously, they were not!

"I say, you fellows, let's whop the Fifth Form cad!" exclaimed Bunter. "I've got a stick——"

"Shut up, you fat chump!"

"Look here, roll him over, and I'll give him six! What?"

"I'll give you a boot, you ferocious fat frog, if you don't dry up!" said Bob.

"Yah!"

"Do you kids fancy that you can get away with this sort of thing?" asked Hilton. "You seem to have plenty of nerve—but do you really think you can carry on like this?"

"Sort of!" assented Bob. "I don't think you'll stop us—or Loder or Price, or Walker, either."

"Quite!" agreed Hilton. "But you can hardly expect Loder to be satisfied as the matter stands. I'd have let you camp here, if the place had been mine—as it happens to be Loder's, he's boss of the show! I admit you've got the upper hand in this tussle—but do you think you can carry on?"

"Why not?" asked Harry. "Loder doesn't seem keen on restarting after the interval! He's walking off with Walker now—and Price has bunked long ago! Think you can handle the lot of us?"

Hilton laughed.

"I'm not going to try!" he answered. "But there are servants about the place—a boatkeeper and his man, and some gardeners, and so on—Loder will call them up, I fancy, as he's failed to do the job on his own! I think you're up against a big order!"

"That's rot!" said Harry. "Loder can try to carry on a high-handed game, and his friends may back him up—but he won't get boatmen and

gardeners to play the bullying hooligan!"

"And there's the police, too, if Loder chose to give them a call!" said Hilton. "I fancy he's wild enough after what's happened."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Loder can ring up the police station, if he likes! I'd like to see a policeman trot round and keep him in order."

"You're not such a reckless young ass as to try to stick here if a policeman came to see you off, I suppose," said Hilton, staring at him.

"Oh, don't be an ass! We've as much right here as Loder—and we should explain that to the policeman."

Hilton stared harder.

"You're not mad, by any chance?" he asked.

"What the dickens do you mean?"

"I'm wonderin' what you mean," said Hilton. "What right have you got here, on private property, I'd like to know?"

"Permission of the owner to camp, which we've paid for—the same as Loder's paid for the villa!" answered Harry. "We've as much right to turn Loder out of the house as he has to turn us off this backwater."

"Oh gad!" said Hilton. "Mind if I get on a seat? It would be more comfy—and I promise not to chuck you all overboard."

The Famous Five laughed, and Hilton was allowed to get on a seat. He sat there, looking at them with an amused grin.

"Did you say you'd paid for permission to camp here?" he asked.

"Yes; a quid," said Bob.

"Might a fellow ask whom you paid?"

"The owner, of course."

"Holy smoke!" said Hilton. "I can't quite imagine Major Loder letting his backwater and lawn to campers for a quid! Look here, are you tryin' to pull my leg, or what do you mean?"

"Maor Loder!" repeated Harry blankly. "It was the owner of this place we paid—a man named Egerton."

"Honest Injun?" gasped Hilton.

"Yes, you ass—what do you mean?" demanded the captain of the Remove testily. "What are you sniggering at?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Hilton. "I haven't the honour of Mr. Egerton's acquaintance—but I fancy you've run up against one of the innumerable swindlers on this jolly old river. Did this Mr. Egerton say he was the owner?"

"Eh? Yes! Of course he did! He was sitting in a canoe here, and—and——" Harry Wharton broke off. For the first time, a dreadful suspicion came into his mind. He stared at Hilton.

The Fifth Form man chuckled explosively.

"Look here, what's the joke?" exclaimed Bob angrily. "That man Egerton said he was the owner of this place—Egerton Lawn—and—and——"

"You paid him a quid?" yelled Hilton.

"Yes, I tell you."

"Ha, ha, ha! I wondered that you had the neck to carry on as you did," howled Hilton. "But I never guessed that one! Ha, ha, ha! Will it interest you to learn that this place is called Thames Nook, that it belongs to Loder's uncle, the jolly old major, and that he's let Loder have it for a fortnight while he's away, to entertain his friends on the river?"

"What!" howled the Famous Five.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Hilton.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Billy Bunter.

The Famous Five stood staring at Hilton—who sat roaring with laughter.

While The Going's Good!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. stood dumb.

They could only gaze at the gurgling dandy of the Fifth.

Not for a moment had they doubted the bona-fides of that young man in the eyeglass and the canoe. Not for a second had they dreamed that they had been done by a rogue who let them that backwater for camping, having no right to do anything of the kind, and no connection with the place at all.

Now it dawned on them!

That young man with the eyeglass had been sitting in the canoe, waiting, as he had said, for a chance to do business with some river party that wanted a camp. But the business he wanted to do was a swindle pure and simple. He was, in point of fact, looking for mugs; and the Famous Five realised that they had been the mugs!

Hilton, still laughing, rose to his feet.

The juniors were not thinking of handling him now, or tying him up to keep him out of mischief! They were thinking of the awful position in which they had been landed by that plausible and unscrupulous young man in the eyeglass.

"I couldn't understand your nerve!" gasped Hilton. "I understand now! Ha, ha! Next time you hire a camp, you'd better make sure the man who lets it owns it."

Harry Wharton found his voice at last.

"Look here," he gasped. "Do you mean to say this place belongs to Loder's uncle—he hasn't hired the house from a man named Egerton——"

"Ha, ha! No!"

"Then we've been swindled!" gasped Nugent.

"Taken in and done for!" grinned Hilton. "You must be a set of duffers to have your leg pulled like that! Look here, I'll go and explain to Loder, if you like, and give you time to clear off before he arrives with an army."

"By gum!" Johnny Bull clenched his hands. "I hope we shall see that man Egerton again some time."

"Most likely he'll have another name next time you see him!" chuckled Hilton. "Perhaps he'll hire you Marlow Court or Cliveden Woods

next time—or Windsor Castle! Ha, ha."

Cedric Hilton was evidently very much entertained. But the hapless juniors were not amused. They were—they knew now—trespassing, they had resisted by force the attempt of the rightful owner of the place to turn them off; and there was, in fact, some excuse for Loder's fury—Loder, of course, knowing nothing about their arrangement with Mr. Egerton.

"Well, it's Loder's own fault, too!" said Bob. "If he had been civil—"

"Dear old Loder doesn't err on the side of civility to fags!" grinned Hilton. "But if you'd told him—"

"Of course, we thought he knew," stammered Harry. "Egerton said he had reserved the right to let this part to campers, when he let the house to a party, so we supposed you all knew, of course—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Hilton.

"Oh, cut the cackle!" snapped Johnny Bull. "If this place is really Loder's, we're going—we wouldn't be found dead in it."

"You'll be found nearly dead in it, if Loder lays hands on you, I think," chuckled Hilton. "Want me any more, or shall I cut?"

"Cut, and be blowed to you!" grunted Bob.

Hilton, still laughing, jumped ashore. His laugh echoed back, as he walked off towards the house, passing through the yews, beyond which Loder and Walker had disappeared.

The Famous Five looked at one another, with rather sickly expressions.

"Well," said Bob, "this is a go!"

"Who'd have thought it?" said Nugent.

Harry Wharton compressed his lips.

"We've been taken in!" he said. "I suppose we ought to have been more on our guard! But—that fellow in the canoe looked all right—and he was tied up here—and—how was a fellow to know? But—"

"But we've jolly well put our foot in it!" said Bob. "We've been diddled out of a quid—and we've no right here! The sooner we cut, the better."

"No doubt about that!" gasped Harry. "Better go while the going's good!" And he cast loose the painter from the branch of the chestnut-tree.

Obviously, there was nothing for it but to go, and to go at once, now they knew how the matter really stood.

The sunset on the river was deepening to dusk: it was a late hour for looking for another camp, but that could not be helped. They had no right there—they had, in fact, whopped and driven off the rightful owners! The sooner they were gone, the better.

There was no space to turn the Water-Lily in the narrow little backwater. They had to punt out stern foremost.

"I say, you fellows, here they come!" squeaked Billy Bunter, in alarm.

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"Blow 'em!" growled Johnny Bull. "Shove, you fellows!" exclaimed Harry.

From beyond the row of yews, quite a numerous party came in sight. Loder, as Hilton had said, had been gathering his forces. Five men were coming along at his heels—Walker and Price bringing up the rear.

The juniors had not believed that men employed about the place would lend aid in turning off campers who had a right to be there—and that, no doubt, was correct. But they would, naturally, lend aid in turning off a party of trespassers who had tried to remain on private property by force! Loder had only to call them up—and now he had called them up.

Hilton was speaking to Loder as he came—no doubt explaining, and urging the bully of the Sixth to let the matter drop, now that the trespassers were going.

