

THE GREYFRIARS

HOLIDAY

1936

ANNUAL

1936

FOR BOYS AND GIRLS





Frontispiece

BILLY BUNTER, THE WAITER!

Specially pictured by Leonard Shields

It was only on the condition that he waited upon the guests that Billy Bunter was allowed to be present at this big Remove "feed"—A cheery incident taken from "Billy Bunter's Bust 'U'p!" 115

The GREYFRIARS HOLIDAY Annual

1936



Greeting

ONCE more I come to greet you, chum !
The best of books, behold me !
(That's not a boast, it's what a host
Of readers past have told me.)

I bring you tales of thrilling trails
And yarns of high adventure,
Of schoolboy fun, each yarn A1
Will never call for censure.

I've tales galore of peace and war,
Of sportsmen, scouts and fighters ;
With tales of school I'm brimming full,
By all your favourite writers.

I've lots of fun for everyone
Within my merry pages,
And poems fill the contents bill
By various bards and sages.

The artists who my pictures drew
Should hang in the Academy ;
(I mean to say, their works, not they ;
No, that would be too bad o' me !)

Each sketch and plate I beg to state
Is absolutely topping ;
Leave that to me, I'll never see
My own high standard dropping.

Enough is said ! Now go ahead
And take my benediction,
To add its mite to your delight
In this my chest of fiction.

Issued from The Fleetway
House, Farringdon Street,
London, E.C.4.

The Editor To His Friends

IN presenting this, the 1936 Edition of the "Holiday Annual," to the many thousands of my loyal reader-friends, I am aware that I am up against a tough task. For every year, for seventeen years now, I have endeavoured to make each successive volume of the "Holiday Annual" just a little better than its predecessor, and every year, naturally, my self-imposed task has become just a little more difficult.

In considering the problem this year, I have decided to throw the burden on to the shoulders of our old friends Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars, and the equally popular Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's.

Readers of this volume, therefore, will find that even more space than usual has been devoted to the fun and adventures of these famous schoolboy heroes—incontestably the world's favourite characters—on the principle that it is impossible to have too much of a good thing. Just enough fiction of the thrilling adventure type has been included to give balance to the book and to provide the spice of contrast.

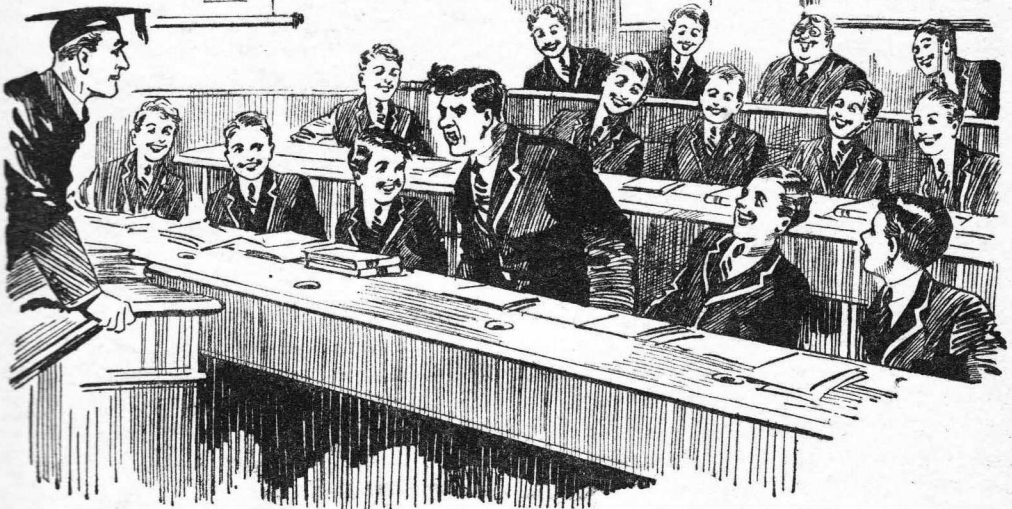
That the finished product will provide even the most fastidious with many happy hours of satisfying reading, is the quite confident hope of your sincere friend,

THE EDITOR.

THE FLEETWAY HOUSE,
FARRINGDON STREET,
LONDON, E.C.4.

(All rights reserved, and reproduction without permission strictly forbidden.)

The DUNCE of GREYFRIARS!



By FRANK RICHARDS

When it comes to brains Horace James Coker of the Fifth Form is on a level with the most backward boy in the Second Form. But what Coker lacks in brains he makes up for in brawn—and pluck! Read how he convinced his Form-master that brawn and pluck were a mighty sight better than being able to spell correctly!

THE FIRST CHAPTER

COKER KNOWS BEST!

“OXYPUT!”

“Oxyput!”

“Oxyput!”

Harry Wharton & Co., of the Remove at Greyfriars School, stared.

That word was enough to make any fellow stare.

They stared blankly.

What Coker of the Fifth was doing it for was a mystery to them.

But he was doing it.

Sitting at his table in his study in the Fifth-Form passage at Greyfriars,

Horace Coker, of the Fifth Form, was writing that amazing and extraordinary word over and over again.

Coker's rugged brow was wrinkled. His lips were set. His whole expression was one of dogged determination. He seemed concentrated on his strange task—so deeply concentrated, that he remained unaware of the arrival of the Famous Five of the Remove.

True, they had arrived very quietly. They had tiptoed. They wanted to catch Coker. They did not want to give him time to slam his study door and turn the key.

But they really need not have been so excessively cautious. Coker did not look round or look up as the five juniors appeared in his study doorway. His back was to them as he sat at the table, and it remained to them. As they tiptoed into the study, Coker dipped his pen into the ink and wrote once more that remarkable word "Oxyput!"

The juniors, standing behind Coker and looking over his broad shoulders, could see what he was writing. It amazed them. It made them stare. It made them forget that they had come to the study to rag Coker.

Coker had to be ragged. Coker, who rather prided himself on having a short way with fags, had recently kicked Nugent minor, of the Second Form—doubtless for his own good. Perhaps he had forgotten, or perhaps he did not care, that Dicky Nugent had a major in the Remove; and that his major, Frank Nugent, was a member of that celebrated company, the Famous Five. If he had forgotten, he was going to be reminded. Nugent major had arrived with his comrades to indicate to Coker that kicking a fellow was a game that two could play.

Nugent major was going to kick Coker. Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh were going to quell any objections Coker might have to the process. It was probable that Coker's objections would be somewhat strenuous.

Now, however, instead of collaring Horace Coker and up-ending him out of the chair, the chums of the Remove stared—just stared! They wondered whether Coker had gone off his rocker. They knew that he had not far to go.

"Oxyput!" wrote Coker for the fourth time, and then for the fifth time "Oxyput!" And then for the sixth time "Oxyput!"

It was really mysterious. Harry Wharton & Co. had heard of the word "occiput." It was, they believed, some section of a fellow's napper. But why Coker should be writing that word over and over again—and, above all, why he should be spelling it in so extraordinary a manner—mystified and intrigued them.

"The old ass!" Coker spoke aloud, communing with himself. "The old chump! I'll show him! Pompous old ass! Yah!"

The juniors guessed that Coker was alluding to his Form-master, Mr. Prout. The description seemed to fit.

Apparently Coker was in some trouble with his Form-master.

That was nothing new. Coker was often in hot water in his Form-room. He knew things better than Prout could tell him—or fancied that he did. That sort of belief inevitably led to trouble.

"They can say what they like!" went on Coker, still communing with himself. "Potter's an ass! Greene's another ass! I'll show 'em whether Prout's going to dictate to me! I'll show Prout!"

Once more Horace Coker dipped his pen in the ink and wrote:

"Oxyput!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry suddenly bawled in his ear. "What's the name of that game, Coker?"

Coker jumped.

That sudden roar close to his ear was the first intimation he received that the juniors were in the study at all. He fairly bounded.

"Wha-a-t——" gasped Coker.

A shower of blots flew from his pen. They scattered over his sheet of impot paper, almost obliterating several of his "oxyputs."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker spun round. He glared at the juniors.

"You silly little idiots!" he spluttered. "Look what you've made me do! I shall have to start that impot. over again now! By gum! I'll jolly well whop the lot of you!"

"Is that an imposition!" ejaculated Harry Wharton.

"Of course it is, you young ass! Think I'm sitting in here writing occiput, occiput, occiput, for pleasure, while the other fellows are playing football?" snorted Coker.

"For Prout?" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"Of course it's for Prout! Think any other beak can give a Fifth-Form man an impot!"

"But—but—but Prout hasn't told you to write that!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"He has! A hundred times!" snorted Coker, "and I'd got fairly going when you've made me spoil it! And I'll jolly well whop you——"

Coker glared round the study. He was looking for a fives bat, with which to "whop" those cheeky juniors. It did not occur to Coker's powerful brain, for the moment, that whopping five sturdy fellows, all at once, was a large order—a very large order! It was likely to occur to him; however, when he started—the whopping!

"But, I say, Coker!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Prout couldn't have told you to spell the word like that!"



"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" bawled Bob Cherry suddenly. Coker jumped. That sudden roar was the first intimation he received that the juniors were in his study. A shower of blots flew from his pen as he started.

"Wha-a-at!" he gasped.

Coker, ceasing for a moment his quest of the fives bat, glared at the captain of the Remove.

"How would you spell it, you cheeky young tick?" he demanded contemptuously.

"O-c-c-i-p-u-t!" spelt out Wharton.

Coker laughed. It was one of those jeering laughs!

"That's how Prout spells it!" he said.

"Well, then——" said Harry.

"It's not how I spell it!" said Coker.

"Looks as if it isn't!" remarked Johnny Bull, with a glance at the blotted paper. "But what——"

"We had a row about it, in the Form-room this morning!" said Coker. "The word turned up, and I spelt it oxyput—which is right! Any fool would know that occiput was spelt o-x-y-p-u-t, without being told!"

"Only one fool would know that, I think!" said Bob Cherry, with a shake of the head.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Eh! What?" Coker was not quick on the uptake. "I suppose Quelch teaches you fags to spell in the Remove! Prout doesn't, in the Fifth! The man's an ignoramus, you know! I wonder Dr. Locke keeps him on! I'd sack him, if I were Head! Making out that I can't spell——"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Jawing a man, before all the Form!" said Coker, in tones of thrilling indignation. "A fellow could stand it, if a fellow was in the wrong! But Prout's always in the wrong! His spelling's atrocious! Would you fellows believe that he makes out that there isn't a K in picnic? I'm serious—he does! And that man a school-master!"

"Oh, crikey!"

"Would you believe," went on Coker, "that after I pointed out to him the right way to spell occiput, he still persisted that there were two C's in the word, and no X at all? Sounds steep, doesn't it? But that's Prout all over! And he had the nerve to give me an impot—to write out the word a hundred times—spelt his way! His way! I'll watch it!"

"But——" gasped Harry.

"My esteemed idiotic Coker——" stuttered Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Coker, old bean——" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"I'll watch it!" repeated Coker grimly. "You can take a horse to water, but you can't make him drink! Prout can give me an impot—that's within his powers, as a beak! But he can't make me spell wrong!"

"Oh, scissors!"

"I'm writing the word a hundred times, as he told me to do! But I'm going to spell it correctly!"

"Correctly!" gasped Frank Nugent. "Ye gods!"

"Yes—and Prout can like it or lump it!" said Coker firmly. "He will get his hundred words—spelt right! It may teach him to spell! He needs it! Anyhow, he's not going to make me spell as badly as he does!"

"But—but——" gasped Harry Wharton. "Coker, old bean, you—you can't take that to Prout! Prout's right, you know."

"Don't be a little ass!"

"There really are two C's!" gasped Bob.

"Don't be a little idiot!"

"And no X's—really and truly!" said Nugent.

"Don't be a little fathead!"

"But—but I say, Prout will be fearfully wild if you cheek him like

that, Coker!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"Let him!"

"He might take you to the Head!"

"Let him! If he likes to show up his ignorance to the Head I'm not the man to stop him!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Harry Wharton and Co. gazed at Coker! They were quite concerned

They were really anxious to save Coker from himself, if they could!

"I—I say, why not let Prout have his way?" suggested Wharton, putting it diplomatically. "Even if he's wrong—ahem—you have to give a beak his head, you know, like a horse."

"It's a matter of principle with me!" said Coker. "I can't give in! I'd give in fast enough if I was wrong



Five pairs of hands grasped Coker all at once, and the next few minutes were wild and whirling for the Fifth-Former. Bump! Coker established contact with his study carpet with a concussion that brought dust from the carpet and a terrific roar from Coker!

for him. Such an act of defiance, from any fellow to his Form-master, could only lead to awful trouble. Coker did not seem to understand that. But then, Coker never understood anything. In their genuine concern for the fathead of the Fifth, the chums of Greyfriars forgot that they had come there to rag him.

—I hope I'm a reasonable chap—"

"Oh, dear!"

"But when a fellow's in the right, a fellow's in the right! Prout can like it or lump it! I don't care which!"

"He'll be waxy!" said Bob.

"The waxfulness will be terrific."

"Look here, Coker, don't be an

ass!" said Johnny Bull. "You can't spell for toffee——"

"Lucky you've blotted that impot!" said Nugent. "Start the next one as Prout wants it, Coker, and don't ask for trouble."

Coker did not answer.

His eye had fallen on a fives bat, which lay on the book-shelf.

He stepped across, and clutched it.

"Now——" he began.

"Let's clear, you men!" said Harry Wharton. "If Coker's going to cheek Prout like that, he will get enough without us giving him any. I say—whooop!"

The captain of the Remove gave a roar, as Coker caught him by the collar with his left hand and applied the fives bat with his right!

The whopping had started!

Coker's idea was that, having started, it would continue. But it did not continue! It ended as soon as it started!

Five pairs of hands grasped Coker, all at once.

Bump!

Coker established contact with his study carpet, with a concussion that brought dust from the carpet, and a terrific roar from Coker!

"Yooo-hoop!"

What happened next Coker hardly knew! The next few minutes were wild and whirling!

Then the Famous Five, rather breathless, quitted Coker's study. Horace Coker was left on the floor, in a still more breathless state, with the fives bat shoved down his back!

He sat up, gurgling.

"Ooogh! Grooogh! The cheeky young ticks — I'll — ooogh! Woooogh!"

Coker made frantic efforts to extract the fives bat. He succeeded at last.

By that time, however, the chums

of the Remove had long vanished into space, and it was too late for that fives bat to be of any use.

Coker hurled it into a corner of the study. He sat down at the table again, with a fresh sheet of impot. paper before him, and dipped his pen in the ink! His rugged brow was as determined as ever, or more so! Argument was wasted on Coker! When a fellow knew he was right, he knew he was right, and that was that! And with grim determination, Horace Coker proceeded to write out his imposition for Prout!

Oxyput! Oxyput! Oxyput!

THE SECOND CHAPTER

PLUCKY OF PROUT!

"LEGGO!"

"Look 'ere——!"

"Ow! Leggo! Help!" yelled Billy Bunter.

Mr. Prout paused.

That terrified yell from William George Bunter, of the Remove, reached his ears, through an intervening hedge.

Prout was walking back to Greyfriars, from the village. He had taken a short cut across a meadow, and was about to emerge into Friardale Lane, by a gap in the hedge, when he heard Bunter.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Prout, startled.

He paused, stared round him, and rolled on. Prout was a stout, portly pompous gentleman, and he rolled on his way round like a stately Spanish galleon of olden time. Bunter's dulcet tones continued to greet his portly ears, as he rolled out into the lane.

"I say—leggo! Yow-ow! I haven't any money! I—I've been disappointed about a postal order! I say—yaroooh! Leggo!"

Prout stared.

Billy Bunter, the fattest fellow at Greyfriars, or in the wide world, was wriggling and squirming in a grasp of iron that was fastened on his podgy shoulder.

It was a rough-looking man in a tattered pullover, with a stubbly face, who grasped the fat Owl of the Remove.

In the distance, towards the school, a fat figure very like Bunter's was vanishing, in full flight.

It was that of Sammy Bunter, of the Second Form.

The dusk was falling; and the two Bunters, evidently, had been on their way back to school when the tramp had happened on them. Both had bolted—but whereas Sammy had dodged and got away, Billy had fallen into the rough grasp of the footpad.

"Now then, 'and it over!" said a rough, savage, husky voice. "Turn out your pockets, you fat covey! If I have to 'it you, you'll get 'urt! You won't give Spadger 'Awkins any trouble, if you know what's good for you! 'And it over sharp!"

"I—I say, I—I haven't got anything!" gasped Billy Bunter. "I—I'd give it to you with pleasure, if—I had! But—but a postal-order I was expecting this morning never came!"

Spadger Hawkins, grasping the fat junior with his left hand, drew back his right, clenched.

"Well, if you will 'ave it——!" he growled.

"Yaroo! Help!"

Neither observed the surprised and indignant countenance of Prout staring from the gap in the hedge.

Prout breathed indignant wrath.

He had a stout walking-stick under his arm. He slid it down into his hand and grasped it. Then he weighed in!

The rough fist of Mr. Hawkins was threatening Billy Bunter's fat little nose, and the Owl's terrified eyes almost bulged through his spectacles.

Crack!

Prout's walking-stick descended on the battered bowler hat that adorned the tousled head of Spadger Hawkins.

It was a hefty whack!

The ruffian uttered a terrific yell, released Billy Bunter, and staggered across the lane.

"Oh, crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He gave Mr. Prout one blink through his spectacles! But he did not stop for another! He was free to run—and he ran! Bunter, as a rule, was no sprinter; but the speed he put up on this occasion would have done credit to the most active fellow in the Remove. He fairly flew: and almost in a twinkling, vanished over the horizon after Sammy.

Prout did not run. He did not think of running. He was far too dignified to run. Besides, he had too much weight to carry.

"Scoundrel!" boomed Prout, shaking his stick at the staggering tramp. "Ruffian! How dare you attempt to rob a Greyfriars boy! If there were a constable at hand, I would give you into custody! Rascal!"

Spadger Hawkins stood rubbing his head. He had a pain there! The expression on his stubbly face was almost blood-curdling.

He cast a swift glance up and down the dusky lane. No one was in sight—the two Bunters had vanished! He clenched his hands, hard, and approached the Greyfriars Form-master, his eyes glinting.

"Stand back!" boomed Prout, brandishing the stick. "Stand back, scoundrel, or I will knock you down!"

The Spadger darted in—and

jumped back swiftly as the stick came down. But he jumped only out of reach.

He stood with clenched fists, glinting eyes, and jutting jaw, watching the portly Prout, watching for a chance.

Had Prout been a younger man—the Prout of ancient days who had climbed Alps—he would have dealt with the thickset, stocky ruffian easily enough.

But Prout was no longer young. He was no longer active. But for the stick he carried, he would have been at the mercy of the Spadger. He was already gasping for breath. It was, indeed, plucky of Prout, to have barged in at all, considering his portliness and his shortness of wind. All he could do now was to keep a wary eye on the footpad, and keep the stick ready for a smite. If the Spadger succeeded in running in under the stick, and getting a grasp on Prout, all was up with the plump master of the Fifth.

“Ruffian! Go!” gasped Prout.

“You wait a bit, old covey!” said the Spadger. “Wait till I get my ’ands on you! Jest wait! I’ll give you cracking a man’s nut! You jest wait! That’s all.”

Prout gave a hurried glance up and down the lane, as the Spadger had done! But there was no one to be seen.

Mr. Hawkins closed in again, and again retreated from a swipe of the stick. Mr. Prout gasped!

Prout had rescued Billy Bunter! But there was no one to rescue Prout! And really he was in need of rescue!

Obviously, this could not go on! But he could not venture to turn his back on the ruffian and stride away. Only too certainly the Spadger’s

grasp would have been on the back of his plump neck the next moment.

“Will you — ooogh! — depart?” spluttered Prout.

“Will I?” said the Spadger. “I don’t think! Not till I’ve pushed your nose through the back of your ’ead, old covey, for cracking a man’s nut.”

Prout made a stride at him.

The Spadger dodged back.

Prout made another stride! The Spadger dodged again, with a ferocious grin!

It was easy enough for him to dodge Prout! Prout could not get too close quarters and use the stick.

The plump Form-master panted.

He reversed.

He could not turn his back on the watchful ruffian. He could not remain where he was, holding him at bay. He retreated on reverse gear, so to speak, backing up the lane towards the school.

The Spadger, with glinting eyes, followed.

That crack on his frowsy head had evidently roused all the evil in the ruffian’s nature; and there seemed a good deal of it. He wanted vengeance, and he wanted it badly!

He made a spring—and Prout panted and lashed out with the stick! Again the Spadger leaped out of reach.

Prout backed on. Again the Spadger followed. And then the inevitable happened!!

Prout, of course, had no eyes in the back of his head! On reverse gear, he could not see where he was going! He stepped on a fallen branch that lay in the lane, slipped, stumbled, and sat down.

“Oh!” gasped Prout.

With the spring of a tiger, the Spadger was on him. Prout, gasping helplessly, went over on his back, like

a turtle, and a sinewy knee was planted on his plump waistcoat.

"Nar, then!" said Spadger Hawkins.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

REMOVITES TO THE RESCUE!

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

"What the thump——!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"You young ass!" roared Johnny Bull.

Sammy Bunter, of the Second Form, did not heed. He barged on regardless.

The Famous Five were in the old gateway of Greyfriars, looking out into the road. It was close on lock-up: and they were looking for Lord

Mauleverer, of the Remove, who was out of gates. They were going to tea with Mauly: and Mauly was late—which was not uncommon with this lazy and unpunctual lordship. Looking in the direction of Courtfield, for Mauly, the chums of the Remove did not observe Bunter minor coming from the direction of Friardale—till he happened.

It happened quite suddenly.

Sammy, it seemed, was in a hurry. Sammy was almost as fat as his elder brother, William George: and, as a rule, he carried his weight about at a leisurely pace. Now he flew!

Coming up like a runaway steamroller, Sammy Bunter bounced in at the gateway, barged into the group of Removites, and sent them scattering.



Spadger Hawkins, grasping Billy Bunter with his left hand, drew back his right, clenched. "Well, if you will 'ave it——" he growled. "Yaroo!" yelled Bunter. "Help!" Neither observed Mr. Prout staring at them from the gap in the hedge.

Sammy Bunter's weight, in a charge, was no light matter.

Johnny Bull staggered against the gate. Frank Nugent sat down. Harry Wharton reeled against Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. Only Bob Cherry jumped clear in time.

Sammy, unheeding the excited exclamations behind him, barged on, and disappeared into the quad.

"What the merry dickens!" exclaimed Wharton.

"The young lunatic!" gasped Nugent, scrambling to his feet, "I'll jolly well kick him!"

"But what on earth's the matter with him?" exclaimed Bob. "Is somebody after the young ass, or what?"

The juniors stared down the dusky road towards Friardale. Another fat figure came racing into sight.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! It's raining Bunters!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter, gasping and panting, was coming on at full speed! His spectacles had slipped down his fat little nose, and his eyes bulged over them. Perspiration streamed down his podgy features.

The Famous Five stared at him.

"He's after Sammy, I suppose!" said Harry Wharton.

"Looks like it!"

"Stop him!"

From what they beheld, the chums of the Remove could only conclude that Billy Bunter was in fierce pursuit of Sammy Bunter! That was what it looked like.

So they lined up in the gateway, to put a stop to such an unbrotherly proceeding.

Billy Bunter came barging breathlessly on. He reached the gates and bounced in as Sammy had done.

But he did not get by like Sammy! Five pairs of hands seized him in full career, and swung him to a halt.

"Hold on, old fat bean!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Yaroooh!"

"Chuck it, Fatty!"

"Help!"

"What are you after Sammy for?" asked Harry Wharton, laughing. "Has he bagged a tart or a bun from you, or what?"

"Urrgh! Leggo! Urrgh!" gasped Bunter. "I say, you fellows, leggo! He's after me! Ow! Leggo! Ooooh!"

"He's after you!" repeated Bob. "He's not after you, fathead—he was ahead of you! Weren't you after him?"

"Eh! Leggo! I tell you he's after me!" shrieked Bunter. "Old Prout won't be able to stop him—he'd burst if that rough hit him! Leggo!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"I say, you fellows, leggo! I say, look out! I say, that fearful ruffian is on my track!" yelled Bunter. "Leggo!"

In blank amazement the juniors stared at him, and then stared along the road again. They realised that they had misapprehended. Sammy Bunter was not in flight from Billy Bunter! Both Bunters were in flight from some unknown enemy!

"Who—?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Nobody's in sight, you fat ass!" said Nugent. "You're in no danger, you flabby funk! What's happened? What's that about Prout?"

Bunter spluttered for breath.

"I—I say, you fellows, sure he's not in sight?" he panted.

"Nobody's in sight, ass!"

Bunter ventured to blink back along Friardale Lane, through his big spectacles! Nobody was in sight! The fat Owl of the Remove was relieved of his terrors.

"Oh!" he gasped, "I—I thought he was after me! He—he wanted to

rob me, you know! He wanted all my money——”

“Wanted to become a millionaire, did he?” asked Bob.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Oh, really, Cherry! I say, he had hold of me when Prout butted in, and banged him on the head with his walking-stick! I say, I thought he was after me! Oh, dear! I suppose he’s bashing old Prout, instead of coming after me! I expect he’s nearly killed Prout by this time! Lucky I got away, wasn’t it? Ow!”

“You howling ass!” exclaimed Harry Wharton. “Is Prout mixed up with a tramp in a row—is that what you mean?”

“Ow! Yes!” gurgled Bunter. “Prout biffed him on the napper with his stick, you know, and he let go, and I bunked! Oh, lor’!”

“You didn’t stay to help Prout!” snorted Johnny Bull.

“Eh!” Bunter blinked at him. That idea, evidently, had never occurred to the Owl of the Remove.

“Come on, you men!” said Harry Wharton, tersely. “If old Prout’s mixed up with a tramp he will want help!”

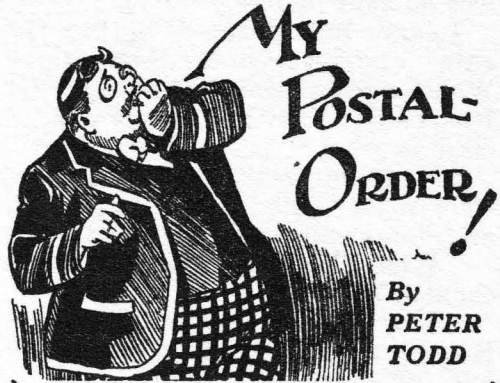
The captain of the Remove started down the lane at a rapid run. His comrades dashed after him.

Billy Bunter blinked at them as they vanished. It had not occurred to Bunter to lend Prout a hand in dealing with Mr. Hawkins; but the Famous Five were made of sterner stuff.

“Oh, crikey!” gasped Bunter. And he rolled in. No doubt he was grateful to Prout for having barged in, and hoped that he wouldn’t be quite killed by the truculent Spadger. But his chief concern was for William George Bunter!

Harry Wharton and Co. went down

Greyfriars Jingles



By
**PETER
TODD**

OF all remarks, as you will own,
This is the one most widely known;
Each season and throughout the year
This oft-repeated phrase we hear:
“My postal-order!”

All up and down and round the Form,
In class-room, study, gym and dorm,
All day, at morning, noon and night,
We hear the Bunter bird recite,
“My postal-order!”

We know he’s been expecting it
Since Caesar first invaded Brit.
He groans, “What’s happened to the thing?
Why can’t that silly postman bring
My postal-order?”

But when our cash he tries to borrow,
He’s sure that it will come to-morrow;
He says, “There’s been a slight delay,
Or else it would have come to-day,
My postal-order!”

The long delay since it was sent
He blames upon the government;
He says, “They’re either fast asleep
Or trying purposely to keep
My postal-order!”

It’s coming from his Uncle Bill,
His Aunt Elaine and Cousin Jill,
His Uncle Dick and Auntie Min
(They all have had a finger in
That postal-order!)

But Bunter in his stony state
Cries, “If you don’t believe it—wait!
You’ll see in just a few hours more;
To-morrow I shall get for sure
My postal-order!”

the lane, as if they were on the cinder-path. They were not afraid of tramps ; and they were really concerned for Prout ! Prout, no doubt, had pluck ; but he was long past the age of fisticuffs, and it was really alarming to think what might happen to him, in a mix-up with some ruffianly footpad.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo !" gasped Bob, suddenly. "Look !"

They came speeding round a bend of the dusky lane, just as Mr. Prout sat down, and the Spadger sprang on him and pinned him on his back in the dust !

They arrived in the nick of time.

Spadger Hawkins had drawn back his right arm for a blow ! His big fist was clenched, like a lump of iron !

What would have happened to Prout's portly features, had that blow landed on them, would hardly bear thinking of !

Fortunately, it never landed !

Just as the Spadger was gathering force for that shattering punch, Harry Wharton, putting on a desperate spurt, reached him. He crashed headlong into the Spadger, hurling him bodily away from his victim, and the ruffian, with a roar, rolled in the lane.

Prout sat up, dizzily.

"Urrggh ! Bless my soul ! Urrggh !" he gurgled.

"Collar him !" roared Bob Cherry.

Frank Nugent ran to Prout, to help him up. The other four fellows rushed at the sprawling ruffian.

"S'elp me !" gasped the Spadger.

He leaped to his feet ! The grasping hands of the schoolboys were almost on him, when he bounded back, leaped through the hedge, and ran. There were too many for Spadger Hawkins, and he had been cheated of his vengeance. He vanished through the hedge, and did the adjoining

meadow at about 60 m.p.h. Almost in a moment, the dusk of evening swallowed the Spadger.

"Oooooogh !" gasped Prout, leaning heavily on Frank Nugent. "Woogh ! I—I am—am a little breathless ! Oooooogh !"

Prout understated the 'case ! He was very breathless indeed ! He gasped and gurgled for wind ! Frank Nugent sagged under his weight, as he leaned, and Johnny Bull ran to his aid, supporting the portly Prout on the other side.

"All right now, sir !" said Harry Wharton, "He's gone."

"Urrrgh !"

"The gonefulness is terrific, honoured sahib !" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Wurrrgh !"

"Hope you're not hurt, sir !" said Bob Cherry.

"Mmmmmmmrrrgh !"

Prout gradually recovered. Wharton picked up his hat. Bob picked up his stick. Prout passed his hand tenderly over the back of his head, which had hit Friardale Lane rather hard. He had a pain there—in that part of the napper which Prout called the occiput, and Coker the oxyput ! Prout caressed his occiput quite tenderly.

"Thank you, my boys, thank you !" said Prout, at last. "I am much obliged to you. Unfortunately my foot slipped, or that—that detestable ruffian would not have taken me at such a disadvantage ! Thank you very much, my dear boys."

"Not at all, sir !" chorussed the dear boys.

And they walked back to the school with Prout—what time Spadger Hawkins, resting under a distant hedge, was rubbing his head, where Prout's stick had smitten him, and breathing

threats of future vengeance, that might almost have turned the atmosphere blue!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

NO SURRENDER!

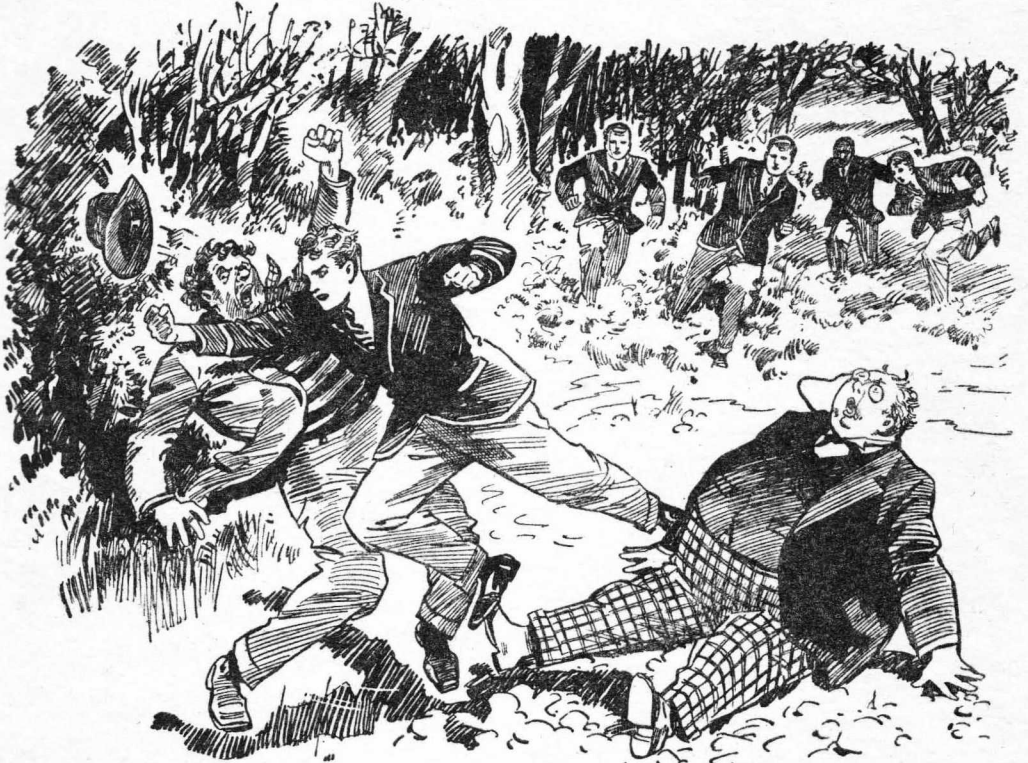
"COME in!" boomed Prout.

There was a tap at his study door. Prout did not want to be disturbed, just then.

He was feeling very much shaken, and very much disturbed. And he had a pain in his occiput!

Perhaps the location of that lingering pain reminded him of Horace Coker, and Coker's imposition. That imposition had to be handed in to Prout before prep, and it was nearly time for prep now.

In his present disturbed state Prout



Just as the Spadger was gathering force for a shattering punch, Harry Wharton reached him. He lunged out at the ruffian, crashing into him at the same time, and the Spadger was hurled bodily away from Mr. Prout.

He was resting, in his study arm-chair, after his wild adventures; and feeling none the better for those wild adventures.

Certainly, Mr. Prout did not regret that he had come to the help of two Greyfriars fags, attacked by a ruffianly tramp. But he had to regret the result.

was in a mood to deal severely with that most troublesome member of his form, Horace Coker, if the egregious Horace gave any more trouble. If Coker did not hand in his impot. on time, Coker was going to be sorry for the same!

Then came the tap at the door, and Prout had no doubt that it was Coker

with his impot. Without turning his head he boomed "Come in!" and the door opened.

"Come in," repeated Prout, still without turning his head. "I trust that you are going to give me no further cause for dissatisfaction, with your unexampled stupidity and obtuse obstinacy!"

There was a gasp of surprise.

"Mr. Prout! Sir!"

Prout spun round!

It was not Coker of the Fifth! It was Mr. Twigg, the master of the Second Form, who had entered his study!

Twigg gazed at him in shocked and offended amazement. Prout became scarlet.

"Oh!" he gasped.

"Mr. Prout!"

"Mr. Twigg! I—I supposed——"

"I came here, sir——"

"Pray excuse me, Mr. Twigg!" gurgled Prout. "I was unaware—quite unaware. I supposed that it was Coker, of my Form—pray excuse the expressions I inadvertently used, under a misapprehension."

Mr. Twigg's face cleared.

"Oh, quite, sir!" he assented. "I understand! I—I was surprised."

"No doubt, sir! But—you see——"

"Oh, quite!"

"I was expecting Coker, of my Form, with an imposition! Pray be seated, Mr. Twigg! Pray excuse me."

"Oh, certainly!" Mr. Twigg sat down. "I trust, Mr. Prout, that you have not been harmed! I have heard, of what recently occurred in Friardale Lane—and as one of the boys concerned, sir, belongs to my Form, I felt bound to express my acknowledgments, sir."

Prout smiled genially.

Evidently the story was getting about the school, of how he had tackled a hefty tramp in defence of two Greyfriars fags. Prout had no objection whatever. He rather liked the lime-light.

"I was bound to intervene!" he said.

"Very true, sir, but I have learned from Bunter minor, of my Form, that the tramp who stopped him and his brother in the lane was a hulking, powerful ruffian."

"A gigantic ruffian, sir!" said Prout. Prout was not the man to diminish his own glory.

"A very dangerous character, sir!" said Mr. Twigg. "The boys might have been seriously harmed——"

"Bunter minor, I think, was out of danger," said Mr. Prout. "He was running very fast when I saw him. But the ruffian certainly had hold of Bunter major, of the Remove."

"Indeed! Bunter minor did not mention to me that he was running!" said Mr. Twigg. "The ruffian might, perhaps, have overtaken him, but for your very gallant intervention, sir."

Prout beamed.

"It was no light matter, sir," said Mr. Twigg, "to engage in a struggle with a hulking ruffian."

Prout waved a plump hand.

"In the circumstances, sir, I had no choice," he said.

"True, true," assented little Mr. Twigg. "Nevertheless, you will permit me to say that the affair redounds very greatly to your credit, sir. Considering your years——"

"Eh!"

"Considering your somewhat advanced years, sir——!"

"Really, Mr. Twigg——"

Prout ceased to beam.

Twigg really was a little tactless. Prout's years were not so advanced



“Come in,” said Mr. Prout, without turning his head. “I trust you are not going to give me further cause for dissatisfaction with your unexampled stupidity and obtuse obstinacy!” There was a gasp of surprise. It was not Coker who had entered; it was Mr. Twigg!

as all that! True, he was not a young man! But he was not old: not, that is to say, what would be called old! Not at all!

Perhaps it was fortunate that another tap came at the door, at that awkward moment!

The door opened.

This time it was Horace Coker, with a written paper in his hand.

Prout glanced round at him.

“Oh!” he said. “It is you, Coker!”

“Yes, sir!” said Coker, respectfully but firmly.

“Will you excuse me for a moment, Twigg, while I deal with this boy.”

“Certainly, sir!”

“You may hand me your imposition, Coker!” said Mr. Prout. “I trust that a hundred repetitions of that word, Coker, have impressed its correct spelling on your mind.”

“I always knew how to spell occiput, sir!” said Coker, calmly.

“What! You did not know how to spell the word in the Form-room this morning!” snapped Prout. “Your spelling is atrocious, Coker! There are small boys in Mr. Twigg’s form who spell better than you.”

Coker breathed hard.

No fellow, of course, could call his Form-master an ass or a fathead! But Coker was strongly tempted to do so at that moment.

It was bad enough for Old Pom-pous to slang him in the Form-room, before all the other fellows! But to slang him in the presence of another beak was the limit.

Coker detected a faint smile on the face of Mr. Twigg. He breathed hard, and harder!

He was glad now, more than glad, that he had not given in to Prout! His friends, Potter and Greene, had implored him, almost with tears in their eyes, not to take that remarkable impot. to Prout. Coker had been adamant! Now he was glad that he had been adamant! If Prout chose to have it all out before another beak, he could please himself. That other beak, at any rate, would see that Coker wasn't going to be bullied into bad spelling by an igno-ramus of a Form-master!

"Small boys!" repeated Prout, severely. "Small boys like Nugent minor, and Bunter minor, would be ashamed to spell as you do, Coker!"

Coker barely repressed a snort.

Prout was doing this on purpose—showing him up to another beak: little dreaming, of course, that he was only showing up his own ignorance!

