

One guess which fictional character utters this immortal line of dialogue: "Urrgh! Beast! Wurrgh! Rotter! Beast!"

Dash it all, you chaps got it right first time.

Of course, it's old Billy Bunter, the Fat Owl of Greyfriars Remove.

Bunter and his chums are making a comeback. Just in time for the pre-Christmas book-buying spree.

Jolly good to see them back, too. Bob Cherry, Mr Quelch, Horace Coker — the duffer of the Fifth — and all the rest.

Mind you, they don't come at tuppence a week any more.

The Bunter stories, together with all the other adventure yarns which once made The Magnet magazine required reading for schoolboys throughout the British Empire, now cost a hefty \$11.50 collected in book form.

## Nostalgia

But even at that price, there are probably enough Old Boys left who'll buy them for their nostalgia value.

Howard Baker Press have not even reset the stories. They appear exactly as they did between 1908 and 1940, the work of one of the world's most remarkable writers — Englishman Frank Richards.

Richards (real name Charles Hamilton) was 86 when he died in 1961 after writing the equivalent of a thousand full-length novels.

# Yaroo chaps and a jolly good show

**Bob Cherry's  
Big Bargain and  
Billy Bunter in  
Brazil, by Frank  
Richards, published by  
Howard Baker, \$11.50  
each.**

Richards claimed that no writer could do better work than to slave over a typewriter to entertain young people.

Much of his prodigious output is clearly dated now, the situations and dialogue made faintly ludicrous in an era of long hair, surf boards, pop concerts, pot smoking and sexual freedom.

Yet there is no denying that Richards was a genius at

thinking up plots. Updated, most of his yarns would go over just as successfully with today's schoolboys.

But browsing through the collected Magnets I wonder at some of the strange sado-masochistic situations that Richards' schoolboy heroes got themselves into.

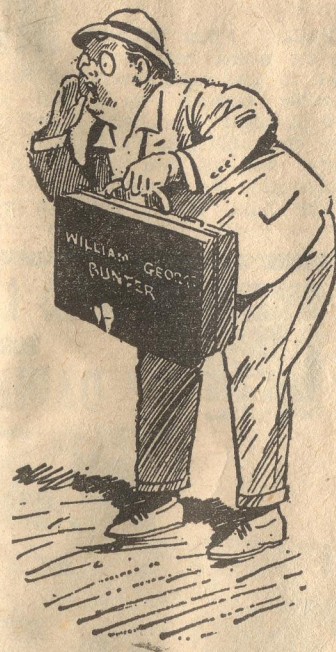
What do you make of this caption for a drawing of a lad being flogged, from The Shadow Of The Guillotine, first published in 1929.

## Flogging

"Paul's shirt was cut to ribbons, laying bare the bruised and quivering flesh, as the grooms forced him to his knees. Goaded, blinded, sick to his very soul with the agony of the brutal flogging, the youngster raised weak hands to ward off the pitiless, stinging cuts..."

Hmmm...

But there's nothing ambiguous about this advertisement in the same issue: "Boys



(ages 14-19) wanted for Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Farm training, outfit, assisted passages provided. The Salvation Army keeps in touch with boys after settlement in the Dominions. S.S. Vedic chartered for third time, sailing Oct 19, 1929, from Liverpool to Australia."

I wonder how many blokes found their way here after reading that ad. They would have sailed right into the Depression and tough times in the bush.

Those who are left might blub a nostalgic tear or two over the Bunter series.