But his urgings were wasted on Loder, who was too enraged and exasperated to care a boiled bean whether the juniors had been taken in or not.

Loder wanted vengeance, and he wanted it bad! At the sight of the boat being punted out of the backwater, he broke into a run.

"Buck up!" murmured Bob.

He hooked up the chain, and the stern of the Water-Lily pushed under it. The boat glided out, and the chain dropped again, under the bows. Wharton and Johnny Bull grasped oars, and pushed off.

"Stop!" roared Loder.

Bob Cherry waved a hand to him. With ten feet of water between the boat and Loder's army, the juniors were safe out of reach.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, old bean!" roared Bob. "Sorry we've got no more tomatoes—like an orange?"

"Get hold of that boat!" shouted Loder to his army.

"Swim for it!" chuckled Bob. "Row, brothers, row!"

Four oars pulled, and the Water-Lily glided out under the sunset. Loder shook a furious fist. He could not reach the juniors—not, apparently, being disposed to swim for it.

"He, he, he!" chuckled Billy Bunter. "The beast can't get at us, you fellows! I say, shy something at him!"

Loder stood raging, glaring after the boat, and the juniors receding from reach of his vengeance.

Billy Bunter put a fat thumb to his nose, and extended the fingers of his podgy right hand. Then he added the thumb of his left hand to the little finger of his right, and extended the fingers of that fat paw also.

That disrespectful salute from the fat Owl made Loder writhe with rage. He shook a frantic fist. Hilton was laughing; Loder's army were grinning—but Gerald Loder spluttered fury.

The Water-Lily pulled away into the dusk of the river and the last Loder saw of its crew was Billy Bunter, grinning, with his fat fingers to his nose!

Pon Asks For More!

"THAT lot?" grunted Johnny Bull.

Dusk was falling, but the sunset was still red on the river. Four oars were pulling the Water-Lily along, still on the Bucks side, the Famous Five looking hopefully for a spot to camp. Thames Nook had been left half a mile behind, and they were glad to have done with Loder, but they were not feeling in the merriest mood possible.

Dearly they would have liked to fall in again with that deceptive young man in the eyeglass; but that was very unlikely. But as they spotted a boat tied up under the bank they saw familiar faces therein.

Three fellows sat in the boat. On it was painted the name Water-Lily—Pon's boat having the same name as the Greyfriars craft. Pon & Co. were occupied in a way that might have been expected of those sportive young gentlemen.

A seat was serving them as a card-table. Ponsonby, when the Greyfriars fellows spotted him, was dealing cards, with a cigarette in the corner of his mouth. Possibly the Highcliff crew had tied up under that tree for a rest—and enlivened the rest with a game of nap. And they seemed so keen on their game that they did not heed the falling dusk.

"Give them a splash?" suggested Bob.

"Oh, never mind them!" said Harry Wharton. "We gave them tit for tat. Let it go at that. No time for a row now."

"We've had enough rows to go on with for a bit!" remarked Nugent. "Let them rip!"

"O.K.!" assented Bob.

Pon & Co. looked round as they spotted the boat. Pon paused in dealing the cards, his eyes gleaming at the Greyfriars crew.

"That gang again!" he muttered.

"Oh, don't rag, Pon!" said Gadsby. "Let's get through. We've got a mile to pull up to our quarters, and it's getting dark—"

Ponsonby's hand closed on an empty ginger-beer bottle in his boat. His look showed how gladly he would have buzzed it among the Greyfriars crew.

"Don't be a fool, Pon!" muttered Monson.

Pon made no reply. His eyes fixed on the passing boat. Perhaps he expected a rag now that the foes had been encountered again! But the Greyfriars crew pulled on, taking no notice of their old enemies, and keeping well out.

"They don't seem keen on another row!" sneered Pon.

"All the better. Let them rip!" said Gadsby. "Your deal!"

But Pon did not heed. His eyes lingered on the passing boat. The fact that the Greyfriars fellows were passing on peaceably encouraged Pon to make himself obnoxious. If they did not want a row Pon did not see why they should get by without one!

He swung up his arm, unable to resist the impulse to send a missile after the departing boat.

Whiz!
The ginger-beer bottle flew across the water. The oarsmen, looking back, could have dodged it easily enough, but Harry Wharton, who was steering, had his back to the Highcliffians. The bottle bumped his shoulder-blades, and he gave a startled yell.

"Ow! What——"
He stared round. The bottle splashed into the water behind the Greyfriars boat.

"By gum!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, his eyes flashing. "That's what comes of letting those cads off! Why, that hooligan might have cracked a man's head with a ginger-beer bottle!"

"Get back!" said Wharton. "We're going to give Pon a tip about buzzing ginger-beer bottles."

"I say, you fellows, I'm sleepy. I——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"
"I tell you I'm sleepy! Are you going to keep me up all night while you row with those Highcliffe cads?" demanded Bunter indignantly.

"Do you think we're going to let them buzz ginger-beer bottles at us, you frowsy fat frog?" hooted Johnny Bull.

"Well, it never hit me!" said Bunter. "I don't see anything to make a fuss about! Just get on, and let's find a camp!"

"It got me in the back!" snapped Wharton.

"Well, let's get on, all the same! Didn't you hear me say that I was sleepy?" demanded Bunter.

The captain of the Remove did not answer that. The Water-Lily swung round and shot back under the tree where the Highcliffe boat was tied.

Pon eyed it evilly as it came—perhaps regretful of that malicious impulse. Possibly he had not expected reprisals, though really, he might have.

"Well, you've done it now!" grunted Gadsby. "You have to ask for it."

"Oh, shut up, you fool!" snarled Ponsonby.

He stood up and grasped a boat-hook as the Greyfriars Water-Lily surged alongside, a savage glitter in his eyes.

"Keep off!" he said, between his teeth. "I'll use this boathook if you come closer! Mind, I mean that, every word!"

"Do you?" said Bob Cherry. "And I mean this!"

And he shoved out with his oar, crashing the tip of it on Ponsonby's knees. The Highcliffe boat rocked as Ponsonby went over, the boathook dropping from his hand.

"Look out!" yelled Monson.

"Hold on!" gasped Gadsby.
A pack of cards scattered all over the Highcliffe boat, some of them shooting into the water. Ponsonby sprawled in the bottom of the boat, yelling. A wave of the Thames came over the gunwale as the boat rocked and swamped Pon's elegant trousers.

The Greyfriars boat rocked alongside, rowlock to rowlock. Harry Wharton reached over and grasped at Ponsonby.

Pon was staggering up when the captain of the Remove grasped him. He grasped him by the nose, with finger and thumb.

"Oooogh!" spluttered Pon, as his nose was pulled.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came from the Greyfriars crew.

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

Bunter was sleepy, but not too sleepy to derive entertainment from the pulling of Ponsonby's nose.

Spluttering, Pon struck out furiously. Gadsby and Monson sat tight. Pon could have what he had asked for, so far as they were concerned. They were not looking for a battle.

Harry Wharton, with his left, knocked Pon's fist aside. With his right he compressed his grip on Pon's nose.

"Urrrgh!" gurgled Ponsonby. "Will you led do? Led do by dose! Oogh!"

"Sorry you chucked that bottle, you hooligan?" asked Harry Wharton politely.

"Urrrghh!"

"I'm holding on to your nose till you're sorry! Take your time!"

"Yurrrrghh!"

The Highcliffe boat rocked and rocked as Ponsonby struggled to release his nose. It shipped water again and again, splashing the three, and eliciting howls from Monson and Gadsby. But Pon could not release his nose. It was gripped as in a steel vice.

"Say when!" said Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oooogh! Led do!" howled Ponsonby, in muffled nasal tones. "Led do! Thorry—thorry! Led do!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The captain of the Remove released that nose at last. The Greyfriars boat pushed off, and pulled on, a roar of laughter coming back as it went.

Ponsonby, his nose crimson, and his face flaming, almost as crimson as his nose, with fury, groped at another ginger-beer bottle.

Gadsby knocked it from his hand.

"Chuck it, you silly ass!" he shouted. "Do you want to bring them back again?"

Ponsonby realised that he did not want to bring them back again. He sat down, with both hands clasped to his suffering nose. Pon was rather proud of his handsome Greek nose—but at the moment it did not look Greek; it looked more like a beetroot.

"Ha, ha, ha!" floated back down the river.

And the Greyfriars crew pulled on, leaving Pon caressing his nose in the Highcliffe boat. He was still caressing it, long after the Greyfriars crew had disappeared up the dusky river, and he was still rubbing it tenderly when the Highcliffe boat cast off and Gadsby and Monson pulled away.

The Wrong Address!

"ROT, if you ask me!" drawled Hilton.
"I don't ask you!" snarled Loder.
"It was all a mistake——"
"Oh, shut up!"
(Continued on next page.)