"Are there not boys in your form, Mr. Twigg, who can spell the word occiput correctly?" asked Prout, passing a hand over his own occiput, as he spoke, where he felt a painful twinge.

"I trust so, sir!" said Mr. Twigg. "Any boy in my Form, I think, with the exception perhaps of Bunter minor."

"You hear that, Coker! You are on a level, sir, with the most backward boy in the Second Form!" said Mr. Prout. "But I trust—I trust—that we shall see an improvement. I shall certainly insist upon improvement. The spelling of this word, at least,

you should remember correctly, after writing it out a hundred times. You may hand me your paper, Coker."

Coker handed him his paper.

Prout glanced at it.

Then he stared.

His stare became fixed, mesmerised, petrified! It began to resemble the glare of the fabled basilisk. It became like unto the petrifying gaze of the Gorgon! Prout could, indeed, hardly believe his eyes.

Coker had written out the disputed word a hundred times! So far, Coker had given Prout his head!

But he had not spelt it Prout's way! He had spelt it his own way! Knowing better than Prout, Coker had felt that he really had no choice in that matter. Anyhow, he had done it!

Oxyput, oxyput, oxyput, oxyput, oxyput—there it was, a hundred times, staring Prout in his astonished face.

Prout hardly seemed to breathe.

Coker waited—calmly!

Mr. Twigg glanced at him, and glanced at Prout. He could not see what was written on Coker's paper. But he could see what was written on the speaking countenance of Prout!

Olympian wrath was gathering there.

"Coker!" gasped Mr. Prout, at last.

"Yes, sir!" said Coker, firmly.

"Are you out of your senses, Coker?"

"I hope not, sir!"

"You — you — you——" Prout seemed to find difficulty in articulating. "You—you have spelt this word incorrectly——!"

"Not at all, sir!"

"Wha-a-t!"

"I know how to spell occiput, sir!"

"Am I to understand," gurgled Prout, "that this is not mere

stupidity—that it is not mere obtuseness and ignorance—but that it is an act of disobedience and defiance?”

“Oh, no, sir! I hope I have a proper respect for my Form-master!” said Coker calmly. “But when you told me to write out the word in its correct spelling, sir, I was bound to do so. And I’ve done it.”

“You—you have—have done it?”

“Yes, sir!”

“Coker!”

Prout lowered the paper. Mr. Twigg glanced at it and gave a convulsive start!

The Fifth Form-master gazed at Coker.

Coker waited, calmly. Having done what was right and proper, whether Prout knew it or not, Coker could be calm. Anyhow, Prout couldn’t cane him. The Fifth were never caned.

Prout, perhaps, might have sense enough to see that he was in the wrong, and admit it like a man! Coker hoped so.

That showed that Coker had a hopeful nature! Prout did not look in the least like admitting that he was in the wrong! He looked, indeed, as if he were on the verge of a volcanic eruption.



Coker made one stride at Skinner, grasped him by the collar and spun him round. Skinner yelled, in anticipation. The next moment his anticipation was realised! Coker's foot landed on him with a crash. "Whoop!" yelled Skinner.

"Coker!" he gasped at last. "It would be beneath my dignity, and the dignity of a senior Form, to cane you! Yet what can I do?"

Coker did not answer that conundrum.

Prout pointed to the door.

"Go!" he said, "I will consider this matter! I will consider whether to request Dr. Locke to administer a flogging! I will consider! In the meantime, go!"

Coker went!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER
CALAMITOUS FOR COKER!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter yelled.

He almost shrieked.

Wildly excited, the Owl of the Remove came barging across the landing, to a group of fellows who were chatting outside No. 1 Study.

"He, he, he!" gurgled Bunter. "I say, you fellows—he, he, he! Oh, crikey! He, he, he!"

Bunter, evidently, was amused! He was highly entertained! It was clear that Bunter believed himself to be in possession of the joke of the season—the jest of the term—the last funny word!

Harry Wharton and Co. were talking football. But they forgot even footer, as Bunter barged in.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the jolly old news?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"I say—he, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

"Some joke, what?"

"Yes, rather—he, he, he!"

"Well, get it off your chest, fat-head!" said Harry Wharton. "Don't tell us your postal order's coming! We've heard that funny story before."

"Oh, really, Wharton! I say—Prout—he, he, he——!"

"Prout!" repeated the Famous Five. Apparently the Fifth Form-master was the cause of Bunter's outbreak of merriment.

"And Coker——!"

"Coker!" repeated the five.

"Yes! He, he, he!" Bunter removed his spectacles, and wiped his eyes, "I say, you fellows, my minor told me—Sammy of the Second, you know! Hasn't your minor told you, Nugent?"

"Eh! No! I haven't seen Dicky!"

answered Frank. "What on earth's up?"

"Prout — Coker — Twigg ——!" gasped Bunter. "He, he, he!" He went off into another prolonged cachinnation.

"What on earth's that row?" asked Vernon-Smith, coming along the Remove passage. "What are you fellows letting off an alarm-clock for?"

"Oh, really, Smithy——"

"Oh! My mistake!" said the Bounder. "Was it your cackle, Bunter? Bottle it up, old bean."

"Beast! I say, you fellows——"

"For goodness' sake cough it up!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"I'm just telling you—he, he, he!"

"Spill it, you goob!" said Fisher T. Fish. Quite a number of Remove fellows were gathering now, to hear the news, whatever it was.

"You are keeping us on the esteemed tender-hooks, my absurd Bunter," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh; probably meaning tenter-hooks.

"Shake it out of him!" said Peter Todd. "Take hold of his other ear, somebody!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! Leggo! I say, you fellows, he, he, he!—I'm just going to tell you—he, he, he! Coker—Coker of the Fifth, you know—he's going—he, he, he——!"

"Coker going!" exclaimed Harry.

"My hat! Coker can't have been sacked for his spelling!" said Bob Cherry. "It's enough to make a cat laugh, but they can't have sacked him for it."

"Is he going?" exclaimed Nugent.

"Yes, rather! He, he, he! He's going into—he, he, he——!"

"Into a lunatic asylum!"

"Or a home for idiots!"

"Into the Second!" yelled Bunter, getting it out at last, "He, he, he!"

"WHAT!" roared the juniors.

They stared at Bunter.

"I say, you fellows, it's true!" roared Bunter, "Coker of the Fifth, you know! A Fifth-form man—senior, and all that! Prout's fixed it up with Twigg—and Twigg's taking Coker—in spelling!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"All the Second know!" shrieked Bunter. "They're killing themselves laughing over it! Twigg told them in third school this morning! Coker's going to take a lesson every day in the Second Form! Sitting among the fags, you know! He's beginning this afternoon! Twigg fixed up his place in Form, and told the Second! My minor says he was grinning."

"No wonder!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"They're howling over it in the Second!" gasped Bunter. "Fancy Coker, you know—bigger than a lot of men in the Sixth! Sitting among the fags, to learn how to spell! He, he, he!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not the Shell, or the Fourth, or even the Third!" chortled Bunter. "The Second—he, he, he! Fancy Coker!"

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

"A giant among the pygmies, by gad!" remarked Lord Mauleverer.

"Gulliver among the Lilliputians!" chuckled the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's twice as big as Twigg himself!" chortled Bob. "Coker will get the spot-light, in the Second Form."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Poor old Coker!"

"Well, he's asked for it!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "He

spells like a fag in the Second, only worse! But Prout's done this for his cheek, of course! I wondered what would happen if he took that impot. to Prout! Something was bound to happen!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites yelled.

It was, undoubtedly, the joke of the season, the jest of the term! The mere thought of the burly, beefy, hefty Horace, sitting among the small fry of the Second Form, made the juniors howl.

If Prout had specially planned to make the self-willed, obstinate, pig-headed Horace feel small, he could not have thought of anything better than this.

Coker's feelings on the subject would be unutterable.

Probably he would repent before long, that he had not given into Prout, his master, in the matter of orthography!

"I guess this will hit Coker where he lives!" chuckled Fisher T. Fish, "I'll say this is the cat's whiskers!"

"Poor old Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"O what a fall was there, my countrymen!" said Wibley.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, I saw Coker in the quad," giggled Bunter. "Prout's told him—he's scowling like a demon in a pantomime! I say, I shouldn't wonder if there's a shindy in the Second Form this afternoon. I say, I shouldn't wonder if Coker chucks little Twigg across the Form-room."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where's Coker now?" asked Skinner eagerly.

"In the quad—Potter and Greene are arguing with him!" chuckled Bunter. "I heard him say he

wouldn't go in with the Second, Prout or no Prout!"

"He will jolly well have to!" said Nugent. "Prout will take him to the Head, if he kicks!"

"I suppose it's meant as a lesson to Coker—not only in spelling!" said Wharton. "Well, a fellow shouldn't cheek his beak! He really couldn't expect Prout to stand it."

"Poor old Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let's go and take a squint at him!" said Skinner, and he rushed away.

"Oh, give him a rest!" called out Bob Cherry. "Coker won't like being squinted at, in the giddy circs."

Skinner, unheeding, went to look for Coker.

He found him in the quad, talking to Potter and Greene. Coker, with a red face and glinting eyes, was evidently in a state of great excitement and indignation. It was not a judicious moment to approach him, if Skinner had reflected.

"I say, Coker——!"

Coker glared round.

"Is it true you're in the Second Form for spelling?" howled Skinner.

Coker did not answer.

He made one stride at Harold Skinner, grasped him by the collar, and spun him round.

Skinner yelled, in anticipation.

The next moment his anticipation was realised! Coker's foot landed on him with a crash!

"Whooooo!" roared Skinner.

He flew!

Coker walked away with Potter and Greene. Skinner limped away in quite a pained state.

Nobody else went up to Coker to ask him about it! Evidently, Coker was dangerous at close quarters!

But, for once, everybody was

anxious for the bell to ring for classes! Everybody was interested to see the mighty Horace walking into the Second Form room, towering over the fags! And everybody was on the grin, in expectation of that interesting sight!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

TOE THE LINE!

"**N**OTHING——"
"But, old chap——!"
urged Potter.

"Nothing——"

"Beak's orders, old fellow!" said Greene.

"Nothing," repeated Coker, with undiminished firmness. "Nothing will induce me to do anything of the sort."

"The bell's ringing!" said Potter.

"Let it ring!"

"Prout says——"

"Let him say!"

"But——!" said Potter and Greene together.

"It's no good talking!" said Coker, "I'm just not going to do it, and that's that! Prout's done this to insult me! He was in a fearful wax, yesterday, at having his ignorance shown up before Twigg——"

"Oh, dear!"

"He makes out," said Coker, "that I can't spell! I could spell his head off! Look at the mistakes he makes! You heard him, only this morning, say that unprecedented was spelt without an S in it! Didn't you?"

"But—but so it is, old chap!" urged Greene.

"Don't be an ass, Greene!"

"Look in the dictionary, old bean!" said Potter.

"Dictionaries are not much use!" answered Coker. "I've found a lot of mistakes in dictionaries."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Not that I want to argue with the man!" said Coker. "He's an ass—a pompous ass—and that's the long and the short of it! He can make mistakes if he likes! I don't want to argue about it. But when it comes to putting me down among a lot of fags, I draw the line! A Fifth-form man has to consider his dignity! I can't do it! And I shan't!"

Potter and Greene exchanged a hopeless look.

Coker stated that he couldn't, and wouldn't, and shouldn't, just as if he had the deciding voice in the matter! He seemed to think that he had! But, in point of fact, he hadn't!

It was for Prout to decide! And Prout had decided! It was only left for Horace Coker to toe the line!

That, however, simple as it was, Coker seemed unable to get into his head. And the bell was ringing!

"Well, we've got to get into the Fifth!" said Potter. "Come on, Greeney."

"So have I!" said Coker calmly.

And he walked into the House with his friends.

It was not yet quite time for the Form-room doors to open. But the Form-room passage was crowded.

Fellows were sometimes late for class. Not a fellow was late now. All were early.

Coker was the attraction. Everybody wanted to see Coker of the Fifth go in with the Second.

Outside Mr. Twigg's Form-room his Form were gathering: Dicky Nugent, and Gatty and



"Prout makes out," said Coker, "that I can't spell. I could spell his head off! Only this morning he said that unprecedented was spelt without an S in it." "So it is, old chap," urged Greene. "Don't be an ass!" exclaimed Coker. "Oh, crumbs!" murmured Potter and Greene.

Myers, and Sammy Bunter and the rest. All of them were grinning. They seemed to have brighter anticipations for that afternoon than Coker of the Fifth had.

"Here he comes!" grinned Nugent minor. Dicky Nugent had not forgotten Coker's short way with fags, and the kick the great Horace had bestowed on him the previous day. "I say, Coker, how many K's in cat?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker disdained to take heed. He walked on with Potter and Greene. Mr. Twigg came down the passage and met him.

He blinked at Coker. Coker eyed him calmly.

"Oh, Coker!" said Mr. Twigg. "Pray come this way, my boy. You are aware that your Form-master has arranged for you to take lessons with my Form."

"Quite a mistake, sir," said Coker. "I'm not coming into the Second."

"Mr. Prout's orders, Coker." Twigg was a peaceable little gentleman, and he was persuasive. He blinked up at Coker, who was taller than the Second Form-master. "Come, come, my boy! Mr. Prout has talked the matter over with me, and I have consented——"

Coker walked on.

Mr. Twigg blinked after him.

"Coker!" he called out.

Coker did not answer or turn his head.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Twigg.

He went on to his Form-room and unlocked the door. He left Coker to be dealt with by his own beak.

Twigg, certainly, was not anxious to have that whale among the minnows in his Form-room.

Prout had asked him. He had consented. After the way Prout had

barged in, in the affair of the tramp, Twigg felt that he couldn't refuse. A boy of his Form had been threatened by a hulking ruffian. Prout had run a lot of risk in barging in. Twigg had called on him, in his study, to express his acknowledgments. Then Coker and his impot. had happened. And Prout, casting about in his mind for some adequate method of dealing with Coker, had hit on this. He could hardly cane a tremendous fellow like Coker. He did not want to take him to the Head to be flogged, if he could help it. He did want to teach him how to spell and to subdue his lofty swank. And so it was arranged.

That Coker would object was a foregone conclusion. That he would refuse had probably not occurred to Prout. He was going to learn that.

All eyes were on Horace Coker, as he stood with the Fifth, waiting for Prout. Fellows looked at him, peered at him, craned their necks at him. Coker was the cynosure of all eyes. He was the central attraction. He was the goods!

An elephantine tread was heard in the passage.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Prout!" breathed Bob Cherry.

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

"Poor old Coker," murmured Nugent.

Prout, majestic, arrived. He glanced over his Form, and his eyes fixed on Horace Coker. His brow darkened.

"Coker!"

"Yes, sir!"

"What are you doing here?"

"Waiting to go into the Form-room, sir."

"I have told you, Coker, that you are to go into Mr. Twigg's Form this afternoon," rumbled Prout.

"I hope you've changed your mind, sir."

"I have not changed my mind, Coker."

"I'm sorry for that, sir," said Coker politely. And he stood where he was.

He stood firm, facing his Form-master: four square to every wind that blew, so to speak. He had a feeling at that moment that he rather resembled Ajax defying the lightning, or Horatius defending the bridge. He felt a bit like Leonidas in the pass of Thermopylæ. And a bit like the Old Guard at Waterloo. "The Old Guard dies, but does not surrender!" That sort of thing.

All this, however, was lost on Prout.

Prout did not see in Coker a danger-defying hero. All he saw was a sulky and disobedient schoolboy.

It was one of those differences in the point of view which are bound to lead to trouble.

"Coker!" said Prout, in a very deep voice.

"Yes, sir!"

"Go to your Form-room!"

"I'm waiting for you to open the door, sir! It's locked, I think."

"I am alluding to the Second Form-room, Coker!"

"That's not my Form-room, sir!"

"For the English lesson, every day this week, Coker, that is to be your Form-room."

"Oh, no, sir!"

Prout gasped.

"Am I to understand, Coker, that you disobey me, your Form-master?" he inquired, in an awful voice.

In breathless silence, an army of fellows hung on Coker's reply! It came!

"I'm sorry, sir, but I can't do it!"

"Will you obey me at once, Coker?"

Coker did not stir.

"Very well!" said Mr. Prout with calmness—an awful calmness. "You will go and pack your box, Coker!"

Coker started.

"Pip-pip-pack my bib-bib-box!" he stuttered.

"I shall now proceed to the Head!" said Mr. Prout. "I shall request him to expel you from the school, Coker! You will leave Greyfriars by the next train! Blundell!"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Blundell of the Fifth.

"Please go to my study, and telephone for a taxi to take Coker to the station."

Coker gazed at Prout.

He was in earnest! He was in deadly earnest!

Coker's brain almost swam!

Expelled!

Sacked!

Bunked!

It was unbelievable! But there it was! He wasn't going in with the Second—he was going in a train—for home!

Coker gasped!

Potter and Greene gave him imploring looks. They really didn't want to lose Coker like this! Coker was rather a trial to his friends; but really they did not want him to be turned out.

Prout whirled round in the passage. He was going to the Head! Coker's fate trembled in the balance!

"Hold on!" gasped Coker. He found his voice. "If—if you mean that, sir——"

Prout whirled round again.

"I will give you one more chance—a last chance!" he boomed. "If you have not obeyed me in one second——"

The sixtieth part of a minute, brief as it was, was enough for Coker! With feelings that no fellow could have

expressed in words, Coker turned away, and walked to the Second Form room.

There was a general gasp of relief. Even Prout, probably, was relieved. He was a pompous gentleman, an important gentleman, but a kind-hearted gentleman. He wanted to be as easy with Coker as Coker would let him be!

"You need not telephone, Blundell! Enter!" said Mr. Prout, unlocking the door of the Fifth Form-room.

The Greyfriars fellows went into their Form-rooms. In the Second Form-room sat Coker of the Fifth: a whale among the minnows, a giant among the pygmies, a Gulliver among the Lilliputians! The grinning faces of the fags indicated that they took it as a huge joke. But Coker's countenance wore no grin. It was serious—solemn—not to say tragic!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

COKER IN THE SECOND!

HARRY WHARTON and Co. in the Remove-room, wondered how Coker of the Fifth was getting on. They could guess that he was not getting on well. And they were right—he wasn't!

Coker, a living picture of suppressed indignation, sat and glowered. Only one consideration kept him in the fag Form-room. It was the "sack" if he left it without leave!

He did not want to be sacked! True, the way he carried on was asking for it! But Coker, like many other people, did not want that for which he asked. The thought of being turfed out of Greyfriars was quite unnerving. He had never expected that Prout would go to such an extreme. Really, he might have expected it! But he hadn't!

In his present circumstances it was rather unfortunate for Coker that he had a short way with fags! Many a cuff had Coker bestowed on the heroes of the Second Form—for their own good, of course! Coker's opinion was that the more fags were cuffed, the better it was for them. In this the fags did not agree with Coker!

Now he was with them, if not of them. And the fags remembered many a cuff, and were ungratefully regardless of the fact that the same had been bestowed for their own good!

"I say, Coker," whispered Dicky Nugent, as Mr. Twigg stood busy at the blackboard, "I say, how many F's in fathead?"

Coker disdained to answer.

"How many D's in duffer?" whispered Gatty.

Stony silence from Coker.

"How many K's in scowl, Coker?" asked Myers.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Twigg glanced round.

"Silence in the class, please!" he said mildly.

The fags subdued their whispers. But the whispering went on. Coker of the Fifth was fair game, in the opinion of the Second. He sat like a stone image, scowling—if a stone image could be supposed to scowl. His feelings were deep and intense—how deep and intense the Second Form did not know; and unfortunately did not care.

Sammy Bunter seemed to be the only fellow in the Second Form who was not interested in Coker! That was accounted for by the fact that Sammy was the happy possessor of a stick of toffee, in which he was very interested indeed.

So long as Twigg's back was turned Sammy was able to suck his toffee at

his ease ; and he did so with great enjoyment.

Till the spirit moved Dicky Nugent to snatch the stick of toffee suddenly from Sammy's grubby fingers, lean over Coker from behind, and drop it down the inside of Coker's collar.

" I say——" howled Sammy Bunter, in dismay.

roared Coker, wriggling wildly.

" Something sticky——"

" Ha, ha, ha !"

" Silence ! Coker——"

" Ow ! It's sticky ! It——"

" Sit down at once, Coker ! How dare you perform such antics in this Form-room !" exclaimed Mr. Twigg.

" Sit down !"



" You are aware, Coker," said Mr. Twigg, " that your Form-master has arranged for you to take lessons with my Form." " Quite a mistake, sir," said Coker. " I'm not coming into the Second." " Come, come, my boy !" said Mr. Twigg.

His voice was drowned by the roar that came from Coker !

Coker bounded to his feet.

Mr. Twigg faced round from the blackboard.

" What——" he began.

" Oooogh ! Grooogh ! Urrgh ! There's something down my back !"

Coker wriggled horribly. Sticky toffee, in the small of his back, was frightfully uncomfortable.

" I tell you——" he bawled.

" Silence, sir ! Sit down ! How dare you !" hooted Mr. Twigg.

" I warn you, Coker, that your unruly and disobedient ways will

not be tolerated in this Form-room."

"I've got something down my back——"

"Nonsense! How could anything be down your back? How dare you talk such nonsense! Sit down!"

"One of these little beasts——"

"What? What?"

"One of these grubby little scoundrels has——"

"Another word, Coker, and I will send you back to Mr. Prout!" bawled Mr. Twigg. "I will have nothing of this kind here, sir! I warn you, sir! Be quiet at once!"

Coker sat down. He was on the verge of explosion; but fortunately did not explode. Mr. Twigg eyed him with great severity.

"Take example by the boys of my Form, Coker, and behave yourself!" he snapped. "You are among well-behaved boys—take example by them, sir! I will not allow you to introduce uproarious unruliness into this Form-room. Be quiet in your place! Not a word! Silence!"

How Coker managed to keep silent he hardly knew. But he did! He sat breathing wrath, with the sticky toffee giving him horrid squirming feelings in his back.

The fags exchanged blissful glances. Coker was not enjoying life, but he was adding considerably to the gaiety of existence in the Second Form of Greyfriars.

Only Sammy Bunter did not enjoy that jest on Coker. Sammy was thinking sadly of his lost toffee. Like Rachel of old, he mourned for that which was lost, and could hardly be comforted. His only comfort was to see Coker wriggling and squirming on the form in front of him.

Mr. Twigg turned from the blackboard. He had chalked there a list of words in which some of his Form

had found difficulties. The fags had to copy them down. So had Coker. Taking part in an infantile lesson of this sort was simply excruciating to Coker of the Fifth.

He was far from realising that he needed it as much as the fags did!

One word in the list was "particle." Mr. Twigg spelt that word in the common, or garden, way! Coker stared at it on the blackboard, hesitated, and finally spoke.

"If you please, sir——!" said Coker, with very careful respect.

"What is it, Coker?"

"Are we to spell those word correctly, sir?"

"Certainly," snapped Mr. Twigg. "How in the world do you imagine I wish you to spell them, Coker?"

"I mean not as they're written, sir."

Mr. Twigg gazed at him.

"Not as they are written!" he repeated. "Do you mean to imply, Coker, that I have set words for my class incorrectly spelt?"

"Well, look at that word particle, sir!" said Coker patiently. "I know Mr. Prout spells it like that! I spell it with a K, sir."

"You spell particle with a K!" repeated Mr. Twigg, like a man in a dream.

"Yes, sir!"

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Dicky Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence in the class! Coker, I hardly know what to say to you! Your ignorance is astounding! Or is it impertinence?" demanded Mr. Twigg. "At all events, you will spell the words as written, and say no more."

Coker breathed hard.

Strongly was he tempted to write "partikle." He knew there was a K in it, if Twigg didn't!

But he resisted the temptation. After all, it was not his business to teach the Second Form-master how to spell! He had tried to make Prout understand that occiput was spelt oxyput, and failed! Already Coker was learning his lesson! He decided to let Twigg have his way: and with a sardonic smile, wrote down "particle."

After this painful episode Mr. Twigg gave his youthful Form some dictation. He selected a stanza from Byron for that purpose beginning "Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll!"

A snigger from some of his Form drew his attention to Coker! Fags peering at Coker's paper seemed entertained.

Mr. Twigg stepped to the desks, and glanced at Coker's lucubrations. His eyes popped, as he read:

"Role on, thow depe and dark bloo
ocean, role!
Ten thowsand fletes sweep over
thee in vane,
Man marks the erth with rooin,
his kontrole
Stops at the shoar: upon the
wattery plane
The rex are all thy dede, nore duth
remane
One shaddow of man's ravnage,
save his owne."

"Coker!" gasped Mr. Twigg.
Coker looked up.

"Is that intended for a foolish
joke?" demanded Mr. Twigg.

"Eh?"

"How dare you play such foolish
jests here, and distract the attention
of the boys from their work!"
exclaimed Mr. Twigg.

Coker had borne much! This was
the limit! Goaded, he glared at
Twigg!

Songs of the Seasons



MERRY falls the springtime,
Laughter's in the air;
Sing, for this is singtime,
Youth is everywhere!
Life is full of laughter,
All the world's at play,
Care may follow after,
We'll enjoy to-day.

Fresh among the rushes
Shaking in the breeze,
See, the river gushes
Merry melodies;
Just the day for boating,
Let us get aboard,
While the sun's devoting
Warmth for our reward.

Long have we been thirsting
For the happy hours,
Now the buds are bursting
On the trees and flowers;
Now the grass is greener.
Washed and newly-sprung,
All the earth is keener,
All the earth is young!

Get your cycle ready,
Oil your iron steed,
Mind and take it steady,
Careful of your speed!
Biking is delightful
When your wits are cool,
But it's rather frightful
In a village pool!

Mind you are not leaving
Cameras behind,
Spring is busy weaving
Spells for you to find;
Views await in plenty
Up the hill and down,
You may manage twenty,
If you've half-a-crown!

After months of prison
(Winter is so long),
All the earth has risen
With a happy song;
Youth and joy and gladness,
Tunes the whole refrain,
Gone is winter's sadness,
Spring is here again!

"What the thump do you mean?" he roared.

"Coker!"

"Talk sense!" roared Coker.

Mr. Twigg did not talk sense! He did not talk at all! He brought his pointer down on Coker's knuckles with a sharp rap!

"Yooooop!" roared Coker.

"Silence!"

"Wow! ow! wow!" Coker sucked his knuckles, furiously. Only by great self-command, did he refrain from dashing them at Twigg's nose! "Look here——"

"Silence!"

"If you think I'm going to have my knuckles rapped, like one of these putrid little fags——!" shrieked Coker.

"Another word," hooted Mr. Twigg "and I will send you to the Head!"

Coker did not utter another word! He mastered his feelings, which were indescribable. How he got out of that Form-room, at last, without having punched Twigg, he never knew!

Fortunately, he did!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

BACK UP!

"BUCK up, old man!" said Potter.

"Cheer up!" said Greene. Coker of the Fifth did not answer.

He did not buck up! He did not cheer up! He remained plunged in the deepest of gloom.

It was three or four days, since Mr. Prout's crushing sentence on Coker had made all Greyfriars chuckle, and Horace rage and foam.

In those three or four days, fellows had got quite used to seeing the hefty form of Coker towering over the fags, going into the Second-Form-room. They had almost ceased to smile at the sight.

The fags had got used to it. Twigg had got used to it. Prout had got used to it.

Only Coker hadn't!

Coker couldn't! Few, probably, guessed what anguish this was to Coker! It hit him, as Fisher T. Fish had expressed it, where he lived! He was wounded in the tenderest place—his self-esteem.

Ixion may have got used, in time, to whirling on his wheel; Sisyphus to rolling his eternal stone! But Coker could not get used to being treated as a fag among fags.

Deep gloom was imprinted on the manly brow of Horace Coker! He was plunged in pessimism! Glumness clothed him like a garment.

Sprawling in the armchair in his study, his long legs stretched out, his hands driven deep into his trousers' pockets, Horace Coker heard his friends' attempts at comfort, but heeded not.

He was past comfort.

"After all," said Potter, "it won't last! Prout only means it as a lesson to you, Coker, old man."

Coker looked up, at that!

"A lesson?" he repeated.

"Yes, that's all."

"Do you think, George Potter, that I'm in need of any lesson?"

"Oh, dear!" said Potter.

"Well, you did cheek Prout, you know!" urged Greene.

"Don't be a silly ass, Greene!"

"Um!"

"If it's cheek to be in the right when a pompous old ass is in the wrong, then perhaps it was cheek!" said Coker. "Not otherwise."

"Um!" murmured Potter and Greene.

"A fellow can't stand it!" said Coker, darkly. "The fags in the Second cackle at me! Grin at me!

I've had toffee slipped down my back——”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“What are you sniggering at?” roared Coker.

“Oh, nothing! But——”

“That little tick, Twigg, is cheeky,” went on Coker. “He has the cheek to jaw me, before the fags! They cackle! A fellow can't very well pick him up and chuck him across the Form-room——”

“Oh!” gasped Potter. “No! N-n-not quite! No!”

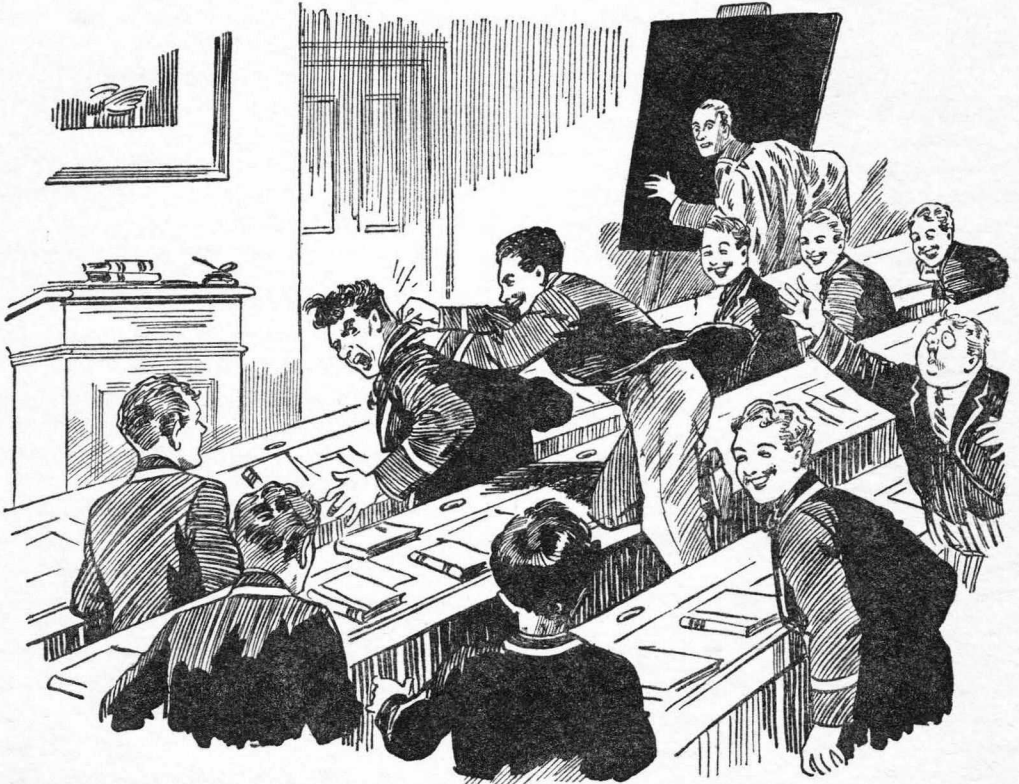
“You see, it's the sack!” said Coker distressfully. “If it wasn't for that, I'd take Prout and Twigg by their necks and bang their heads together.”

“Great pip!”

“But what would happen if I did?” demanded Coker. “The Head would sack me. That's a cert, I reckon. What?”

“Quite!” gurgled Greene. “I—I—I don't think there's any doubt that a fellow would be sacked if he knocked two Form-masters' heads together.”

“Well, what's a man to do?” said Coker wearily. “Prout thinks he's getting away with this! Making a fellow look a fool! It's not only an insult to me, but to all the Fifth, if they could only see it! They can't! They only cackle! But look here, I'm not letting Prout crow over me.”



Suddenly Dicky Nugent snatched the stick of toffee from Sammy Bunter's fingers, leaned over Coker, and pushed it down the back of his neck. “I say——” howled Bunter minor. But his voice was drowned by the roar that came from Coker. “Ooogh! Grooogh! Urrrh!”

Coker sat up in the chair. There was a gleam in Coker's eyes.

The worm will turn! And Coker was not a worm! Such deep, inexpiable wrongs roused thoughts of vengeance.

"I'm getting back on Prout!" said Coker darkly. "He can make me look a fool, by sticking me among those putrid fags! Well, I fancy Prout will look rather a fool, too, when he gets a bucket of whitewash over his silly head."

"A—a—a what?" stuttered Potter, in alarm.

"I've been thinking it out," said Coker. "Prout's got me in a cleft stick—with the Head backing him up, ready to sack a fellow. I'm not going to be sacked, to please Prout! He's made me sit up! I'm going to make him sit up! See? You fellows are going to help."

Potter and Greene looked doubtful.

"Are we?" murmured Potter.

"Of course, I shall have to be a bit strategic," said Coker. "It won't do for Prout to know that it came from me. That's where you fellows will come in useful."

"Oh!" said Potter and Greene.

"Like the mouse and the lion over again," explained Coker. "The humble little mouse, in the fable, you know, who helped the lion when he was in the toils! In the same way you're going to help me."

"Oh!" said Potter and Greene again.

They did not seem to be greatly taken by the idea of playing mouse to Coker's lion!

"You know old Prout takes a trot in the quad of an evening," said Coker. "Rolls like a barge along the Elm Walk! Well, I know how to get that bucket of whitewash out of Gosling's wood-shed. You two fellows

get in one of the trees over the Elm Walk——"

"Do we?"

"Yes! You pull up that bucket with a rope! You keep it all ready——!"

"Oh!"

"And up-end it over Prout when he passes underneath! See?"

Potter and Greene gazed at Coker!

"What do you think of that?" asked Coker.

Potter and Greene did not tell Coker what they thought of the idea of up-ending a bucket of whitewash over the head of their Form-master! They seemed bereft of speech!

"Easy as falling off a form, what?" pursued Coker. "You see, you fellows slip along, and get up into the tree early. You have a rope with you. I come along with the bucket of whitewash, and you pull it up. Then I clear off—of course, I shall have to be quite clear when it happens, as Prout is bound to think of me! I shall have to have an alibi. See?"

Potter and Greene were still speechless.

"Fancy Prout!" said Coker. A pale smile dawned on his gloomy face, "Fancy Old Pompous drenched with whitewash from head to foot! Make him look a bit of a fool, what?"

"Oh, crikey!" said Potter, finding his voice at last.

"You'll get clear all right afterwards," went on Coker. "A jolly good chance, anyhow! If you get landed, of course, you'll get it a bit stiff! You take that risk!"

"We—we—we take that risk?" articulated Greene.

"Yes, you can't carry out a stunt like this without risk!" said Coker. "Never mind that, though——"

"Oh!" breathed Potter. "Never mind that?"

"The only drawback is, that I shan't be able to tell Prout that it came from me, to make him squirm for sticking me in the Second!" said Coker. "But it wouldn't do, of course."

"Oh! That's the only drawback?" gasped Greene.

"Yes; I'd like to tell him, but it wouldn't do! We'll get on with it this very day!" said Coker. "Gosling may move that bucket of whitewash to-morrow. Strike while the iron's hot, what?"

Coker rose from the armchair.

He was still gloomy, still glum. But he seemed to draw some crumb of comfort from this masterly scheme for making Prout suffer for his sins. Vengeance is sweet!

Potter and Greene did not rise. Coker was keen, Potter and Greene did not seem to share his keenness.

"Well, come on," said Coker, glancing at them, "I've told you exactly what you're to do, and even duffers like you can't very well muck it up, when you've got exact instructions. Why don't you come?"

"Do—do—do you think we're coming to mop whitewash over our beak?" gasped Potter.

"Eh! Yes!"

"Then you'd better think again!" hooted Potter. "We're not doing anything of the kind, see? We don't want a Head's flogging."

"And we don't want to whitewash Prout, either!" hooted Greene. "Prout's not a bad old bean!"

Coker looked at them. It dawned on his powerful brain that his own keenness for this great stunt was not shared in his study.

His brow darkened.

"If you mean that you're letting me down——!" he began.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" exclaimed Potter. "Look here, Coker, you've only got from Prout what you asked for——"

"Begged and prayed for!" said Greene.

"Make the best of it!" said Potter. "You're learning spelling, anyhow, in the Second!"

"And you need it!" said Greene.

Coker's eyes glinted.

"Are you backing me up, or are you not backing me up?" he demanded, categorically.

"No!" roared Potter and Greene together, desperately.

"That does it!" Coker pushed back his cuffs. "I can't bang Prout and Twigg's heads together for their cheek! But I can jolly well bang your cheeky heads together, and I'm going to."

And Coker rushed at his disloyal followers, grasped them, and essayed to bang their heads together, as they so richly deserved.

But Coker was not the only worm that could turn.

Potter and Greene did not, perhaps realise that they deserved to have their heads banged! Anyhow, they did not want them banged!

They grasped Coker.

They heaved at him together and upended him! A head banged in the study. But it was not Potter's head, or Greene's head! It was Coker's head, and it banged on the study table.

Bang!

"Yoooooop!" roared Coker.

Bang!

"Yaroooooh!"

Coker found himself sitting on the carpet, rubbing a dizzy head. Potter and Greene retired, rather hastily, from the study, and left him to it.

THE NINTH CHAPTER

RALLYING ROUND COKER!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Too late!"

"Eh! What do you mean, too late?" demanded Billy Bunter.

"We've finished tea."

There was a chuckle in No. 1 Study in the Remove. Tea was over, in that celebrated apartment when Billy Bunter put his fat face and big spectacles in at the door.

"The too-latefulness is terrific, my esteemed Bunter!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Oh, really, you fellows! I say, Coker's coming!"

"Oh, Coker!"

The Famous Five jumped up from the tea-table at once.

"I looked in, to give you the tip," said Billy Bunter, more in sorrow than in anger. "Still, if there's any cake left——"

"There isn't!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled away, as the heavy tread of Horace Coker, of the Fifth Form, woke the echoes of the Remove passage.

Coker looked into No. 1 Study.

Five smiling faces were turned towards him.

Harry Wharton picked up a ruler. Frank Nugent picked up the inkpot. Bob Cherry lifted the poker from the fender. Johnny Bull grasped a Latin dictionary; Hurree Singh a pair of compasses. The chums of the Remove were quickly ready for Coker.

They supposed, of course, that the great Horace had come on the war-path. Coker was very often on the war-path. And they knew that his fiery temper had been fearfully exacerbated, of late, by his experience in the Second-form room.

To their surprise, however, Coker

showed no sign of hostility. He stared at them.

"What's that game?" he grunted, noting the various weapons in their hands. "What are you up to, you silly little idiots?"

"The question is what are you up to?" answered Harry Wharton. "Is this a friendly call, or have you come here for a ragging?"

"Don't be a young ass, Wharton! I've got something to say to you."

Coker shut the door.

Apparently he did not desire other ears to hear what he had to say to the chums of the Remove.

"Oh, all right," said Harry.

The ruler, the inkpot, the poker, the dictionary and the compasses were restored to their respective places. Coker, it appeared, did not need them!

"Sit down, old bean!" said Nugent hospitably.

Why Coker had called was a mystery, Still, if he was going to depart so far from his usual manners and customs as to be civil, the chums of the Remove were prepared to be civil in their turn.

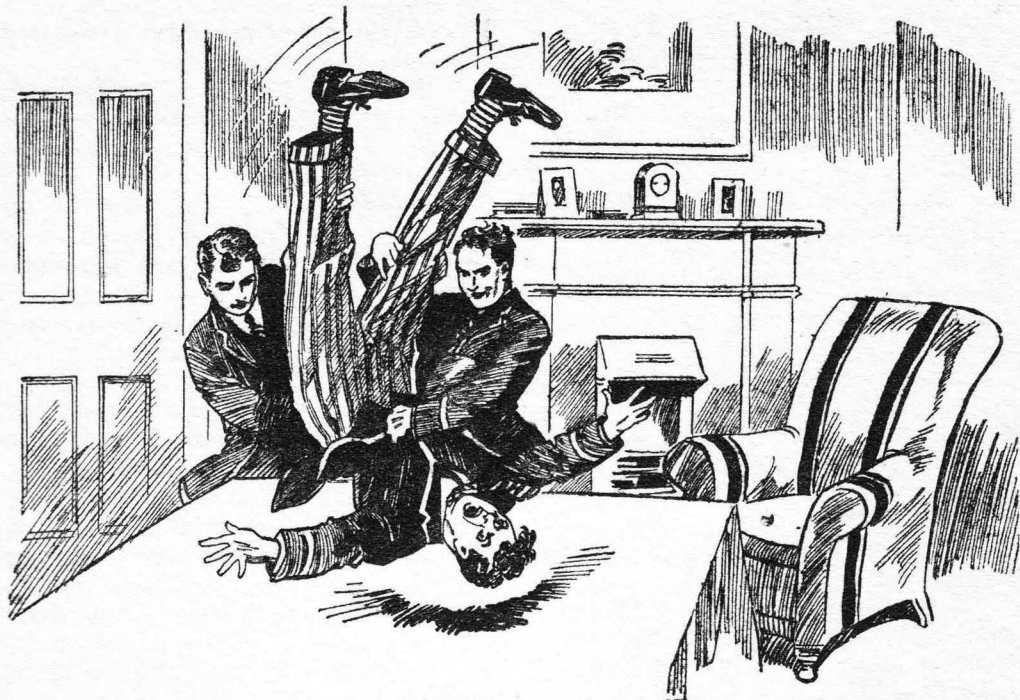
"I'll stand!" grunted Coker. "You needn't fancy you've got a Fifth-form man visiting your study, because I've come here to speak to you. I don't want any of your dashed fag familiarity!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I'm in need of some assistance," said Coker. "I want something done, and my own pals have let me down." He rubbed his head reminiscently. "It's just the sort of thing you cheeky little sweeps would like, I fancy. You're always playing some fag trick or other."

The Famous Five eyed him.

It appeared that Coker had come there to ask some service at their



Potter and Greene grasped Coker together, heaved at him, and up-ended him over the study table. Bang
 "Yooooop!" roared Coker, as his head smote the table. Bang! "Yaroooh!" he roared again.

hands. Coker had his own inimitable way of asking favours.

"You've heard about the way Prout's been treating me——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker glared.

"I haven't come here to listen to fag cackle!" he roared. "If you want me to thrash you all round you've only got to say so."

"So!" said Bob Cherry at once.

"What?"

"So!" repeated Bob.

"What do you mean, you young ass?" said Coker irritably. His powerful brain did not grasp things quickly; indeed, often did not grasp them at all. "Talk sense. Or rather, don't talk at all. I haven't come here to listen to your fag jaw. Look here, I'm after Prout."

"Eh?"

"A couple of you kids can do the trick," said Coker. "And I'll stand you a cake if you work it all right."

"A—a—a cake!" repeated the Famous Five.

They looked at Coker as if they could have eaten him. From Coker's lofty point of view, all juniors were fags, to be bribed with cakes or apples. Coker made no distinction whatever between the heroes of the Remove and the inky little imps in the Second Form, among whom he sat for his sins.

But there was a difference—a big difference.

"A big plum cake," said Coker. "I've had one in a hamper from my Aunt Judy. Big enough to make the lot of you sick."

They gazed at him.

"Well, this is the idea," said Coker

briskly. "Two of you hide in the big elm over the Elm Walk in about half an hour's time. Take a cord with you. I shall bring along a bucket of whitewash, and you'll pull it up."

"What—which—why—how——"

"Don't jaw—listen! You'll wait in the tree till Prout comes barging along, then you'll upend the whitewash over his head."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Then you can scoot," said Coker. "I daresay you'll get clear all right."

"You—you daresay! Oh!"

"You'll get away all right if you're careful. If you're not, serve you jolly well right if you get whopped."

"Oh, crikey!"

"And there'll be the cake afterwards," said Coker temptingly. "You fags are always gorging, I believe. A big plum cake! Is it a go?"

"Is it?" gasped Harry Wharton. "Not quite."

"The quitefulness is not terrific."

"You silly ass!"

"You blithering bandersnatch!"

"You frabjous fathead——!"

"Don't jaw," said Coker. "I don't want any jaw. I've had enough of that from Potter and Greene. I want you to do this. I'll stand you a cake to guzzle if you'll do it for me. I'll jolly well whop you all round, here and now, if you don't. I can't say fairer than that."

Horace Coker's fate trembled in the balance. He never knew what a narrow escape he had at that moment of being strewn over the floor of No. 1 Study, with five juniors treading on him. Bob Cherry waved his comrades back as they were about to advance.

"Let's have this clear," said Bob, with a glimmer in his blue eyes. "We get into the big tree over the Elm Walk, Coker——"

"We don't!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Shut up, old chap. Coker's here to give orders, aren't you, Coker?"

"Of course!" said Coker.

Johnny stared at his chum dumb-founded for a moment. Bob closed one eye at him. Johnny grinned and was silent.

"Well, go ahead, Coker," said Bob. "Let's have it clear. We get into that big tree over the Elm Walk——"

"That's it," said Coker.

"You bring along a bucket of whitewash——"

"Exactly."

"We pull it up."

"You've got it," assented Coker.

"Then we mop it over somebody passing along the path underneath."

"Yes; over Prout!"

"Prout?" repeated Bob, gravely.

"Well, it's a bit shadowy under those trees, Coker! Suppose we mopped it over the wrong man?"

"Keep your eyes open, of course," grunted Coker. "If you make a mistake it's your own fault! Watch for the man you want, of course."

"Well, that's all right!" said Bob.

"We watch for the man we want, and let him have it right on the napper?"

"Yes."

"It's a go, then!" said Bob.

The rest of the Co. stood silent.

That Bob Cherry had any idea, even the remotest idea, of mopping whitewash over the majestic head of Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, was wildly impossible. Coker might fancy so! Nobody else was likely to fancy so! The Co. could only conclude that Bob had some mysterious scheme for pulling Coker's egregious leg, and they let him get on with it.

Coker nodded with satisfaction.

"Half an hour's time, then!" he said.

"Right as rain!"

"Well, I'm glad I haven't had to

thrash the lot of you," said Coker, genially, as he turned to the door.

"You've reason to be glad!" remarked Johnny Bull. And the Famous Five chuckled.

Coker gave Johnny a look; but he left the study peaceably. These cheeky fags were going to do what Coker wanted; and that was that! But were they?

When the door closed on Coker, four members of the famous Co. looked expressively at Bob Cherry.

"Now, what's the game?" demanded four voices.

"Game?" repeated Bob.

"You're not thinking of mopping whitewash over Prout, I suppose?" demanded Wharton.

"Hardly! I never told Coker we'd do that, did I? I said we'd watch for the man we want, and let him have it right on the napper! So we will! Prout's not the man we want, though!"

"Oh!" gasped Wharton. "I—I see!"

"Time you did!" agreed Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar of merriment in No. 1 Study. Coker heard it, as he went down the Remove staircase. He smiled! Evidently these fags were greatly entertained by the prospect of mopping down that whitewash on an unsuspecting head!

Coker smiled—though probably he would not have smiled, had he



"If some junior boy has played a prank on you, Gosling," said Mr. Prout, "go to the boy's Form-master! Why do you come to me?" "Master Coker ain't no junior boy," replied Gosling, "and wot I says is this 'ere——" "Coker!" repeated Mr. Prout, his eyes gleaming. He was fed-up with Coker.

known whose head was to get the whitewash!

THE TENTH CHAPTER STRATEGIC!

GOSLING stared.

The ancient porter of Greyfriars' School was in his wood-shed. He had some work to do there.

He was sitting on a bench in the corner of the shed, slowly and methodically filling his pipe with tobacco, and cramming it down with a horny thumb.

No one, perhaps, would have guessed, from Gosling's occupation, that he had work to do! But that, as a matter of fact, was the way Gosling often did his work! He preferred doing it that way!

Having filled his pipe to his satisfaction, Gosling was about to strike a match, and apply it to the bowl, when he stopped—and stared!

A shadow fell across the half-open doorway of the shed.

A figure stepped in, on tiptoe.

Gosling stared blankly at Coker, of the Fifth Form! Had a fag of the Third or Second sneaked into his wood-shed in that surreptitious way, Gosling would not have been surprised. Such young rascals were as full of tricks as monkeys! But he was surprised to see a Fifth-form senior at it.

Coker, inside, glanced round and spotted the bucket of whitewash standing under the window. He did not spot Gosling.

Gosling was in the further corner, staring. Pipe in hand, with his mouth open, he stared.

"What luck!" Coker murmured the words aloud. "There it is—the old donkey hasn't used it yet! Lucky the old ass left the door open, too!"

Gosling breathed hard. He could

not doubt to whom Coker's communitings referred! He, William Gosling, was the old donkey, and the old ass! And this Fifth-form fellow was after his whitewash!

The whitewash had been mixed that morning! No doubt Coker had seen it, through the window, where it stood. And he was after it! What use a Fifth-form fellow could possibly have for whitewash was a mystery to Gosling. Certainly Gosling was not going to let him walk it off! Gosling had a use for it himself! Indeed, he would have been using it now, had he not been busy on the more important occupation of resting his ancient limbs on a bench and filling his pipe!

"Hi!" ejaculated Gosling, suddenly and sharply.

"Oh!" gasped Coker.

He spun round.

"I'd like to know," said Gosling, as the Fifth-Former stared at him, "what you think you're up to, Master Coker? Wot I says is this 'ere—wot are you up to?"

"Oh!" gasped Coker. "Nothing!"

"You come in 'ere for nothing?" asked Gosling, with crushing sarcasm. "Well, take it and go! There's lots of it!"

Coker looked at him. He was annoyed. He was tempted to jam Gosling's head against the wall and walk off the bucket of whitewash under his cheeky nose, but he refrained. It was necessary for Prout not to know who had handled that whitewash. Just as Coker's vengeance was, he did not expect the Head to see the justice of it, if the facts came out. Circumstances compelled Coker to imitate the gentleman in the poem who did good by stealth!

He walked out of the wood-shed. Had he walked off that whitewash under Gosling's nose, Gosling would

have reported him to his Form-master. Then, after the happening, Prout would have guessed that Coker was concerned in the whitewashing! Coker could see that. Coker was not bright, but he was bright enough for that.

Strategy evidently was indicated. He had to have that whitewash. Already the Remove fellows were on the Elm Walk, getting into the tree, ready. But he had to have it without Gosling's knowledge.

Gosling snorted when he went. He lighted his pipe. He was going to smoke his pipe and use the whitewash afterwards, if there was time after he had finished smoking his pipe!

But his smoke was interrupted.

Hardly five minutes later the rugged features of Horace Coker looked in at the door.

Gosling eyed him with deep suspicion. This time, however, Coker did not enter; he called across to Gosling.

"You there, Gosling? Did you know that the Head was at your lodge, asking for you?"

"Ho!" said Gosling.

Coker walked off again.

Slowly, Gosling rose from the bench and laid down his pipe. If the Head wanted to see him at his lodge, he had to go. It did not occur to him for the moment that Coker had not said that the Head was at his lodge. He had merely inquired whether Gosling knew that he was there. Coker was rather a stickler for the truth.

However, this fine distinction was lost on Gosling's rather slow brain. He left the wood-shed and pegged away to his lodge.

When he was gone, a burly figure appeared round the corner of the shed. Coker had watched him go.

The astute Coker grinned as he whipped into the wood-shed and secured the bucket of whitewash.

Gosling was nowhere in sight when he walked out with it. Coker's strategy had been a success.

He walked away cheerily. He had to take rather a roundabout course to get that bucket into the quad unobserved, but he had plenty of time on his hands. Prout was not due to take his usual stroll for nearly half an hour yet.

Five minutes after Coker had vanished, Gosling returned with a red and wrathful face. He had not found the Head at his lodge. He realised that Coker had been pulling his leg! He debated in his mind whether the episode was serious enough for a report to Coker's Form-master. He pegged into the wood-shed, sat down on his bench again and picked up his pipe.

Then he uttered a startled ejaculation.

"My eye! That there whitewash!"

The bucket was gone.

Gosling saw it all. He had been tricked out of the shed while Coker snaffled the whitewash! It was as clear as noonday to Gosling.

"My eye!" he repeated.

Once more Gosling left the shed. This time he peregrinated towards the House. He kept his eye open for Coker, but did not spot him. He reached the House, and went to Mr. Prout's study.

"Come in!" said the deep and fruity voice of Prout, as Gosling tapped at his door.

Gosling entered, greeted by a surprised stare of inquiry from Prout.

"What is it, Gosling?" asked Prout, rather snappishly.

Mr. Prout was not in the best of tempers that afternoon. There was

something in the nature of a worry on his mind. He had had a rather unpleasant reminder of the existence of a gentleman whose existence he would gladly have forgotten. That was Mr. Spadger Hawkins!

The Spadger's exploits of nearly a week ago had been duly reported to the police at Courtfield. Inspector Grimes had undertaken to round up that rough and disagreeable gentleman, and provide him with free board and lodging for a time. Mr. Prout had naturally supposed that either the Spadger would be "run in," or else that he would disappear over the horizon and never be heard of again.

Neither had happened! The Spadger had been seen quite near the school, but the police had not succeeded in getting hold of him.

He had dodged them; but it was known that he was still in the neighbourhood; a much-sought-after man!

This was unpleasant news for Prout! He could not help feeling that the Spadger was lingering in the vicinity, at his peril, on account of that crack on the nut that Prout had given him! With some idea in his mind, perhaps, that one good turn deserved another, he wanted to crack Prout's nut!

It was disconcerting.

Prout had heaps of pluck! He feared no foe! But it was rather unnerving to think that that hulking ruffian was watching for him, when he took his walks abroad, with the intention of cracking his nut! It seemed judicious, for the present, to confine his walks to the precincts of the school.

Thinking over this, Prout was not in the best of tempers.

Certainly it was not Gosling's fault! But he snapped at Gosling! He felt like snapping at somebody; and

Gosling was the only person available at the moment!

"It's like this, sir——" said Gosling.

"Like what?" snapped Prout. "Kindly speak in English!"

"Eh?" said Gosling.

"If you have anything to say to me, Gosling, say it, and be brief, and do not disturb me further!" yapped Prout. "I am a busy man!"

"Ho!" said Gosling. "Well, sir, wot I says is this 'ere, if young ribs are to pull a man's leg, I says, and make a fool of him, I says, and send him orf to see somebody what ain't there, I says, and sneak his pail of whitewash while his back's turned, I says——"

"Nonsense!" said Prout. "If some junior boy has played such a foolish prank on you, Gosling, go to the boy's Form-master! Why do you come to me?"

"Master Coker ain't no junior-boy, sir," answered Gosling, "and wot I says is this 'ere, I've come 'ere, I says, because Master Coker——"

"Coker!" repeated Prout.

His eyes gleamed.

He was fed up with Coker! With the worry of Spadger Hawkins on his mind, he had no patience for Coker!

"Wot I says——!" recommenced Gosling.

"Be brief!" barked Prout. He rose. "Has Coker, of my Form, been to your wood-shed?"

"He 'ave——!"

"He has abstracted a pail of white-wash?"

"I ain't said nothing about extracting nothing," said Gosling. "Wot I says is this 'ere, he's took it!"

"He has taken a pail of whitewash from the wood-shed?"

"Arter pulling of a man's leg——"

"I will see to the matter! You may go!"

Gosling went. He grunted as he went. He was annoyed with Prout and his brusque manner. Still, he drew comfort from Prout's manner—it indicated that Coker was booked for trouble! Gosling went back to his wood-shed, to complete his interrupted smoke, hoping that Coker of the Fifth would get it, as he described it, "ot!"

Prout looked as if Coker would, as he left the House!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

NOT PROUT!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"Here he comes!"

There was a chuckle in the branches of the big elm. Five smiling faces looked down through the foliage on to the path below.

It was still quite light in the open quad. But on the Elm Walk, it was quite dusky.

It was not too dusky, however, for the Famous Five to observe a burly figure that came cautiously through the trees, carrying a bucket of whitewash.

They smiled down at Coker of the Fifth.



"Mind how you pull it up," said Coker, as Bob Cherry drew up the cord with the bucket attached. "Don't be clumsy young duffers if you can help it. Careful!" Coker watched the ascent of the bucket of whitewash with an anxious eye.

Coker had arrived on the scene of action! He had rather kept the Famous Five waiting. They had expected him sooner. They were not aware that he had had to use strategy to get hold of the whitewash.

However, here he was, at last.

He stopped under the big elm, of which the extensive branches completely roofed that part of the path. He looked up.

He frowned at the sight of five young faces among the leaves above him. Two of the fags would have been enough for the purpose. But it appeared that they all wanted to see the fun.

"Oh! You're all there!" grunted Coker.

"Here we are, here we are, here we are again," sang Bob Cherry, powerfully if not melodiously.

"Don't make such a row, you young ass!" snorted Coker. "Do you want to bring all Greyfriars here?"

"My esteemed and idiotic Coker," murmured Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Shut up, you silly, chattering nigger," snapped Coker. "Can't you silly fags ever hold your silly tongues?"

Really, if ever a fellow asked for it, Coker did. He seemed born specially to ask for it.

"Look here, Coker——" began Johnny Bull.

"I said shut up!" interrupted Coker. "No need to jaw. Just shut up. Now, have you got the cord? Just like you young idiots to forget it."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"We've got the cord, Coker," he answered.

"Let it down, then, and don't waste time, or jaw."

"Here it comes!"

The captain of the Remove, sitting astride the branch, let down the cord. It slithered down to Coker, uncoiling as it slithered. The coil was not quite uncoiled, when it landed on Coker's head.

He gave a howl.

"You clumsy young ass!"

"What's the matter now, Coker?"

"I didn't tell you to bang the thing on my head, you silly little idiot."

"That's all right, Coker—I could do that without being told."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker glared up at the five. Had they not been a dozen feet above his head, and consequently far out of reach, Coker might have interrupted the proceedings by starting to thrash them all round. He had no doubt that it would have done them good.

"Stop that sniggering!" snapped Coker. He captured the end of the cord and tied it to the handle of the bucket. "Keep quiet, you sniggering young asses. Prout won't be here yet, but you don't want fellows to hear you and come along. Can't you understand that this has got to be kept dark?"

"The understandfulness is terrific, my esteemed Coker."

"Shut up!"

Coker knotted the end of the cord secured to the handle of the bucket, the Famous Five watching him with great interest from above.

"There, that's all right," said Coker. "Mind how you pull it up. Don't be clumsy young duffers, if you can help it. Careful!"

Sitting astride on the branch, Bob Cherry drew up the cord, with the bucket attached. Coker carefully helped it off the ground.

He watched its ascent with an anxious eye. Slowly but surely it reached the wide-stretched branch where the juniors sat.

"Now, careful with it!" said Coker. "Lodge it on the branch and keep it steady while you wait for Prout."

The bucket was grasped, lifted, and lodged on the branch.

"Prout may be along any time, in about a quarter of an hour," went on Coker. "Don't jaw, and keep an eye open for him. I shall have plenty of time to get clear——"

"Will you?" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Yes, that's all right. I don't want Prout to think I've had a hand in it—he would be pretty certain to take me to the Head. I had to be jolly careful in getting hold of the whitewash—that old ass Gosling was there; but luckily I pulled the wool over his eyes all right," said Coker, in happy unconsciousness of the fact that Gosling had already reported his strategic exploits to Prout. "Mind you don't spill it, Cherry, you clumsy young ass."

Bob winked at his comrades.

Coker, standing under the branch, looking up, was about as good a target as any fellow could have desired.

"All right now, Coker," said Bob. "We're to watch for the man we want and let him have it on his napper."

"That's it. Prout——"

"Prout's not the man we want."

"Eh?"

"You're the man we want, Coker."

"What!"

"And here comes the whitewash!" It came!

Before Coker's powerful intellect realised what was happening, Bob Cherry tilted over the bucket of whitewash.

The contents shot down, with a swoooooosh!

Swoosh!

Splash!

"Urrrrrgh!"

Coker disappeared from view—under a gallon of whitewash! It

clothed him from head to foot! It clothed him like a garment! From the midst of it, the astonished Coker gurgled horribly.

"Urrrh! Wurrgh! Gurrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The bucket was tossed away among the trees. Five juniors dropped from branches, and scudded. A howl of laughter floated back. But Coker did not hear it. His ears were full of whitewash. He lived, and moved, and had his being in a world of whitewash. He was of the whitewash whitewashy! Streaming, splashing, gurgling, and breathing whitewash, Coker staggered on the path under the elms, uttering a series of the most remarkable ejaculations:

"Oooogh! Wooooogh! Urrrrh! Wurrrrh! Gug! gug! gug!"

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

HORRID FOR HORACE!

"HA, ha, ha!"

"Who is it?"

"What is it!"

"Why is it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Prout stared round him. He was coming out of the House, to look for Coker of his Form: wrathfully determined to inquire, with the greatest severity, why he had snaffled Gosling's whitewash, what he was going to do with it, and what had become of it—and to administer due punishment.

But Prout, as it turned out, was under no necessity of making all those inquiries. He was no sooner out of the House, than he discovered Coker, and the whitewash, and what had become of it!

A strange, startling, grisly and ghastly figure was tottering towards the House, from the direction of the elms.

It gurgled as it came!

Crowds of fellows stared at it! It was not recognisable as Coker of the Fifth! It streamed whitewash, and left a white trail behind it, like the wake of a ship! Potter and Greene, of the Fifth, gave a simultaneous jump at the sight of it. A dreadful fear smote them that it was Prout, and that Coker had carried out unaided, the remarkable stunt in which they had declined to lend their aid. If he had, it was the sack for Coker—the long jump on the spot! But they spotted the portly figure of Prout, and were relieved.

"It's not Prout!" breathed Potter.

"Thank goodness!" gasped Greene.

"But—but it's somebody——"

"And—and it's whitewash——"

"He's got the wrong man——"

"Just like Coker!"

"Oh, just!"

"Who's that?" roared Wingate, of the Sixth. "What sort of a game is this? Is that some fellow larking, or what?"

"I—I think it's Coker!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Coker!" roared Potter and Greene together.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Did—did—did someone say that—that—that that was Coker!" articulated Mr. Prout.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What a very extraordinary proceeding!" said Mr. Quelch. "What can Coker have done this for? Very extraordinary indeed!"

"Groooogh!" came from the ghastly figure. "Oooogh! Woooo-ooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oooogh! Gurrgh! Gug!"

"I say, you fellows, it's Coker!" yelled Billy Bunter. "I say, he's smothered himself with whitewash! He, he, he!"

"Coker!" boomed Prout.

He strode up to the whitewashy figure. Coker came to a halt, and gave him a dim blink through the whitewash.

Had the stunt gone according to plan, Prout would have been in Coker's present ghastly state. And Coker, though he did not realise it, would have been booked for the "sack." Really, Coker was better off, in his present state, though he did not realise that either. The chums of the Remove had saved Coker from himself, as it were; but Coker was not feeling grateful. His present desire was to slaughter them.

"Is—is—is that you, Coker?" gasped Prout.

"Urrgh! Yes, sir!" gurgled Coker.

"Why have you done this?"

"Urrrgh!"

"Speak!"

"Gurrgh!"

"Explain yourself!" shrieked Prout.

"Wooooooogh!"

"You utterly absurd boy! Are you in your right senses? Gosling has reported to me that you abstracted his whitewash. Is it possible that you did so with this intention—to cover yourself, sir, with whitewash, and present this ridiculous spectacle to the school?"

"Ugggh! I—I—I didn't—I—urrgh——"

"The boy must be insane!" gasped Prout.

"Groooogh!"

"Will you explain yourself, Coker?"

"Ooogh! How can I—grooogh!—when my mum-mum-mum-mouth's full of—urrgh!—whitewash?" gurgled Coker. "I—I—oooooch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"A most absurd jest, if jest it is!" said Mr. Quelch. "I see nothing whatever of a humorous nature in such a jest! The boy must have ruined his clothes."

"Groogh! I never—ooogh!"

"It is beyond me!" said Prout.

"Beyond me entirely! The boy appears to have purloined a pail of whitewash, for no purpose but to smother himself from head to foot with it! I doubt whether he is sane!"

"Ooogh! I—I—groogh—"

"Go into the House, sir!" boomed Prout. "Go and—clean yourself! I will question you later! Go!"

He stepped aside, and Coker trailed on, dripping whitewash. Prout glared after him. Quelch frowned after him. The Greyfriars fellows roared with laughter after him. Coker had the spotlight! He had brought down the house!

"Amazing!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Unparalleled!" gasped Prout.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker trailed in. Potter and Greene followed him. Coker wanted a wash and

a change; and they were prepared to help. Howls of laughter echoed behind them.

They got him to a bath-room. Coker wallowed in hot water and soap, which he badly needed. They brought him a change of clothes.



"Prout's not the man we want," said Bob Cherry. "You're the man we want, Coker! And here comes the whitewash!" Before Coker could realise what was happening, Bob Cherry tilted the bucket and the contents shot down with a swoooooosh! "Urrrrrgh!" gurgled Coker through whitewash.

But it was a long time before Coker presented anything like his usual aspect! When he got the whitewash off, he was as red as he had before been white, with scrubbing and exertion. And, with all his efforts, there were still traces of whitewash in his hair, and about his ears.

He was gasping for breath when he was finished at last. His rugged face was like a freshly-boiled beetroot.

"I'll smash 'em!" he said for the twentieth time. "I'll spiflicate 'em! I'll pulverise 'em!"

"But how did it happen?" gasped Potter.

"All your fault!" hooted Coker. "If you'd stood by me, it wouldn't have happened! I got those Remove fags to do it, and they had the cheek to mop the whitewash over me instead of over Prout."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Potter and Greene.

Coker glared at them.

"You cackling asses!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you sniggering at?" howled Coker. "Do you think it's funny?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Apparently Potter and Greene did. They staggered away, doubled up with merriment.

"Oh, snigger!" roared Coker after them, greatly incensed. "Snigger!"

Potter and Greene took full advantage of that permission. They sniggered almost hysterically as they went.

Later, Coker had to see Prout. Even Coker was too wary to tell Prout what he had intended to do with the whitewash. He explained that he had never intended to get it upset over himself—which was the truth. He left Prout the richer by five hundred lines.

There was only one consolation left for Coker. That was to smash, spiflicate and pulverise the Famous Five of the Remove.

With that deadly intention, Coker dropped into No. 1 Study after prep that evening.

Soon afterwards a sound was heard on the Remove staircase, as if the coal-merchant was delivering sacks of coal there!

But it was not a delivery of coal! It was Horace Coker, of the Fifth Form, rolling down!

The chums of the Remove had not been smashed, spiflicated, or pulverised. But Coker, by the time he landed on the lower landing, was feeling considerably smashed, spiflicated, and pulverised! What was left of Coker tottered away, a sadder, if not a wiser Coker!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

SECOND TIME OF ASKING!

"It's rotten!" said Coker gloomily. "Mine's right!" said Potter rather tartly.

"So's mine!" said Greene.

Coker stared at them.

The three were at tea in the study, a day or two after the hectic episode of the whitewash.

There were eggs for tea. Potter and Greene were demolishing their eggs with satisfaction. Football practice had given them good appetites.

Coker jabbed his spoon into his egg as if he hated it!

Gloom sat on Coker's manly brow.

Gloom, indeed, sat there perennially now! To Coker, of the Fifth, life seemed weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable.

He had hoped that Prout would relent, and let him off that awful business of attending class with the Second Form. He had hoped that

Twigg would get tired of having him there.

Probably the latter hope had been realised! Twigg, very likely, was tired of Coker in the Second. The Second Form were not tired of him—Coker made class more interesting for them. They liked Coker there! They liked to hear him spell! They liked to see the way he looked at Twigg, when Twigg told him that there were no X's in "accept," or no J's in "gem." They liked putting bent pen-nibs on the form for him to sit on. They liked dropping pencils and things down his back. They found Coker almost inexhaustible as an entertainment. But Mr. Twigg, it was very probable, would have been glad to see the last of him, though he did not like to say so to Prout.

As for Prout's relenting, that was hopeless. So far from relenting, Prout was adamant—hard as the nether millstone. Some fellows suspected that he was so glad, and so relieved, to get Coker off his own hands a bit, that he would not be in a hurry to let him off.

Indeed, Prout had plainly stated that Coker had to sit with the Second till his spelling improved! That was the same as saying that he had to sit with the Second till the Greek Kalends. It was a life-sentence, in fact!

If Prout had ever thought of relenting, the incident of the whitewash would have hardened him again. Prout was sensitive about a fellow in his Form cutting such a ridiculous figure. It banished any compunction he might have had.

No wonder that Coker said that it was rotten! He felt that he was getting near the limit of endurance.

This, really, was a thing no fellow could stand!

If he had only got away with that

Greyfriars Jingles

How Much Per Cent?

By
**PETER
TODD**



I GUESS you've heard of Fishy, eh?
That enterprising business jay,
Who cut his eye-teeth in Noo Yark?
Well, here's his favourite remark:
"How much per cent?"

He's lots of others, such as "Great!"
"I kind a guess and calculate!"
And "Snakes!" and "Say, I gotta hunch!"
But still, the pick of all the bunch
Is "How much per cent?"

Thus speaks our Shylock, Fisher T.,
"I guess you can't get over me!
It's time for prep? Aw, walk your chalks!
I guess I'm busy! Money talks—
How much per cent?"

He'll lend you money like a shot,
And hand it to you on the spot;
It isn't generous, it's "biz,"
And all you've got to worry is
How much per cent?

His "greenbacks" are his only friends;
For them his life begins and ends.
He lives and moves and has his being
In getting interest, and seeing
How much per cent?

Wherever you encounter him
In Rag or class-room, dorm or gym,
With heavy thought his eyes are shut,
Not thinking of his lessons, but
How much per cent?

whitewash stunt it would have been a comfort! Whitewashing Prout would have consoled him! But only Coker himself had been whitewashed, which was no consolation at all.

Gloomy, glum, restive, Coker sat at the tea-table and jabbed at his egg as if the egg had been Prout!

"Rotten!" he repeated. "Putrid!"

"They're new-laid!" said Potter.

"What?"

"New-laid!"

"Mad?" asked Coker.

"You've not tasted it yet!" Greene pointed out.

Coker blinked at them. Potter and Greene did not know that he was speaking of Prout's conduct, of his own uncommon wrongs and grievances, and of the stale, flat, and unprofitable state of the universe generally. They supposed that he was speaking of the eggs! And as they were eating eggs, it was a natural supposition.

"Tasted it!" said Coker.

"Yes! Taste it, and see!" said Greene. "Mine's all right and Potter's is all right! Fresh as a daisy."

"Perfectly fresh!" said Potter.

"You blithering, blethering, blinking blockheads!" said Coker. "Do you think I'm talking about eggs?"

"Eh! Yes! You said it was rotten"

"I wasn't speaking of the egg, you fathead!"

"Well, if you mean the tomato"

"The tomatoes are all right!" said Greene.

"I wasn't speaking of the tomato!" shrieked Coker. "Eggs! Tomatoes! That's all you fellows can think of! Eggs! Tomatoes!" Coker sneered—one of those bitter, sardonic sneers. "Talk about Nebuchadnezzar fiddling while Constantinople was burning!"

Potter and Greene made no re-

joinder to that. They had never, so far as they knew, heard of Nebuchadnezzar fiddling while Constantinople was burning! Possibly Coker was thinking of Nero and Rome, and had got it mixed.

But they did not argue! It was useless to argue with Coker! If he wanted to make it Nebuchadnezzar and Constantinople, he would make it Nebuchadnezzar and Constantinople, and that was that!

"But the worm will turn!" said Coker darkly.

"Um!" said Potter.

"Um!" said Greene.

"If you fellows had backed me up the other day, we'd have made that pompous old ass, Prout, sorry for himself!" said Coker.

"You'd have got sacked——"

"Don't be an ass, Potter!"

"Bunked!" said Greene.

"Don't be a dummy, Greene!"

Potter and Greene devoted themselves to eggs and tomatoes. They found these more interesting than Coker's conversation.

"You let me down!" said Coker.

Silence.

"Those cheeky Remove fags let me down!"

Still silence.

"But I'm a fellow," went on Coker, "that can depend on himself! If Prout thinks he's going to stick me among those putrid fags in the Second Form, and get away with it, Prout is making a big mistake."

Coker paused—not for a reply, but to demolish his egg! The egg duly demolished, Coker re-started after the interval.

"What do you think happened in the Second this afternoon?" he asked. "That ass, Twigg—that fathead, Twigg—that blithering cuckoo, Twigg—put up the word occiput on



As the strange, startling figure came tottering towards the House, leaving a white trail in its wake, crowds of fellows stared at it and roared with laughter. But the figure was not recognisable as Coker of the Fifth.

the blackboard! He spelt it without an X."

"Oh!"

"Like Prout!" said Coker.

"Oh!"

"I had to copy it down!"

"Oh!"

"I copied it down, just as the old ass wrote it!" said Coker. "I've had enough of trying to teach Form-masters how to spell! And what do think the old fathead said? He said I was improving!"

"Oh!"

"Improving!" repeated Coker, with a sardonic laugh.

"Um!"

"I sat on a pen-nib to-day!" went

on Coker. "One of the little beasts put it on the form while I was standing up! I sat down on it. It was sharp!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Snigger!" said Coker bitterly. "Oh, snigger! Well, that's the sort of thing Prout's let me in for, because I wouldn't allow him to bully-rag me into bad spelling! But let him wait!"

Coker paused again. This time it was to deal with the tomatoes. The tomatoes followed the egg on the downward path, and Coker resumed: "I've thought it out!"

Potter and Greene refrained from asking him what he had done it with!

Coker, evidently, was in no mood for such inquiries.

"I've got it all cut and dried!" said Coker. "I'm not asking you fellows to help me, this time! I'm doing it alone! And it won't be white-wash, either! Let Prout wait!"

Coker breathed hard.

"Let him wait—till he takes his next trot on the Elm Walk!" said Coker. "Just let him wait! He'll find somebody there!"

"Coker, old man——" murmured Potter.

"For goodness' sake——" said Greene.

"Don't jaw!" said Coker. "As I said, let him wait! That's all! He's got it coming to him! It's coming to him all right! When he gets the bag over his head——"

"The—the bag!" gasped Potter.

"I've got the bag ready! I've soaked the inside with red ink. When Prout gets its slammed down over his head——"

"Coker——!"

"And tied, so that he can't get it off——"

"Oh, crikey!"

"Perhaps he will be sorry for himself—what?" asked Coker.

"You'll get sacked!" gasped Potter.

"I'm not going to tell him I did it!" said Coker sarcastically. "I wasn't thinking of mentioning that to Prout!"

"Coker, old man——" implored Greene.

"You needn't jaw!" said Coker, rising from the table. "Prout's made me sit up! I'm going to make Prout sit up—and how! That's what!"

"If you're seen with the bag——" gasped Potter.

"You'll be seen—spotted—nailed—snaffled——" groaned Greene.

"Think I'm a fool?" asked Coker.

Potter and Greene did not answer that question. Coker would have been offended, had they stated what they thought on that subject.

"I'm going to put the bag there ready, long before I bag Prout!" Coker condescended to explain. "I've got it here, in a brown-paper parcel. I shall leave it among the elms, where I can pick it up when I want it—which will be about an hour from now."

Coker, under the dismayed eyes of his friends, sorted a brown-paper parcel out of the study cupboard.

They looked at it. Certainly, that parcel looked innocent enough. No one could have suspected that it contained a bag, soaked with ink, intended to be jammed over the head of a Form-master! Nobody at Greyfriars could possibly have suspected that! Such things could hardly occur to any brain less original than Coker's.

"It will be all ready!" smiled Coker. "So shall I! Let Prout wait! That's all I say—let him wait!"

Coker, parcel in hand, walked out of the study.

Potter and Greene looked at one another! Coker was asking for it again—the second time of asking, as it were—begging for it with deep earnestness. This new scheme was, perhaps, a little more egregious than the whitewash stunt. On that occasion, Harry Wharton and Co. had saved Coker from himself! On this occasion they could not save him—nobody could save him!

If Coker bagged Prout with an inky bag, the result was certain. He would no longer have to sit with the Second Form of Greyfriars, it was true!—for he would no longer be at Greyfriars at all! It was the bag for Prout, and the sack for Coker!

"Oh dear!" sighed
Potter.
"Oh lor'!" sighed
Greene.

And they left it at that!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER

ALL RIGHT FOR BUNTER!

BILLY BUNTER blinked.
But he did not stir.

He blinked anxiously
and uneasily through his
big spectacles. But he
made no sound, and no
movement.

William George Bunter,
at the moment, was under-
studying the shy violet.
He was seeking seclusion.
Generally, Bunter was a
gregarious animal. Just
now he appreciated the
charms which sages have
seen in the face of Solitude.

In No. 1 Study, in the
Remove, a box of choco-
late creams had been in-
tended to follow tea. That
box of chocolate creams
was missing from No. 1

Study. Billy Bunter was missing from
the Remove passage!

When a box of chocolates and Billy
Bunter were both missing at the same
time, it was a safe bet that both had
departed in the same direction! So
the fat Owl of the Remove had a
misgiving that he might be looked for.

For which reason, Bunter had
strolled along to the Elm Walk, a
shady and secluded spot, and turned
off into the trees. Seated at the foot
of an elm, in the dusk, Bunter
negotiated the chocolates. If Harry
Wharton and Co. were hunting him
up and down the House, they were
welcome, so far as Bunter was con-



As Bunter heard Coker rambling about, he sat still and silent with
the box of snaffled chocolates. Next moment there was a sound as a
parcel was dropped near him. "That's all right," came Coker's voice.
"Nobody will see it there, and I can get it when I want it."

cerned, to go a-hunting as long as they
liked. Bunter was not going to be
seen in the House again till he had
disposed internally of the evidence
against him. By the time Bunter was
seen, X-rays would be required to
discover the evidence.

So the sound of a footstep among the
elms rather alarmed Bunter! He
blinked round him very anxiously.

He had not finished the chocolates
yet! A lot of the evidence was still
in sight if he was found. If those
beasts had thought of hunting for
him outside the House——

The fat junior hardly breathed.
Somebody was coming along the

Elm Walk! It might be old Prout, who always took a walk there in the early evening. It might be any fellow! Bunter could only hope that it was not the proprietor of the chocolates!

But his fat heart almost missed a beat as he heard the footsteps turn from the path into the trees.