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Hilton shrugged his shoulders.

Hilton and Walker were pulling, Price sitting in the stern, Loder standing up and scanning the darkening river with savage, searching eyes. Loder & Co. were in pursuit of the Water-Lily; three of them, at least, very keen and anxious to get to close quarters with that craft.

The skiff from Thames Nook had put off in pursuit as soon as Loder & Co. could get going, but the Water-Lily had vanished up the river and Loder had seen nothing more of it, so far.

Loder had a dog-whip under his arm. He had it all ready for the Greyfriars crew when he overtook them.

The fact that the Famous Five had been taken in by an impostor and that they had camped at Thames Nook in the full belief that they had a right so to do made no difference to Gerald Loder.

It did not alter the fact that Loder had been rather severely handled and soaked to the skin. Loder wanted vengeance and he was going to give the Greyfriars crew such a terrific thrashing—when he got them—that they would remember it for the rest of the vacation.

Walker and Price were feeling equally sore and savage. Hilton was the only member of the party willing to let the matter drop and he was disregarded.

However, as the dusk was thickening on the river, it did not seem probable that the Water-Lily would be run down.

Loder searched the dusky waters in vain. There were few craft to be seen in the falling dusk. Twice he rapped out an order to Price to steer closer to some craft—to scan it for the enemy—and found that it was the wrong craft. Even Loder did not want to handle his dog-whip on the wrong party.

And the dusk was thickening more and more.

"We'll get them!" growled Loder. "They had a start, but they can't pull that old tub half as fast as we're going. Hallo, there's another boat—edge in a bit, Price!"

Loder had a torch in his hand, and he flashed the light on the dim boat that loomed up. He read the name Eliza on the stern and shut it off again. It was another wrong boat.

"Put some beef into it!" he grunted.

And the Thames Nook skiff shot on. Hilton gave a chuckle.

"Don't wake up the wrong passengers!" he suggested. "If you land out at a lot of strangers with that whip, Loder, old bean, there may be trouble to follow."

"Don't be a silly ass!" grunted Loder. "I noticed the name of their boat painted on the stern—the Water-Lily! As soon as we spot the Water-Lily we run alongside and then—"

"Then let them have it!" said Price viciously.

"I'm going to!"

The skiff shot on. But it was getting quite dark now, and the visibility was not good. Loder watched

the river, ready to flash on his light again at the sight of any craft pulling up the Thames.

The dim shape of a boat loomed out of the gathering gloom again. Again Loder flashed on the light.

This time he grinned savagely with triumph. Ahead of him the beam of the electric torch picked up a name painted on the stern of a boat—the Water-Lily!

That was enough for Loder!

It did not occur to him at the moment that there might be more than one Water-Lily on the Thames—probably, indeed, a dozen or so. He was after a Water-Lily and he had found one. That was that!

He shut off the light instantly. He did not want the young rascals to spot him and attempt to dodge. A chase up and down and round about on the river in the dark was not what Loder was looking for; neither did he want to give the Greyfriars crew a chance of running to the bank and taking to the land.

"That's the gang!" he said, in a low voice. "That's the Water-Lily! We've got them! Pull alongside before they spot us. You hold on to them, Pricey, while I lay into them with this whip!"

"What-ho!" grinned Price.

It was dark now, and the boat ahead was only a dim shape. But enough was to be seen of it to enable the pursuers to run alongside.

They ran alongside, with a sudden rush, and there was a crash of oars as they ran close. Price immediately reached over and grasped the gunwale of the other boat and the two rocked side by side.

Loder lashed out with the dog-whip.

Three dim figures were starting up in the other boat—three, Loder supposed, of the five. He could only see three—and he let them have it, swiping with utter recklessness at them one after another.

Wild yells rose in a chorus from the other boat.

"What's that?"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Ow! Is that some lunatic?"

"Look out!"

"Oh scissors!"

Lash, lash, lash, lash! came from the jubilant Loder. He landed them fast and he landed them hard. Loder was a quick worker. Each of the three had had four or five almost in as many seconds.

They roared and raved and yelled and strove to push their boat away, evidently taken utterly by surprise by this sudden and unexpected attack.

But they could not get away—Price was holding on, keeping the two boats together. And Loder whacked and whacked and whacked.

"Take that!" roared Loder. "By gum, I've got you! I'll teach you to trespass—I'll teach you to camp in my grounds! Take that—and that—and that—"

"It's some lunatic!" shrieked Ponsonby. "Knock him down with an oar—"

"Help!" howled Monson.

"Keep off!" shrieked Gadsby.

Loder lashed and lashed.

"You mad ass!" shouted Hilton,

starting up. "That's not the lot—that's another lot! Loder, you maniac, chuck it! I tell you you've got the wrong lot!"

"Don't be a fool—that's the Water-Lily—I saw the name on it! Take that, you young rotters, and that—and that—"

The Thames Nook skiff almost capsized as Hilton grasped at Loder's arm and dragged him back.

"You mad fool!" he yelled. "I tell you—"

"Hands off, you idiot! I—"

"By gum, though, I think Hilton's right!" gasped Walker, peering at the other boat. "It doesn't sound like their voices, anyhow!"

"Rubbish! I—"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Price. "I—I think you've made a mistake, Loder, and—"

"I tell you that's the Water-Lily! Let go my arm, Hilton, you fool!"

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Hilton. Still holding Loder's arm, he shouted to the other boat: "What boat's that?"

"You rotten hooligans!" came back a yell of fury from Ponsonby. "I'll have you run in for this!"

"Is that Wharton's boat?" called out Price.

"Wharton's? No, you fool! It's ours!"

"It's smaller than Wharton's boat, I think!" gasped Walker. "It's the same name, but it's not the same boat!"

"Oh!" gasped Loder.

Even on Loder's angry and obstinate mind it was dawning that he had made a mistake—misled by the name of the boat.

He jerked the torch out of his pocket again and flashed it on the other boat.

The light revealed a crew of only three—none of them a Greyfriars man. Loder—now that he could see them—knew them by sight.

"Highcliffe fags!" he ejaculated.

"Oh gad!" breathed Price.

"Have you gone mad?" yelled Ponsonby. "What the thump are you up to? I'll report this to the police! I'll have you run in!"

Loder shut off the light.

"Get out of this!" he muttered.

Price had already released the Highcliffe Water-Lily. The two boats surged apart—yells of rage and fury and anguish pealing across the dim water from the Highcliffe boat. What that sudden and amazing attack could possibly mean was a mystery to the Highcliffians.

"Pull on!" muttered Loder. "Get down to it! Who'd have guessed that another boat with the same name would be fooling around? But get on—we'll get that crew!"

"Will you?" said Hilton. "You fool—"

"You idiot!" said Walker.

"You ass!" said Price.

And Loder's crew, disregarding Loder, pulled back for Thames Nook. They had had enough—or, rather, more than enough—of Loder's mistakes in the dark.

Half a mile farther up the river, Harry Wharton & Co. were pulling on, happily unaware that Loder had



Quietly and stealthily, Shifty Spooner unpacked the juniors' reserve food supply, while Bunter pretended he was asleep!

been in pursuit at all. Pon & Co.—only too painfully aware of it—gaspd and mumbled and moaned and groaned, as they pulled on their weary way.

Mysterious Mr. Spooner!

“**B**ETTER stop at Henley!” said Billy Bunter.

“Too late for the jolly old regatta, old fat bean!” said Bob Cherry.

“Blow the regatta! I want to do some shopping! I suppose,” added Billy Bunter with dignity, “that you fellows can lend me some money? I forgot to bring any currency notes with me.”

“Better forget the shopping, too!” suggested Johnny Bull.

“If you fellows are going to be mean—”

“We are!” said Johnny.

“The meanfulness is going to be terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter!” assured Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

“Stingy lot!” said Bunter.

Bunter did not insist on stopping at Henley for shopping! He had a lot of shopping to do, if funds were available! His twopence-halfpenny was still intact, it was true; but Bunter realised that that sum would not go very far in an expensive place like Henley.

So he grunted and gave up the point, as the stingy lot ran on, with the boat under sail, to Wargrave, and there, the wind failing them, towed on to Shiplake Lock.

The previous night had been rather one of discomfort. The Greyfriars crew had not found a camp, after their hurried departure from Thames Nook, and they had finally tied up and passed the night in the boat.

Billy Bunter declared that he had not slept a wink, though how his deep and rumbling snore had echoed over the Thames while he was not sleeping a wink was left unexplained.

He made up for it by sleeping most of the morning, but he woke up every now and then to raid the stores, and was wide awake when the Water-Lily, after passing Shiplake, tied up for lunch. At Sonning, the towpath, hitherto on the Oxfordshire side, crossed over to the Berkshire side, and the Famous Five were going to have a ramble round Sonning before they went on up the river.