They came directly towards the gnarled old elm behind which Bunter sat, his fat shoulders leaning on the trunk.

He barely repressed a yelp of alarm.

Then the footsteps stopped.

Only the tree was between Bunter, sitting with mouth agape and eyes bulging with terror behind his spectacles, and the unknown person who had arrived.

"This will do."

It was a murmuring voice.

Billy Bunter breathed more freely. He knew that voice. It was the voice of Horace Coker of the Fifth Form!

Bunter did not want to meet Coker. Coker had a short way with fags, and he was as likely as not to cuff Bunter for his own good! But it was a great relief to find that it was only Coker, and not one of those beasts who might have suspected Bunter of having snaffled the chocolates. Wondering why on earth Coker was rambling about there in the falling dusk, Bunter sat still and silent.

He heard a sound—as of a parcel dropping. Then the murmuring voice of Coker was audible again.

"That's all right. Nobody will see it there in the dusk, even if any fellow comes this way; and nobody ever does at dusk. I can get it when I want to all right."

Receding footsteps.

Coker was gone.

Bunter sat still and blinked. He was amazed.

Coker had sneaked into the elms and left a parcel there at the foot of a tree, intending to return later and retrieve it. It really was surprising.

To Bunter's mind, there was only one possible explanation. That parcel contained tuck!

On the rare occasions when Billy Bunter possessed more tuck than he could consume at a single sitting, it was his happy custom to bestow the remainder in a safe place till wanted. Only too well Bunter knew that if tuck was left about carelessly in a study, it might disappear. Often and often had he helped tuck to disappear in such circumstances.

Evidently—to Bunter—Coker had left a parcel of tuck in that safe place till he wanted it. It was rather an odd place to select, perhaps, but it was safe enough. Nobody would have dreamed that it was there, but for the happy chance that Bunter had been on the spot.

The Owl of the Remove did not stir—for two reasons. He wanted to give Coker time to clear, and he wanted to finish the chocolates.

The chocolates were duly finished. The silence showed that Coker had cleared. Bunter rose to his feet.

He came round the tree, blinking through his big spectacles in search of Coker's parcel.

There it lay, half-seen in the thick dusk under the branches. Bunter pounced on it.

It was wrapped in brown paper and tied with string. It was not very heavy—pastry, Bunter concluded.

Bunter's little, round eyes gleamed through his big, round spectacles. His fat fingers fumbled at the string.

That the tuck—if it was tuck!—belonged to Coker of the Fifth was a trifle light as air to Billy Bunter! Only that morning, Coker had kicked

Bunter. Only the day before he had smacked the head of Bunter's minor, Sammy, of the Second. A fellow who kicked and smacked Bunters could hardly expect the Bunter tribe to be very particular in dealing with him.

It would serve Coker right to bag his tuck, Bunter considered. He felt that he was quite justified.

In point of fact, however, he was thinking less of the justification than of the tuck! He fumbled with the string, and paused. Coker was coming back later for that parcel. It was not likely that he would come yet, as it was hardly ten minutes since he had left it there. Still, it was no use taking risks. All things considered, it was judicious to open that parcel at a safe distance.

Bunter put it under his arm and rolled away.

He blinked round rather anxiously in the quad. He did not want to meet Coker of the Fifth.

True, brown paper parcels were much alike. Still, he preferred not to meet Coker. Coker was rather a suspicious beast, quite capable of suspecting a fellow of snaffling his tuck!

However, he did not meet Coker. He rolled into the House and negotiated the stairs at unusual speed. It was a relief to roll into the Remove passage with his parcel safe and sound.

Billy Bunter felt pleased and satisfied.

That feeling of pleased satisfaction, however, was brief. As he rolled up the Remove passage from the landing, there was a sudden shout.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is!"

"Here's the fat burglar!"

"Collar him!"

"Bag him!"

There was a rush of feet. Hands clutched at the Owl of the Remove.

"I say, you fellows——" gasped Bunter.

"Where's those chocs?" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Bump him!"

"Squash him!"

"I say, you fellows, I never had the chocs!" yelled Bunter. "I say, I never went into your study, Whar-ton, and the chocs weren't in the cupboard, and I never saw them there, and—and they were still there, quite safe, when I left the study——"

"Oh, my hat!"

"As if I'd touch a fellow's chocs!" gasped Bunter. "I say, you fellows——"

"Burst him!"

"I—I say, leggo! I say, I—I've got some tuck—I say, I—I was coming to whack it out with you fellows—something better than your measly chocs!" gasped Bunter. "I say, make it pax, you know! I never had the chocs——"

"Bump him!"

"I say, I've got a feed here—something ripping!" gasped Bunter. "I—I was coming to ask you fellows to whack it out!"

"Whose is it?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you know! I—I've just fetched it from—from the tuck-shop—and—and I was coming to look for you fellows—I say, let's go into the study and—and whack it out!"

And the Famous Five, generously forbearing to slay Bunter as he richly deserved, marched him into No. 1 Study, where the brown paper parcel was dumped down on the study table.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

IN THE DARK!

"WAIT!" breathed Coker of the Fifth.

Mr. Prout did not know that that bright member of his Form was addressing him. His portly back was to Coker; and Coker was addressing that portly back—at a safe distance and under his breath.

"Just wait!" murmured Coker.

Prout, unconscious of Coker, sailed majestically across the quad, where the dusk was beginning to fall. Coker stalked him.

The Fifth Form-master was taking his usual walk—as Coker had expected he would. Prout was a gentleman of regular habits, and could be timed like a clock.

He was not thinking of Coker, of his Form. Had he thought of Coker, he would never have guessed that Coker was breathing vengeance. Prout was, in fact, unconscious of having deserved vengeance at Coker's hands. His own opinion was that he was very kind and patient with that backward and troublesome boy. Some Form-masters would have been much more severe with him. Prout, indeed, hoped, perhaps, that Coker was grateful!

If so, that hope was unfounded! Coker wasn't! Coker was thinking of vengeance, and of an inky bag that was to be jammed over Prout's head in the dark under the elms. With that inky bag over his nut, and the string drawn tight and tied under his chin, Prout would have reason to be sorry for himself, Coker considered.

Prout's portly form disappeared on the Elm Walk. Most of the fellows who were out were heading for the House; it was close on time for lock-up. Coker strolled after Prout with an air of exaggerated carelessness.

He dodged in among the elms from the quad. On the other side of the ancient elms was the school wall. There were quite a number of the old trees—ample cover for Coker, especially as dusk was falling. Under the wide-spreading branches it was quite dark.

A distant bell was ringing. Coker did not heed it. He did not care if the House was closed and locked. For Coker had been very strategic; he was, he believed, rather a whale on strategy. He had left a window open, in an obscure passage, for his return to the House. By that window he would regain the interior—unseen, undiscovered, unsuspected; after bagging Prout.

Dodging among the elms, he heard Prout's elephantine tread on the walk that ran among the trees.

It was Prout's favourite walk: and at that hour he had it all to himself. From one end of the Elm Walk to the other Prout paced—and back again. Coker could not see him in the deep dusk; but he could hear him. It would have been difficult not to hear Prout. He had a tread resembling that of the "huge earth-shaking beast" mentioned by Macaulay.

Coker's eyes gleamed.

Swiftly he made his way to the gnarled old tree, at the foot of which he had left the brown-paper parcel containing the inky bag!

He groped for it!

His plans were all cut and dried. He was going to ambush himself by the Elm Walk. He was going to whip out behind Prout when he had passed. He was going to have that bag over Prout's head, before Prout had the faintest idea that anything was happening. One pull on the string, and the neck of the bag would

be fastened round Prout's neck! Coker, perhaps, had looked rather an ass, when he tottered away from that very spot smothered with whitewash. Prout would look a bigger ass, staggering away with a bag tied on his head, and ink oozing all over him! Coker suppressed a chuckle at the thought!

He felt like chuckling. But he ceased to feel like it, as he groped for the parcel containing the bag.

It was not there!

Coker knew where he had left it. There was no doubt on that point. He knew the exact spot. Naturally he had expected to find it there. But it was not there!

This was rather a "facer" for Coker!

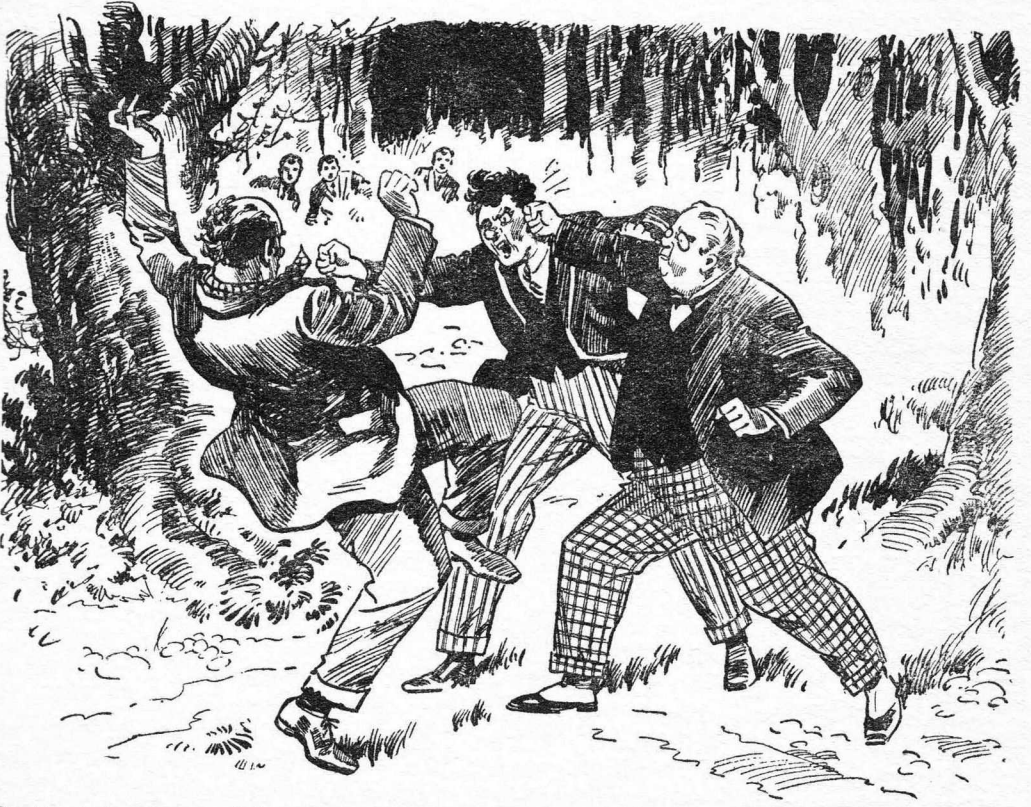
The elephantine tread drew nearer. Prout was pacing back along the Elm Walk! This was Coker's chance—if he had had the inky bag ready. But he hadn't. He was bagless at the psychological moment!

The heavy tread passed.

Coker breathed hard!

Where was that dashed parcel? He groped and groped. He went right round the tree. Glimmering in the dark were fragments of silver foil that had once enwrapped chocolates. They were traces of Bunter. But they were no use to Coker!

Where was that beastly bag?



Mr. Prout, hovering round Coker and the Spadger as they fought furiously, tried to help. But it was all too swift for the Form-master. He got in one blow—which landed with a thump on Coker's ear.

Again the elephantine tread drew nearer. Prout was coming up the path again. Again it was a chance for Coker—if he had not been bagless. But he was still bagless!

It was absolutely rotten—putrid, in fact! What silly ass could have come along, and shifted that parcel? Nobody had been anywhere near when Coker put it there—he was certain of that. What had become of it? Had he, after all, mistaken the tree? Was he rooting round the wrong elm?

He went a little further afield. He rooted round another elm, then round another. Still there was no brown-paper parcel to be found. Coker breathed harder and harder.

Suddenly he gave a start.

There was a footstep, quite close to him. It sounded, to Coker, as if someone had dropped from a wall or a tree. He stared round, in surprise.

A shadow flitted before his eyes, and was gone.

He blinked after it.

Somebody had clambered over the adjoining wall, and dropped within. Some fellow who had been out of gates, Coker supposed, and who had returned to find the gates locked. Gosling had to take a fellow's name if he presented himself at the gates after they were closed. In such circumstances, it was not uncommon for a fellow to give the gates a wide berth and clamber in over the wall, and take a chance of getting into the House on time.

That, Coker supposed, was it. It had startled him for a moment. But he dismissed the matter, and continued rooting after the brown-paper parcel.

It was rather bewildering, under the trees, in the dark. Easy enough for a fellow to mistake the spot. Still

in hopes of discovering that elusive brown-paper parcel, Coker rooted and rooted.

Then, suddenly, he jumped. Through the thick gloom under the elms, came the deep, fruity voice of Mr. Prout, in startled tones.

“What—who—who are you? What are you doing here?”

“Oh, crikey!” breathed Coker.

For a second, he fancied that he was discovered. Then he realised that Prout's words were not addressed to him. There was somebody else on the Elm Walk. A rough voice came in answer:

“P'raps you don't know me, old covey!”

Coker stood transfixed with astonishment. He remembered the half-seen shadowy figure that had dropped in from the wall and flitted for a moment and vanished. It had not been a Greyfriars fellow getting in after Gosling had locked the gates! That voice certainly was not a Greyfriars' voice! It was quite a strange voice to Coker's ears; he had never had the pleasure of listening to the dulcet tones of Mr. Spadger Hawkins!

“Who—what—you——!” came Prout's startled voice.

“Jest me, old fat covey!” said the husky tones of the Spadger. “Me, what you cracked on the 'ead with your stick last week, old fatty! I've been a-watching of yer, I 'ave!”

“Scoundrel——!”

“I've been a-watching of yer!” grinned the Spadger. “'Arf-a-dozen times I see yer, over that there wall! I've been a-watching of yer, and you can lay to that, old covey! Now I got yer! Whose 'ead is going to be cracked now, I'd like to know! I ask yer!”

Coker stood petrified.

He had heard of Prout's adventure

with the tramp ; it had been the talk of the school at the time. He had forgotten it—but now he remembered it ! This, clearly, was the tramp !

There was a startled cry—the sound of a struggle ! Coker felt a thrill of excitement, as he realised that Prout was in the grasp of the revengeful ruffian.

“ Oh, my hat ! ” gasped Coker.

Coker was there for vengeance himself ! He was there to bag Prout ! But he forgot all about that now ! This brute had been watching for Prout—and Prout had not taken any walks abroad lately ! As the mountain did not come to Mahomet, Mahomet had come to the mountain, as it were. Here he was, within the walls of Greyfriars, but at a safe distance from the House and help—with poor old Prout in his ruthless grip !

Coker did not stop to think ! Thinking was not his long suit, anyhow ! As he realised how matters stood, Coker woke to action !

He flew through the elms.

He bounced out on the Elm Walk.

There was Prout—portly, gasping, spluttering, struggling, but struggling in vain, in the grasp of a muscular ruffian twice, or thrice, as strong as he !

Prout went down, bumping ! At the same moment, Coker reached the Spadger. What hit the Spadger in the eye, all of a sudden, he hardly knew. It felt like a sledge-hammer, or a battering-ram.

But it was neither. It was the clenched fist of Horace Coker, with all Horace Coker's considerable beef behind it.

The Spadger went backwards as if he had been shot.

He crashed.

“ Oooogh ! ” gasped Prout dazedly.

“ Woooogh ! Help ! Urrggh ! Help ! What—who—what—— ! ”

“ All right, sir ! ” gasped Coker.

He bounded at the Spadger, who was leaping up. Prout sat and gurgled.

“ Woogh ! What—Coker ! Is that Coker ! Urrggh ! ”

Coker did not answer again. He had closed with the Spadger, and a terrific fight was going on in the dark under the elms. Coker had no breath left for conversation with Prout.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER

NOT EDIBLE !

“ I SAY, you fellows—— ! ”

“ What the dickens is it ? ”

“ Tuck ! ” answered Bunter, “ I say, lend me a knife to cut the string.”

Bob Cherry cut the string of the brown-paper parcel on the table in No. 1 Study.

“ I hope,” said Bunter, with dignity, “ that you're not going to make a fuss about a few measly chocolate creams. I never had them, as I told you—and there were only about a dozen, anyhow. I've got something pretty decent here, and I'm going to whack it out with you fellows.”

“ Where did you get it ? ” asked Harry Wharton, rather suspiciously. “ If you got it in the same way that you got the chocolate creams——”

“ Oh, really, Wharton——”

“ Well, where did you get it ? ” demanded Nugent.

“ I told you fellows I was expecting a postal-order,” answered Bunter. “ Well, it came, and—and I changed it at the school shop, see, and—and bought this tuck specially to whack out with you fellows. I wasn't trying to get it quietly to my study when you jumped on me in the passage.”

“ Ha, ha, ha ! ”

“ Blessed if I see anything to cackle

at! I've got some jolly good tuck here," said Bunter warmly. "Coker always has good stuff—he gets it in hampers from his Aunt Judy, you know——"

"Coker!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "Have you been snaffling tuck from Coker's study, you fat fraud?"

"Oh, really, Bull, I haven't been anywhere near Coker's study——"

"Is that stuff Coker's?" roared Bob Cherry.

"Certainly not! As if I'd touch Coker's stuff!" said Bunter indignantly. "Besides, he kicked me this morning."

"I hope he kicked you hard!"

"Beast! Besides, it's not Coker's! Of course, you needn't mention it to Coker. He's a suspicious beast, as you know. He might fancy that this was the brown-paper parcel he hid under the elms——"

"Coker hid a brown-paper parcel under the elms!" repeated Harry Wharton, in astonishment.

"Well, he may have!" said Bunter cautiously. "Not that I know anything about it, you know. I wasn't under the elms eating chocolates, or anything."

"Oh, my hat!"

"The fact is, I haven't seen Coker to-day at all; almost forgot there was such a fellow at Greyfriars. This parcel came to me specially from Bunter Court——"

"Great pip!"

"You fat frabjous fathead——"

"If that's the way you thank a chap for whacking out his tuck with you, Bob Cherry——"

"How do you know there's tuck in it?" grinned Nugent. "Coker's not the sort of fellow to hide tuck, like a dog hiding a bone."

"Well, it stands to reason!" argued Bunter. "What would he want

to hide it for, if it wasn't tuck? I dare say he thought Potter and Greene would snoop it, if he left it in the study."

"Then it is Coker's?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Oh, no! It's mine! I got it from Courtfield——"

"Oh, crikey!"

"Look here, not so much jaw," said Bunter crossly. "It will be calling-over in a few minutes now; let's get it open, and see what's in it."

"See what's in it!" gasped Bob. "You got it from the school shop, and you got it from Bunter Court, and you got it from Courtfield, and you don't know what's in it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter did not waste time in replying. With tuck on hand, he considered that enough time had been wasted already in frivolous talk. He unwrapped the brown paper.

The contents were revealed!

Bunter blinked at the contents.

The Famous Five stared.

"Oh, lor'!" gasped Bunter.

"Great Scott!"

"What the dickens——!"

"What the thump——!"

It was not tuck! It was nothing like tuck. It did not bear the most distant resemblance to tuck. Even Billy Bunter, who could eat almost anything, could not have eaten the contents of Coker's parcel.

A bag—a large canvas bag, with a string threaded round the neck of it, lay folded in the brown paper. It dripped with ink. The bag, apparently, was empty—except for ink!

There had been, it seemed, quite a lot of ink in it. Coker had been liberal with the ink. But a great deal of the ink had oozed through the bag. It soaked and it dripped.

Billy Bunter blinked at it, in amaze-



"Come, Coker, my brave boy!" said Mr. Prout. "Take my arm—I will assist you to the House!"
 "Oooogh!" gurgled Coker. And with a black eye and nose feeling twice its size, and looking altogether hard hit, the Fifth-Former left the scene of the combat.

ment, his eyes almost popping through his spectacles.

"A-a-a-bib-bub-bag!" he stuttered, "and-and-and ink! Wha-a-t did Coker want to wrap up an inky bag for? Is he mad?"

"Mad as a hatter, I should think!" said Harry Wharton blankly. "Just a bag soaked with ink!"

"Coker must be potty!" gasped Bob.

"The pottifulness must be truly terrific!" ejaculated Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "He is completely off his absurd onion."

"The—the silly ass!" gasped Bun-

ter. "The howling fathead! A—a—a bag—a mouldy old bag soaked with ink. All the trouble I've taken to sneak it into the House without anybody seeing——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The blithering idiot! The burbling chump!" gasped Bunter. "I—I thought it was tuck, of course. And it's a bib-bib-bag! And—and nothing in it—except ink."

Bob Cherry gave a whistle.

"That ass, Coker!" he exclaimed. "He's up to his tricks again; you men remember the whitewash. I'll bet Coker had this for Prout——"

"Oh!" exclaimed Wharton.
"That's it! The howling ass——"

It was light on the dark mystery! Coker was not mad! He was only the same silly ass the fellows had always known him to be!

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hark!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

From the dark quadrangle came a startling sound. It was a yell for help.

"Help! Help!"

"What the thump——"

"Help!"

"That's Prout's fruity toot!" gasped Bob.

"Oh, crumbs! Has that mad idiot Coker——"

"Come on!"

The Famous Five rushed out of the study—leaving Bunter with his prize. Other fellows were running for the stairs. Downstairs there was a hubbub of startled voices. The great door had been thrown open, and light streamed out into the dusky quad.

"Help!" came Prout's boom.
"Help!"

Wingate of the Sixth had already run out. Quelch and Twigg and several other masters rushed after him.

Harry Wharton and Co. flashed out in the midst of an excited mob. From the direction of the shadowy elms came shout on shout in Prout's fruity boom.

"Help! Help!"

Half Greyfriars rushed to the rescue.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER

AND ALL WAS CALM AND BRIGHT!

COKER was going strong.

Over and over on the shadowy Elm Walk he rolled, in the grasp of the muscular Spadger—grasping hard in return.

Blows were exchanged—hefty punches.

Coker was no great boxer, but at such close quarters, even Coker could not fail to land his punches. And Coker's punches, when they landed, were big hits! Coker might not shine in brains, but Nature had made it up to him in brawn. Coker hit often and he hit hard—frightfully hard!

Spadger Hawkins was fighting rather for escape than for victory. But Coker was not aware of that. The Spadger, having failed to catch Prout alone and crack his nut, would have been glad to go, and postpone the cracking of Prout's nut till a more convenient time. But there was no getting away from Coker.

One of the Spadger's eyes had been closed by Coker's first hit. The other had collided with Coker's elbow and was blinking painfully. His nose streamed red.

But Coker was getting some of his helpings, too. Coker's nose ran like a river of claret, Coker was getting damaged, though in the excitement of the combat he hardly noticed it.

Prout, hovering round that wild fight, tried to help. But the work was too swift for Prout. He got in only one punch, which unfortunately landed on Coker's ear.

He roared for help.

That was more efficacious. His boom reached many ears in the House, and help came promptly.

Quite an army rushed across the shadowy quad to the elms. Twenty or thirty flash-lamps gleamed on the path.

"Help!" boomed Prout.

"Here we are, sir!" panted Wingate.

"Who—what——" stuttered Mr. Quelch.

"Help!"

"It's Coker!" yelled Potter.

"Coker!" gasped Greene.

"Pile in, you fellows!"

The Spadger made one last desperate effort to tear himself away from Coker. He succeeded, but as he got loose, Wingate of the Sixth grasped him by the collar. Potter and Greene got hold of him. In the grasp of the three, he struggled.

Then a dozen hands joined in. The Spadger went down. He was sat on. He almost disappeared under Greyfriars fellows.

The Spadger had put up a good fight, but he was done. He was done to the wide! Only feeble gasps came now from Mr. Hawkins.

Coker, gurgling for breath, leaned against a tree. The fight had not ended too soon for Horace Coker. He was hard hit. He was winded. One of his eyes was shut and rapidly darkening. His nose streamed crimson. His mouth had a list to port. Coker, in a few hectic minutes, had collected a lot of damage. He felt rather bad, and he looked it.

"Oooogh!" gasped Coker.

"Coker, old man!" breathed Potter.

"Coker, old chap!" murmured Greene.

"Coker! Brave, noble boy!" exclaimed Mr. Prout.

"Oooogh!" gurgled Coker. He mopped his streaming nose. "Wooogh!"

"Brave, noble, gallant lad!" boomed Prout.

"Urrrrgh!" said Coker.

"But what—who—? " exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"That man—that ruffian—that—that desperado!" gasped Prout, "is the tramp I knocked down one day last week, when he was attempting to rob a boy in Mr. Twigg's Form, and a boy in your Form, Quelch. It is the same desperate ruffian! He came

Songs of the Seasons



THE buds that promised well in June
Have one by one unfolded,
To green and glorious shades the tune
Of summer's song is moulded;
The song must flow in tranquil rhyme
To praise the rich adorning
Of mellow dusk at evening time
And silver mist of morning.

When fiery hangs the sun at noon
Above the baking meadows,
We seek the wood where pigeons croon
To lie among the shadows,
Or cleave the river's placid breast,
In luxury declaring
That this alone is worth the rest
Of all the joys we're sharing.

The playing field is satin green
Where reigns the good King Cricket,
And white-clad figures dot the scene
While at the farther wicket
The batsman scores without a pause,
(He's got about a million),
And elm trees rustle their applause
Behind the school pavilion.

Through azure skies the galleons white
Of billowed clouds roll proudly,
The breezes play on downland height,
The hills are calling loudly;
We hear the call and take our course
In happiness together,
A merry climb through ferns and gorse
To picnic in the heather.

But chief of all the summer joys
To which we give devotion,
The seaside! Trust all British boys
To love the sparkling ocean,
For as we swim and sail and glide
Our eyes and limbs grow firmer;
What joy it is to stay beside
The sea's unending murmur.

But whether we're upon the turf
At cricket, golf or tennis,
Or riding gaily through the surf
To dare the billows' menace,
We all agree, though spring be gay
And autumn rich and fruity,
The summer season, come what may,
Takes pride of place for beauty.

here, and—and attacked me in the dark——”

“Is it possible?”

“I was already in his grasp,” panted Prout, “when Coker rushed to the rescue—rushed to my aid like the brave and gallant lad he is——”

“Oh, my hat!” murmured Bob Cherry.

Prout’s opinion of Coker seemed to have changed considerably! But that was not surprising.

What might have happened to Prout was evident from what had happened to Coker! But for Horace’s intervention, Prout’s majestic countenance might now have been in the same state that Coker’s was in! It was an awful thought!

“Why, Coker was here—how he came here, I do not know,” said Prout. “He seems to have been out of the House after lock-up——”

The Famous Five exchanged glances. Remembering the inky bag left in No. 1 Study, they thought they could guess why. But they were not likely to say so!

“But it was very fortunate for me!” said Prout. “Coker has saved me from serious injury! He has suffered himself, in helping his Form-master! I am proud to have such a boy in my Form!”

“Urrrrggh!” said Coker. “Ooogh!” For the present, shortness of wind limited Coker’s contributions to the discussion.

“Take care of that ruffian, Wingate!” boomed Prout. “I will telephone to the police to come and take him into custody! Coker, my brave boy——”

“Oooogh!”

“Come! I will not ask why you were out of the House—no trifling faults shall be remembered now! Take my arm—lean on my arm, my dear

boy—I will assist you to the House.”

“Wurrrggh!” gurgled Coker.

He leaned on Prout’s plump arm. One hand held a handkerchief to his nose. Thus they left the scene of the combat.

At the door of the House stood the Head. The uproar had brought him thus far. He stared at the startling sight as the procession arrived.

“What—what—what——?” said Dr. Locke, faintly.

Prout boomed.

“This brave, this noble boy, sir, has saved me from an attack—a desperate attack from a desperate desperado, sir——”

“Bless my soul!”

“A boy, sir, who is a credit to the school—whom I am proud, sir, to have in my Form. Come, Coker, your injuries must be attended to at once. Come, my dear boy!”

The dear boy was led in.

It never came out why Coker had been so fortunately near the Elm Walk on that thrilling occasion.

That was just as well. It might have diminished Prout’s gratitude.

Prout, of course, was grateful!

Coker could have spelt occiput with an X, or with two or three X’s, now, without rousing Prout’s wrath.

Of course, he was let off sitting with the Second. Never again did Coker sit with the Second! For the present, at least, he was the apple of Prout’s eye! Prout was proud to have him in the Fifth!

“Not a bad old bean, Prout!” Coker told Potter and Greene. “Prout’s all right!”

To which Potter and Greene made no reply. It was useless to argue with Coker!

THE END



By
MONTY LOWTHER
(the humorist of the Shell.)

Have the "Talkies" affected St. Jim's?

The author thinks they have, but as he is a humorist, his remarks should not be taken too seriously.

OLD Boys visiting St. Jim's after many years of absence have been heard to remark recently that a subtle change seems to have come over the old school.

It is difficult to explain exactly what it is, they say, but something about St. Jim's is certainly different.

They'll give you instances of what they mean. When they run up against a fag carrying a toy pistol, they'll say that sort of thing wasn't done in their day. They'll shake their heads sadly over the spectacle of fellows sitting on a wall busily chewing gum, and tell you that gum simply was not chewed when they were at St. Jim's. When juniors greet each other by pulling their caps over their eyes and remarking "Sez you!" or "O.K., baby!" these same Old Boys will frown in a puzzled sort of way and mumble into their beards.

What is at the back of these various manifestations of a changed spirit? Let Professor Lowther unravel the mystery for you, dear readers! The cause is the popularity of the talkies!

Several people have asked me lately

whether I think the talkies have affected St. Jim's. On each occasion I have replied unhesitatingly: "Yes." If by chance I happen to have been eating a bullseye at the time, I have modified it to "Yeth," but the principle remains unchanged.

Only yesterday, the Head approached me, dressed in a long, black cloak by way of disguise, and bade me follow him to an unfrequented spot behind the woodshed.

When we got there, he looked to the right and to the left, not to mention north, south, east and west and fore and aft, then whispered:

"Are we alone?"

I nodded silently.

"It is well," said the Head. "I have a question of profound importance to put to you, Mont"—that's how he talks to me when we're on our own. "Have the talkies affected St. Jim's?"

"You betcha sweet life they have, doc!" I said. "And how!"

The Head chewed his lip thoughtfully.

"Yet it is difficult to see in what

way. I have observed no change in the mannerisms or speech of the boys."

"Kinder difficult to notice any change in the way we spill the beans, ain't it, doc?" I ventured.

"It is, indeed. You speak perfect English yourself, Lowther. Evidently you are one of those who are not affected by the talkies."

With that, he wrung my hand and turned to go back to his house, slipping over on a banana-skin in the process.

Inspired by that interview, I went round to one or two fellows, asking them what they thought about it.

Here are their replies, copyright by Rooter, Scentall News, "Tom Merry's Weekly," and other leading news agencies.

I ought to mention that they're unauthorised and printed without the speakers' permission.

HERBERT SKIMPOLE: "Professor Balmcyrumpet says—" (Five pages of closely printed matter omitted owing to lack of space.)

TOM MERRY: "Of course, it would be idle to say that the talkies have not affected St. Jim's. In a fag footer match which I refereed yesterday, I was surprised to notice that the teams took to the field armed with bludgeons. I found that they were playing American football, picked up from the talkies!"

GERALD CUTTS: "Beyond inspiring me to be a gangster chief, the talkies have made absolutely no impression on me!"

GEORGE FIGGINS: "I haven't noticed much difference myself since the talkies came. House scraps are carried on now with machine guns and armoured cars, but that's nothing much to talk about, after all, is it?"

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY: "I wegwet to say the talkies have had a wotten influence on me, givin' me a fwightful Amewican accent. I vewy often find myself usin' expwessions like 'wuffneck,' 'bootleggah,' 'speakeasay' and 'wight guy.' Yestahday, I even said 'Yeah, wathah!' Howwid, isn't it?"

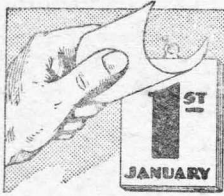
TAGGLES: "Which it's no use for you to talk ease to me when I 'aven't 'ad a moment's ease since I came 'ere. Wot's that? You're not talking about ease; you're talking about *talkies*? Well, I can soon tell you wot I think about them—nothing at all. Which I ain't never been to a talkie in my life and ain't never likely to, neither."



The Head, dressed in a long black cloak by way of disguise, approached me and bade me follow him to an unfrequented spot behind the woodshed.

JACK BLAKE: "If the talkies affect other chaps like they affect me, their chief result has been to exercise imaginations in trying to connect up the sound with the action. I closed my eyes twice during a recent show at the Courtfield Cinema and tried to guess what was on from the sound. The first scene turned out to be Henry VIII eating, and the second Niagara Falls falling—but they both sounded just like a train to me."

I should like to say a lot more about the effects of the talkies on St. Jim's. Perhaps I shall, one of these days!



OLD MAULY'S ALMANACK For 1936

An astrological forecast of what is in store for Greyfriars, by Lord Mauleverer, the slacker of the Remove. We fear the effort of writing his predictions was too much for his lordship, and he had to take forty winks, thus leaving his great work incomplete.

THIS is an astrological forecast, chappies, but don't be put off because you don't know what that means—to tell you the shameful truth, I have only the foggiest ideas about it myself!

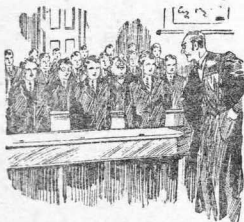
Such slight information as I do possess I picked up last vac. from an aged and somewhat frenzied aunt who actually believes you can tell what's going to happen by studying the jolly old stars!

I've spent several evenings recently, examining the heavens from the porch at Mauleverer Towers to find out what 1936 holds in store for us at Greyfriars. It has been fearfully fatiguing, and I hope you all appreciate it. Thanks, dear men—I knew you would!

Now let me set down all that I've found out.

Predictions

JANUARY. Jupiter crosses Saturn and the New Moon turns over on its back. This may convey nothing to you sportsmen, but to an astrological student like myself it conveys an awful lot. It conveys that the peace and quietude of the Christmas vac.



JANUARY.—The heart-rending return to the old school takes place.

will give place at the end of the month to a violent and devastating upheaval. In other words, my hearties—the heartrending return to the old school takes place. Oh, gad!

FEBRUARY.

Mars and Uranus do a jog-trot round Mercury and the Moon suddenly reverses. There will be staggering expenditures of energy on football, and Coker will be thrown down the Remove stairs at least forty times. What larks!

MARCH. Venus bumps Mercury in the rear and Saturn nose-dives into Pisces. This is a very evil portent and denotes a furious outbreak of cross-country running accompanied by much exhaustion. A young lord is likely to fall in love with a young lady assistant in a bun shop. Help!

APRIL. Mercury and Mars turn double somersaults, and the Moon heaves a brick at Neptune. These are ominous signs, dear men, and we may expect expenditure in materials of war to rise and shares in pea-shooter manufacturing concerns to show sensational gains. Saturn making a long nose at Uranus as it rises out of Aries obviously indicates that a



MARCH.—A young lord is likely to fall in love with a young lady assistant in a bun shop.



APRIL.—An outbreak in dormitory warfare is highly probable.

dangerous situation will arise between Fourth and Remove, and an outbreak of dormitory warfare is highly probable. Ye gods! Think of the energy we shall have to expend, lads!

MAY. The Moon takes a zigzag course across the Milky Way and Jupiter starts doing hand-springs backwards. This indicates a violent earthquake in the Remove passage caused by a fat youth collapsing as a result of being attacked by a crowd of sportsmen whose rations he has purloined. And that reminds me of Bunter. I had a feeling when I started, begad, that I'd be reminded of something unpleasant before long!

Following on the earthquake, famine will reign in the Remove—and if Bunter has been around previously, I can quite believe it!

Midway through the month there will be a plague of impots. and floggings. What frightful things do come out of the Abysses of the Infinite, old sports, don't they?

(Don't blame me for "Abysses of the Infinite"—it's my frenzied aunt's pet phrase!)

JUNE. Jupiter and Uranus conjoin in Scorpio, the Sun turns green and Neptune jumps over the Moon. These are very unfavourable signs, meaning public robberies, thefts, pilage, earthquakes and famine. Evidently dear old Bunter will be on the war-path again. Ah, me!

Oceans of energy will be

expended on cricket, rowing, hiking and other fearfully exhausting pastimes, and lots of fellows will be rushing about, shouting and cheering and what not. From my point of view, the mere thought of it is sufficient to send a shiver down the good old spinal column. Ugh!

JULY. Halley's Comet hits the Greyfriars Clock Tower, a shower of meteorites falls over the tuck-shop, and the Man in the Moon pokes out his tongue at Highcliffe. Fearsome portents, these, my dear old horses, believe me! War will break out between Greyfriars and Highcliffe and the highways and byways will be littered with bits and pieces of the gallant warriors. Fearfully energetic youths will sock each other on the nose, the excitement will be terrific and opportunities for forty winks will be non-existent. Noise and tumult will be going on alarmingly, gory battles will be a daily occurrence, compulsory cricket practice will, of course, fill in all the time between scraps and—help, old scouts...

I believe I'm coming over faint—

(Lord Mauleverer was found lying beside his uncompleted manuscript in a state of semi-consciousness, brought on, obviously, by the thought of the hectic times ahead of him. Friends removed him to the sanatorium.

The doctors have prescribed a long rest!

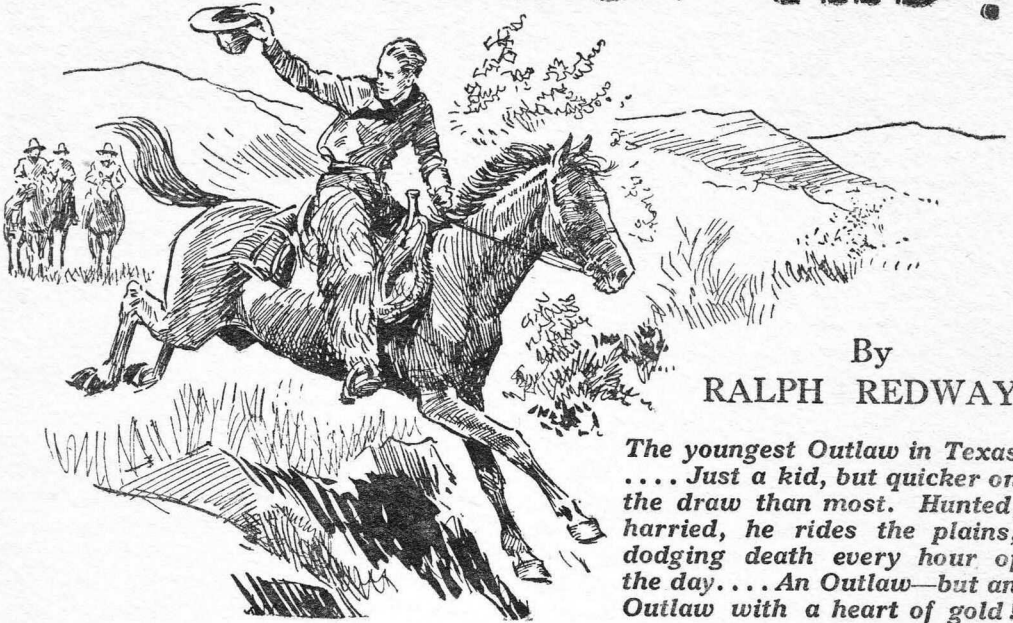


MAY.—A violent earthquake in the Remove passage, caused by a fat youth collapsing, is indicated.



JULY.—War will break out between Greyfriars and Highcliffe.

The OUTLAW KID!



By
RALPH REDWAY

The youngest Outlaw in Texas Just a kid, but quicker on the draw than most. Hunted, harried, he rides the plains, dodging death every hour of the day. . . . An Outlaw—but an Outlaw with a heart of gold!

THE FIRST CHAPTER

ON THE JACK-RABBIT TRAIL!

“**H**OLD in your hosses!” It was a quiet drawling voice. There was no excitement in it—no hint of a threat. But the driver of the Jack-Rabbit stage pulled in his team so suddenly that the horses almost rolled back on their haunches.

“The Rio Kid!” he ejaculated.

He dragged on the reins as the horseman pushed out of the mesquite into the trail.

There was no need for the Kid to lift the long-barrelled Colt in his hand that hung at his side. The sight of the handsome, sunburnt, reckless face, in the shadow of the Stetson hat, with its circle of silver nuggets, was enough for the stage-driver. He might have chanced whipping his horses to a rush

in dealing with any other outlaw in Texas. But he was not taking chances with the Rio Kid.

The Kid smiled sourly.

From the window of the vehicle two or three startled faces looked out. But no weapon was shown. The passengers in the stage coach did not horn for gunplay with the Kid.

“I see you know me, Ribbons!” said the Kid, as the driver brought the trampling horses to a standstill.

“I should smile!” answered Billy Fresh, the driver. “Say, I ain’t giving you any trouble, Kid—not by a jugful!”

“I guess it’d be the last thing you’d do this side of Jordan, if you did,” answered the Kid. “Tell them guys to light down and pony up the dust.”

Billy Fresh eyed him curiously.

“Say, Kid, you holding up this hearse?” he asked.

"You've said it."

"It's sure a new break for you, Kid."

The Rio Kid shrugged his shoulders.

Without waiting to be bidden, the passengers were descending from the stage into the rough trail. Scared glances were cast towards the boy rider, sitting in the saddle of the grey mustang, his revolver held down by his side. They knew the name and fame of the Rio Kid, and they knew that that long-barrelled, walnut-butted gun was ready to spit fire and death with lightning swiftness.

"Say, Kid——" went on Billy Fresh.

"Aw, can it!" snapped the Kid. "This hyer is a new break for me, jest as you say. I allow it's the first hold-up I ever figured in, but it sure ain't going to be the last. They won't let me be anything but an outlaw, and it's me against all Texas!"

The Kid's eyes flashed.

The boy outlaw was in a black and bitter mood, and that mood had lasted for days. It had lasted since he had ridden away from the Lazy O Ranch in the Packsaddle country, to avoid being rounded up by the Texas Rangers.

Wild as the Rio Kid's reputation was, wild as were the deeds laid to his charge, the Kid was at heart what he had always been—a cowpuncher born and bred, as in the old days on the Double-Bar Ranch at Frio. And the Kid had made an attempt to leave outlaw trails behind him—an attempt upon which fortune, at first, had seemed to smile.

But it was not to be. The Rio Kid was destined not to run his ranch—not to ride Side-Kicker on peaceful trails. Fate had been against him, and he had been hunted from his new home,

driven from his hope of leading a peaceful life within the law. No man in Packsaddle could say that the Kid had wronged him; many had been proud to call themselves his friends; but the shadow of the past had fallen on him once more, blackening his fair prospects.

Now, as he rode once more an outlaw trail, a hunted man with a price on his head, after his attempt to throw the past behind him, the Kid's thoughts had taken a new line.

They had made him an outlaw again—they had driven him to the sierra and the chaparral, and the Kid, in his bitterness, swore that what they had made him he would be! If they would not have him for a friend they should have him for a foe, and they would learn how dangerous a foe. Outlaw, gunman, fire-bug, hunted for his life, why should he not live up to his reputation, and take the game as well as the name?

In that bitter mood the Kid rode the Jack-Rabbit trail, for the first time, as what men called him—a fire-bug and a hold-up man. The die was cast. The Kid, at last, had become what he was called.

Sitting Side-Kicker in the trail, the Rio Kid watched the frightened passengers alight. His gun was ready, but it was not wanted. No man there was likely to burn powder with the Rio Kid.

"One — two — three," the Kid counted, as the passengers stepped out. "Put up your paws, you-'uns!"

They stood in a row in the trail, with their hands up. The Kid pushed his horse a little nearer.

"I guess you've got another passenger, Ribbons!" he said coolly.

"I guess not," said Ribbons.

"Can it!" said the Kid. "Jonas Sylvester, the boss of the Silver Star

Ranch, got on this hearse at Injun Ford. I guess I'm wise to it, and I reckon Jonas has been selling cattle, and he's going back to Jack-Rabbit with a big wad. Tell him to hop out."

Billy Fresh grinned.

"You're too late, Kid."

"How come?" asked the Kid.

"Mister Sylvester ain't in this hyer hearse. We was stopped a mile out of Injun Ford by the Jadwin gang, and they've got him."

"Sho!" ejaculated the Kid.

He rode closer to the stage and peered in at the window. The vehicle was empty. The three passengers, standing at the side of the trail with their hands up, were all it had contained. Those three passengers—a storekeeper, a bar-tender, and a bank clerk, of Jack-Rabbit—were hardly worth any hold-up man's attention. Jonas Sylvester, the wealthiest rancher in the section, was big game, and he was the Kid's game, now that the boy outlaw of the Rio Grande had taken to an outlaw trail in deadly earnest.

"Sho!" repeated the Kid. "Carry me home to die!"

Billy Fresh chuckled.

"Yo're more'n an hour too late, Kid," he said. "Them guys—three of them—held us up a mile outside the Ford. They was after Sylvester's roll, and they sure was mad when they found that he'd banked the money for the cattle at the Ford. Yes, sir, Mister Sylvester hadn't more'n ten dollars in his rags, and him the richest man in Jack-Rabbit. I'm telling you that they was horn mad."

"Sho!" said the Kid. "And what for did they take the guy out of the hearse? What was the good of the guy without his dust?"

The driver chuckled again.

"I guess the Jadwin gang know

how to make him spill dollars," he said. "Mister Sylvester will have to buy his skin dear from that gang. Bill Jadwin will sure make him sweat dollars."

The Kid smiled grimly.

He could guess what the rich rancher's fate was likely to be in the grip of the most savage and lawless gang of desperadoes in the section. No torture known to Apache or Comanche would be spared to force plunder from him. Mister Sylvester, of the Silver Star Ranch, would have fared better at the hands of the Rio Kid.

Billy Fresh gathered up his reins.

"I guess I'm late for Jack-Rabbit, Kid," he said persuasively. "You going through them guys, say?"

The Kid made a gesture.

"I sure ain't picking crows," he said. "I stopped this hyer hearse for old Sylvester. I reckoned he'd have ten thousand dollars in his rags."

"That was what the Jadwin gang reckoned, I guess!" chuckled Billy. "And they was hoppin' mad! But I guess they'll sweat ten thousand dollars out of him afore he hits the Silver Star again, search me!"

He grinned at the Kid.

"You're sure too late, hombre," he said.

The Kid made no answer; he burst into a laugh. It was a ringing, good-humoured laugh. The Kid had a sense of humour. This was the first time he had followed an outlaw trail in earnest, and his intended prey had slipped through his fingers. The Kid was amused.

Deep in his heart, perhaps, the Kid was glad that it had happened so. It was passionate resentment, something like despair, that had led him to live, for once, up to his wild reputation. But Fate had intervened once more.

"Say, you ginks, you can sure hop into that hearse," said the Kid, with a gesture to the waiting passengers. "You ain't my game!"

The three passengers gladly took advantage of the permission. The Kid turned to Billy Fresh.

"You can beat it, Billy," he said curtly.

"Sure!" said Billy cheerfully.

The driver cracked his whip, and the stage rolled on along the trail towards the cow-town of Jack-Rabbit.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

THE WAY OF THE KID!

"YOU pesky gink!" growled the Rio Kid.

He was speaking to himself.

There was a cloud on the Kid's brow, a glint in his eyes. He was angry—angry with himself, irritated by the thoughts that he drove from his mind and that would return.

From the Jack-Rabbit stage-trail the boy outlaw had ridden away through the mesquite at a gallop. But the gallop slackened down to a loping trot, the trot to a walk.

"You dog-goned geck!" growled the Kid.

More and more slowly the Kid rode, as if checked by some power outside his own will.

He drew the mustang to a halt at last, and Side-Kicker lowered his head and began to crop the herbage. The Kid, sitting idle in the saddle, communed with himself angrily.

"If you ain't the prize boob, Kid Carfax!" he said. "If you ain't the world's biggest bonehead, carry me home to die! Ain't you hit enough trouble, you gol-darned gink, without hornin' into another guy's? Say!"

But it was useless for the Kid to argue. He knew what he was going to do, all the while he argued.

Rancher Sylvester, of Jack-Rabbit, had been his game. He had expected to find the rich rancher in the Jack-Rabbit stage. From cover on the trail he had seen the stage drive out of Indian Ford, with the Silver Star rancher in it; and he had cut across country to waylay the stage half-way to Jack-Rabbit. He was glad that he had failed, he admitted that now. Driven to desperation by the persecutions of Fate, hunted by innumerable enemies, the Kid had figured that he was going to be what they made him. But there was nothing to it, he was not a hold-up man. Even had Rancher Sylvester been on the stage, he doubted now whether he would have lifted the rancher's wad. There was nothing to it, and the Kid realised that. And he had ridden away, realising that; but—

But in spite of himself, his thoughts lingered on the rancher, a prisoner in the hands of the Jadwin gang.

The Kid knew the reputation of the Jadwins. Three brothers, the hardest cases in Texas: savage, lawless, ferocious; wanted for a dozen murders and robberies. He could have pitied even a deadly enemy who had fallen into the hands of the Jadwin gang. And Jonas Sylvester was no enemy. He was a fat old rancher, popular in the section, well liked by his outfit, and he had a wife and daughter at home at the ranch. The wife and the daughter the Kid had never seen, but his thoughts went to them now.

He knew what he was going to do. The Kid's old weakness had cropped up again. He was going to horn into trouble that was not his. He had ridden the Jack-Rabbit trail to hold up Rancher Sylvester, and he was going to risk his life to save the man from the outlaws, for the sake of the



“Hold in your horses!” As the quiet, drawing voice came from the horseman, with levelled Colt, beside the trail, the driver of the Jack-Rabbit stage pulled in his team so suddenly that the horses almost rolled back on their haunches. “The Rio Kid!” he ejaculated.

wife and daughter who would be waiting, with anxious hearts, at the ranch. That was what the Kid was going to do. A strange enough outcome of his first essay as a hold-up man on the trails.

Long the Kid sat idle in the saddle, debating the matter in his mind, yet knowing all the time how the debate would end. He swung Side-Kicker into motion again, at last wheeling round and riding back the way he had come.

“It’s you that’s the prize gink, Kid Carfax,” he said bitterly, as he rode back to the Jack-Rabbit trail. “Say, wouldn’t this guy Sylvester put the

riata round your pesky neck as soon as the next man? He sure would! Why can’t you leave him to what’s coming to him, you gol-darned geck? Say!”

There was no answer to that question; only the Kid knew that he was not going to leave Jonas Sylvester to what was coming to him.

He reached the open trail, and rode in the direction of Indian Ford. A mile out of Indian Ford, Billy Fresh had said, the rancher had been taken from the stage. It was there that the Kid’s trail began.

Side-Kicker’s swift hoofs covered the ground rapidly. The Kid’s keen

eyes picked up the spot when he reached it. He did not trouble to dismount. He read the signs where the stage had halted, and where three horsemen had trampled the trail. He picked up the prints of the boots, where Jonas Sylvester had walked into the chaparral, a prisoner in the hands of the three riders.

Not a sign escaped the lynx eyes of the Rio Kid. There were few men in Texas so keen at reading signs. It was a game at which the Kid could beat Apache or Comanche. But he knew that difficulties would begin later. The Jadwins would look for pursuit, though not by the Rio Kid; they would blind their trail the best they could.

"Shucks!" grunted the Kid.

More than a mile he had followed the Jadwin trail through tangled thickets and scrubs. For a time there had been the footprints of the man who had walked among those of the three horses. But after a time those footprints vanished, and the Kid figured that the prisoner had been taken up behind one of the riders. Indeed, the Kid's unfailing eyes could pick out which of the horsemen had lifted the rancher, for the deeper tracks of the animal told of the double weight. Three hours at least had elapsed since the Jadwins had ridden that way, but the trail was more than fresh enough to the Kid—it was fresh enough for any plainsman—and he knew that the Jack-Rabbit outfit would be following it. But now the Kid had come to a wide stretch of stony ground, thick with alkali dust blown in the wind, and he dismounted from the mustang to search for sign.

He had expected something of the kind. He knew that the Jadwins would not leave a trail that any galoot in Texas could follow with his eyes

shut. So far, a tenderfoot could have followed them, but from now on the keenest Apache might have been beaten.

Beyond the alkali plain lay a range of low hills. Somewhere in the hills the Jadwins had taken refuge with their prisoner, but the alkali dust told no tale. The tracks of the Kid's own mustang were obliterated almost as soon as they were made by the wind that tossed the dust in clouds ever shifting.

It seemed, for a little time, that the Kid himself would be beaten. He tried to and fro, and long minutes passed; and a sound came from the dim chaparral behind him that told of horsemen approaching. The Jack-Rabbit outfit were coming on through the scrubs, and they would come on the Kid if he lingered there.

But it was not long that the Kid lingered.

Few eyes would have picked up the sign that guided the Rio Kid onward. But anything that was visible to an eagle's eye was visible to the Kid's. One broken twig in a sage-bush was enough, and the Kid rode forward at a gallop, the shifting alkali dust behind him washing out his trail as fast as it was made.

The direction was all he wanted, and that almost indistinguishable sign had told him. The Jadwins had turned at a sharp angle from their former course, aiming to cross the alkali plain diagonally, though a pursuer would naturally have figured that they had struck right across it to the refuge of the hills.

The Kid rode at a gallop, and the inequalities of the plain soon hid him from the eyes of the Jack-Rabbit outfit when they emerged from the chaparral at the spot he had left behind.

The Kid reckoned that at that spot they would be beaten, and he looked for no further following.

It was the task ahead that occupied his thoughts.

The Jadwin trail, if the Kid had picked it up correctly, lay almost parallel with the line of the hills. But at some point they would turn off to strike into the hills, and if the Kid missed that point he might ride on and leave what he sought behind him.

He slackened speed, scanning the ground, and at last dismounted and proceeded on foot, the patient mustang following him.

Overhead, the blazing sun of Texas poured down heat ; the plain reflected the glare. But the Kid did not heed dust and heat. For mile on mile the alkali plain lay round him, dotted with dusty, scrubby sage, and here and there a gaunt cactus. And it was the broken blade of a yucca that told the Kid that he was still on the right trail ; and later, a single hoofprint that the dust had not obliterated. An outcrop of stone, thick with dust, sheltered that single sign from the wind, and preserved it for the Kid's eyes, which gleamed as he scanned it.

" I guess them Jack-Rabbit guys won't pick up a trail like this, a whole lot ! " chuckled the Kid.

He looked back.

There was no sign of horsemen on the plain. The men from Jack-Rabbit had been beaten, as the Kid expected, and as the Jadwins certainly had calculated. The Kid pictured them hunting for a sign that they would never find, swearing and cursing ; he laughed at the mental picture. If the Jadwins and their prisoner were found it would not be by the outfit that had ridden out of Jack-Rabbit to search for them.

The Kid pressed on.

He had forgotten all his doubts and hesitation now—forgotten that he was horning into another man's trouble that did not concern him—in his keen interest in picking up the most difficult trail he had ever followed.

He picked it up, sign by sign and inch by inch. From that point the Jadwins had been less wary and watchful, certain that they had left no sign behind that any but a magician could have followed. Two trackless miles—trackless to any but the Rio Kid—lay behind the gang, and they had felt safe. From now onward the Kid's hard task was easier. He picked up trampled sage, a burnt match, and a cigar stump—infinitesimal objects in the rolling plain, but not too infinitesimal for the eyes that found them. Where the gang had turned, at last, towards the line of the hills, the Kid turned, too ; and now he remounted Side-Kicker, and rode.

Black and barren lay the arid hills before him, and in the rugged line was a narrow opening—a dark, rocky gulch, by way of which, if the Kid's figuring was not out, the Jadwins had ridden into the hills. The Kid's eyes were not seeking sign now ; they watched the dark hills before him as he rode, and his gun was very near his hand.

He reached the dark opening at last, and rode into it—a split in high rocks, scarce six yards wide, rugged and precipitous. It wound away into the mass of the hills, and the eye could not follow its windings more than a score of yards ahead.

The Kid dismounted again.

Followed by his mustang, gun in hand, the Kid tramped up the rugged, rocky floor of the gulch. Suddenly, from the silence of the hills came a sound to his ears ; and the Kid halted, breathing hard, and listened.

It was a cry that had reached him—the cry of a man in pain. It was repeated, ringing eerily down the rocky gulch.

The Kid's eyes glittered.

He made a sign to Side-Kicker, and the mustang halted.

The Kid moved on—silently now as a panther stealing on his prey.

Again came the cry—and again. It guided the Kid, if he had needed guiding. With his gun gripped in his hand, finger on trigger, the Rio Kid crept on. And as he came round the base of a great cliff, and a startling scene burst upon his eyes, he knew that he had come to the end of the trail.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

SHARP SHOOTING!

“DOG-GONE you, hombre! You reckon you want more?”

It was a deep, gruff, savage voice.

Bill Jadwin, the leader of the outlaw gang, stared down grimly at the bound man who lay at his feet.

On either side of Rancher Sylvester knelt Sam and Mike Jadwin. The boss of the Silver Star Ranch lay helpless, bound hand and foot with raw hide ropes. His face was white and tortured. On his broad chest lay a huge mass of rugged granite, held in position by the two ruffians who knelt. Its weight almost crushed the hapless man stretched beneath it.

“You want more, dog-gone you?” growled Bill Jadwin.

A faint cry was the only answer.

The ruffian uttered an oath.

“Say, Mister Sylvester, I reckon you know where you are,” he snarled. “You're with the Jadwins. And I guess you've heard of their reputation. You reckon you can beat us to it, when we've got you by the short hairs, jest where we want you—say?”

“I guess the hombre wants some more,” chuckled Sam Jadwin. “You jest heave another rock on him.”

The rancher panted.

“You scoundrels! My outfit will get you and hang you for this.”

Bill Jadwin gave a savage laugh.

“I guess your outfit won't find us in these hills,” he said. “You had your eyes open the way we came. You sure saw the trail blanketed. You figure that any guy on the Silver Star Ranch will ever pick up sign enough to follow us home?”

The rancher groaned.

“You've got it coming to you,” snarled Bill Jadwin. “We reckoned we'd lift off'n you the wad you got at Injun Ford, selling cattle; and there was nothing to that. But we got you.”

“We sure did, feller,” chuckled Mike Jadwin.

“I guess it was ten thousand dollars,” said Bill Jadwin. “But I sure reckon it's going to touch you for twenty thousand to get clear of this, Jonas Sylvester. You get me? You got to fix up the paper fair an' square, and stay here with us, while Mike goes to collect on it. And if the dollars ain't paid on the nail, and anything happens to Mike, you want to be sorry for yourself, for you'll burn at the stake like you was with the Apaches in the Staked Plain. You get me, durn you?”

There was no mistaking the ruffian's savage earnestness. But the only reply from the rancher was a cry of pain. The heavy rock crushed him to the earth with its weight.

“Heave on another rock, Bill,” exclaimed Mike Jadwin impatiently. “The guy will sure talk turkey then.”

“Never!” panted the rancher. “You may kill me, but I will never sign the draft! You shall never touch a cent of mine!”

"I guess we'll see about that," snarled Bill Jadwin; and he grasped a heavy boulder, and placed it on top of the great mass that already crushed the hapless man.

A low moan burst from the rancher. "I guess that will do the trick," grinned Sam Jadwin. "Say, hombre, you want to have some hoss sense! I reckon your bones will sure begin to crack."

The rancher moaned again. The pain was intolerable. And the obstinate doggedness died out of his face.

"Release me!" His voice was a faint moan. "I will sign."

Bill Jadwin laughed hoarsely.

"I kinder guessed you would," he jeered. "Say, you gink, you've sure

been wasting a whole lot of time. I reckon them twenty thousand dollars is coming to us."

"Not in your lifetime," said a quiet voice.

The three ruffians spun round at the voice, with startled oaths. The boulders piled on the rancher, no longer held in position, rolled off with a crash, and the tortured man breathed again.

The three outlaws grasped their weapons as they turned, and the Rio Kid rapped out sharply:

"Put 'em up!"

In amazement and rage the Jadwin gang stared at him. Suddenly, as if he had fallen from the skies, the Rio Kid had appeared on the scene, and



"I reckon them twenty thousand dollars is coming to us," laughed Bill Jadwin. "Not in your lifetime," said a quiet voice. The three ruffians spun round at the voice to face the Rio Kid's guns. "Put 'em up!" rapped the Kid.

the Jadwins could scarcely believe their eyes as they stared at him. A gun was in either hand of the Kid as he stood scarce a dozen feet away.

The Kid smiled over the levelled barrels at their enraged faces.

"I guess you don't collect them dollars, a whole lot, fellers," he drawled. "I surely guess not. Keep them guns down, or you get what's coming to you—sudden."

"The Rio Kid!" breathed Bill Jadwin.

"I guess you're wise to me," smiled the Kid.

The bound man on the earth turned his head, gazing at the Kid.

"Help me!" he panted. "Save me—save me from these demons! I will reward you! Any reward you name!"

"Can it!" interrupted the Kid. He spoke to the rancher, but his eyes were eagle-like on the three glaring outlaws. "I guess I ain't after your dollars, Mister Sylvester."

"The Rio Kid!" repeated Bill Jadwin, his grasp convulsive on the gun he dared not raise. "You dog-goned fire-bug, what you horning into this game for? You that's wanted by a dozen sheriffs—you that's hunted by the Texas Rangers! Let up, you gink, and stand pat, I'm telling you!"

"Not by a jugful!" answered the Kid cheerily. "I guess I'm here to get that hombre away from you, feller!"

"What durn business is it of yourn?" roared Bill Jadwin. "You an outlaw, same as this gang——"

"You've said it," agreed the Kid. "I guess Texas won't let me be nothing but a pesky outlaw. And that goes. But not the same as you, Bill Jadwin, I reckon. Not in your lifetime, hombre. But I guess I didn't

hop into this outfit to chew the rag. Put up your hands!"

The three ruffians hesitated. Well they knew the shooting of the Rio Kid; and his two Colts bore full upon them. But they were three to one and hardy desperadoes and burning with rage at the thought of being robbed of their prey. A quick glance was exchanged among the three.

"Don't!" said the Kid warningly.

"I guess we'll take you into the raffle, Kid!" said Bill Jadwin hoarsely.

"Stand in with us!"

"Forget it!"

With a fierce curse Bill Jadwin lifted his gun-arm, and his brothers acted as promptly.

Crack-ack!

Both the Kid's guns roared instantly. Bill Jadwin spun over backwards with a bullet in his heart. And Sam Jadwin crumpled where he stood, and dropped, and never stirred again. Mike Jadwin's hands flew above his head, and he yelled:

"Let up, Kid! Let up!"

The Kid eyed him grimly.

"I guess you wasn't any too soon putting up them paws!" he snapped. "I reckon you can live, you dog-goned coyote! Keep 'em up!"

The Kid advanced and disarmed the ruffian, who eyed him with malevolent hate.

"Git on your cayuse, an' beat it," said the Kid briefly, when he had searched Mike for weapons. "Light out, you durn scallywag, afore I change my mind and send you after the other ginks! You get me?"

There was a crash of hoofs as Mike Jadwin threw himself on his horse and galloped down the gulch. He turned in the saddle to shake a clenched fist at the Kid, and yell out a threat at which the Kid smiled

contemptuously, and then he vanished from sight, and the galloping hoofs died away in the distance.

The Kid turned to the rancher.

A few slashes of his bowie-knife and the boss of the Silver Star was free. The Kid helped him up, and the rancher sat gasping on the rock that had so lately crushed him to the earth.

The Kid went to the two remaining tethered horses, cast one loose, and saddled the other and led it to the rancher.

"I guess you can borrow this cayuse," he said. "Say, Mister Sylvester, they'll sure be powerful anxious about you at the Silver Star, and you want to hit the trail pronto."

Sylvester rose from the boulder. His eyes were strangely on his rescuer.

"You're the Rio Kid, same as that hombre said?" he asked.

"Sure!"

"The outlaw of the Rio Grande?"

"You've said it!"

"And you've saved me from those fiends!" muttered the rancher. "Say, this sure gets my goat! They won't believe this in Jack-Rabbit!"

The Kid laughed.

"They'd sure believe you a whole lot, if you told them that the Rio Kid had held you up for your roll," he said.

"They sure would," said Sylvester. "Outlaw and fire-bug, whatever you are, you've saved me, and you've got a friend for life if you want one, Kid!"

"Forget it," said the Kid lightly. "I guess I horned into this rookus jest because I never could mind my own business, feller. Get on that cayuse, and hit the trail."

The Kid called to Side-Kicker and mounted, and rode down the gulch with the rescued rancher. They rode in silence. Far away on the alkali

plain a horseman was vanishing in the dusty distance, and the rancher cast a glance for a moment after Mike Jadwin.

"You've made a bad enemy there, Kid," he said.

The Kid shrugged his shoulders.

"I guess I've made a whole heap already, and one more won't worry me any," he answered carelessly. "This way, Mister Sylvester. I guess you'll be meeting up with your friends soon. There's an outfit from Jack-Rabbit in the chaparral, and I allow they're hunting for you."

They rode on in silence across the alkali plain towards the chaparral that bordered the Jack-Rabbit trail. On the edge of the dark green chaparral horsemen were seen, at last, moving to and fro on the plain, and the Kid grinned. The Jack-Rabbit outfit were trying to pick up the Jadwin trail in the alkali dust. But the horsemen turned their heads, and bunched together, and there was a shout as the two approaching riders were seen on the plain.

The Kid pulled in his mustang.

"I guess you hit it alone from here, Mister Sylvester," he said. "It sure would not be healthy for me to strike that bunch."

The rancher glanced at the distant horsemen now approaching them, and turned to the Kid again.

"They're my friends," he said. "Ride with me, Kid, and I'll answer for your safety."

"Not by a hatful," grinned the Kid. "Say, Mister Sylvester, them guys are hunting you, and, likewise, they're hunting a galoot who held up the Jack-Rabbit stage this morning after your wad, thinking you was aboard."

"And that was——"

"This hombre," said the Kid, laughing.

"Search me!" said the rancher, in amazement.

The Kid raised his Stetson.

"Adios, hombre!" he called out lightly; and, with a touch of the spur, Side-Kicker leaped into speed, and the Kid galloped away.

"Kid!" called out the rancher; but there was no answer, and Sylvester rode on to join his friends.

Far in the distance a little cloud of alkali dust marked the way of the Rio Kid. It died down, and the Kid was gone.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

SHOT FOR SHOT!

A SHOT rang from the pines, and the Rio Kid set his teeth hard. It was not often that the wary Kid was caught at such a disadvantage, but in the windy, snowy passes of the Huecas he had not looked for a foe. It was bitter winter weather—in many a drift on the ranges cattle froze, and up in the rugged Huecas the snow was stacked in every arroyo and gulch and gully. Even Side-Kicker did not find easy footing, though Side-Kicker could clamber wherever a goat could clamber.

But the path the Kid was following by a barren, snowy hillside was slippery with snow. On his right the slope rose steeply to a belt of pines; on his left it fell more steeply to a deep ravine choked with snow, where a fall meant burial at the bottom of a thirty-foot drift. Slowly but surely the grey mustang trod that perilous path across the rugged hill, through a bitter wind, so bitter that even the Kid's goat-skin chaps hardly protected his legs from its bite, and his hands in his cowboy gloves were chilly.

It was going to be a hard Christmas-tide in the uplands of the cow country

—frozen death to many of the herds, to many, perhaps, of the men who herded; but up in the Huecas the grip of winter was harder and more savage than on the wind-swept ranges below.

At least, the Rio Kid told himself, the hunt for him would slacken; sheriffs and rangers would have no hunch for tracking him by frozen hillside and yawning snowdrift. In the Huecas he looked for no foe, though the hunt had been hot at his heels on the plains. But the Kid for once missed his guess, as he was suddenly apprised by the rifle-shots that rang out from the pines a hundred yards above him.

A shot, and another shot; and both too close for comfort. The Kid's glance swept up the rugged slope to the pines; but the man who pulled trigger was unseen, skulking in the cover of the gaunt trees, keeping out of the Kid's sight while he burned powder. That, no doubt, accounted for the lead whizzing by the Kid without touching him, close as it flew; the unseen marksman was more careful of his own skin than anxious to penetrate the Kid's, though the way he pitched his lead showed that he was keen enough to drop the boy outlaw from his horse.

"You durned polecat!" the Kid muttered, his eyes gleaming at the frosty trunks that hid his enemy. "You dog-goned prairie wolf! I guess if you'd show yourself a piece I'd put you wise about potting at me from them pines, you all-fired scallywag!"

But the marksman did not show himself; the keen eyes of the Kid, scanning the belt of pines high up the slope, detected no sign of him. And the Kid pushed on his way, knowing that for quite a distance he had to

ride under the fire of his enemy, powerless to escape. For no horseman could have ridden up that steep slope, slippery with snow, to the pines, to get to close quarters, and below lay only the deep-piled snow in the hollow. The Kid had to pursue his way, and to pursue it slowly, for a single false step meant death to horse and rider.

Crack! came again from the pines, and the Kid felt the sting of the bullet as it tore through his Stetson hat. It grazed his forehead, and a tiny trickle of blood ran down under the Kid's thick hair. It was the third shot, and it had gone closer than the others. The Kid bitterly figured that the unseen gink was getting the range fine. And it needed long minutes for the Kid to pass out of range of the pines, and for every second of those long minutes he was under fire. The Kid reckoned that it was all Texas to a Mexican dollar that he would be all shot up before he could wind round the hill and get out of range.

The Kid's eyes gleamed under his knitted brows; his teeth were clenched with rage.

Crack!

The Rio Kid pitched suddenly off Side-Kicker, and crumpled into the snow.

There was a yell in the pines above—a yell of triumph. From the shadows of the gloomy trees a man leaped, rifle in hand. It was Mike Jadwin.

Bang!

It was the roar of a Colt, and this time it came from the boy outlaw who was crumpled in the snow beside his pawing mustang.

The rifle dropped from Mike Jadwin's hands, and he staggered back to the pines, yelling.

The Kid was on his feet the next second.

His ruse had succeeded; he had drawn his enemy from cover, and his gun was levelled to send his second shot through the heart of the bushwhacker.

But a desperate leap back into the trees saved Jadwin.

The Kid's shot missed him by a fraction of an inch as he disappeared into the pines.

He was wounded—there was blood on his face, spots of crimson on the snow, but his yell of rage showed that he lived. Twice again the Kid fired, sending his lead whistling into the pines. But no answering shot came. The bushwhacker's rifle lay where he had dropped it, and at a distance a six-gun was of little use in any hand but the Kid's.

The Kid holstered his revolver, remounted his grey mustang, and pushed on his way.

He was smiling now—a grim smile.

Mike Jadwin had regained the cover of the pines, wounded; and the Kid figured that a wounded man had little chance of pulling out in the bitter wintry waste of the Huecas.

A few minutes more, and the Kid had passed round a bend of the hillside, and the dangerous path was behind him. From the man in the pines came no sound or shot as he went. He was done with Mike Jadwin.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER

THE TRAIL IN THE SNOW!

“OH, shucks!” said the Kid.

Grey dawn was creeping over the sierra.

The Kid had camped for the night in a place he knew, high up in the Huecas—a cave in a lonely canyon that had afforded him refuge before, when sheriffs and their men had been hard on his traces.

Rolled in his blankets and slicker,

the Kid had slept, without waking till dawn crept over the Huecas.

Now he was standing at the mouth of the cave, looking out on a world of white.

But almost the first glance that he took as he looked out from the cave mouth showed him something that brought a startled exclamation to his lips.

It was a track in the snow.

High up in the Huecas, the Kid reckoned that there would be no man but himself to leave a trail.

He stared at the footprints.

If there were any galoot but himself in those lonely passes, he reckoned that it must be some puncher from the ranges, who had lost his way in search of stray cattle. If that was it, the puncher had lost his horse also, for the trail that ran past the cave in the snow was left by cowboy riding-boots.

"Shucks!" repeated the Kid.

He stepped out and bent over the trail to examine it. The thought of Mike Jadwin came into his mind for a moment. But he was long miles from the pine wood where the bushwhacker had fallen under his bullet—what was left of the last of the Jadwin gang, he reckoned, was only bones gnawed by the hungry coyotes of the sierra.

The snow had ceased to fall towards morning. It lay thick and velvety as far as the eye could reach. It was since the cessation of the snowfall that an unknown man had passed along the canyon; or the tracks would have been covered up.

An hour ago, the Kid reckoned, the galoot had passed, leaving a trail in the snow, winding away into the rocky wilderness.

The Kid stood with a thoughtful brow.

Somewhere in the hills amid the

snowdrifts, was the man who had tramped by on foot in the night; passing the cave, without knowing anyone was there—passing by the help that he needed.

For, outlaw as the Rio Kid was, he was the galoot to help any man—especially a cowman—who was down on his luck; and cheerfully would he have shared his blankets and his grub with a puncher lost in the snow-waste.

"Oh, shucks!" growled the Kid, for the third time.

He stood where he was, gazing thoughtfully and frowningly at the tell-tale prints of the man who was lost in the snowy waste, whose staggering footsteps were leading him only to death in a snowdrift.

The Kid was not thinking of a camp-fire now, or of breakfast. More likely than not that sinking wanderer in the snow had already sunk down to die; but if there was a chance of saving him every minute was worth a fortune. More likely than not it would be a dead man, frozen stiff, that the Kid would find at the end of the trail, if he followed it; but there was a chance that he would find a living man, and that chance was enough to make the Kid forget his own business and horn into another guy's. He chewed cold, hard bacon by way of breakfast as he followed the trail in the snow, the grey mustang following at his heels.

The trail was more than easy to follow.

Deep in the velvety snow the tracks had sunk, and again and again the Kid came on signs where the wretched man had fallen and dragged himself up again.

Once the trail led him by the very edge of a precipice, where the tottering man, in the darkness, had passed within a foot of death. But the



Facing page 80

THE RIO KID'S GOOD TURN!

Specially painted by Saville Lumley

This fine colour plate shows the Rio Kid, a hunted Outlaw, risking his own freedom to succour a helpless enemy.

wanderer, unseeing, had passed in safety, for the trail led on and on into the blinding wastes.

The Kid reckoned that he was gaining on the man fast, even if the wanderer was still pursuing his tottering way. And then suddenly the trail ended.

The Kid halted.

The trail ended on the verge of a cliff, and beyond lay a deep hollow where the snow lay piled in a drift.

The sudden end of the footprints told its own tale.

In the darkness the wretched wanderer had staggered blindly over the edge of the cliff, and fallen into the chasm beyond, and there were no signs that he had climbed out—indeed, climbing out would have been impossible, even for a man in his full strength.

The Kid whistled softly.

It was the end of the trail—an end that might have been expected—indeed, the end the Kid had looked for.

The boy outlaw of the Rio Grande dropped on hands and knees, and crawled to the edge of the cliff.

It was neither easy nor safe to approach the verge, down a steep cliff that was almost like a wall.

Forty feet below was the snow-drift in the hollow. The snow was deep—how deep the Kid could not tell.

Into it the wanderer had fallen, and there he still lay—the Kid knew that. Frozen to death long ago.

The Kid caught his breath.

Deep in the snow at the bottom of the cliff something stirred.

The Kid's keen eyes picked out a dark object that lay there in the snow—the figure of a man, half-buried in the hollow that had been made by his fall.

But the man had not been frozen

to death—not yet, at all events. For he was stirring.

A gleam of the sun, through a rift in heavy clouds, fell like an arrow into the arroyo below the cliff. It gleamed on a white, hard, stubbly face that was turned upward—a face on which blood had frozen—a face that the Rio Kid knew.

“Sho!” said the Kid.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

IN PERIL OF HIS LIFE

“CARRY me home to die!” murmured the Rio Kid.

It was Mike Jadwin who lay in the snowdrift forty feet below. It was the last of the Jadwin gang—it was the bushwhacker who had fired on the Kid from the pines, savagely and ruthlessly seeking his life.

Wounded, weak, sinking from loss of blood, the desperado had struggled to escape from the snowy wilderness into which hatred and revenge had led him. He had lost his horse—fallen from it, as likely as not—and, on foot, he had covered many weary miles in snow and darkness—to fall, at last, over the cliff into the snowy arroyo, and find a grave there.

The Kid's face hardened.

It was not some lost cowpuncher who had left that trail in the snow. It was Mike Jadwin, thief, outlaw, bushwhacker, assassin. Let him lie where he had fallen.

He turned away from the giddy verge, and crawled back, and stepped to the grey mustang who stood waiting.

“I guess, old hoss, that it's us for the trail,” said the Rio Kid; and he threw the reins over his arm and led the mustang away.

From the icy silence behind him came a cry.

It was a faint cry, inarticulate; but

it told that the man who lay half-buried in the snowdrift was conscious, that he knew that another human being was at hand in that frozen solitude.

The Kid halted.

The cry was not repeated. It seemed as if all the remaining strength of the wretch had been expended in that one effort.

The Kid moved on again.

It was a savage-hearted ruffian, a wretch whose hands were stained with blood, who lay at the bottom of the cliff. A scallywag whose life was not worth saving, if the Kid could save it ; and only at the imminent risk of his own life could he save the man who had sought to kill him, who would seek again to kill him, given the chance.

But the Kid turned back.

He took the coiled riata from his saddle, and approached the verge of the cliff again.

Crawling to the edge, he looked down.

Deep in the hollow that the force of his fall had driven in the snow, lay Jadwin, but he did not stir now. He was unconscious. The Kid looked long and hard at the savage, bearded face.

Then, coolly and quietly, he secured the end of the riata to the horn of his saddle, and threw the slack of the rope over the cliff.

The mustang, well away from the verge, planted his forefeet firmly to stand the strain, knowing what was required. The Kid patted Side-Kicker's neck.

"Stand to it, old hoss," he muttered.

Taking hold of the rope, The Rio Kid crept over the verge of the cliff. The mustang watched him with intelligent eyes as he slid over the dizzy verge.

Down below, the end of the forty-

foot rope was straggling in the snow beside the senseless bushwhacker.

The Kid did not look down.

Hand below hand he swung himself down the stout rope. It stood the weight easily enough ; it was built to stand the strain of the wrench when a careering bull was suddenly roped and brought to a standstill. And the mustang, trained to stand firm when the rope gathered in a charging steer, stood firm now, and the trailing rope over the precipice gave hardly an inch.

Hand below hand the Kid swung in dizzy space. The face of the cliff hollowed out as it descended ; there was no foothold for the Kid, nothing that his feet could touch. He swung in space, lowering himself into the windswept arroyo, swinging to and fro in the bitter wind.