So they tied up on the Sonning side, some distance above Sonning lock, and lunched on the boat; and when they prepared to start, after lunch, Bob picked up a shopping-bag, as there was shopping to be done. Billy Bunter was pleased to nod approval.

“Get enough!” he said. “And don't forget the jam! We've run out of jam! I'd like some grapes and pineapples, too! Get some 'Turkish delight and toffee. And for goodness' sake don't forget jam tarts and cream puffs!”

“Anything else?” asked Bob.

“Well, chocolates, and chocolate creams,” said Bunter. “And a jam roll—a big one, mind! And some meringues—say, six dozen.”

“That the lot?”

“Well, no, we might have a cake—better bring a currant cake, a plum cake, and a seed cake! And a Madeira cake, too! And a Dundee cake!”

“You can't think of anything else?” asked Bob gravely.

“A jar of honey,” said Bunter. “I like honey! And one of those tins of

shortbread! And a tin of mixed biscuits—better get a full-size tin—one of those big square ones.”

“Any more?”

“Some doughnuts,” said Bunter. “Say three dozen. And see if you can get some toffee-apples! If you can, bring a lot.”

The Famous Five smiled. How many pounds that order would have run into they did not know, but it was not worth while to calculate.

“Hadn't you better write down a list?” asked Bunter.

“Not at all necessary,” answered Bob.

“But you won't remember them all unless you make a list.”

“Right on the wicket!” agreed Bob.

“Well, you fathead, how will you be able to get them, if you don't remember them?” yapped Bunter.

“That's all right—I'm not going to get them!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

And the Famous Five went for their ramble—to see beautiful Sonning and its beautiful surroundings—and certainly not to clear the district out of its entire stock of sticky things!

Bunter snorted, and settled down to sleep in the boat.

Wild horses would not have dragged Bunter on a walk; nevertheless, he took the view, as a matter of course, that he was left to mind the boat while the other fellows went off enjoying themselves.

And they weren't even going to bring him those few things he had mentioned! It was an ungrateful world!

However, Bunter found comfort and consolation in happy slumber.

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With the folded sail and a number of rugs and blankets, he made up quite a comfortable couch, and settled down thereon, with his straw hat over his face to keep off the flies.

From under that straw hat there soon proceeded a sound like the rumble of distant thunder.

If Bunter was minding the boat, he was minding it with his eyes shut, deep in the mists and shadows of sleep.

Probably he would not have awakened till the Famous Five came back from their ramble; but for the circumstance that other people, as well as Bunter, were on the sunny Thames that afternoon.

Something suddenly twisted the straw hat off his fat face. It was a towrope from a passing boat, which swung over the Water-Lily, and, sagging as it passed over, dipped and caught that straw hat.

Bunter's hat rolled in the boat, as the towrope passed on, and his eyes opened, and he blinked round him, wondering drowsily what had happened.

The towed boat passed on, and Bunter did not see it; but he saw something else that made him jump.

A dinghy had tied on to the Water-Lily while Bunter slumbered.

From that dinghy a man had stepped quietly into the Greyfriars boat without awakening the fat Owl.

He was kneeling, with his back to Bunter, at the stern locker.

Bunter blinked at his back.

He could not see the man's face, but his figure, and his dinghy, were familiar, and he knew at once that it was Shifty Spooner.

The man's occupation was startling to Bunter.

In the stern locker of the Water-Lily, which was rather roomy, the juniors kept a reserve store of canned stuff. Once or twice when supplies had run short they had had to draw on it—that was what it was for, as they never ate stuff out of tins if they could help it. But the locker was still almost full of the original supply.

Shifty Spooner was unpacking the stack of tins.

He was not transferring them to his dinghy. He was laying them about the boat as he pulled them out of the locker—perhaps ready for transfer.

Bunter blinked at him!

After the trick he had played on Mr. Spooner a few days ago, he was not anxious to meet that gentleman at close quarters. Still, tied up by the towpath, with boats and people on shore continually passing and re-passing, the fat Owl did not feel very uneasy. Plenty of help was at hand if Mr. Spooner cut up rusty.

That, no doubt, was why Shifty was acting so quietly and surreptitiously. In a lonelier spot he would probably have pitched Bunter out, and walked off with the Water-Lily. That he could hardly venture to do so prominently in the public eye.

So, whatever his mysterious game was, Shifty was carrying on with it, quietly, stealthily, and cautiously, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,645.

taking care not to awaken Bunter—who certainly would not have awakened, had not the passing towrope disturbed his balmy slumbers.

Can after can came out of the locker and was softly and silently stacked out of the way. Bunter could see, blinking along the boat, that the locker was already nearly empty.

That locker was not only rather roomy, but it was carefully built. It had a flooring of sheet zinc, no doubt to keep damp away from what might be stowed in it. The juniors knew that Mr. Spooner, to whom the boat had once belonged, had had it built to his own specifications—in the days before the law had worried Mr. Spooner and packed him away in a safe place for having mistaken another man's property for his own.

Billy Bunter raised himself on one elbow and watched Shifty as he hooked out can after can.

Shifty did not turn his head.

Satisfied that the fat schoolboy was asleep, and not likely to wake, Shifty gave him no attention at all.

Passing people, on the bank and in boats, could see Shifty; but naturally supposed that the man who was clearing out the locker belonged to the craft.

Can after can came out, till the locker was empty. Then, and not till then, did Shifty Spooner cast a stealthy look about him, to ascertain that no eyes were on him before he proceeded farther—though what more he had to do now that the locker was empty was rather a puzzle.

Thus it was that Shifty, who supposed that the fat schoolboy in the boat was still fast asleep, was startled to see a fat head lifted, and a pair of astonished eyes blinking at him through a big pair of spectacles!

"Oh!" ejaculated Shifty, with a jump.

Bunter scrambled to his feet. The look on Shifty's face alarmed him. It was a look of concentrated rage and fury; as if Billy Bunter's awakening had utterly disconcerted Mr. Spooner.

"Look here, what are you doing here?" exclaimed Bunter. "You jolly well get out or I'll jolly well call a policeman!"

Shifty rose from his knees. The look on his face was really terrifying. He looked as if he would gladly have pitched Bunter into the Thames, to get rid of him.

Bunter gave a squeak of terror. In so public a spot, Shifty could hardly proceed to violence, if that was in his mind; but Bunter did not wait to give him a chance. He yelled frantically.

"Help! Help! Help!"

That terrified yell rang along the bank, and far over the river. A dozen people on the towpath stopped and stared round. There were stares from three or four boats on the water.

"Help!" roared Bunter. "Help! Thieves! Robbers! Burglars! Help!"

A boat glided towards the tied-up Water-Lily. Six or seven people stopped on the bank. A punt poled up.

Shifty Spooner stood, for a long moment, a picture of rage and disappointment. Then, as half a dozen voices called from the bank, and three or four from craft on the river, he realised that if he was to go at all, he had better go while the going was good.

He made a jump from the Water-Lily into his dinghy, and shot away like an arrow, narrowly missing the punt that was poling up.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "I say, stop him—stop thief—oh crikey!"

"What's up?" came from the bank.

"What's the trouble?" came from the man in the punt.

A dozen voices called questions.

"That beast—trying to rob my boat while I was asleep!" gasped Bunter. "I—I believe he was going to spring at me! Oh crikey!"

"Well, you're all right now! He's gone all right."

The dinghy was only a spot in the distance. Shifty Spooner was going all out!

Billy Bunter realised that the danger was all over. His sympathisers went on their way again! That look on Shifty's speaking countenance haunted Bunter—and his eyes were still open behind his spectacles when Harry Wharton & Co. at last came tramping down the towpath.

Bunter's Not Believed!

BOB CHERRY dumped a well-filled bag into the Water-Lily. All the juniors stared at the array of canned goods lying in the boat.

Bunter had interrupted the raider; he had stopped his game, whatever his mysterious game was. But he had not taken the trouble to pack the displaced cargo back into the locker. Canned salmon and corned beef and sardines lay where Shifty had left them.

"What the dickens is that game, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton, in astonishment. "What have you unpacked the locker for?"

"I haven't!" hooted Bunter.

"Did all those tins walk out?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Did you think there was a cake or something stacked behind them?" grinned Bob Cherry, "or have you been looking for condensed milk?"

There had once been tins of condensed milk among the other tins. They had disappeared, one after another. Bunter was fond of condensed milk!

"I never touched them!" snapped Bunter. "But they'd all have been jolly well pinched if I hadn't driven off the thief."

"Eh?"

"What?"