Slowly but surely the Kid went down, till his riding boots touched the snow of the drift, and he stood, sinking in snow till it was up to his belt. Under it he felt firm footing, some ledge of rock from the cliff that jutted out into the arroyo. It was upon this that the falling bushwhacker had landed, and it had saved him from plunging to certain death in thirty feet of snow that was banked in the chasm.

There was no movement from Mike Jadwin ; his eyes were closed, he seemed scarcely to be breathing. The blood was clotted over the gash that the Rio Kid's bullet had left above his ear. Half an inch nearer, and Mike Jadwin would never have stirred after it touched him.

The Kid stooped by his side, then started and felt his heart throb. He was on the very edge of the rocky ledge that supported the fallen bushwhacker. For a second his foot had gone over space—space filled with

snow that was ready to swallow him and hide him from all eyes.

"Gee!" murmured the Kid.

Very carefully the Kid felt his way on the snowy ledge. Bending over the insensible bushwhacker, he wound the end of the lasso round him, under his shoulders and knotted it fast.

Jadwin did not stir.

But as the Kid rose from his task the

"The Kid!" repeated Jadwin. "The Rio Kid! Dog-gone you, you durned firebug, you've got me now—got me dead to rights!" He made a feeble motion to his belt, and his nerveless fingers groped on the butt of a six-gun.

The Kid kicked the gun from his hand and tossed it into the snow in the abyss.

From the shadows of the gloomy trees a man leaped, rifle in hand. It was Mike Jadwin. Bang! Next moment there was the roar of the Colt held in the Rio Kid's steady hand, and Jadwin staggered back yelling.



ruffian's eyes opened, and he cast a wild glance round him and stared up dazedly at the boy outlaw of the Rio Grande. The Kid looked down at him grimly, and slowly recognition dawned in the eyes of Jadwin. Recognition—and fear—fear that made his eyes dilate and his faint breath come with a sob.

"The Kid!" he muttered huskily.

"Right in once!" said the Kid.

"I guess you won't be wanting your hardware, Mike!" he grinned. "Can it! You figure that I'm here for your scalp? Forget it!"

He turned away from the ruffian. Jadwin made an effort to rise, and sank helplessly back.

That he expected death—ruthless death—at the hands of the man he had trailed and sought to kill was evident in his looks. Why the Kid

turned from him without driving a bullet through his heart the ruffian could not guess. Neither could he understand, as the Kid went up the rope, hand over hand, swinging himself up the face of the steep precipice. Jadwin watched him, with half-closed eyes, dizzily, uncomprehendingly.

Hand above hand the Kid went, climbing steadily. The strain on his arms was heavy, and once his hands slipped and the Kid hung on, resting, his breath coming quick and fast. Then he climbed again, with set teeth, all his strength in the effort.

High over him, on the rugged rock, the grey mustang stood fast, never yielding to the tug of the rope. Higher and higher rose the Kid, till he was at the top of the precipice, and clambered over, and sank down in the snow, with aching limbs, breathing in deep gasps. For long, long minutes he had swung over a terrible death; but he had made the grade at last, and now he lay in the snow, gasping for breath, waiting for his strength to revive.

But he did not rest long. Still breathing hard and deep, the Kid rose to his feet and moved over to the grey mustang. To pull the bulky ruffian up the cliff would probably have been beyond the Kid's strength, sturdy as the boy outlaw was; but Side-Kicker was there to help.

"I guess you want to hump it, old hoss!" murmured the Kid. "You sure got to pull that firebug up, old cayuse."

He headed the mustang away from the cliff and set him in motion. The rope tautened, and the half-conscious ruffian below felt the drag of it.

Mike Jadwin gave a faint cry as he felt himself dragged up.

"Hump it, old hoss!" murmured the Kid.

The grey mustang moved on steadily, dragging the tautened riata after him.

The Kid, on hands and knees, moved back to the edge of the precipice.

Lying there on his face, he grasped the rope, and gave a tug, to ease the strain on the mustang. But Side-Kicker was more than equal to the strain; slowly and steadily he moved on away from the cliff, dragging on the rope; slowly and steadily the burly ruffian swung up from the snowy ledge below, and swung at last clear of the snow.

The Kid looked down.

As the rope slid past him, dragged by the steady pull of the mustang, Mike Jadwin rose nearer and nearer, closer and closer to the dizzy edge of the precipice where the Kid lay. Steadily he came up, till he was pulled on to the cliff.

"Whoa, Side-Kicker!"

The grey mustang ceased to pull.

Jadwin lay sprawling on the snowy summit of the cliff. The Kid lay beside him for some minutes, exhausted with his efforts.

He staggered to his feet at last.

He released Jadwin from the riata, coiled it, and hung it on the saddle of the grey mustang; then he lifted the bushwhacker to his feet.

"I guess you got to hit the trail pronto, Mike," he said pleasantly.

Only a dull, uncomprehending stare replied. The Kid half led, half carried the burly ruffian to the horse and lifted him to Side-Kicker's back. Mike Jadwin sagged in the saddle.

He could not have sat the horse without the Kid's aid. But the Kid was there to help him; his strong hand held the bushwhacker on the mustang's back as Side-Kicker moved away.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

THE END OF A FEUD!

A RUDDY gleam of flame lighted the shadows of the cave in the Huecas.

The camp-fire, fed with pine-cones and broken branches, burned steadily, and cast a radius of warmth and light.

Outside the cave the setting sun glimmered on sheets of snow. The Huecas were deep under a snowy pall.

On the blankets by the fire Mike Jadwin lay.

He was alone in the cave.

But he knew that he was not to be left alone. The Kid would return. Every time he had left the cave he had returned again, and Jadwin knew that he would come.

For three days Jadwin had been in the cave under the

Kid's care. He had been very near death when the Kid had saved him from the snow-drift in the arroyo, but care and warmth and food had brought him round. The Kid had rescued him in time; the bushwhacker was on the way to recovery now. He was able to sit a horse—if he had had a horse to sit—and on a horse he could have escaped from that dreary waste of frost and snow and ice and frozen



Mike Jadwin, his eyes burning at the motionless form of the Rio Kid, crept closer. One fierce blow and the Kid would never wake again. The Jadwin gang would be avenged. The hand that held the jagged lump of rock was raised . . .

rock. On foot it was very doubtful.

He was thinking of that as he lay by the fire.

What the Kid's game was the ruffian could not understand.

But what he could understand was that the Kid's horse would carry him to safety if he could lift Side-Kicker; and that, although the Kid had disarmed him, there might be other ways of getting at the boy outlaw and turning the tables on him.

And now, as he lay by the ruddy camp-fire waiting for the Kid to return, Mike Jadwin held in his hand, hidden from sight under a corner of the blanket, a jagged lump of rock. He had pondered and planned and schemed while he lay in the Kid's blankets in the Kid's camp, and that was the outcome. The desperado was waiting and watching for his chance.

There was a trampling of hoofs in the snow without, a jingle of harness ; the boy outlaw of the Rio Grande was returning at last.

A burning glitter came into the sunken eyes of the man who lay by the fire.

The dim daylight at the entrance of the cave was darkened by the handsome figure of the Rio Kid. He led Side-Kicker into the cave ; and, to the bushwhacker's surprise, another horse followed at the end of a trail-rope.

The Kid glanced at the bushwhacker and nodded.

"Feelin' fine?" he asked cheerily.

"I guess I'm mending," muttered Mike Jadwin.

"You sure are mending," said the Kid. "I reckon you'll be able to hit the trail in the morning, feller. Say, I've rustled you a cayuse."

Jadwin stared at the horse.

"That's my critter," he said.

"Sure!" said the Kid, smiling. "I figured that he would be loose in the Huecas, and I've sure been trailing him some. I guess I've had a long pasear hunting that cayuse, Mike ; but I got him at last and roped him in."

The Kid led the horses into the cave and fed them. The bushwhacker lying in the blankets watched him in silence. His grasp was hard on the hidden lump of rock. If his chance came——

The Kid came towards the camp-fire.

Mike Jadwin's eyes gleamed strangely in the firelight. The Kid sat carelessly on a boulder within a few feet of him.

"Say, feller, I reckon you're mended enough to hit the trail at dawn," he said. "We're sure getting to the end of the fodder hyer ; the cayuses have finished up their feed, and the grub's running short for us. Now you've got a hoss, I guess you will be able to make the grade, say?"

"I reckon!" muttered Jadwin.

The Kid made supper for two, and they ate, while the darkness fell on the Huecas and deepened outside the lonely cave. From the heights above a bitter wind blew, laden with snowflakes. It was a black and bitter night on the sierra, but within the cave there was ruddy light and warmth.

The Kid mended the fire with pine-wood, banking it up for the night, and yawned.

"I guess I'll be turning in," he remarked.

"You've fixed me up in your blankets," muttered Jadwin.

"I guess the slicker's enough for me."

"You letting me go in the morning?"

The Kid looked round at him.

"Sure!" he answered.

"What's your game, Kid?" muttered the ruffian. "You shot up the gang at Jack-Rabbit, and I was trailing you for your life. You ain't letting me light out arter that? What's your game? There's a reward out for me at Jack-Rabbit. You figure on handling it?"

"You durned pesky bonehead!" answered the Kid. "Forget it!"

"Then what's your game?" snarled the bushwhacker. "I guess I ain't wise to it. You've saved my life, and you've got back my hoss for me. And you tell me I can hit the trail?"

"Sure!"

"And why?" snarled Jadwin.

The Kid laughed.

"You can search me," he answered. "You're a bad man from the toes up, Mike, and I reckon your life wasn't worth saving; and I sure don't know but you'll be gunning after me agin if you get a dog's chance. I don't rightly know why I don't put a bullet through your cabeza, like you deserve, you pesky fire-bug; but I guess I was always a dog-goned gink, and you can put it down to that if you want.

"It's Christmas," said the Kid, reflectively, "and mebbe that helps. Anyhow, you ain't going to leave your bones in the Huecas—and that's a cinch."

And the Kid, rolled in his slicker, settled down with his feet to the fire.

For a long time there was silence. The cave was deeply dusky, the fire dulled by the wood the Kid had banked on it. Only every now and then came a flicker, dancing on the rocky walls and for a moment illuminating the dusky hollows.

Jadwin stirred at last. Slowly he raised himself from the blankets.

He was standing now, the jagged rock in his hand. His chance had come, and the ruffian's eyes burned at the motionless form of the Kid stretched by the fire.

He crept closer.

One fierce blow, and the Kid would never wake again. The bitter feud would be ended, the Jadwin gang avenged!

The sinewy hand that held the jagged lump of rock was raised—

It was lowered again.

He could not do it! The murderous hand was lowered. The ruffian crept back to his blankets.

A soft voice drawled in the silence.

"Say, feller, I reckon that was your best guess."

Jadwin started violently.

The Kid was not asleep!

He sat up in the folds of the slicker, and the firelight caught the gleam of a gun. It caught also the Kid's smiling eyes as he looked at the scared face of the bushwhacker.

"Why, you bonehead," said the Kid, "I was awake and watching you; and if you'd tried to cave in my cabeza with that rock, I guess I'd have drilled you so sudden you'd never have known what hit you till you woke up on the other side of Jordan!"

Then he laughed.

"Say, Mike, you're sure a bad man, but you ain't so pesky bad as you allow! Go to sleep, hombre, and dream of a Merry Christmas!"

There was silence in the cave.

Under the wintry glimmer of the morning sun two horsemen rode by snowy paths in the Huecas. From the cave they took different trails—Mike Jadwin to the east, and the Rio Kid to the west. They parted in silence; but at a little distance the Kid turned his head and found that Mike Jadwin was also looking back.

The Kid smiled and waved his hand.

"Merry Christmas, feller!" he shouted.

And Jadwin, his grim, stubbly face breaking into an unaccustomed grin, waved back and shouted, too.

"Good-bye, Kid! And a Merry Christmas to you!"

And they rode their different ways.

THE END

LODER'S LUCK!

By
**PETER
TODD**



THE FIRST CHAPTER

PRESENTS FOR LODER!

ELEVEN strokes fell upon the darkness from the big clock high up in the old tower at Greyfriars. A dense gloom wrapped the quad and cloisters; the buildings themselves showed only one glimmer of light. This came from a place which should have been as dark as the rest of the school. The Remove dorm, in fact.

Nobody in the Remove should have been out of bed at eleven o'clock at night, but things were not as they should be. They frequently aren't, in the Remove. Several candles were burning in the dorm. Two fellows were out of bed. The rest were sitting up and grinning.

The fellows out of bed were Vernon-Smith and Bolsover major. Smithy

was mixing some concoction in a tin pan; Bolsy was putting on a few togs. The other fellows were engaged in arguing.

"The best thing to do is to lock his beastly door," said Skinner firmly.

"Oh, rats! We don't want to get the man the sack," commented Nugent. "How's it getting on, Smithy?"

The Bounder grinned.

"I'm just putting the carmine copying-ink and gum in it," he replied. "It'll be pretty ripe then."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All we need to do is to bung a bottle of liquid glue in his bed," said Bolsover major obstinately. "He won't like his bed swimming with glue. Stands to reason."

"Never mind his bed," grunted

THE TOFFEE THAT SAVED A SENIOR FROM THE "SACK"!

Smithy. "It will be enough when he gets this pan of ink on his napper."

"Better just lock his door——"
Skinner chimed in.

The person who was to be bombarded with ink and gummed up in bed was none other than our old enemy, Loder of the Sixth. And this was how it all happened.

Poor old Quelchy bagged a nasty cold from somewhere, and was shot off to the sanny to nurse it; so Loder was detailed to take the Remove while he was away. Loder must have thought the Head said, "Take it out of the Remove," for that's what he did—and he did it jolly well. Practically every chap in the Form was landed with lines or lickings, and the whole of the Remove was simply bursting for vengeance on Gerald Loder.

Bunter, of course, was in the thick of it all. Loder had snaffled a packet of toffee from Bunter and confiscated it, giving the Owl five hundred lines by way of compensation. After class, Bunter had made an attempt to hook the toffee out of Loder's study. He didn't get the toffee, for Loder came up to the study while he was there. Bunter had just time to get under the bed.

In hiding under the bed, Bunter overheard Loder making plans to go out on the razzle-dazzle that night, and he promptly passed on the news to the other fellows.

Then it was that we saw our chance of getting a bit of our own back. Skinner suggested locking the door of Loder's study so that he couldn't get back to bed; but most of us felt this was a bit too thick, although doubtless Loder deserved it. Bolsy was keen on glueing his bed for him, while Smithy, who had a large bottle of carmine copying-ink on hand,

was desperately anxious to give Loder the benefit of it by means of a booby-trap over his door.

Bunter did not care what means was selected, but he appealed loudly to whoever went to Loder's study to bring back his confiscated toffee.

"I say, you fellows," he wailed, "it was a one-and-sixpenny packet, practically full. I'd only eaten one piece when the brute dropped on me, and it was jolly good toffee, too. Wasn't it, Russell, old fellow?"

Russell stared.

"How should I know?" he demanded.

"Well, it was your—I mean," said Bunter hastily—"of course you don't know, old chap."

"Was that my packet of toffee he bagged?" roared Russell, starting. "Why, you fat brigand——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bolsover major had slipped on his jacket and bags. He now stole over to the door. Smithy glared at him.

"You needn't butt in," remarked the Bounder. "I'm goin' to give him this booby-trap——"

"I'm going to glue his bed——"

"Better lock the door, I think."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"You'd better all three go it," he remarked. "Bolsy can glue his bed, Smithy can balance a pan of red ink on his door, and then Skinner can shut the door and lock it. Loder will be pleased."

"Don't you get foolin' round his door," snapped Smithy, glaring at Skinner. "I don't want this booby-trap spoilt."

"I'm going to glue his bed," repeated Bolsover obstinately.

"Well, buck up, then," said Vernon Smith impatiently. "You can go and swamp glue into his bed, if you like. Only you'd better be quick. This

mixture will be ready for him in half a tick."

"I—I say, Bolsy, old fellow," yelled Bunter, as the burly Remove junior opened the door. "Get my toffee for me, old chap. It's in the beast's desk."

"Rats to you!" snapped Bolsover, and went softly out of the dorm to get his bottle of liquid glue from his study.

"Beast!" grunted the Porpoise. "I say, Smithy——"

"Cheese it!"

"I'm hungry, you know. You might get a fellow's toffee for him."

"I might pull a fellow's nose for him, if he doesn't shut up," replied the Bounder, busily stirring his horrid mixture.

"My hat!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Won't Loder enjoy himself! First of all he'll get a nice drenching with red ink and gum, and then, after he's scrubbed himself clean, he'll crawl wearily into a pool of glue."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Remove, greatly tickled with the thought of Loder's face when this happened.

"Won't he yell when he gets that lot on his napper," chortled Squiff.

"Will he?" replied the Bounder grimly. "I don't think he will. If he wakes up any of the other prefects or a few of the masters, he can explain to them what he's doing out of bed at one o'clock in the morning. I don't think Loder will try it, somehow."

Smith carefully lifted the pan and trod over towards the door.

"I—I say, Smithy——"



The dormitory door opened and a fearsome figure, dripping with gum and ink, entered the room, flourishing a large fist at Vernon-Smith. "You—you——" stuttered the figure wildly. It was Bolsover; he had landed Smith's booby-trap laid for Loder.

"Shut up, you fat ass!"

"My toffee, old fellow! You can easily hook it out of the beast's desk. I say, you know, don't go out while a fellow's talking to you. Beast!" hooted Bunter, as Smithy left the dorm without taking any further notice of him.

The fellows all waited with keen interest for Smithy and Bolsover to return with the news that Loder's bed was duly glued and the booby-trap was in position over his door. Bunter grouched and grumbled about his toffee, and Skinner, who was sore and savage, complained that Loder's door should have been locked, leaving the prefect with a chance of being discovered and expelled.

"Bolsy's gone a long time," remarked Wharton, yawning.

"Giving Smithy a hand with the booby-trap, I expect," grinned Nugent.

We waited patiently. Presently the door opened and the Bounder came in grinning.

"All serene!" he said. "If Loder touches his door now, he'll get the whole lot on the back of his neck."

We stared at him.

"Where's Bolsover?" asked Wharton. "Didn't he come up with you?"

"Bolsover!" repeated the Bounder. "I didn't see anything of him. I took it for granted he'd been and gone. Oh, my hat! I wonder——"

The door opened again, and a fearsome figure staggered into the room.

The figure was a vivid scarlet in colour; gum and ink were dripping from it in a stream. In one hand it held a bottle of liquid glue!

It staggered up to Smithy and flourished a large fist in front of his nose.

"You—you—you——" stuttered the figure wildly.

We simply shrieked.

Bolsover had got it! How, or why, we didn't know; but the sight of him was enough for us. We yelled—regardless of the noise we were making.

Smithy didn't laugh. His face was dark with fury.

"You fool!" he snarled. "What did you want to spoil my booby-trap for?"

"Could I help it?" raved Bolsover fiercely. "I couldn't find the glue for some time. That fathead Dupont had shoved it behind the bookcase. When I found it, I went down to Loder's study and—and this caught me——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look at me!" yelled Bolsover. "Just look at me! Ain't I a sight? You—you blithering bandersnatch! You—you——"

"You want a wash!" Smithy snapped, picking up a jug of water. "Here you are, ass!"

And he swooped the water over Bolsover with a swing of his arm.

That did it. Forgetful of time and place, Bolsover jumped at Smithy, hitting out wildly.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Wharton. "Stop them! We shall have the Beaks up here at this rate."

A number of fellows jumped out of bed and rushed at the combatants to drag them apart.

As they did so, two other fellows slipped quietly out of the dorm. Bunter went first and, shortly after him, Skinner.

That night's adventures were not yet over.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

A CLOSE SHAVE

BUNTER was hungry. That, of course, was not unusual with Bunter. Skinner was savage. And

that, equally of course, was not unusual with Skinner.

Bunter left the dorm first. The thought of a whole packet of toffee simply waiting in Loder's empty study for somebody to go along and hook it out was not to be resisted. Scuttling out of the room, he edged his way quietly to the Sixth-form passage.

Skinner followed him a few minutes afterwards. Skinner had taken two lickings in class that morning, and he was burning to get his own back. By simply turning the key in Loder's door, and taking the said key away with him, he was putting Loder in the position of being shut out of his own bed-room, with a risk of being expelled if he couldn't find a way to get in. It looked a soft thing to Skinner.

Bunter reached Loder's study exactly one minute ahead of Skinner.

The fat Porpoise had just opened the drawer of Loder's desk when the door of the room was gently closed and a key grated in the lock.

"Oh, crikey!" gasped Bunter, transfixed.

Outside in the passage, Skinner grinned and slipped the key out of the lock. That would do Loder's business for him just right, reflected Skinner. He was about to return to the Remove dorm, when the handle of the door suddenly turned—obviously being moved from within. Skinner stared blankly.

"What the——"

"Oh, lor'!" came a dolorous whisper from within the study. "Oh, crikey! Beasts!"

"Bunter!" exclaimed Skinner, recognising the dulcet tones. "What the dickens is that fat ass doing in Loder's study?"

"I—I say—who's that?" came Bunter's voice.

Skinner grunted and stepped forward to open the door again. Obviously he couldn't leave Bunter shut up in Loder's study. He stepped forward.

If he had stepped on the floor, all would have been well. But in the darkness of the passage he did not see Smithy's tin pan, which was lying on the floor where it had dropped after connecting with Bolsover. Skinner planted a foot right on it. The tin pan skidded in the pool of inky gum. Skinner skidded, too.

Crash!

"Whoooooop!" roared Skinner, as he smote the lino.

The bump shook Greyfriars to its foundations. The yell brought every prefect and every master upright in bed.

Skinner scrambled painfully to his feet and fairly bolted up the stairs to the dorm. Bunter could wait; Skinner couldn't. He knew there would be a mob of prefects on the scene in something less than a minute.

He was right. Doors opened all along the passage. Heads looked out. Mr. Prout and Mr. Hacker, sporting dressing-gowns, rolled on the scene. Wingate switched on the light.

"What the thump——" He stared blankly at the pool of red ink and gum.

"What's happening?" inquired the prefects in wonder. "Somebody larking?"

"What is this?" boomed Mr. Prout, puffing along the passage. "Wingate, I have been awakened! Aroused! Disturbed! I have been startled by a noise from this passage. What is taking place here?"

"I don't know, sir," replied the school captain. "There's this on the floor. Somebody seems to have made rather a mess here."

"What, what?" Mr. Prout blinked at the remains of the booby-trap. "Bless my soul! Wingate, there has been a dreadful crime here. Blood has been spilt. I will go and get my rifle, and then——"

The prefects grinned. Some of them felt that, if Mr. Prout got to work with his rifle, it was only too probable that blood might be spilt by the gallon.

"Ahem!" said Wingate. "I don't think that's necessary, sir. I fancy some young rascal has been trying to fix a booby-trap in this passage."

"Ah, very probably," agreed Mr. Hacker. "One of Quelch's juniors, I have no doubt."

"No doubt," agreed the Fifth-form master. "But it is still far from clear how, or why, a booby-trap—as Wingate terms it—could be affixed at this spot, and for what purpose it was intended. This must be thoroughly investigated. I shall get to the bottom of this matter, Wingate. I desire to know what has been going on in this passage."

"It's outside Loder's door," observed Wingate. "Perhaps Loder knows something about it." And he rapped on the door. "Loder! Are you awake?"

"It will be very odd if he is not," said Mr. Hacker sarcastically, "since the noise occurred at this spot and woke nearly everyone else in the building. I should have expected Loder to be the first to come out into the passage."

"Loder!" called out Wingate, tapping the door.

"You had better go in and arouse him," said Prout.

"The door seems to be locked, sir."

"What, what! Absurd! Why should the door be locked? Is not the key there, Wingate?"

"Eh? No, sir."

"Dear me!" came the acid tones of Mr. Hacker. "Can it be possible that Loder is absent from the school at this hour of the night?"

Wingate set his lips. There had, in the past, been rumours about Loder, and Wingate had a shrewd suspicion that they were not unfounded. If they were true, and Loder was really out of bounds—it was the long jump for Loder.

The school captain banged heavily on the door.

Inside the study, Billy Bunter quaked. The fat junior had no very clear idea of what had happened. All he knew was that a crowd of masters and prefects were outside the door, and that, if he were discovered in Loder's room, it meant a whacking from the Head. Bunter shivered.

"Oh, lor!" he groaned silently. "Oh, crumbs! Oh, jiminy! If I'm nabbed here by Prout—— Oh, lor'!"

He wished from the bottom of his fat heart that he had let Russell's toffee alone. But it was too late to wish that. Prout had now taken command. He meant to get to the bottom of the mystery.

"Wingate!" he boomed. "This door must be opened. There is a duplicate key in the key safe downstairs. If no other key can be found, the Headmaster must be aroused and a duplicate obtained."

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

Bunter gasped. Evidently he was to be "for it." His wits worked with lightning speed. There was just one chance—just one. He took it with both hands.

Our old Owl is a weird and wonderful ventriloquist; he can imitate other fellows' voices to the finest degree of perfection. He now turned



As Skinner planted his foot in the tin pan, the pan skidded in the pool of inky gum. Next moment Skinner skidded, too! "Whoooop!" he roared, as he smote the lino.

on his ventriloquial tap and spoke like Loder.

"I say," he yawned, "what's all the rumpus out there? Do let a fellow sleep!"

Mr. Prout jumped.

"Oh, Loder! You are there!"

"Eh?" came the supposed voice of Loder. "Of course I'm here. Where else should I be at this time of night? What's up?"

Wingate breathed again. There was to be no sacking in the Sixth Form. But Hacker glared suspiciously at the locked door.

"Loder!" he snapped. "Why is your door locked?"

"I locked it, sir."

"But why? What is the reason of—"

A sleepy chuckle interrupted him.

"Oh, that's all right, sir. I took

Mr. Quelch's Form in class this mornin', and I believe one or two of the young rascals didn't like the lickings I gave them. There was some talk of paying me back, I believe. So I thought I'd lock my door to-night—just in case. Of course, it's a bit thick to talk of assaulting a prefect, but Mr. Quelch's juniors are rather—er—"

"Quite so!" assented Hacker. "They are, as you suggest, rather—er— Quite so!"

Really, at times Bunter's cleverness almost amounted to genius. The fat spoofer completely convinced the two masters, and Prout's voice was quite amiable as he exclaimed:

"I have always said that the way Quelch manages his Form— But that has nothing to do with the matter at present. There appears, Loder, to be the remains of a—a

booby-trap upon the floor outside your study."

"Ha, ha!" Bunter could even laugh like Loder. "Looks as if I acted wisely in locking my door, then. I expect the young rascal tried to walk into my room with that lot, and bumped himself on the door when it didn't open."

"Ah! Exactly! I have no doubt that is the case!" Prout nodded. "He shall be discovered to-morrow and punished. Meanwhile, we had better return to bed, I think."

And the crowd outside melted away, leaving Bunter to wipe his perspiring brow and gasp with relief.

About twenty minutes later Skinner came down and released Bunter. And this time Loder's door was left open. They were fed up with Loder.

We seemed to be lying awake for a long time, wondering if Prout would come to investigate further. But he was apparently standing by his determination to leave the matter until the morning. All we could hear was a strange noise of chewing and champing.

Bunter was the only one who profited by the night's adventure. He had got his toffee back!

An hour or so later Loder came in, yawned, grinned, and got into bed—without the faintest notion of how near he had come to being booted out.

We did not make any more plans for vengeance on Loder. We were quite tired of it. Our great midnight vengeance on Loder had panned out as follows:

Bolsy saved Loder from a booby-trap. Smithy saved Loder from a bed full of glue. Bunter and Skinner between them saved Loder from getting the sack.

And yet, Loder thinks himself unlucky!

Greyfriars Jingles

TOO MUCH FAG!

By PETER TODD



DON'T ask the Earl Mauleverer
What kind of sport he would prefer;
Upon his study couch reclined
He'll yawn, "That kind of thing I find
Too much fag!"

This limp and lazy nobleman
Spends every single hour he can
Upon his study sofa springs,
And mildly calls all other things
Too much fag!

Don't ask him why he does not wield
A bat upon the cricket field
And knock the bowling into fits—
He's pretty sure to tell you it's
Too much fag!

Of course, he gives his full support
To every healthy form of sport,
But taking part in it—no fear!
The reason why is very clear—
Too much fag!

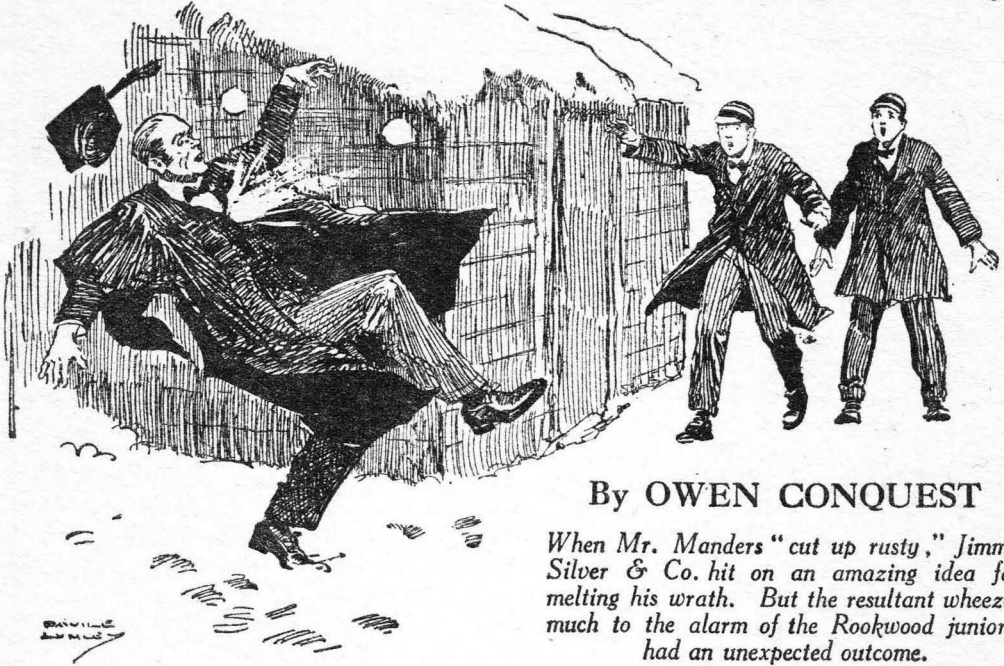
The Latin language he'll approve
Of being learnt by the Remove;
The same with grammar, French and
"stinks,"
But learning them himself he thinks
Too much fag!

He's fond of Lower School delights
Like rags and feeds and pillow-fights,
But does not share in them, not he!
He says, "They always seem to me
Too much fag!"

But Mauly, heed this little tale:
There lived a tired and languid snail
Who did not dodge the early bird
Because he found it, so I've heard,
Too much fag!

(Other slackers take warning!)

MELTING MR MANDERS!



By OWEN CONQUEST

When Mr. Manders "cut up rusty," Jimmy Silver & Co. hit on an amazing idea for melting his wrath. But the resultant wheeze, much to the alarm of the Rookwood juniors, had an unexpected outcome.

THE FIRST CHAPTER

MANDERS STOPS ONE!

"HERE they come!"

"Got enough snowballs?"

"Wait till they get past the lodge!"

"Then all let fly together!"

"Ssssh!"

There was an air of expectation at the back of the woodshed under the school wall at Rookwood. Several things combined to explain it. One was a pile of well-made snowballs standing in the recess between the shed and the wall. Another was the four pairs of hands belonging to Jimmy Silver & Co., which were within easy reach of them. A third was the approach of three cheery-looking juniors in the shape of Dodd and Doyle and Cook—the

Three Tommies of the Modern House.

It was really rather heartless of Jimmy Silver & Co. to lie in wait for their old rivals in this fashion, for the Three Tommies were actually keeping an appointment which Jimmy Silver himself had made. It was nearing the end of the Christmas term and, in preparation for the Breaking-up concert, Jimmy Silver had written a play called "Burglar Bill's Christmas," in which he had given the Three Tommies important parts. It was to get away from the crowd that he had chosen the woodshed for a rehearsal on this particular Saturday afternoon, and not to lay a trap for the Moderns; but the presence of the first snow of the season had proved irresistible. Hence, Jimmy Silver was lying in wait for

Tommy Dodd & Co. with the rest as keenly as he would have lain in wait had " Burglar Bill's Christmas " not existed !

In blissful ignorance of the reception awaiting them, Dodd & Co. tramped through the snow towards the woodshed. From their well-chosen hiding-place the Fistical Four heard the crunching sound of their rivals' unsuspecting approach and began gathering up supplies of ammunition.

" Up, guards, and at 'em ! "

The yell came from Jimmy Silver. An instant later, the Fistical Four had come out into the open and four snowballs propelled by four hefty arms were whizzing through the air.

Tommy Dodd & Co. were taken completely by surprise, and three yells of mingled discomfort and consternation went up as the Classical missiles found billets. But they were quick to recover.

" All right, you bounders ! " hooted Tommy Dodd. " First blood to you, but we'll soon get ours ! Up, the Moderns ! "

" What-ho ! "

" Faith, an' it's meself that'll paste the spalpeens ! "

The Three Tommies made a dive for the snow at their feet, and hurriedly prepared to give battle. Three snowballs whizzed back at the attackers, and another three in response to the Classics' second volley. In the space of a few seconds, a spirited battle was raging in front of the woodshed, and the air was thick with flying snowballs.

It was when the fight was at its height that Mr. Manders suddenly appeared.

Mr. Manders of the Modern House had an unhappy knack of appearing

at the wrong moment, and he couldn't possibly have appeared at a worse moment than this.

The combatants didn't notice Mr. Manders. But Mr. Manders could hardly fail to notice the combatants. He stopped dead and pursed his thin lips and scowled. Some masters, like Dicky Dalton of the Classical House, took a lenient view of the high-spirited activities of youth in wintry weather. But Mr. Manders was not in the habit of taking a lenient view of any kind of youthful activities, and in particular he abominated snow-balling.

" Stop ! " he called out.

The juniors carried on. Mr. Manders' voice, harsh as it was, could not rise above the din of the battle that was raging now.

Mr. Manders took a step forward.

" Stop, I order you ! Dodd—Doyle—Silver——"

" Go it, Classics ! "

" Up, the Moderns ! "

Mr. Manders, glaring, advanced warily into the firing-line.

" Stop, you young ruffians ! At once, I say ! Stop immediately, or I will——"

Then it happened ! Newcombe and Raby, with a view to cutting off the retreat of the outnumbered Moderns, moved to another position which happened to be quite near Mr. Manders. Doyle and Cook rained snowballs at them as they moved—and realised too late that a newcomer was in the line of fire.

Plop ! Thud ! Plop !

One caught Mr. Manders on the nose, one on the ear, and a third on the chest.

Mr. Manders sat down in the snow with a bump, and his string of orders tailed off into a gasping yell.

" Oh ! Yooop ! Oh ! "

THE SECOND CHAPTER

UP TO THE CLASSICALS!

“CAVE!”
“Oh, crikey! It’s Manders!”

Tommy Dodd & Co. dropped their snowballs as though they had suddenly turned into hot bricks. Jimmy Silver & Co., as members of the Classical House, had not quite as much reason for alarm, but they, too, hurriedly got rid of the remainder of their ammunition.

Mr. Manders looked in a mood to take direct action against anyone he saw with a snowball in his hand!

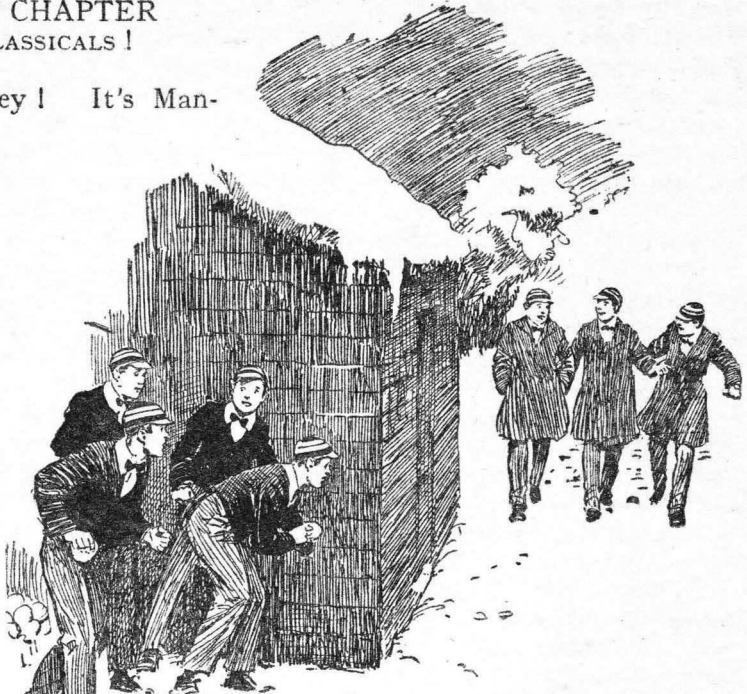
“Sorry, sir!” blurted out Cook, as Mr. Manders stood dizzily on his feet again. “We—we didn’t see you, of course!”

“Shure, an’ we’d be the last to throw snowballs at ye whin ye were lookin’, sir, however much we felt loike doin’ it!”

“Silence!” barked Mr. Manders. “Words will only add to your offence!”

He glowered at them for a few seconds, then went on:

“Dr. Chisholm asked me to excuse you certain items of preparation in consideration of your spending your spare time in rehearsing the so-called play which Silver is producing, and I agreed—on condition that your spare time really was utilised in that manner. I cannot say that I am surprised to find that you are not



In blissful ignorance of the reception awaiting them Dodd & Co. tramped through the snow towards the woodshed. From their hiding-place the Fistical Four heard their rivals’ approach and began gathering up ammunition. “Wait till they get past,” said Jimmy Silver. “Then all let fly together.”

keeping your end of the bargain!”

“Half a minute, sir!” broke in Jimmy Silver. “The fault isn’t Dodd’s and his pals. What really happened was this——”

“That is enough, Silver! I am quite prepared to believe that the behaviour of you and your friends was as ruffianly as that of the boys belonging to my House, and I shall report to Mr. Dalton accordingly—without entertaining too much hope as to his doing anything to remedy the matter,” said Mr. Manders, with a curl of his thin lips. “That, however, does not excuse the Modern boys for lending themselves to this display of hooliganism. Dodd, Doyle and Cook, I do not propose to cane you!”

"Oh, good!" murmured Tommy Dodd & Co., rather taken aback by that unexpected announcement.

"Instead," said Mr. Manders, "I propose to punish you by withdrawing the privileges the Headmaster induced me to grant you in connection with this forthcoming theatrical production."

"Oh, crikey!"

"But, sir——"

"From now till the end of the term," said Mr. Manders, smiling a little as though he was deriving some inward satisfaction from what he was about to say, "you will do prep. in full. Furthermore, you will write me a thousand lines each, to be delivered up on the last day of the term!"

"M-m-my hat!"

"That is all!" smiled Mr. Manders, turning on his heel.

Tommy Dodd gave a gasp.

"But—but that won't leave us any time for rehearsals, sir!"

"Discipline, my dear Dodd, is more important than the rehearsal of a childish play!" retorted Mr. Manders, smiling acidly as he turned his footsteps towards the Classical House—doubtless with the intention of reporting his experience to Mr. Dalton. "The only advice I can give you is to give up the idea of acting in this absurd production."

With that Mr. Manders departed; and the juniors, both Classics and Moderns, were left to look at each other in dismay.

"Well, of all the mean old blighters that——" said Lovell disgustedly.

"He's got one in on us this time, and no mistake!" said Tommy Dodd ruefully. "This is all your fault, Jimmy Silver."

"Hear, hear!"

Jimmy Silver, for once in his young life, looked quite abashed.

"Well, it's partly your fault for having an old killjoy like Manders to run your House," he said. "Still, there's something in what you say. I ought to have reserved snowballing for another time and place, instead of presenting Manders with a chance of busting up the show like this."

"Fat lot of good admitting it now the harm's done!" snorted Tommy Cook. "What about 'Burglar Bill's Christmas' now?"

"And phwat about us, with a thousand loines each to do before the end of the term?" demanded Tommy Doyle indignantly.

Jimmy Silver shook his head sadly.

"Blessed if I know!" he confessed; then he added, with a faint grin: "But don't worry, kids! Classical brains will get you out of it somehow, though I don't quite see how for the moment! You leave it to your Uncle James!"

"You—you footling fathead!"

"Pax!" grinned the leader of the Classics, as the Three Tommies, fairly exuding indignation at having insult added to injury, adopted aggressive attitudes. "I'm not being funny; I mean it. We've let you down this time, and it's up to us to get you out of the jam. I'll think out a wheeze somehow, if I have to stay awake all night to do it!"

"Thanks, awfully! In the meantime," said Tommy Dodd, with crushing sarcasm, "we'll get back to our study and make a start on those lines—just in case the wheeze doesn't work! Come on, chaps!"

And the Moderns, without making any attempt to disguise their ruffled feelings, marched towards their own House.

"And that's that!" remarked Raby, when they had gone. "How do we go for the rehearsal now?"

"Nothing doing," Jimmy Silver said promptly. "I'm not taking on others to fill their places, so the show's off—unless we can melt old Manders' heart in some way and get him to cancel that sentence!"

"My hat! And what are the odds about melting Manders' heart?" inquired Lovell curiously.

"About a thousand to one against, going by looks!" grinned Newcombe.

Jimmy Silver frowned thoughtfully as he led the way back.

"That's obvious, of course," he admitted. "Still, faith works wonders, and I've got heaps of faith in my mental powers. Give your Uncle James time to think!"

And the Co. accordingly gave him time—though, judging by their expressions, they didn't share his unbounded faith in his mental powers on this occasion.

Mr. Manders came out of the House as they arrived at the steps, and gave them a sniff and a glare.

"I have reported your conduct to Mr. Dalton. You will report to him at once," he snapped.

"Thank you, sir!" said Jimmy Silver demurely, and he and his followers retreated rather hurriedly into the House, leaving the House-master of the Modern House glaring more fiercely than ever.

As the Fistical Four had anticipated, Dicky Dalton did not regard the matter with anything like the seriousness of his Modern colleague.

"You should be more careful as to who is about when you play these pranks, boys," he said. "However, I assume that Mr. Manders' mishap was quite accidental so far as you are concerned?"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Good. Then I'll let you off with fifty lines apiece."

And Dicky Dalton, with a twinkle in his eye, dismissed them from his cheerful presence.

"Eureka!"

That was what Jimmy Silver said, outside in the passage. There was a note of suppressed triumph in his voice that made Lovell and Newcombe and Raby look at him quickly.

"Something biting you, old chap?" Lovell asked solicitously.

"I've got it!" the leader of the Fistical Four ejaculated. "The very idea! The wheeze of the term! The one and only way of melting old Manders!"

Lovell and Newcombe and Raby smiled somewhat sceptical smiles.

"If you'll give us a brief outline," suggested Lovell.

"It's nothing much," Jimmy Silver said modestly, as they walked towards the hall. "Just an idea for making Manders so grateful to Tommy Dodd & Co. that common decency will simply compel him to let them all off!"

"Great Pip! Is that all?"

"In order to bring about that result," said Jimmy Silver, "we shall have to co-operate in a little subterfuge. The idea is, you see, for all of us to rig ourselves up in the crook costumes we wear in my play——"

"What?"

"And then to pretend to hold up Manders——"

"Eh?"

"Just before Tommy Dodd & Co. arrive on the scene," grinned Jimmy Silver. "Tommy Dodd & Co. will then proceed to do their stuff. They'll put us to flight and dutifully rescue their Housemaster——"

"Ye gods!"

"And Manders will never suspect

that it's anything other than an act of heroism and devotion on their part. Result: he'll cancel that thousand lines, and let them carry on with rehearsals again. See?"

Lovell and Newcombe and Raby drew a deep breath.

"My hat! Rather fantastic, isn't it?" Newcombe asked.

"Rather risky, too," said Raby, a little uneasily. "If Manders ever found out——"

"He never would," declared Jimmy Silver confidently. "I'm pretty useful at disguising my voice, and I can do all the talking that's necessary. Of course, we wouldn't hurt him!"

"Great Pip! I should say not!"

"Wouldn't lay a hand on him, in fact," said the leader of the Fistical Four. "That wouldn't be necessary; one look at us in our disguises would be enough for Manders! It can't go wrong, I tell you. We can arrange the hold-up in the loneliest part of that footpath to Coombe where Manders takes his constitutional every day. Nobody's ever about there at this time of the year."

"Yes, but——"

"But nothing!" said Jimmy Silver cheerfully. "Let's go and see what Tommy Dodd & Co. think about it."

And the Co. duly accompanied their leader to hear the verdict of the Three Tommies. And by the time they arrived at the Modern House, Jimmy Silver had completely converted them.

The Moderns were dubious at first—very dubious indeed. Gradually, however, as their various objections were answered, their resistance to Jimmy Silver's unique "wheeze" weakened until Tommy Dodd, so to speak, hauled up the flag of surrender.

"All right, then," he said resignedly. "It's the craziest idea ever

—but it may work. We'll take a chance and play our part, anyway!"

And, thus agreed, the friendly rivals of Rookwood got down to the discussion of details.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

"MERRY CHRISTMAS, MR. MANDERS!"

"ARTERNOON, old covey!"

A Mr. Manders jumped.

It was the day after the snow-balling episode. Classes were over for the day, and in the fading light of the brief winter afternoon, Mr. Manders had gone out for his usual constitutional walk. It was a quiet walk at this season, and no sound but the crunching of his own feet in the snow had fallen on his ears since he left Rookwood.

The gruff tones of the stranger, coming from the direction of the hedge, were like a bolt from the blue to Mr. Manders. He jumped—then jumped for a second time when he looked towards the hedge from which the sound of the voice had come.

Four roughly-dressed individuals were advancing towards him in the most threatening manner imaginable. Each of the four carried a most formidable-looking cudgel which gave him an extremely sinister appearance; and to add to the sinister aspect of things, each of the four wore a mask.

"Arternoon!" repeated the leader of the desperate band, in his gruff, unpleasant voice.

Mr. Manders felt his knees wobble.

"W-w-what do you want?" he managed to gasp, in tones made husky with fear.

The leader of the masked quartette laughed—an unpleasant laugh that sent a cold feeling up Mr. Manders' spine.

"Jest you 'and over all your oof, old covey, that's all!" he said.

"You part up an' we won't 'urt you, see? Otherwise——"

He whirled his cudgel at what looked to be dangerously near Mr. Manders' head.

Mr. Manders jumped again—then gasped again—then, in a sudden paroxysm of fear, let out a shout.

"Help! Police! Rescue!" he yelled hoarsely.

Although he yelled, Mr. Manders entertained only the slenderest hope that his yells would be answered, for he was a considerable distance from any habitation, and it was not the time of day for wayfarers to be in the neighbourhood. It was with surprise as well as joy, therefore,

that he heard an answering shout from the other side of the hedge.

"Coming, sir!"

"This way, you chaps!"

"Rescue, Rookwood!"

"Go for 'em!"

An instant later Dodd and Cook and Doyle burst through a gap in the hedge and came running at top speed down the snow-covered footpath towards the scene of the hold-up.

Never during his entire career at Rookwood had Mr. Manders felt so glad to see three juniors as he felt to see the Three Tommies now. He almost wept with delight.

"These ruffians, my boys—these dreadful footpads——" he gasped.



"Jest you 'and over all your oof, old covey," said the leader of the roughly-dressed, masked quartette, whirling his cudgel dangerously near Mr. Manders' head. "You part up an' we won't 'urt you, see?" "Help!" yelled the master hoarsely. "Police! Rescue!"

" We'll soon settle 'em, sir ! " cried Tommy Dodd. " Pile in, you men ! "

" What-ho ! "

The Three Tommies piled in with a right good will.

The four footpads seemed to hesitate. The odds were certainly in their favour, but they appeared disinclined to make a fight of it. That circumstance might have struck Mr. Manders as a little peculiar at any other time, but on this occasion he was so relieved at the prospect of rescue that the peculiarity of the affair did not occur to him at all. He fairly chortled as he saw the Three Tommies wade in, hitting out right and left among the masked bandits.

" Detain the rascals if you can, my boys ! " he cried. " If we can only get them along to the constable at Coombe, it will be excellent ! "

It was a rather tall order, particularly as Mr. Manders contributed nothing towards it himself ; and the Housemaster of the Modern House had no reasonable cause for complaint when Tommy Dodd & Co. failed to comply with it.

The masked quartette broke away suddenly and ran ; and despite his order, Mr. Manders was not sorry to see the back of them, and, in fact, hurriedly called the Three Tommies back when they started chasing them.

" Good job we happened to turn up just then, sir ! " panted Tommy Dodd, as he and his chums returned to their Housemaster. " Did they hurt you, sir ? "

In Mr. Manders' eyes, as he replied, was a gleam—a kindly gleam such as the juniors never remembered seeing there before.

" No, Dodd, thank you," he answered. " Thanks to the fortunate appearance of you and your friends at the right moment, I have sustained

nothing worse than a slight shock to the nervous system."

Mr. Manders paused for a few seconds, as though pondering on what to say next, then went on :

" My boys, I need hardly say that I am very grateful—very grateful indeed—for the assistance you have given me. All three of you acted with great heroism."

Tommy Dodd coughed.

" H'm ! It was nothing, sir ! "

" That statement, Dodd, shows that you possess the modesty of a true hero ! " said Mr. Manders. " Your behaviour was magnificent. I am proud of you three boys to-day ! "

" Oh, my hat ! "

" What did you say, Cook ? "

" I said we're awfully glad, sir—meaning awfully glad to have saved you," explained Cook, displaying unusual presence of mind. " It's nice to know we're in your good books again, sir, after what happened yesterday."

Mr. Manders started.

" Bless my soul ! With this engaging my mind, I had almost forgotten it ! Let me see—I ordered you to do preparation again, and to write me a thousand lines each, did I not ? "

" Ye-es, sir ! "

Mr. Manders almost beamed.

" My boys, after what has happened, I cannot think of allowing that punishment to stand. You may regard it as rescinded."

" Oh, thank you, sir ! " gasped the Three Tommies.

" After all, the throwing of those snowballs was but a foolish prank," said Mr. Manders, displaying an indulgence never known in him before. " Kindly forget all that in the heat of the moment I may have said yesterday afternoon. The punishment I ordered is cancelled—do not forget that, my boys ! "

"We won't, sir!" grinned Tommy Dodd & Co.

"And now let us return to the school," said Mr. Manders briskly. "It is not advisable to remain out with ruffians like those abroad. I will ring up the constable at Coombe and acquaint him with what has happened as soon as we get back. Come, my boys!"

And they went. And it might have been expected that, with the successful melting of Mr. Manders' heart, the affair was over.

But it wasn't quite over.

Two quite unforeseen factors prevented that.

The first was the unlooked-for reaction of Tommy Dodd & Co. to Mr. Manders' new mood of graciousness. Though, from some points of view, Mr. Manders owed them quite a lot in the way of graciousness, the Three Tommies began to experience a peculiarly uncomfortable sensation whenever Mr. Manders smiled at them. The unqualified success of Jimmy Silver's great wheeze for getting their punishment cancelled brought in its train an odd reluctance on their part to participate in the benefits they had earned through it. They had an uneasy feeling that they were sailing under false colours. Pangs of conscience began to smite the Three Tommies. They had to admit that they preferred Mr. Manders scowling at them as of yore to Mr. Manders smiling at them on account of the spectacular deed the ingenious Jimmy Silver had arranged.

The second factor preventing the affair from being at an end was the suddenly-realised likelihood that Mr. Manders would discover the little plot after all. Why nobody had foreseen that he was bound to link up the four burglarious characters in Jimmy

Silver's play with his four assailants on the footpath was a mystery. But nobody had. It was only when the dress rehearsal took place that Tommy Doyle, in a flash of inspiration, saw the danger and told the rest. By that time, it was too late to do anything. The play took up more than a quarter of the whole programme for the Breaking-up concert, and to withdraw it at the eleventh hour was out of the question.

"There's only one thing for it," said Tommy Dodd, after the dismayed juniors had talked it over for some time without arriving at any solution. "Manders mustn't see it. He'll have to be kept out!"

"How?" asked Raby pointedly. "By keeping him locked up somewhere while the show's on?"

"Can't be did," said Jimmy Silver, with a shake of his head. "Bad enough to hold him up; to lock him up as well would just about crown it."

"Oh, rather!"

"No. The only thing to do is to give him some counter-attraction to keep him away of his own accord," said Tommy Dodd. "If we could find some intriguing wireless lecture that would keep him listening-in in the Masters' Common-room while the Breaking-up concert was on——"

"My hat! That's an idea!" grinned Jimmy Silver. "Let's hunt up the radio programmes."

They did so—with excellent results. By sheer chance a lecture on "A New Approach to Greek Art" was to be delivered from a German station at the same time as "Burglar Bill's Christmas" was to be performed in Hall. And Mr. Manders, as Jimmy Silver expressed it, was a "dab" at German and "nuts" on Greek Art. It seemed only necessary to call Mr. Manders' attention to the lecture, and

his absence from the concert was assured.

Tommy Dodd called his attention to it. He performed the task with a diplomacy of which he had hardly suspected himself capable. And Mr. Manders fell.

So "Burglar Bill's Christmas" started without the presence of Mr. Manders among the audience. And the juniors, as they stood in the wings, felt very much relieved—though, as the Three Tommies still had to confess, they would have felt more relieved still had the new and embarrassing relationship between themselves and their Housemaster never existed.

The play was a great success. Act One finished to tremendous applause, and the youthful actors could feel that the audience was even more enthusiastic about the second and final act.

And then, as they were reaching the end, they saw hovering in the wings the grim spectre of Mr. Manders. And the juniors' hearts sank.

"Burglar Bill's Christmas" finished to the cheers of a thoroughly satisfied audience, and the curtain fell for the last time. Then the juniors walked reluctantly off the stage to face the music.

There was no need to ask whether Mr. Manders knew. The grim frown on his face was sufficient to tell them.

"Well?" barked Mr. Manders.

The juniors almost ducked.

"We—we——" said Lovell.

"You—you see, sir——" stuttered Raby.

"The—the fact is——" gasped Newcombe.

Then Tommy Dodd stepped to the fore.

"I'm glad you've found out, sir," he said. "We've felt rotten about it

ever since you turned so decent to us over it."

"Well?" barked Mr. Manders again.

"We only did it because we wanted badly to get our rehearsals in—and because it seemed rather a lark, too," said Tommy Dodd frankly. "We didn't realise then how we'd feel over being looked on as heroes for nothing."

"It is something to hear you say that, at all events," snorted Mr. Manders. "But if you expect it to influence me in your favour, you are sadly mistaken. I shall report you Classical House boys to Mr. Dalton at once. As to you, Dodd and Doyle and Cook, you are detained for the rest of the term and——"

"But there isn't any rest of the term, sir," said Jimmy Silver softly. "We're breaking up for Christmas to-morrow, you know."

Mr. Manders clicked his teeth in rage. Temporarily, in his excitement, he had forgotten that rather important fact.

"Very well, then," he said harshly. "That being the case, I will——"

"We didn't mean any harm, sir," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "And Dodd and the rest have really been fed up over getting into your good books under false pretences. And—and, after all——"

"Well?"

"If you hadn't been particularly hard on them over that snowballing accident, sir, it wouldn't have cropped up at all, would it?"

Mr. Manders paused and eyed them. Strangely enough, the hostile glare in his eyes seemed to be fading a little.

From the other side of the curtain, the full-throated strains of "Good King Wenceslas" were coming, as the audience filled in the interval with a little community singing.

Perhaps it was that. Perhaps even the tight-lipped Mr. Manders felt deep down within him that spirit of peace and goodwill which he seemed to keep so well bottled up during most of the year.

Whatever it was, Mr. Manders suddenly stopped glaring altogether, and the faint ghost of a smile struggled to his lips.

"It was a senseless prank," he said, and his tone was astonishingly mild. "But—but—well, Dodd, perhaps I was a little hard on you over those snowballs."

"We are not excusing ourselves on that ground, sir!" gasped the flabbergasted Tommy Dodd.

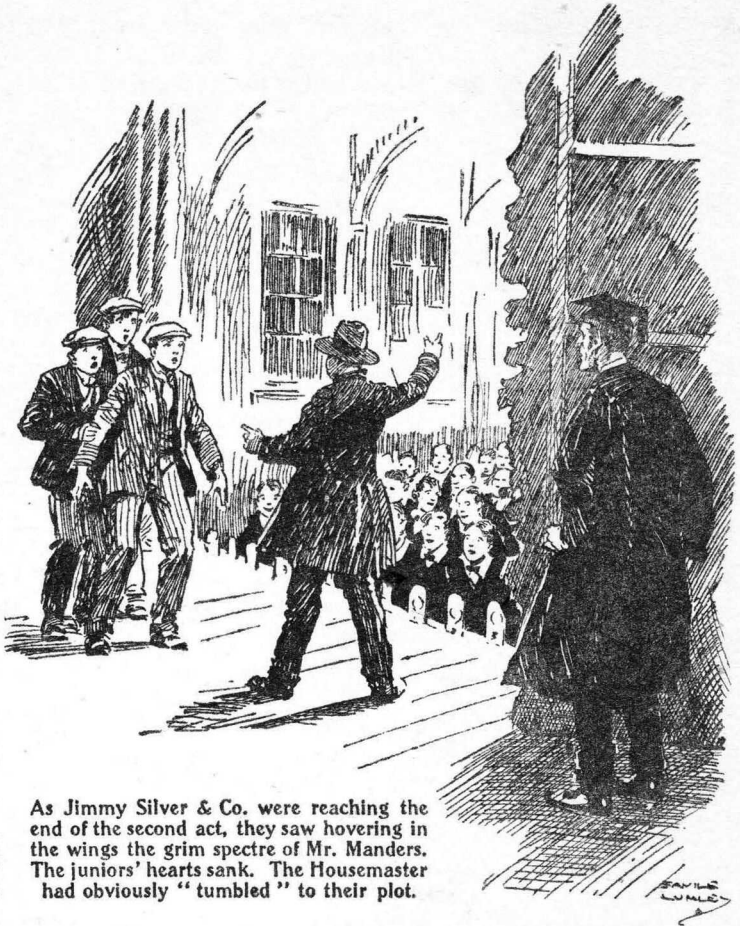
"I should hope not! Nevertheless, I was probably a little hard, and perhaps it does provide an extenuating circumstance. On second thoughts, I will say no more about it."

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Jimmy Silver. The rest managed to blurt out: "Oh, thank you, sir!"

"Please don't infer that I am ever likely to excuse such a thing in the future," said Mr. Manders hurriedly. "But on this occasion I will let the matter drop. I—I hope you all enjoy your holiday!"

"Three cheers for Mr. Manders!" yelled Jimmy Silver.

"None of that nonsense, please, Silver!" rapped Mr. Manders, although



As Jimmy Silver & Co. were reaching the end of the second act, they saw hovering in the wings the grim spectre of Mr. Manders. The juniors' hearts sank. The Housemaster had obviously "tumbled" to their plot.

he could not restrain the gleam of pleasure that showed for a moment in his eyes.

But Jimmy Silver refused to be put off so easily, and shouted again, at the top of his voice.

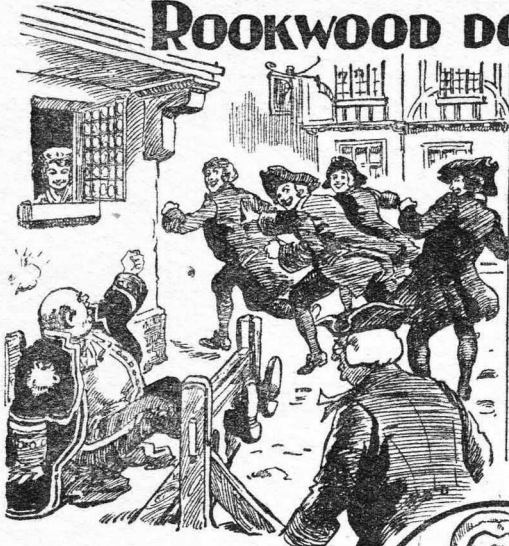
"Three cheers for Mr. Manders!"

They were given with a will—and as the flustered Mr. Manders withdrew he was followed, for the first time on record, by a truly hearty chorus of:

"Merry Christmas, Mr. Manders!"

Which was the most unexpected finish to the process of melting Mr. Manders that either Classics or Moderns could possibly have imagined.

ROOKWOOD DOWN THE AGES!



THE GREAT BARRING - OUT AT ROOKWOOD

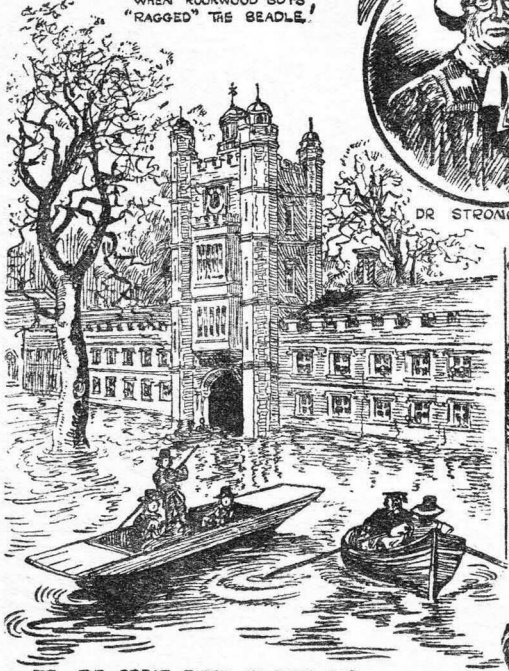
WHEN ROOKWOOD BOYS "RAGGED" THE BEADLE!



DR STRONG 1727-53



WHEN ROOKWOOD DEFIED ALL COMERS.



THE GREAT FLOOD AT ROOKWOOD



ROOKWOOD BOYS COME TO THE RESCUE.

An interesting page of pictures specially drawn by the Holiday Annual artist after he had delved into a bulky volume giving the early history of this famous school.

ST. JIM'S POINTS OF VIEW

Prominent St. Jim's Juniors make some very pointed remarks on other fellows and topics in general. It's all a matter of opinion.

FAGS—By Jack Blake

FAGS are a tribe of extremely backward savages inhabiting certain regions reserved for them in both Houses at St. Jim's.

Where these barbarians come from and what they are is a mystery. Judging by the colour of their skins, most of them are of negro origin. According to one legend I heard, their ancestors used to live in trees in Rylcombe Woods. But these are mere guesses, unworthy of the attention of serious students.

Whatever the truth, the Fags are a race apart, living in their own peculiar way and carrying out their strange, primitive customs, just as though they had never come into contact with civilised human beings.

In appearance they are small and agile, like the pygmies of Central Africa. Left to themselves, they are noisy and quarrelsome. When brought into touch with civilised Fourth Formers or Shellites, they usually quieten down, but, to make up for that, indulge in weird rites such as poking out their tongues, extending their fingers from the nose and pulling fearful faces.

Probably with the idea of terrifying their enemies, they daub themselves liberally with red and blue and black

ink, and the effect of this war paint on their mud coloured skins is truly frightening to strangers who inadvertently enter their territory.

Their principal weapon of offence is a tube, through which they blow peas with terrific force at unsuspecting travellers through their domain.

Their diet consists principally of herrings crudely toasted on improvised toasting forks in the shape of pen-holders.

They speak an obscure dialect unrelated to any known language.

With careful handling they become quite tame and in time learn to eat out of your hand.

And now, gentlemen, chaps and fellows, you know all there is to be known about Fags!

But they must be seen to be believed.



The effect of inky and dirty fags, armed with their principal weapon of offence, is truly frightening to strangers.

OLD FOGEYS—By Wally D'arcy

OLD FOGEYS are the weird old buffers belonging to the Fourth and Shell.

Some of my pals in the Third get frightfully annoyed with them. But Old Fogeys only amuse me.

How they fancy their luck! They strut across the quad. In twos and threes, with their noses up in the air just as though they owned the giddy earth! Curly Gibson once said they

reminded him of Prussian Guardsmen he once saw on the pictures doing the goose step in slow motion. My own idea about it is that they look like a collection of lop-eared turkey-cocks chucking their weight about a farmyard!

The fact is dear readers, they put on far too much side. It's not only the way they walk—it's the way they talk, too. To hear the old dodderers bleating "By Jove!" and "My hat!" you'd imagine they were all headmasters at least! But it doesn't irritate me. It just makes me laugh!

In the Third, we're plain, natural men, without any old buck. But the Old Fogeys are full of old buck and you have a rare job to find anything natural about them! When we dislike each other in the Third, we punch each other on the nose. When they dislike each other, they glare and make acid remarks. It's a scream to watch the old idiots bursting with conceit while they're doing it!

Of course, they have their uses. My major, fathead as he is, certainly does help me with my prep., and those old buffers, Merry and Blake, are always willing to give a chap a few hints on footer. But when all's said and done, there's one word and one word only that sums up the Old Fogeys of the Fourth and Shell.

That word is SWANK!

SKIMPOLE ON SOCCER

WHEN my pedal extremities first established contact with the

terrestrial adjuncts of this scholastic edifice, a juvenile known for his sporting proclivities asked me whether I went in for Soccer.

Having previously been under the impression that St. Jim's was a seat of learning, I erroneously concluded that Soccer was an obscure Oriental dialect. I therefore answered: "No, my good youth. My linguistic studies are at present confined to Latin and French and German, and I frankly confess that Soccer is unknown to me even by repute."



How the Old Fogeys fancy their luck! They strut across the quad, with their noses up in the air, as though they owned the giddy universe.

For reasons which I found difficult to comprehend at the time, the juvenile promptly betrayed signs of risibility. Afterwards I found a certain amount of justification for his mirth. Soccer, it appeared, was not an Oriental dialect, but a recreative pastime associated with the propulsion of a spherical object known as a football across a measured portion of the earth's surface known as a football pitch.

I endeavoured to interest myself in this strange ritual, and have been endeavouring ever since. So far, I must admit, I have encountered a striking lack of success!

How is it possible to experience excitement over the vicissitudes of a leathern sphere subjected to the pedal and cranial impulses of 22 juveniles ludicrously attired in woollen jerseys and abbreviated nether habiliments is to me a profound mystery.

Over Darwinism, Determinism, and a number of other "isms" propounded

by my mentor, Professor Balmycrumpet, I admit to becoming occasionally enthusiastic. But over Soccer—no, my good youths, that can never be!

WHO'S COCK HOUSE NOW?

By Clifton Dane

ALTHOUGH our official opinion is that all New House men are born idiots, we've always been willing to admit that they have their redeeming features. One of the redeeming features is Figgins' proven merit as a long-distance runner. We cheerfully grant that when it comes to a cross-country run, old Figgy is a regular human antelope. We can confidently assure you, old sons, that he takes a rare lot of whacking!

For that reason, School House long-distance men went into pretty strict training for last Saturday's 8-mile marathon. New House don't often get the chance of a chortle over us these days, and we wanted to avoid giving them one, if possible.

Figgins was made sole scratch man in the handicap drawn up by Kildare, but rather than put up with the indignity of a start, Tom Merry decided to ignore the handicap and begin dead level with the New House leader.

Twenty men lined up for the start—twelve School House and eight New House. The course was over rough country to Wayland Moor, across the railway between Rylcombe and Wayland and through the quarries, then back by footpath and road via

Rylcombe—a gruelling run, sufficient to test the stamina of the toughest!

After the first mile, Merry forged ahead of Figgins, and began rapidly overhauling the others. At the level crossing beyond Wayland Moor, the School House chief was leading the pack, with Figgins well back among the smaller fry. Figgy knows how to bide his time in a marathon!

About a quarter of a mile north of Rylcombe, Figgins settled down to win the race, and spectators who finished the course with the runners on their bikes report that he streaked ahead for a minute or so as though nothing could stop him. At Rylcombe he had left the rest behind and was fast overtaking Merry, who was by this time showing obvious signs of wear and tear. Mellish offered ten to one on Figgy at this stage and found no takers, so you can judge it looked pretty good for the New House!

But Merry plodded on desperately,

and Figgins began to realise that it wasn't going to be a walk-over for him, after all. With St. Jim's in sight, he made a great spurt and drew level—and then, for the last two hundred yards the two rivals ran neck and neck.

Amid cheering such as is rarely

heard at the finish of a marathon, Merry and Figgins breasted the tape together. The great race had ended in a dead heat for first place!

So for once in a way, the question "Who's cock House now?" can't be answered by either side with any kind of certitude.



Amid cheering such as is rarely heard at the finish of a marathon, Merry and Figgins breasted the tape together.

GUNNER ON GUARD

By **ARTHUR NEWCOME**

(of the Fistical Four of Rookwood)

SAID Peter Cuthbert Gunner when
A merry crowd of Fourth Form men
Were going swimming in the pool
Where water is so calm and cool ;

“ Look out, the river’s rather deep,
So mind you silly asses keep
Within your depth, or else you’ll shout
For help when nobody’s about !

I’ll tell you what—I’ll come and stand
In bathing costume near at hand,
And when you cry for help, I’ll dive
And bring you to the shore alive !

A life-guard—that’s the right idea !
You’re safe enough when I am near ;
I’ll stand on duty at the brink
To rescue you before you sink !”

“ You silly fathead !” Lovell said,
“ You dive just like a lump of lead,
And swim the river like a stone—
You’d better leave the job alone !”

And Raby added, “ If we yelled
For help, and found ourselves compelled
To wait till help from you arrives,
We’d go on drowning all our lives !”

But Gunner let us laugh and scoff,
Determined not to be put off ;
So in we went, and said no more,
But left him standing on the shore.

The life-guard strutted, full of swank,
Upon the margin of the bank ;
Then trod upon an empty tin
And missed his footing, and fell in !

A fearful howl of wild despair
Rang sharply through the summer air ;
“ Help! Rescue !” came in tones of fear.
Said Silver : “ Gunner’s chance is here !”

Alas ! The voice was of our guard,
Whose plight was desperate and hard,
But Silver grasped him as he sank,
And towed him to the river bank.

He staggered up and left the pool,
And trailed back wearily to school ;
And there he vowed that nevermore
He’d be a life-guard on the shore !





BILLY BUNTER'S MASTERSTROKE!

THE FIRST CHAPTER

RIVER PIRATES!

"A DINGHY from the boat-house——"

"Good!"

"A dip when we get up river——"

"Hear, hear!"

"Then a picnic on Popper's Island to wind up the afternoon," said Harry Wharton of the Greyfriars Remove. "How does that fit in?"

"Fine!"

"Just the right weather for it!"

"I say, you fellows——"

A fat face adorned by a large pair of spectacles showed itself round the door of Study No. 1, where the Famous Five had assembled, and a groan went up from the chums of the Remove.

By FRANK RICHARDS

When Billy Bunter, the fat and fatuous tuck-raider of Greyfriars, was guest of honour at a feed!

"I knew it couldn't happen!" remarked Bob Cherry. "For a moment, I thought we'd used the word 'picnic' without Bunter hearing; but I knew it was impossible, really!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts!" sniffed Bunter; then, in an altered tone, he went on: "Look here, if you chaps want someone to see you through over this picnic, then I'm your man!"

"Thanks; but we don't!"

"If you want someone to carry the tuck hamper or help with the rowing, or do the cooking when you get to Popper's Island——"

"Not a chance, old fat bean!"

"Ready, everybody?" asked Wharton.

"Ready, aye, ready!"

"Give me a hand with this hamper, then, Franky. Stand clear, Bunter!"

"Certainly, old chap!" said Bunter, obligingly. "Then it's settled that I'm coming?"

"You can come if you can keep up with us, old Barrel," said Bob Cherry, closing one eye at the rest of the Co. "We're rather in a hurry, though."

Bunter grinned.

"If it's a question of putting a jerk into it, I fancy I can give you fellows one or two pointers. I can hurry all right!"

"Good! This way, old bean! Take his other arm, Johnny!"

"Pleasure!" grinned Johnny Bull. "Kim on, Fatty!"

"I'll show you men how to walk!" smiled Bunter. "When it comes to walking, I pride myself on—whooop! Wharrer you doing?"

It seemed to Bunter that an earthquake, a cyclone and a hurricane all rolled into one had suddenly struck him. All the pride he might previously have felt in his powers of walking vanished in one fell swoop as Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull rushed him out of Study No. 1. He yelled as they rushed through the doorway, puffed as they rushed him down the stairs and panted painfully as they rushed him out into the quad. By the time they had reached the gates, it seemed to Bunter that the last gasp of air had been bumped out of his fat carcase.

He collapsed on the grass patch outside Gosling's lodge, moaning feebly. Bob Cherry looked down on his prostrate body apparently in great surprise.

"Hurry up, Bunty, old bean. We haven't started yet, you know!"

"Beast!" moaned Bunter.

"Thought you said you were a walker," Bob remarked. "Why, you've dropped out just as we were getting into our strides!"

"Here are Wharton and Nugent," grinned Johnny Bull. "Coming, Bunter?"

"Ow! Beast!"

"That's his way of saying 'no thanks'!" chuckled Harry Wharton.

"This way, kids!"

"Good-bye, Bunter!"

"Race you down to the boathouse, Fatty!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But Bunter made no response. For once in his loquacious life, Bunter found it literally beyond him to utter a syllable!

And the Famous Five went their way rejoicing.

"And that's that!" said Frank Nugent, as they walked down the leafy lane leading to the school boathouse. "With Bunter out of it, the day ought to be a great success. Just right for a swim, anyway!"

"The rightfulness is terrific," smiled Hurree Singh, in his own peculiar brand of English. "The heat joyfully reminds me of a mid-winter's day in my native Bhanipur!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They came in sight of the boathouse, and Bob Cherry pointed through the trees to a small motor-launch that was speeding along through the glistening waters of the Sark.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Pon's doing the grand!" he remarked.

"Rowing's too much like work for his nibs," growled Johnny Bull, with a look of disfavour at the elegant Ponsonby and his followers from Highcliffe who occupied the motor-launch. "I suppose the rotters are going up-river for one of their little gambling afternoons."



By the time Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull had rushed Bunter down to the gates, it seemed to the Owl that the last gasp of air had been bumped out of his fat carcass. He collapsed on the grass, gasping feebly. "Hurry up, Bunt, old bean!" said Bob Cherry. "We haven't started yet."

"In that boat they'll travel a lot farther than us, so we're not likely to run into them," said Wharton thankfully. "Here's the dinghy, chaps!"

The Famous Five climbed down into the roomy dinghy they had reserved for the afternoon, feeling rather relieved at the thought that the unsavoury presence of Pon and his friends was not likely to mar their excursion.

As things turned out, however, Wharton's prognostication proved to be far from correct. Though the Famous Five reached Pepper's Island without a further sight of the Highcliffe juniors, they were destined to see quite a lot of them before the

afternoon was over—much more than they wanted to see, in fact.

Reaching the Island, they moored their boat to the bank, deposited their picnic hamper in a place of safety under the trees, then changed into bathing kit and had their promised swim.

It was a hot July day and the cool waters of the Sark proved more than usually attractive. The result was that the Famous Five stayed in much longer than was usually the case and swam a considerable distance from the Island.

It was when they were returning that Bob Cherry, well ahead of the rest, gave a sudden shout.

"Highcliffe cads! Hurry up!"

"What the dickens——"

"They're on the Island, raiding our tuck!" panted Bob Cherry, as he struck out again. "Must have landed on the other side! Hurry!"

"Oh, my hat!"

The chums of the Remove needed no second bidding. Five lithe bodies fairly streaked towards the Island.

Meanwhile, on the rising ground over the spot where the Famous Five had moored their dinghy, Ponsonby, Vavasour, Gadsby and Monson of Highcliffe watched the efforts of the swimmers with mocking smiles on their faces.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

TURNING THE TABLES!

"WELCOME!"

The greeting was Ponsonby's. The leader of the Highcliffe black-sheep seemed to be pleased with himself. He was standing at the water's edge waiting for the swimmers to arrive. For unknown reasons, he carried in his right hand a coil of rope with a big loop at the end of it; and, strangely enough, the other members of his party were similarly equipped.

"Welcome!" called out Ponsonby again as the Famous Five drew nearer. "Always a pleasure to meet our young friends, isn't it, you men?"

"Oh, rather!"

"After all, they can't help their faces," drawled Vavasour. "And their bad manners are hardly their own fault, since they've been brought up in a casual ward like Greyfriars!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Highcliffians were evidently in fine fettle. The Famous Five couldn't help wondering why, for the prospect of a fight usually had the reverse of a stimulating effect on Pon & Co.

They soon learned.

As they entered shallow water and started scrambling to their feet, Ponsonby & Co. sprang into sudden activity. Four lengths of rope were raised and flung outwards, uncoiling in the air as they went, and four looped ends descended over the shoulders of Wharton, Nugent, Cherry and Bull respectively.

Wharton uttered a shout.

"Slip 'em before they pull, or——"

But the warning was already too late. Pon & Co., having successfully lassoed their old rivals, were tugging at their ends of the ropes with vicious force. The ropes tightened sharply around their victims, and in a matter of seconds Wharton and Cherry and Nugent and Bull were being dragged willy-nilly out of the water, their arms in each case pinned to their sides! Too late, the Famous Five realised that Pon & Co. must have been preparing this little surprise for some time. The skill with which they had wielded their ropes was a sure indication that they had had considerable practice in the art of lassoing prior to "springing" it on the Greyfriars picnickers.

Hurree Singh, the only member of the Co. to escape, came splashing out of the water, his eyes gleaming with the light of battle. But the Highcliffians were prepared to deal with the odd man of the party—in their own inimitable way. As the dusky nabob reached terra firma and made a rush at Ponsonby, Vavasour jumped forward suddenly and put his foot out, tripping him up. Hurree Singh pitched forward helplessly, and a second later Ponsonby and Gadsby were bending over him, knotting his hands and feet together with the ends of their rope.

The battle was not altogether over

yet, for the lassoed juniors still had the use of their legs, and once on land they struggled desperately to get loose. But the dice were loaded against them now, and, struggle as they might, they could not avert defeat. Soon they were lying on the grass, trussed up like chickens, with the victorious Highcliffians grinning down on them in great glee.

"Neat job, what?" remarked Pon, quite proudly. "Hope you're nice and comfy, Wharton?"

"You—you——"

"'Fraid we can't spare time to stay and dry you," said Pon, regretfully. "Still, if you all move together, you'll be able to shuffle along to that patch of sunshine. The water will simply steam off you then, I fancy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"An' now for the hamper!" grinned Pon. "Give me a hand, Vav., will you? Gad! It's heavy!"