"He would have carted off the whole lot, but for me!" said Bunter. "He had got them all out, ready to shift into his boat, when I jolly well stopped him—"

"He! Who?" roared Bob.

"That man Spooner—"

"Spooner!" exclaimed Nugent. "Has Spooner been here?"

"He jolly well has!" answered Bunter. "He was lugging all those tins out of the locker when I woke up—I mean, I wasn't asleep—"

"You woke up when you weren't asleep?" asked Johnny Bull.

"I was keeping watch—minding the boat—of course I never went to sleep. I may have closed my eyes for a minute. Then I saw him—lugging them out—"

"That man Spooner got on the boat and shifted all those tins out of the locker?" asked Harry Wharton, with a very suspicious look at the fat Owl.

"Yes, and he would have got away with the lot, if I hadn't yelled for help—I mean, if I hadn't tackled him—"

"You tackled Spooner?"

"Went for him like billy-oh!" cried Bunter. "I gave him my left, and then my right—and he was jolly glad to jump back into his dinghy and clear! I can tell you, he went off fast enough."

The Famous Five gazed at Billy Bunter! His tale was a little too extraordinary for easy credit.

Shifty Spooner was a bad character. He had been in prison for a robbery, and he had more than once tried to pinch the Water-Lily. He was none too good, certainly, to pinch tinned beef and canned sardines. But it seemed very improbable to the Greyfriars fellows that even the dishonest Shifty would take the trouble to trait them up the Thames for the sake of about two pounds worth of tinned foods.

It was not merely improbable! It was absurd! Shifty Spooner wanted the Water-Lily—that was certain; but it was absurd to suppose that he cared a boiled bean about an assortment of tinned things.

"And now," said Johnny Bull, "what did you shift all those tins out of the locker for, Bunter?"

"You silly chump!" howled Bunter. "I've just told you that that man Spooner shifted them—"

"You can tell us that till you're as black in the face as you are behind the ears, and it won't go down!" grunted Johnny.

"You cheeky beast—"

"Must have been after condensed milk!" said Bob. "I told him he had snooped the last tin, but I suppose he wanted to make sure."

"You silly fathead!" yelled Bunter. "I knew there wasn't any more condensed milk! I never touched those tins. That man Spooner—"

"Oh, chuck it!"

"Gammon!"

"Think out a better one!"

"Give us a rest!"

Billy Bunter blinked at the chums of the Remove in speechless wrath and indignation.

Like many people who are not very particular about the truth, Bunter did not like having his word doubted—especially on the rare occasions when he was sticking to the facts.

This time he was stating facts! Shifty Spooner had unshipped all those tins from the locker. But Bunter's facts were so few and far between that, among his fictions,

they were like a few grains of wheat in oceans of chaff. Not a fellow on the Water-Lily thought of believing him.

It was highly improbable that even a dishonest rascal like Shifty was taking a lot of trouble to pinch those cans of beef and sardines. But it was very probable that Bunter had rooted through the locker in search of a stray tin of condensed milk, and had been too lazy to repack it. The Famous Five rather naturally preferred the probable to the improbable.

"Well, now pack them back before we get going!" said Harry.

"Shan't!" roared Bunter. "I tell you that man Spooner did it—and he would have carted them off—"

"Cheese it!" roared Johnny Bull.

"He had the lot all ready to carry off, when I woke up, and saw him, and yelled for help!" howled Bunter. "A lot of people stopped, and they'd have collared him, too, if he hadn't cut—"

"That sounds a bit more probable," grinned Bob. "But what about the left and right you gave him?"

"Oh! I—I mean—"

"I suppose it's possible that the man has been here," said Harry Wharton doubtfully.

"After canned beef?" snorted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, no! He might have fancied that we kept something else there—it would be a safe spot to park anything valuable—"

"Possible!" grunted Johnny. "Not jolly likely!"

"No, I suppose Bunter's telling whoppers, as usual—"

"I tell you—" shrieked Bunter.

"Don't tell us any more, old fat man," said Bob Cherry. "I'll tell you something instead! I've got some more condensed milk in this bag, and I'm going to pack it in that locker—and if it's missing, like the other lot, I'm going to give you a whopping with the towrope."

"Beast! I tell you—"

"Shut up!" roared the Famous Five, in chorus.

Billy Bunter relapsed into indignant silence. Bob Cherry repacked the locker; and Johnny Bull took the towrope—not, however, to tow; he held it out to Bunter.

As Bunter had been sprawling in the boat during the hours that the Famous Five had been walking round Sonning and doing their shopping, it seemed rather reasonable that Bunter should put in a spell at towing. Johnny seemed to be still set on accomplishing that superhuman task of making Bunter work!

"Here you are, Bunter!" he said.

"Wharrer you mean, you beast?" hooted Bunter.

"Take the towline!"

"Eh? I don't want it."

"Take it, all the same. You're going to tow."

"I'm not!" roared Bunter. "My hat! I think this is the limit! You fellows go off wandering and amusing yourselves, leaving me to mind the boat—and after I've minded it for hours and hours, and driven off a

beast who was going to rob the boat you ask me to tow!"

"Waiting!" said Johnny Bull.

"I'm too tired to tow, after my struggle with that man Spooner—"

"You'll be a good deal more tired after a struggle with me!" said Johnny Bull darkly. "I've told you I'm waiting."

"Beast!"

"Will you take this line?"

"No!" yelled Bunter. "I won't!"

Whop!

The end of the towrope descended on William George Bunter. It descended on him with a bang! There was a terrific roar that might almost have been heard from Sonning to Caversham Lock.

"Yaroooh!"

Whop!

"Ow! Beast! Stoppit!" yelled Bunter.

"You're taking this rope!" said Johnny stolidly. "You can take it in your paws or round your trousers—but you're taking it!"

Billy Bunter decided to take it with his paws. He stepped out of the boat, gurgling with indignant wrath, and hooked the towrope under a fat arm. And the Water-Lily resumed her voyage up the Thames at the rate of about a mile in a century or two!

Shifting Shifty!

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

"What's up?" asked Nugent. "Is the boat moving?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look astern!" said Bob.

The crew of the Water-Lily looked astern. Plenty of craft were on the water, going up to Caversham Lock. Among other craft, Bob's eyes had spotted a dinghy with a single occupant.

And when he pointed it out to his friends, they recognised a well-known face in it—the foxy face and the shifty eyes of their old friend, Mr. Spooner!

"Oh!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Then that sweep is about, after all."

"Looks like it!" said Bob. "He's following us! He could pass us in a jiffy if he wanted to—but he doesn't want to."

That was clear enough. Keeping his distance, Shifty Spooner was crawling up the river, accommodating his pace to that of the towed Water-Lily.

The Famous Five looked grimly back at Mr. Spooner. Since the occasion when Bunter had diddled that shifty gentleman into giving him a lift, they had not given Mr. Spooner much thought; and they had hoped that they had left him well behind on the lower reaches of the Thames. Evidently, however, he was on the trail again; and, having spotted the Water-Lily, he was sticking to that trail.

"It's Spooner all right!" said Frank Nugent. "I wonder if Bunter was telling the truth, after all?"

"Miracles have happened before!" remarked Bob.

"Bunter may have seen him," said Harry. "Anyhow, he's here now, and watching us—that means we shall have to be on guard to-night when we camp. We know what the rascal is after."

"Not the canned beef!" snorted Johnny.

"He's after this boat!" said Bob. "And, as we explained to Pon & Co. the other day, sauce for the goose is sauce for the giddy gander. Spooner's going to pinch this boat, if he can—let's pinch his!"

"Wha-a-t?"

The Co. stared at Bob. They were willing to use drastic measures in dealing with that pertinacious rogue; but not to the extent of following his example of pinching boats!

"Lend me your ears, my beloved 'earers!" said Bob. "That man Spooner's only lately come out of quod; and if he had any money to buy a boat he could have bought this one, instead of trying to steal it. How do you think he got hold of that dinghy? It looks a pretty decent boat."

"Oh!" said Harry.

"Pinched it!" said Johnny Bull, with a nod. "Plenty of boat-thieves along the river—and that blighter's one of them."

"Exactly!" said Bob. "If it's his boat, we can't touch it—if it isn't, we can, and we're going to. And if he wants to follow us after that he can do it on Shanks' pony, which will give him some exercise, which is good for the health, and keep him from spotting our camp to-night, which

will be good for our beauty sleep. We're going to shift Mr. Shifty Spooner."

Bob stood up and waved his hand to Bunter.

"Tired of towing, old bean?"

A perspiring fat face glared at him. Bunter had been towing for nearly half an hour! He was more than tired.

"Yes, you beast!" he hooted.

"Hop in, then!" said Bob. "We're going to pull."

"Beast!" grunted Bunter, doubtless by way of thanks. He gladly hopped in, the towrope was shipped, and the oars put out. Four of the juniors pulled, and the Water-Lily shot into rapid motion at once.

Looking back, they saw Shifty Spooner shoot into rapid motion also. His eyes were on them; and no doubt his impression was that, having spotted his pursuit, the Greyfriars crew were putting on speed to get clear of him.

Mr. Spooner was not to be so easily dropped! The dinghy came shooting on like an arrow—which, if Shifty had only known it, was exactly what the crew of the Water-Lily wanted:

Suddenly, the Water-Lily backed-water. As she slowed almost to a standstill, the dinghy came shooting up—Mr. Spooner not being prepared for that artful manoeuvre. When Shifty looked round again, he was right on the Greyfriars boat.

Before Mr. Spooner quite realised that he had been, so to speak, led up the garden, Bob Cherry had reached

out with a boathook and hooked on to the dinghy.

"'Ere, what's this game?" exclaimed Mr. Spooner, in angry astonishment.

The boats rocked alongside, and all the Famous Five held on. Mr. Spooner eyed them savagely, gripping an oar, which he was evidently disposed to use as a weapon. But the odds were rather too heavy for Shifty to try that game.

"We're taking you in tow!" said Bob Cherry, cheerily. "You seem to want to go the same way, Mr. Spooner, so we're giving you a tow up to Caversham."

"Suffering snakes! I don't want no tow!" howled Mr. Spooner.

"You're getting it, just the same! Is that your dinghy?"

"Eh? 'Course it's mine!"

"All right for you if it is!" said Bob. "Don't you worry if that's your dinghy. If that's your dinghy, you can rely on the police at Caversham seeing that nobody takes it away from you. If it isn't, they'll stick to it—and you, too! Leave that boathook alone, Spooner—or you'll get a poke from an oar."

Unheeding that warning, Mr. Spooner grasped at the boathook to cast it off. A lunge from Johnny Bull's oar, catching him in the waistcoat, caused him to alter his mind, and he released the hook quite suddenly.

"Blow you!" gasped Mr. Spooner. "Blow the lot of you!"

"Blow away, old bean!" said Bob amiably. He coolly tied on the dinghy's painter. "Keep on blowing, if it amuses you, while we tow you up to Caversham. Look out for another poke if you try to get loose."

"The pokefulness will be terrific, my esteemed pinching Spooner!" grinned the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"He, he, he!" chuckled Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, let's have him run in!"

The Water-Lily pulled on—Bob Cherry keeping the boathook in his hand and a watchful eye on the man in the dinghy.

Shifty Spooner eyed the Greyfriars crew with feelings that were really too deep for words.

He had not looked for this! It did not suit Mr. Spooner at all! Explaining to a policeman how that dinghy had come into his possession was a task from which Mr. Spooner shrank. Not only would the policeman take the dinghy—he would take Mr. Spooner along with it! Shifty, who had lately lived for two years at the Government's expense, had no desire to put the Government to any more expense on his account.

For about ten minutes Shifty sat looking at the Greyfriars crew as if he could have eaten them. Once his hand stole towards the painter; but popped back again quite suddenly, as Bob made a jab with the boathook.

Shifty breathed hard and deep. There was only one thing in the circumstances for Shifty to do—and he did it! As the dinghy bobbed along in the wake of the Water-Lily near the bank Shifty rose and made a sudden leap to the shore.

The ROOKWOOD RAGGERS!

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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.

SPACE being rather short this week, chums, I must commence my chat by telling you what is in store for next week. First and foremost is:

"GREYFRIARS TO THE RESCUE!" another splendid story by Frank Richards dealing with the further exciting holiday adventures of your old favourites—Harry Wharton & Co.—on old Father Thames. Next week they trespass on private property and look like getting it where the chicken got the chopper—in the neck—until— But why spoil the yarn by giving away the plot? Take it from me, chums, you'll vote this great Greyfriars yarn one of the very best.

Although the Famous Five are holiday-making, the "Greyfriars Herald" will appear as usual. Look out for more "news in a nutshell" in next Saturday's tip-top issue.

No doubt you have all noticed that Mr. Shields has been doing the inside illustrations for the MAGNET as well as the cover. This is due to the fact that Mr. Chapman is on holiday, taking a much-needed rest. When he returns, Mr. Shields will seek rest and quiet by the briny. I feel sure you will all be with me in wishing these old friends a really good time so that they may return fit and well to carry on the good work.

ARE THERE SEA-SERPENTS?

is the first query I have to deal with, and it comes from Fred Tatham, of

Barnsley. As a matter of fact, this is a problem which has engaged men's minds for centuries. The old Norsemen believed that there were sea-serpents—they called them "So-Orms," and these creatures were said to be 200 feet long and in the habit of rising out of the water and snapping up odd sailors here and there from the decks of ships. But that wants a bit of swallowing!

All kinds of theories have been put forward to explain the appearance of sea-serpents, and some people have even gone so far as to suggest that the old mariners who reported seeing them had had a nightmare or something, while other folk said they were just pulling our legs. A school of porpoises swimming one behind the other might easily be mistaken for some sort of snake-like monster swimming through the water.

I remember reading how the crew of a whaler in the Pacific saw what looked like a serpent swimming in the water. The captain sent some men out to harpoon it, but instead of harpooning it they brought it back with them with a rope round its neck. It turned out to be no sea-serpent at all, but a mass of seaweed!

Off the coast of America there is a particular kind of seaweed known as alga, which grows to a length of 400 feet and has a large, bladder head. If one of these huge lumps of seaweed got washed out to sea it would look like an immense snake.

A Happy Meeting!

BOB CHERRY jumped. "Oh, my only hat! Know that chap?" he stuttered.

The Greyfriars boat was nosing along the Oxfordshire shore, in the glowing August sunset.

A delightful spot had caught their eyes—as delightful as the spot where they had so unfortunately camped and encountered Loder & Co. A little green meadow, sloping down to the river, shaded by old oaks, was exactly the spot where they would have liked to camp.

And seeing a young man sitting in a canoe tied up under the bank, they wondered whether he belonged to the place, or the place to him, and whether there was a chance of hospitable leave for camping. And then Bob, looking at that young man a second time, fairly gasped.

And his comrades gasped, too. It was Mr. Egerton, eyeglass and all, sitting at the receipt of custom, as

WELL, so much for sea-serpents. Let's see what the next letter contains. It is a query from Tom Jackson, of Hammersmith. He wants to know what dum-dum bullets are like.

These bullets are hollow-nosed and expand on striking an object. The wound made by a dum-dum is more severe than that made by an ordinary bullet. They get their name from the town where they were manufactured—Dum-Dum, a town in British India.

Just to finish up my chat, here is a selection of

RAPID-FIRE REPLIES

to questions which have been fired at me by various readers.

If Billy Bunter, in possession of a pound note, weighs 14 st. 12½ lbs. before going into the school tuck-shop, what does he weigh when he comes out? A "pound" lighter, Wilfred Marriott, of Yorks.

How many foreigners are there at Greyfriars? Here's a nap hand, John Morrison, of Co. Dublin, Fisher T. Fish (New York), Hurree Singh (Bhanipur), Wun Lung and Hop Hi (China), and Monsieur Charpentier—and they're all good scouts!

WANTED: Cardboard model of Greyfriars showing studies, etc. And very nice, too, Rex Walker, of Walsall, but rather too big a proposition for me, chum.

How long will it be before Mr. Quelch finishes his "History of Greyfriars"? Don't ask me, Clem Foster, of Glasgow, I'm not doing the job! But don't rush the old bean!

When will the "Holiday Annual" be on sale? Next Friday, September 1st. And if you want to be sure of a copy, Ray Simmons, of Epping, ask your newsagent to reserve a copy for you.

That's about all for this week, chum.

YOUR EDITOR,

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! He's going!" roared Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Shifty crashed on the bank, his legs in the water. He dragged his legs out of the Thames, shook an enraged fist at the grinning crew of the Water-Lily, and travelled—on his highest gear. A roar of laughter followed him from the Greyfriars crew.

"That's that!" remarked Bob Cherry. "Looks as if it wasn't his dinghy—what?"

"Sort of!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"We can hand in that boat at Caversham to-morrow," said Bob. "I dare say its owner will be glad to see it again. And as Mr. Spooner has landed in Berkshire, we'll pull across and look for a camp in Oxfordshire, what?"

And satisfied that the pertinacious Mr. Spooner had been this time effectually thrown off the trail, the Greyfriars crew pulled across to look for a camp on the Oxford bank.

they had seen him before, the previous evening.

He had changed his location—no doubt he changed it every day. He was a good many miles up the river from his previous beat. But it was the same young man in the same eye-glass, and the same canoe—and evidently at the same game—looking for mugs.

No doubt he wanted a different set of mugs—but unfortunately for Mr. Egerton, the same set had happened on him again.

He was smoking a cigarette over a racing paper as before. Probably the quids that Mr. Egerton extracted from mugs went on geegees. But he looked up with a pleasant smile as the Greyfriars boat rolled into the offing.

"Nice evening!" said Mr. Egerton, evidently not for the moment recognising his mugs. "Looking for a camp, might I ask?"

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"Quite!" said Harry Wharton, reaching out with the boathook and hooking on to the canoe. "We're also looking for the rascal who swindled us yesterday. We haven't found the camp yet; but we've found the rascal!"

While he was speaking, recognition dawned in Mr. Egerton's face. The agreeable smile faded away, leaving the young man in the canoe looking worried.

"Oh!" he said.

"Like to let us that meadow for camping, Mr. Egerton?" asked Bob Cherry pleasantly. "I dare say you've let the house to some other party; but you've reserved the right to let the meadow to any party of mugs that may come along—what?"

Mr. Egerton grasped his paddle.

But he had no chance of using that paddle. Wharton had hooked the canoe with the boathook, and Bob Cherry grasped it with a strong hand. Johnny Bull had an oar in hand, his look expressing quite plainly that he was going to knock Mr. Egerton down with it, if he attempted to get away. It was the hour of reckoning for the young man in the eyeglass.

"You can put down that paddle, Mr. Egerton—if your name's Egerton to-day, as it was yesterday," said Harry Wharton. "You're not going."

"I don't know what you mean," said the young man in the canoe, with an attempt at bluster. "I've never seen you before."

"I say, you fellows, that's the chap!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "That's the beast who landed us in that row at Loder's place. I say, chuck him into the water!"

"We got into a shindy last night, after you'd taken us in!" said Harry Wharton. "Never mind that. But you owe us a pound—"

"I don't know you from Adam!" said the young man in the canoe.

"Sheer off, and go about your business. I want nothing to do with you."

"Very likely," grinned Bob; "but we want quite a lot to do with you, now we've bagged you! Are you handing over that quid you welshed out of us yesterday?"

The young man in the canoe set his lips. He was fairly caught; but he was evidently unwilling to make restitution. He swung up his paddle.

"Let go my canoe, or—"

He did not finish. He was interrupted by Johnny Bull's oar, which jammed forcibly into his ribs, and knocked him over the side of the canoe.

He grabbed hold of his craft with a spluttering yell, and it rocked, with Mr. Egerton standing up to his armpits in shallow water under the bank.

"Getting wet?" asked Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Egerton, if that was his name, which was improbable, spluttered. He strove to drag himself back into the canoe. Johnny Bull's oar, catching him under the chin, rather frustrated that effort.

"Stick where you are!" said Johnny cheerfully. "You try to get into that canoe, and I'll knock you out again fast enough. You're going to shell out the quid you swindled us of, before you get out of the water."

"You—you—" gasped the hapless swindler. "You—you—"

"Us—us—" agreed Bob Cherry. "Take your time, old bean—we're not in a hurry. We're not handing you a quid this time, for leave to camp on somebody else's property—you're handing us our quid, for leave to get out of the Thames. But take your time."

"No hurry at all!" said Frank Nugent politely. "Lots of time to look for a camp yet. We'll wait an hour if you like."

"He, he, he!" from Billy Bunter. Mr. Egerton, with his feet sinking in mud, the Thames washing round him under his arms, held on to the canoe, and gazed at the Greyfriars party with an expressive gaze. He did not seem as willing as the juniors to wait an hour. He was in a hurry, if they were not. He was finding the Thames very wet and uncomfortable.

He did not keep the Greyfriars crew waiting an hour. He kept them waiting hardly a minute.

Then still with that expressive expression on his face, he groped under water and a wallet came in sight. Holding it carefully above the Thames, he extracted a pound note from it, which, in expressive silence, he handed over to Harry Wharton.

"Thanks!" said Harry. "That sees you clear—and you can cut. You're not going to wait here to catch mugs! Get off!"

Mr. Egerton was allowed to clamber into his canoe, taking some of the Thames and quite a considerable amount of mud on board with him. He sat drenched and dripping and draggled.

"Get going!" grunted Johnny Bull. He gave Mr. Egerton a start, by lunging with the oar at his neck, and Mr. Egerton gasped and got going.

Probably, in his drenched and muddy state, he was hardly disposed to remain there looking for mugs. Anyhow, the Greyfriars crew were not going to allow him to do so. He paddled dismally away. The Greyfriars fellows had been quite pleased by that meeting; but the pleasure was all on their side—it was clear that the young man in the canoe had not enjoyed it a bit. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh gave him a parting word of advice as he went.

"Remember, my esteemed swindling rogue, that honesty is the cracked pitcher that saves a bird in the hand from going to the well, as the English proverb remarkably observes!" said the nabob. And with those words of wisdom in his ears, the young man in the canoe disappeared down the river.

And the Greyfriars crew, quite bucked by that happy meeting, pulled on and looked for a camp.

THE END.

(Your old pals—Harry Wharton & Co.—meet with more fun and exciting adventures on Old Father Thames in next week's super story: "GREYFRIARS TO THE RESCUE!" By Frank Richards. Don't miss it!)

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—Ed.

The GREYFRIARS HERALD

(Continued from page 2.)

"Well done, Birchemall!" he cried. "You've been a champion ass right through this bizziness—"

"Oh, really, Mr. Fearless!"

"But you've turned up trumps in the end!" finished Mr. Fearless. "Three cheers for Dr. Birchemall, everybody!"

And the cheers were given with a will!

The only problem remaining was what to do with Hymer Kerr and his followers. Kaptin Goodfellow was for handing them over to the authorities as pirates, to be hung, drawn, and quartered. But Mr. Fearless was in a forgiving mood now that his quest had ended in success, and after a general confab he adopted a suggestion of the Head's that they should all be made to run the gauntlet three times.

This was done amid much cheering and laughter; after which the ruffians, looking very much the worse for wear, were bundled back to their own ship and cut adrift.

It was a very cheery trip back to England for everybody on the Mary Ann, and especially for Jack Jolly & Co. The fact that Jolly had saved the Head from being turned into food for cannibals gave the old fogey food for thought; and he was as nice as ninnepence to the chums of the Fourth throughout the voyage.

Altogether, our heroes had to agree when they landed at last that they had enjoyed themselves no end. In the face of danger they had been Fearless; and, as a consequence, everything had been Jolly and Merry and Bright!

OLD BOY'S BOISTEROUS BOASTS ARE BOLONEY!

Declares **DICK RUSSELL**

Years ago my Uncle George was at Greyfriars himself, and when Rake and I spent a week-end with him he jolly well let us know it!

"If I can say it without offence, boys," he beamed, "Greyfriars boys of to-day are not what they were when I was in the Lower Fourth. Nothing like it!"

"The fact is, if you don't mind my mentioning it, you're rather a milk-and-water crowd at the old school nowadays. Not boisterous enough, by gad! Too meek and mild and polite—that's what it is! Now, in my day, we were tough."

"That so, uncle?" I asked politely, and Rake said "Really!" You have to give these old jossers their head!

"We were hard-working, hard-playing, and hard-hitting," said Uncle George, warming to his work. "Bullying was rife; but nobody ever complained. We just gritted our teeth and put up with it! Floggings were everyday affairs; we used to laugh at them, by Jove! As for japes—Ha, ha, ha!"

Uncle George went off into a hearty roar at the mere recollection of his japing days. I winked at Rake.

"I expect they were pretty thick, eh, uncle?" I asked demurely.

"Ha, ha, ha! You're right, boy! None of your namby-pamby booby-

traps or ventriloquism for us! That sort of stuff was mere chicken-feed to us! We went all out!

"I remember a crowd of us stripping the Head's orchard of apples and leaving them piled up all over the old chap's study! Another time we filled our Form-master's bath with bad fish just before he went in for his morning dip. Ha, ha, ha!"

"There was another occasion when we moved all the furniture from a prefect's study into a box-room. Shall I ever forget his face when he walked into his empty room that night? I think not!

"As for other people's property, we treated it with scant respect, I can



tell you. Wherever we went, we left behind a trail of broken windows, knockerless doors, and unhinged gates. We were regular vandals, I admit—but how tough and vital compared with the present generation of Greyfriars boys! Ah, well!"

Uncle George sighed reminiscently. Then he stopped and stared at his house, in front of which he had been delivering his monologue.

"Great Scott! That window!" he ejaculated. "The drawing-room window over there! It's broken!"

I smiled.

"Quite right, uncle. I forgot to tell you before. Rake and I were practising with our catapults this morning, and one of us must have aimed wide."

Rake and I grinned cheerfully at Uncle George, quite expecting him to be pleasantly surprised at our timely display of old-fashioned youthful boisterousness.

But he was nothing of the kind. Instead of giving us each a clap on the back and roaring with laughter, he gave us each a clip on the ear and roared with rage.

"Catapults, eh? And broken windows!" he hooted. "I'll teach you young rascals to go round smashing my windows!"

"But look here, uncle," I protested, "didn't you say that when you were a boy—"

"When I was a boy I had too much respect for other people's windows to

use a catapult—and I'm going to get the same respect from you while you're staying with me!" he snorted. "Pah!"

And punky stumped into the house, breathing fire and slaughter.

What he would have done if we had removed his door-knocker and unhinged his gate and stripped his orchard and put stale fish in his bath, I tremble to think. But I can tell you the opinion Rake and I formed of his boast about Greyfriars being tougher in his day.

It's summed up in one word—boloney!

HAROLD SKINNER'S NEWS SERVICE!

(My motto: Facts, Not Fiction.)

Mr. Quelch celebrated his umpty-first birthday by winning first prize at a sports meeting in the carpet-beating contest.

Mrs. Mumble has just finished making her Hot Cross Buns for next Good Friday.

Penfold is in great demand for picnics because of his reputation as a "fly" swotter.

Coker finds very little inconvenience during the hols in going about without headgear. Though deprived of the chance of talking through his hat, he finds he can still talk through the back of his neck.

Ogilvy, on holiday in Scotland, got up in the middle of the night to go fishing. He caught a tremendous cold.

The meat-and-pastry served for dinner at Greyfriars is to be given the title of the Old School Pie.

Asked if he objected to being nicknamed the Owl, Bunter stated that he didn't care two hoots.

THE DE-BUNKFULNESS OF OUR ESTEEMED SCHOOL!

By **HURREE SINGH**

It gives me great pleasurefulness, my esteemed and absurd chums, to correct amendfully a few wrongful notions commonly held about our worthy school.

1. That Billy Bunter's postal order never turns up—it does. I saw it once viewfully with my own honoured optics. It had grown whiskers sproutfully in transit!

2. That Loder is always "an esteemed and reprehensible bully. He is not. I distinctly remember one occasion when he looked at a fag without scowling. The fag fainted swoonfully.

3. That Lord Mauleverer takes forty winks sleepfully every afternoon—not always. I myself enumerated his winks countfully one afternoon when I chatted with him during his napful repose. The esteemed Mauly winked only three times before he was sleeping soundfully.

4. That Gosling thoughtfully opines that all boys should be "drowned" at birth—he doesn't. He oncefully remarked that they ought to be "throttled."

5. That the honoured and ridiculous author of this article cannot write correctful English—he can. The fact that he has inscribed these words writefully in perfect English without a faultful error is the positive test prooffully!

A DIP INTO MY HOLIDAY DIARY!

By **BOLSOVER MINOR**

MONDAY.—"What shall we do to-day?" asked Paget, first thing. "Redskins," I answered. We made ripping headdresses and went out scalp-hunting in the woods at the bottom of Pagot's garden. Enjoyed being Redskins no end.

TUESDAY.—Turned ourselves into speedway aces and rode races round the playground of the village school. Looked top-hole in crash helmets and with numbers on our bikes. It's great being a speedway ace!

WEDNESDAY.—Decided to become detectives. After a scrap to settle who was who, I became Ferrers Locke—and Paget, Jack Drake. Trained a fellow who carried a bomb wrapped in brown paper. We knew it must be a bomb because you could hear it ticking. Collared the chap and snaffled his parcel. Disappointed to find it was only an alarm-clock—but it's gorgeous being a detective!

THURSDAY.—Mr. Paget hired a couple of ponies for us, so we put on cowboy kit and made ourselves outlaws. Pity the farmer came along to spoil the sport. Old boy cut up rusty and we had to turn into ordinary cowboys, which isn't half such fun as being an outlaw.

FRIDAY.—Had a circus in the garden with Paget's animals—two dogs, one cat, two rabbits, a mouse, and three guinea-pigs. I was ringmaster and Paget lion-tamer. Had a fine time. I really think I like being a ringmaster better than anything.

SATURDAY.—Discovered a quarry where they're not working at present. Had spiffing sport with a truck left on rails. I was the engine-driver and Paget the guard. Staged a marvellous smash-up. Decided that I'm in my element when I'm a train-driver.

SUNDAY.—When Mr. Paget asked me what I liked most about a holiday I said the fact that it gave me the chance to be my real self. Mr. Paget said as far as he could judge the last thing on earth I wanted to be was myself. Dashed if I can make out what he's getting at!

NO TRANSATLANTIC SLANG AT GREYFRIARS!

Says **TOM BROWN**

Some silly ass has been writing to the papers complaining about the spread of American slang in English schools. It's all rot!

It doesn't apply to Greyfriars! I can tell you that for certain, because I went round the school before the holiday, making notes

In the quad I came across Skinner and Trevor having a squabble with Snoop that ended in their bumping him.

If that newspaper correspondent had been correct, they'd have said "Give him the works!" But they said nothing of the kind.

They used good King's English instead. They said "Biff him on the boko!"

At the tennis courts, near the Head's garden I heard Wingate giving orders to Bolsover minor, who was fagging for him. Did Bolsover minor say "O.K., big boy!"? He did not. He said "Right-ho, old cock bird!"

On the School House steps I was just in time to hear Bulstrode crashing in on a crowd of Remove chaps with some important news. Now if Bulstrode had been infected with this Transatlantic slang bug he'd have said "Hear me holler! Get a load of this!"

Instead of that he spoke pure English. He said "Shut your gabs and open your bally ears!"

I could give you plenty more like this. But what I've given you will do for a sample.

Transatlantic slang hasn't spread to Greyfriars. We speak the best English there, thank goodness!

HONESTY THE BEST POLICY!

Yawns **FISHER T. FISH**

When you holler about honesty I guess you just can't help thinking of Fisher T. Fish. That's right where I live!

Take this little tourist stunt I been running at Greyfriars in the vac. Most guys would have stuck to every cent of the profits. But not Fisher T. Fish. No, sir!

I'll say it was a nifty idea and all my own at that. Who else would have thought of taking tourist parties round the school at a shilling a time in vacation? Nobody else you can think of in this sleepy old joint, I'll tell a man!

But I got my eye teeth cut. It's just a matter of brains, I guess. And did the dollars roll in? I'll say!

If it hadn't been for that old snooper Gosling muscling in, I guess I'd have made a pile at it. But when Gosling said he was reporting me to the Head I saw the red light and shut up shop. The Doc just ain't businesslike, and he wouldn't stand for it—and I knew it and gave it best.

I went right to his Reverence instanter and spilled the beans in that frank and honest way you would expect of me. You bet!

"Listen, sir!" I yawned. "I guess I been doing this joint some good. I guess I been showing tourists round and putting some swell advertising for you. I guess I made some dough out of it, too. But it's all yours. Give it to charity, sir. You're welcome!"

With these words I handed the old bird a dollar and moseyed out. He just managed to thank me.

Well, there you are, folks. That's me—honest from the word "go." Can't beat it, can you? A guy makes fifty dollars and hands the whole lot over to the Head with the exception of his forty-nine dollars' expenses. Say, it beats Barney!

Call me a sap, if you like. But I get peace of mind out of it. Honesty may not pay, but it's the best policy all the same, I'll say!

JOIN MY DOWN-WITH-DIN SOCIETY!

Says **DICK RAKE**

I am starting an anti-noise group at Greyfriars next term. I propose to call it the Down-With-Din Society. That doesn't mean, by the way, that the members will be known as the Down-With-Dinners!

This new society of mine will aim at abolishing all disturbing noises. Scientists are all agreed nowadays that noise leads to aggravated neurosis and instability of the psychological reflexes. I don't want to suffer from anything like that myself, whatever it may mean, and if my society can stop it, I shan't!

The first thing we will demand is the sound-proofing of the Head's study. That unnerving swishing and yelling you so often hear there must be silenced.

Next we shall aim at installing rubber crockery in the dining-hall so as to cut out that clatter you get at present with meals.

We shall seek power to destroy Coker's motor-bike, to gag Temple whenever he threatens to sing, to fix chokes to Bull's cornet, and to transfer Hoskins' piano to the crypt.

We hope in time to muffle the school bell, to fix shock-absorbers on all floors used for bumping, and to educate Lower School men to carry out the wildest rags in complete silence.

Our complete programme will gladly be sent to all anti-clatter fans who send us a donation. Meanwhile, pals, if a noise annoys you, join the Down-With-Din Society to-day!

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