Vav. gave his leader a hand with pleasure and the helpless Greyfriars juniors had the mortification of watching their picnic hamper carried off through the trees to the Highcliffians' motor launch.

The Famous Five looked at each other ruefully when their captors had gone.

"Well, this is a go!" remarked Bob Cherry. "Dunno how you chaps are placed, but I feel as if it'll take two or three hours at least to get out of this little lot!"

"Same here!"

"The samefulness is terrific!"

"If only we could spot a Greyfriars man," sighed Wharton; then he stopped, with a gasp.

As if in answer to his wish, a fat figure emerged from a clump of bushes near the juniors and the unmistakable snigger of William George

Bunter of the Greyfriars Remove sounded across the intervening distance.

"Bunter!" gasped Frank Nugent.

"He, he, he!"

"Bunter! Dear old, splendid old Bunter!" almost wept Bob Cherry. "I didn't think it was possible to enjoy the sight of Bunter, but this jolly well proves that it is!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hurry up, old fat man, and cut us loose before these Highcliffe bounders get away!" said Wharton.

Bunter rolled over, opening a pocket knife as he did so.

"He, he, he! I say, you fellows, you can always rely on me to get you out of a jam, you know! I followed you up on the towpath and punted across from the bank opposite and——"

"Hurry, you chump! And not so much noise, or Pon and the rest'll hear you!"

"Oh, crikey! I—I say, you fellows, did you hear something rustling back there? D—do you think it may be——"

"Hurry, you fat freak!" shouted Wharton, throwing caution to the winds as the rustling sound grew louder, indicating without a doubt that Pon & Co. had heard Bunter and were returning at the double. "If you don't slash this rope, I'll——"

"Collar him!" rang out a voice from the rear. An instant later, the Highcliffians burst into view and made a dash for the panicky Porpoise.

Bunter made a desperate effort to cut Wharton loose, but fear made his hand unsteady and he only succeeded in giving the Remove leader a jab in the wrist which drew a fiendish howl from him.

A moment later, Pon & Co. were upon him, and Bunter was being

pummelled and bumped and rolled over, as a preliminary to being tied up like the rest!

"There!" panted Ponsonby, having superintended these proceedings and seen that his followers had made a good job of it. "Just as well I happened to hear this prize porker's grunts in time! Rub his face in that mud pool, Vav., just to teach him not to run up against us again!"

"Pleasure, dear man!" smiled Vav.

"Look here, you beast——"

"Over this way, Fatty!"

The grinning Vav. seized Bunter by the scruff of the neck and made to turn him over with a view to carrying out Pon's order.

But before he could do so, an interruption came—an interruption of a totally unexpected kind.

"Vavasour—boy! What in the world are you doing?"

It was the voice of Dr. Voysey, the headmaster of Highcliffe!

"The Head!" gasped the startled Highcliffians.

Vavasour dropped Bunter as though he had suddenly become red-hot.

"I have been watching your movements for the last five minutes," came Dr. Voysey's voice, apparently from the river bank opposite Popper's Island. "I am amazed that Highcliffe boys should lend themselves to such acts of hooliganism as I have witnessed. Release those boys at once and return to the school immediately!"

"Interferin' old pig!" said Pon, between his set teeth.

"You hear me, Ponsonby?"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"At once, I say!"

"Better get a move on!" said Vavasour, anxiously. "The old hunk sounds ratty!"

There was nothing else for Pon & Co. to do. Dr. Voysey of Highcliffe was not exactly an awe-inspiring headmaster, and Pon & Co. took a good many liberties with him at times; but he had been known to "cut up rough" on occasions, and Pon & Co. were not prepared to encourage him to do so now. Reluctantly, they produced pocket-knives and set about releasing their grinning prisoners.

"Now return to Highcliffe and await me in my study!" rapped out the seemingly irate Dr. Voysey. "I intend to punish you very severely for this outrageous conduct!"

"Oh, gad!"

"Which only goes to prove that even Beaks have their uses at times," said Bob Cherry, sotto voce. "Cheer up, you chaps! You all need hardening, and a whacking all round ought to help quite a lot!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Pon & Co. tramped off to their launch with feelings that were too deep for words. If looks could have killed, the Greyfriars juniors would all have expired then and there. Fortunately, they survived the homicidal expressions of the Highcliffians without any difficulty!

Pon & Co's footsteps died away and the Famous Five, who were still wet from their dip in the Sark, looked around for their towels.

"So much for that!" commented Johnny Bull. "The only drawback I can see is that old Voysey came along before Vavasour had time to rub Bunter's face in the mud!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!" snorted Bunter. "If that's all the gratitude you've got for a chap, Bull, I'll take jolly good care not to go to all this trouble to rescue you another time!"

"Eh?"

"Rescue us?" grinned Bob Cherry. "Why, you fat duffer, you muffed it completely and got into exactly the same mess as the rest of us! If it hadn't been for the Head coming along just then——"

"He, he he!"

"What's the joke, Bunty?"

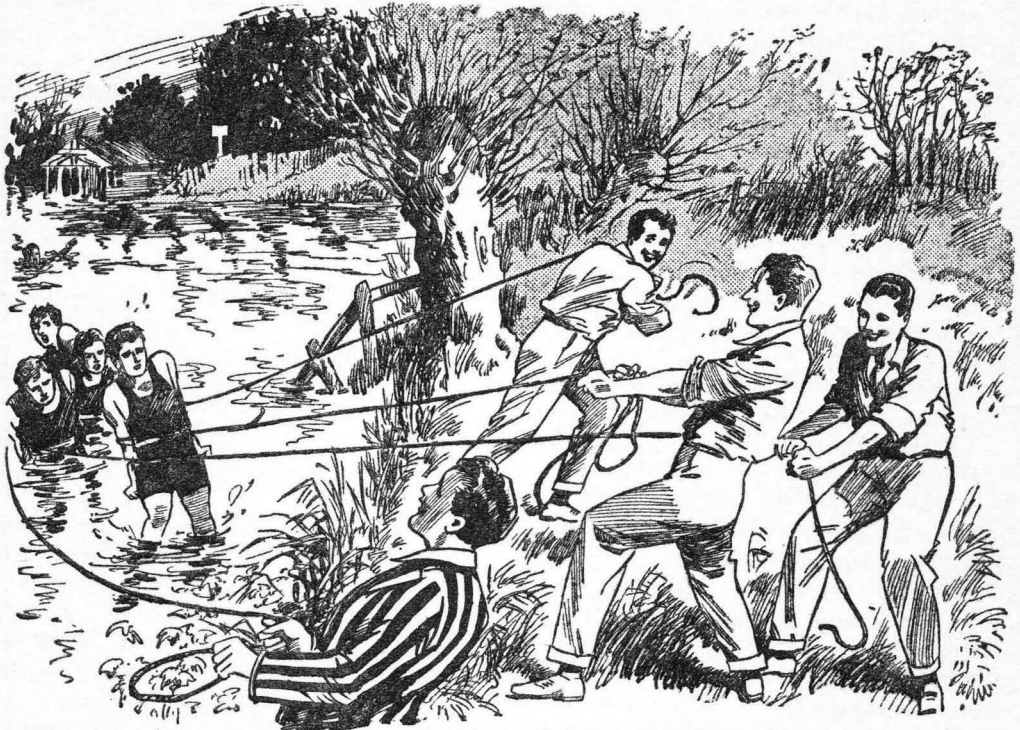
"He, he he! Nothing much—only that their Head didn't come along at all!"

"Great pip!"

"So that's it, is it?" shouted Johnny Bull. "But the fathead's calmly spoiling the joke by allowing those rotters to get away!"

"Oh, my hat! And that's not the only thing!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Come to think about it, they're making a getaway with our picnic hamper!"

"After them!" Wharton said.



Pon & Co., having successfully lassoed four of the Famous Five, tugged at the ropes with vicious force, and, willy-nilly, their prisoners were dragged out of the water. Too late the Greyfriars juniors realised that their rivals had been preparing this surprise for them!

"What the thump——"

"Oh, my sainted aunt!" gasped Wharton, suddenly. "Why didn't we think of it before? Of course it wasn't Dr. Voysey! It was Bunter!"

"Bunter?"

"My hat! Of course!" grinned Nugent. "Bunter doing a spot of ventriloquism!"

"If you fellows'll stop to listen——" began Bunter.

But the Famous Five had no time to stop to listen to Bunter. Without waiting to finish their towelling operations, they tore across Pepper's Island on the track of their late captors!

THE THIRD CHAPTER

THANKS TO BUNTER!

"Too late!"

Johnny Bull uttered the words disgustedly, as they reached the other side of the Island. They had arrived just in time to see Ponsonby's motor-launch moving away from the place where it had been moored. It was gathering speed as it went and the chums of the Remove could see at a glance that they could never hope to reach it by swimming after it.

"There she goes—with our tuck aboard!" groaned Nugent. "Looks like Pon's win, after all!"

"That silly fat cuckoo——"

"That footling fat ass——"

"Why in the name of goodness didn't he tell us in time for us to rag those rotters and get our hamper back?" demanded Bob Cherry. "Of course, he started well; he got us released."

"What's the good of starting well when the whole thing's ruined at the finish?" snorted Johnny Bull. "We could probably have got free ourselves in half an hour without Bunter's help. My idea is that he ought to be jolly well bumped!"

"Hear, hear!"

"The bumpfulness seems the esteemed and proper caper!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is, still grinning as though he's done something clever!" Bob remarked. "Completely satisfied, Bunty?"

"He, he, he! Yes, rather—here, what are you doing, you beasts?"

"Bumping you!" answered Johnny Bull, though strictly speaking the answer was by that time unnecessary. "Give him six, chaps! Here's one!"

"Whooooop! You fearful rotters——"

"This'll teach you to lose our tuck

hamper to Highcliffe rotters!" panted Johnny Bull. "Up with him again, chaps!"

"Yaroooh! Half a minute!" shrieked Bunter. "Lemme alone, you idiots! The tuck isn't lost at all!"

"What?"

The Famous Five paused, with their fat burden in mid-air.

"Lemme down, I tell you!" hooted Bunter. "D'you think for a moment I'd let those rotters get away with Greyfriars' tuck? D'you think I've gone potty?"

Bunter's captors lowered him slowly again.

"If this is a trick——" said Wharton darkly.

"Of course it's a trick!" snorted Johnny Bull. "If you look at the launch, you can still see our tuck hamper dumped near where Monson's sitting.

"He, he, he! I say, you are fat-heads, you know!" grinned Bunter. "The hamper's there all right, I know. But as it happens, there's no tuck inside it!"

"What!"

"You see, I happened to come along just when Ponsonby and his pals were taking up their positions," explained Bunter. "Seeing them, I guessed they were after the hamper, and, while they were busy waiting for you to put your silly heads in their lassoes, I opened the hamper and took everything out and hid it in the bushes, then filled it with stones and clods of earth so they wouldn't guess it had been emptied!"

The Famous Five gazed at Bunter almost incredulously.

"Then—then the tuck's still here?" asked Wharton.

"Every bit of it—safe and sound under those bushes where I was hiding!" grinned Bunter. "Look

for yourselves, if you don't believe me ! ”

There was a rush for the bushes.

And after that, a shout of satisfaction.

The tuck, with the exception of a few trifles to which Bunter had helped himself during his period of waiting, was intact.

“ Bunter, old fat bean, you're a jewel ! ” said Wharton, admiringly. “ Fair's fair, you chaps. It's not often he shines ; but this time he really is a jewel, isn't he ? ”

“ What-ho ! ”

“ Umpteen carat and stamped in every link or whatever it is ! ” grinned Bob Cherry. “ And now that we've time to think about it, Bunter was right, too, in letting Pon & Co. go scot free and in ignorance of the fact that the chap they imagined to be their dear Head was Bunter himself. Imagine their faces as they take up their giddy vigil in Dr. Voysey's study ! ”

“ Ha, ha, ha ! ”

“ Imagine their apologies when he walks in, ” chuckled Nugent. “ And imagine them kicking themselves when he asks them what they're talking about ! ”

“ Ha, ha, ha ! ”

“ Gentlemen, chaps and fellows ! I think we're all willing to agree that Bunter has done really well this time, ” smiled Wharton. “ He has regained our liberty for us and saved our feed ! ”

“ Hear, hear ! ”

“ And that being so he deserves all the rewards that can be heaped on him ! Gentlemen, I suggest that the least we can do is to make him our guest of honour for the rest of the afternoon ! ”

And the suggestion was hailed with enthusiastic acclamation — even by Johnny Bull !

THE END

Songs of the Seasons.



THE mellow time of autumn comes
With gifts of golden grain,
Of apples, berries, pears and plums
To fill the barns again ;
The green that in the springtime shone
Has deepened and grown old,
The summer tints have come and gone,
Now all is red and gold.

The hues of red and gold adorn
The leaves that wither soon,
And gold the field of ripened corn,
And red the harvest moon ;
The breezes still in kindly style
Blow soft on dying flowers,
And still the sun looks down to smile
On summer's fading hours.

But there's a glimmer in our eyes,
A glow upon our skins.
What matter if the summer dies
When football time begins ?
King Cricket slowly steals away
And hangs his ancient head,
His time is done, he's had his day,
And football reigns instead !

So autumn air is very fair,
But not for Mr. Pheasant,
And partridges and grouse declare
The autumn's most unpleasant ;
The crackle of the guns they hear,
Which makes them very nettled ;
They squawk, “ We'd best get out of here,
The outlook's most unsettled ! ”

The winter term has now begun,
We settle down to work,
With visions bright of games and fun
In days of chill and murk ;
The evenings, too, close in apace,
The hours of night are long ;
But we are merry and will face
The prospect with a song.

But autumn's trees are laden down
With ripe and luscious fruit,
And farmers, with their pitchforks, frown
In case you're after loot,
So though the leaves so sadly fall,
The flowers die out of sight,
The autumn we may rightly call
A season of delight.

GREYFRIARS DOWN THE AGES!



THE ARREST OF THE ROYALIST HEADMASTER OF GREYFRIARS

QUEEN ELIZABETH VISITS GREYFRIARS



DR WISEHEAD 1693-1724



THE SCHOOLBOY CHAMPION PUGILIST



A GREAT ATTRACTION OVER 100 YEARS AGO.



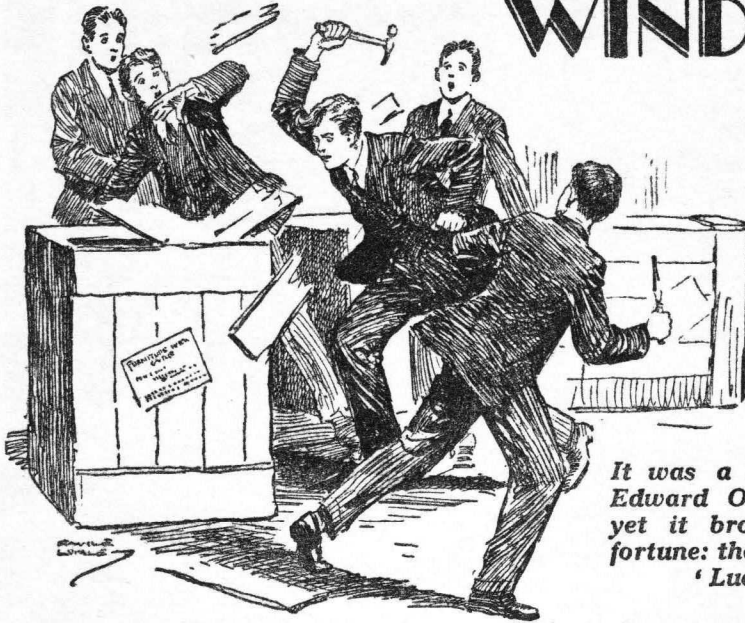
NOW SOME BOYS ARRIVED AT SCHOOL IN 1730.



— AND THE REASON OTHERS DID NOT IN 1307

The Holiday Annual artist spent a week-end at Greyfriars as a guest of Mr. Quelch, the Remove master, who is compiling a 'History of Greyfriars.' These pictures were drawn from some of the elaborate notes Mr. Quelch had made.

HANDFORTH'S WINDFALL!



By
EDWY
SEARLES
BROOKS

It was a spiteful jape against Edward Oswald Handforth.... yet it brought him a small fortune: that's why they call him 'Lucky Handforth.'

THE FIRST CHAPTER

BERNARD FORREST STARTS SOMETHING

THERE had been a violent row in Study D, in the Ancient House, at St. Frank's, and most of the furniture had got more or less pulverised. The fact that the furniture belonged to the burly Edward Oswald Handforth, and the added fact that Handforth himself had smashed it, counted for less than nothing. When Handforth had a really juicy row with a fellow he didn't care two hoots about furniture, his own or anybody else's. If it happened to be within the zone of battle it just got broken.

Bernard Forrest, the dandified cad of Study A, was really the cause of it all. Anyhow, that's what Hand-

forth said. Forrest came into Study D one day, insulted Handforth to his face, and the latter promptly locked the door and sailed in. Exactly what the insult was, nobody could ever find out. Even Handforth had forgotten it after the "mill." But when a crowd of Removites gained admittance to the study after the din had died down, they found Handforth standing in the middle of a pile of glorious wreckage with blood-smearred knuckles, and Forrest littered untidily on the floor, totally indifferent to the subsequent proceedings. It took any amount of cold water to bring him round, and he wasn't really himself again for days.

Church and McClure, who shared Study D with Handforth, were needlessly fussy over the whole business.

They took the unreasonable view that Handforth should have marched Forrest to Study A for the fight, where it wouldn't matter a jot what happened to the furniture.

"You've had your fun, and Forrest looks like a mixed-fruit table jelly, but what are we going to use for a table?" asked Church bitterly. "There's only one leg left on this piece of junk, and the chairs are no better than matchwood. The trouble with you, Handy, is that you don't think. You're too ram-headed."

"It was a glorious mill, though," said Handforth, proudly rubbing his bruised knuckles. "As for the furniture, don't make such a fuss. I'll write to my pater and ask him to send some new stuff down. Until it comes we can get some old boxes, and patch this up."

To the astonishment of Church and McClure—and the rest of the Remove Handforth's pater sent a letter a few days later saying that he couldn't quite understand what Handforth meant, but, anyhow, he was dispatching—and had, in fact, dispatched—something which would be just right for Study D. He didn't go into any details—Handforth's pater wasn't that kind of man—and the burly Removite was left in a state of pleasurable anticipation.

"Didn't I tell you it would be all right?" he said triumphantly. "I knew my pater would 'come across.'"

"Beats me!" said McClure, scratching his head.

"What do you mean, fathead?"

"Well, anyway, let's wait until the stuff comes," said Mac hurriedly. "It ought to be here in a day or two."

Forrest, by this time, had licked his wounds and they had duly healed. But the hatred he nursed was like double-distilled snake venom, and

his desire for revenge was little short of an obsession. So far, however, he hadn't thought of anything frightful enough to meet the occasion. Of necessity it had to be at once cast-iron, appropriate, and fool-proof.

His opportunity came two days later, during morning lessons, when Mr. Crowell sent him across to West House with a note for Mr. Stokes. He espied the railway company's delivery lorry, laden with big packing-cases, making for the rear premises. He frowned darkly. His thoughts went at once to Handforth and the new furniture for Study D. Handforth, of course, had been talking grandly about his pater's generosity, and had made many prophecies mostly wild, as to what the new furniture would be like. Further, he was definitely expecting it to turn up to-day.

The sight of those big packing-cases made Bernard Forrest see red. He toyed with the idea of making a bonfire of them, but came to the conclusion, with great reluctance, that such a course would be too risky.

By the time he had found Mr. Stokes, and had handed over the note, the railway lorry was on its way back to the station. Forrest nipped round to the rear, and found the packing-cases in one of the sheds, by the stables. Nobody was about. The double doors of the shed stood wide open, and Forrest was able to carry out an inspection undisturbed. He was relieved to discover that the packing-cases, four of them, were all addressed to Mr. Horace Pycraft.

A light of pure joy—or perhaps it would be more correct to say, impure joy—leapt into Forrest's eyes. In that second the idea was born.

Mr. Pycraft was the master of the Fourth Form. He was more; he

was the most unpleasant gentleman at St. Frank's, bar none. And Forrest remembered, with ghoulish glee, that Mr. Pycraft had recently had his study redecorated. The labels on the packing cases bore the name of a famous London furnishing house. Clearly, Mr. Pycraft was having new furniture to fit the new decorations.

In any case, it didn't matter. What did matter was that here were four great packing-cases, filled with new furniture, and Edward Oswald Handforth was expecting new furniture! Forrest saw a way of getting his revenge which was quite childishly simple. Handforth would be wallowing in trouble, when the bombshell burst, up to his ears. Mr. Pycraft could be trusted to see to that.

Bernard Forrest never hurried himself as a rule; but the way he streaked indoors that morning would have astonished a hare. He performed a certain task, raced back to the shed, and performed another. He prided himself that he had been rapid. But when he leisurely entered the Remove Form-room Mr. Crowell gave him a penetrating, gimlet-like look.

"You've been a very long time



When a crowd of Removltes succeeded in gaining admittance to the study, they found Handforth standing in the middle of a pile of wreckage, with Bernard Forrest littered untidily on the floor, totally indifferent to the proceedings.

gone, Forrest," he said accusingly.

"Couldn't find Mr. Stokes for quite a bit, sir," replied Forrest, with an injured air. "I didn't want to go, anyhow; I'm not an errand-boy."

"That will do, Forrest, go to your place," said the Form-master. "And don't be insolent."

"Well, I no sooner come in than you jump on me——"

"I said that will *do*, Forrest."

The wily cad of Study A muttered something about being behind with his lesson, and settled down. He gave

the impression that he was a conscientious scholar, and resented having his work interrupted.

Five minutes after school had been dismissed, and when the fellows were dividing themselves into knots in the Triangle, Teddy Long came bustling up to a group which included Handforth & Co., Travers, Tregellis-West and Nipper, the popular Remove captain.

"Your furniture's come, Handy!" said Teddy Long brightly.

There was nothing surprising in the fact that Long was apparently the first fellow to know it. He was the busybody of the Remove. He knew everything.

"By George! Is that a fact?" ejaculated Handforth, turning and staring at the Ancient House, as though he expected to see his new furniture piled on the steps. "How do you know, you young ass? Where is it? Why wasn't I told?"

"I'm telling you, aren't I?" retorted Long. "I haven't seen it; I only heard somebody say that there are some big packing-cases round at the back. Came on the railway van, this morning. They're addressed to you——"

Handforth waited for no more. With a whoop he rushed off, and Church and McClure, who didn't believe the news anyway, were in close attendance. Travers and Nipper and Gresham and a few others followed at a more sedate pace.

When they arrived on the scene they found Handforth gazing calmly, and with an air of proud proprietorship, at the packing-cases. Church and McClure were looking at them with dazed eyes. For days Handforth had been bragging, and his chums, who knew him so well, had been fully expecting that when the "new stuff"

arrived Handforth would get a shock. But it was they who got the shock. In fact, they couldn't believe it.

"They can't really be for you," said Church incredulously, and with an intuition which almost amounted to second sight.

"Don't be a howling ass!" retorted Handforth complacently. "Look at the labels! No mistake about them, is there? By George! The pater seems to have excelled himself this time! That letter of mine must have caught him just after he had promoted a big company, or something!"

There was certainly nothing wrong with the labels. They were almost big enough for a blind man to see. They were neatly tacked on, and each bore the following words, in neat type-writing— "FURNITURE WITH CARE—THIS SIDE UP. From Sir Edward Handforth, M.P., London. To: Master E. O. Handforth, Ancient House, St. Frank's College, Bellton, Sussex. Per Southern Railway—Goods train."

Even the sceptics had nothing whatever to say after inspecting those labels. Handforth was expecting furniture from his father, and here it was. A simple sum of two and two making four.

"Lend a hand, you fellows," said Handforth briskly. "We'll have these open in no time. We need hammers and cold chisels and things."

Everybody was willing to help. Tools of all kinds were produced as though by magic. Handforth, always impatient, did not trouble to get the lid off intact. He wrenched it off piecemeal, and with mighty blows of a hammer, which sent his helpers scattering in all directions, he demolished a side of the big packing-case, too.

"There we are!" he said breathlessly. "Now, you chaps, lend a hand."

"Sure you've finished with the hammer, dear old fellow?" asked Travers, from a safe distance.

"By George! It looks like a desk!" said Handforth, ignoring him.

The contents of the case, liberally wrapped in canvas and other protective material, was lifted bodily out. Handforth got busy with his big scout's knife, and ruthlessly ripped the canvas away.

"Careful, you ass," warned Church. "You're scratching the furniture, whatever it is. Don't be in such a giddy hurry. I believe it is a desk."

They expected to see a fairly cheap article of oak—probably second-hand. Even a second-hand oak desk would be a phenomenal luxury in a junior study.

But the reality took their breath away.

As the packing was torn aside they saw a glorious creation of figured walnut; a really beautiful desk, brand-new, and polished like a mirror. True, there were one or two scratches, and they stood out glaringly on the highly-polished surface; but the packers could not be blamed for these. Handforth had undoubtedly been careless with his knife.

"My only sainted aunt!" he ejaculated, in a husky voice. "Fancy the pater sending me a desk like this! He must have had a jolly good day on the Stock Exchange! I'll bet this cost a fiver!"

"My poor fellow, what do you know about furniture?" said Travers. "If this desk didn't set your pater back twenty quid, I'm Clark Gable's mother-in-law! Fancy a desk like this in a junior study! I'm beginning to wonder if your pater is quite right in the head!"

"You—you arrant ass!" retorted Handforth. "I asked my pater to send me something special, didn't I? He's showing me a bit of appreciation at last, that's all. Goodness knows, it's time he did!"

"Well, you're a lucky bounder, Handy," said Nipper, with a laugh. "Half the fellows in the Remove would give their heads for a desk like that. I wonder how long it'll last in Study D?"

"Not long," said Church sadly. "Before it's been in the place ten minutes he'll be putting hot frying-pans on it, and spilling tea over it, and denting it with the ruler."

"Beats me hollow!" said McClure stubbornly. "Handy's pater *must* be mad!"

"You drivelling dummies!" roared Handforth, in exasperation. "I've never had good furniture in my study before—and now that I *have* got it, I'll take care of it. Let's see what's in the next case!"

There was another orgy of hammering and wrenching and lid removing. But this time Handforth was more careful. The second case was a huge affair, and it finally emitted two of the easiest easy-chairs the fellows had ever seen. You sat in them, and sank into a dream of softness and luxury. They were covered in a tasteful russet-brown velvety material.

"Where's Archie Glenthorne?" grinned Harry Gresham. "He ought to see this stuff! He prides himself that Study E is the best-furnished room in the junior passage; but his study will look like a stable in comparison with Handy's!"

Everybody wanted to try sitting in the chairs, but Handforth hoofed them out. He was thoroughly excited now.

Although he would not admit it

for worlds, he was in very much of a daze on his own account. That his father should send him all this glorious furniture was almost too good to be true. Not, however, that Handforth had the slightest suspicion of the awful truth.

The other two cases, duly opened, occasioned no surprise. For the Removites were past being surprised now. There was a splendid little Turkey carpet, just about the right size for Study D, a figured walnut bureau to match the desk, two walnut chairs with russet-brown seats, and an exquisite club fender of rich bronze with solid leather fireside seats.

"By George! Imagine all this ripping stuff in Study D!" gloated Handforth, his eyes burning.

He stood there, imagining it—and that, incidentally, was destined to be as far as he would get!

THE SECOND CHAPTER

MR. PYCRAFT HAS SOMETHING TO SAY!

"WHEN are you going to move it in, Handy?" asked Nipper.

Handforth gave a start, and came out of his dream.

"Eh? Move it in?" he repeated.

"Now, of course! Plenty of time before dinner! Who's going to lend a hand?"

"Can't take it yet," said Church, practically.

"Why not?"

"Well, the study's full of that wreckage, for one thing," said Church. "We can't put the new stuff in until we take the old stuff out. The room ought to be swept and cleaned, too——"

"Hadn't thought of that," interrupted Handforth brightly. "You're right, Churchy! Let's go along and clear the study. We don't need that old muck in there now. If you other

chaps like to come along and lend a hand, I'll make some presents."

There were plenty of helpers. The old furniture in Study D, battered about though it was, would be useful. Plenty of fellows could do with an odd chair, or a fender, or the bookcase.

Within five minutes hectic operations were in progress in Study D. Everything was cleared out. There were so many willing hands that the work was quickly accomplished.

Handforth did not trouble to give the stuff away to any particular fellows. He just waved his hand, and told them to help themselves. Which they did, scrambling over the loot like a lot of Mexican bandits. There were several side quarrels over this, and one or two fights; but, in the end, the new owners, dusty and dishevelled, triumphantly bore their prizes away to their own studies.

And Study D was left as bare as the proverbial Mother Hubbard's cupboard. Not a stick of furniture was left in it. All was clear for the moving in of the glorious new equipment.

And while all this had been going on, Bernard Forrest, watching like a fox from afar, had become intensely active. No sooner had the crowd of juniors deserted the shed than Forrest unobtrusively slipped on the scene. As he had anticipated, everybody had accompanied Handforth to Study D. The new furniture was left in solitude. It was the work of but two minutes for Forrest to remove the superimposed, tacked-on labels. They were of cardboard, and, of course, they completely obliterated the original labels. They looked strongly attached, too; but with a few quick wrenches, Forrest detached them, tacks included. There was now no trace that they had ever been there.

Hastening away, he got rid of the

labels, and then strolled to the East House. He was lucky enough to run into Mr. Horace Pycraft in the lobby.

"Seems to be a bit of excitement round the back, sir," he observed casually. "Some big cases of furniture arrived this morning——"

"I am well aware of it," interrupted Mr. Pycraft coldly. "I received the notification from the railway company yesterday. The furniture is mine."

"Yours, sir?" said Forrest, in surprise. "Handforth seems to think it's his."

Mr. Pycraft jumped.

"Handforth thinks—— What on

earth are you talking about, Forrest?" he snapped. "Don't be ridiculous!"

"Well, it's nothing to do with me," said Forrest, shrugging his shoulders. "I thought there was a mistake, all the time. Anyhow, Handforth has wrenched all the cases open, and he's lugged the furniture out——"

"Whaaaaat!" shrieked Mr. Pycraft, his weedy figure shaking from bow to stern.

"Only a coincidence, I suppose, sir," said Forrest comfortingly. "Handforth's been expecting some furniture for days, and it seems as though yours happened to arrive at the same time. A bit queer, though,



"Either you are deliberately wicked or the biggest fool in the school!" shouted Mr. Pycraft. And he grabbed Handforth by the scruff of the neck and bent him double. "Look, sir! Look at that label!"

that his pater should send him four whacking great cases——”

Mr. Pycraft waited to hear no more. Sedate seniors in the Triangle were astonished to see the Form-master tearing along like a track sprinter. He whisked out of sight, and Bernard Forrest gave a happy sigh.

“And that,” he murmured complacently, “is that!”

He had timed it with rare cunning. At that very moment Handforth, with his attendant crowd of helpers, was on his way to fetch the new furniture.

“The desk’s the heaviest piece, so we’ll take that in first,” he said briskly. “Half a dozen of us ought to be enough to hike it along.”

“What an original chap you are, Handy,” said Vivian Travers, in a tone of admiration. “Now, personally, I should never have thought of taking the desk in first. In my own futile way I should have started off by laying down the carpet.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“By George! I’d forgotten the carpet!” said Handforth, with a start. “Are you trying to kid me, you fathead? Naturally, the carpet goes down first.”

“It’s a pity about that carpet,” said Nipper regretfully.

“What’s a pity? It’s a ripping carpet.”

“That’s just the point,” said Nipper. “What will it look like in a week’s time? All those glorious colours will be splashed with ink, and there’ll be cinder burns, and soot stains——”

“A week!” broke in Church. “Bit of an optimist, aren’t you? That carpet will be ruined before this time to-morrow! How the dickens Handy’s pater ever came to send him all that stuff beats me hollow!”

“Dry up about it, can’t you?” roared Handforth. “I can’t understand it myself. I—I mean, why shouldn’t he send it? After all these years he’s beginning to appreciate my worth! It’s a good sign.”

“What sort of a sign is this?” murmured Travers.

They had just turned a corner, and were in full view of the shed, with its wide open doors. Mr. Horace Pycraft, usually so much on his dignity, was dancing up and down like a wild dervish in front of the unpacked furniture and the opened cases.

“Funny!” said Handforth, frowning. “What’s old Pieface raving about? Just like him to shove his long nose into my business!”

A hush fell over the juniors as they advanced. Perhaps they had some suspicion that the bubble was on the point of bursting. They had felt, all along, that there was something “phony” about Handforth’s new furniture. But Handforth himself was quite serene. He hurried forward, in advance of the others; and Mr. Pycraft, conscious that he was no longer alone, managed, by a supreme effort, to control himself. A Berserk glare blazed in his eyes as he recognised Handforth.

“You!” he croaked, leaping forward like a half-starved panther. “You, sir!”

“What about me, sir?” asked Handforth, in astonishment.

“You—you—you——” Mr. Pycraft gulped, spluttered, and gripped himself. “How dare you?” he positively yelled. “You unmitigated young scoundrel!”

“Here, steady, sir!” protested Handforth. “What have I done?”

“What have you done!” thundered Mr. Pycraft, trembling in every limb. “What haven’t you done!”

I'll have you turned out of the school for this piece of outrageous effrontery! How dare you open these cases?"

Handforth was more astonished than ever.

"Why shouldn't I open them, sir?" he demanded truculently. "I don't see that I had to get your permission first. You're not my Form-master, anyway; you're not even my House-master."

"Look at this desk!" shrieked Mr. Pycraft. "Look at the scratches on it! Ruined!"

"Pouf! That's nothing! I happened to scratch it with my knife when I was cutting through the canvas," explained Handforth. "In any case, I don't see why you should be so upset about it. It's not your desk. It's mine."

"Are you mad, Handforth?" panted Mr. Pycraft. "This furniture is mine! Do you understand, boy? Mine—mine!"

"You've made a mistake, sir," said Handforth pityingly. "My pater sent me all this new furniture. If you don't believe me, look at the labels on the cases. You don't think I'd open them if they weren't addressed to me, do you?"

Mr. Pycraft nearly choked.

"If you think this is a joke, Handforth, I shall see to it that your sense of humour is adjusted by a flogging," he said, fighting for breath. "How you can stand there and tell me that this furniture is yours passes my comprehension. All these packing cases are addressed to me. Do you understand, sir? To me!"

"I beg your pardon, sir," replied Handforth politely. "If you'll take the trouble to look at the labels you'll see that *my* name is on them."

His confidence was supreme. He was as cool as ice. The fact—as he

felt—that he was in the right made him regard Mr. Pycraft as a visitor might regard the inmates of the local asylum.

"Either you are deliberately wicked or the biggest fool in the school!" shouted Mr. Pycraft, grabbing at Handforth, and seizing him by the scruff of the neck and bending him double. "Look, sir! Look at that label!"

Handforth looked—and the absurd and uncomfortable feeling assailed him that he had suddenly been filleted.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

HE WHO LAUGHS LAST!

ALL the strength seemed to ooze out of Edward Oswald's body through his pores. His eyes goggled. Gazing at that label, he read, at the top, the name of a famous West End furnishing firm; lower, he saw in clear, unmistakable printed characters the name—"Horace Pycraft, Esq." He gulped, tore himself away from the Form-master's grasp, and passed both his hands over the label, as though to assure himself that it was really there.

"But—but it's impossible!" he gasped, in a thin, feeble voice. "All these packing-cases were addressed to me!"

"How dare you tell such deliberate lies?" demanded Mr. Pycraft hoarsely. "You have had the unparalleled audacity——"

"Hold on, sir," interrupted Nipper. "Handforth isn't lying. When he opened these cases he thought they were his."

"Utter nonsense!" shouted Mr. Pycraft. "How could he think such a thing? Can't he read?"

"That's just it, sir," replied Nipper. "I've had a look at the other cases, and I see they're all addressed to you.

But when we came here with Handforth, half an hour ago, they were addressed to *him*."

"For the love of Samson!" murmured Travers, light dawning on him. "So it was a jape!"

"A—a j-j-jape?" stammered Handforth.

"I think we know who did it—although we needn't mention names," continued Nipper grimly. "We know, anyhow, that one of our chaps was out of the form-room during lessons—just when these cases must have arrived. Anyhow, somebody typed some labels, and tacked them over the tops of the originals. They looked all right, Mr. Pycraft. I saw them myself, and I didn't twig anything wrong."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Poor old Handy!"

"Spoofed, by jingo!"

"Dished, diddled and done!"

In spite of Mr. Pycraft's presence, the Removites yelled with laughter. They couldn't help themselves. As for Mr. Pycraft, although he realised that his original accusations were unjust, he stormed off swearing that he would go straight to the Headmaster.

"Forrest, of course," said Church gloomily. "Forrest has been saying for days that he would get his own back on Handy. Well, he's got it!"

"Where is he?" asked Handforth, in a voice like burning sulphur. "I'll pulverise him! I'll slaughter him!"

"Better not," advised Nipper. "The Head will want to see you pretty soon—and you don't want to go to him carrying the marks of recent battle."

"Perhaps you'll think, too, what we're going to do for furniture in Study D?" asked McClure pointedly.

"Eh?"

"You haven't forgotten, by any chance, that you gave everything away?" said Mac, with excessive politeness. "Of course, we can sit on the floor——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But — but I thought—— I mean——" began Handforth.

"You can't expect the fellows to give the stuff back again," said Church impatiently. "You gave it away without any trimmings. If you ask for it back you'll only make yourself more ridiculous than ever."

"Crumbs!" groaned Handforth wretchedly.

"Hey, you chaps, come and look here!"

It was a sudden shout from Tommy Watson. He had been casually examining an ancient-looking crate which stood in the yard. It was a disreputable thing, with straw packing bulging out between the interstices.

"What have you got there?" asked Nipper.

"Come and look!" grinned Watson. "This is Handy's new study furniture—the real thing this time!"

"What!"

The juniors rushed round. Even Handforth, with a dazed look in his eyes, followed. The dilapidated crate bore a label, and the label said, "Master E. O. Handforth," and the handwriting was the handwriting of Handforth's pater. So there could be no shadow of doubt about *this* one.

"Poor old Handy!" said Nipper sympathetically. "Just one crate! And what a crate! Are you going to open it?"

"Might as well," said Handforth impatiently. "By George! So this is all my pater sent? I might have known it! Blow the thing! I want to find Forrest——"

"Not much good finding him,"



Suddenly, as the chair fell to pieces under Handforth's blows, there was a metallic tinkle, and Church leapt forward and grabbed something. "Look at this," he shouted excitedly. "A golden sovereign!"

interrupted Church. "You can't prove anything. Let's get this crate open, and see what's inside."

There were plenty of willing hands. The crate was torn asunder. Handforth himself, bitterly disillusioned, stood by. He wasn't even interested.

At last the "something" his father had sent him was revealed to full view. At the sight of it Handforth started like a dyspeptic stag. It was a rickety old easy chair which the burly junior recognised at once. For years his mother had been threatening to throw it out of his father's study. And here it was—thrown out at last! It was all the "new" furniture he was likely to see for Study D. It was

faded and threadbare, and the springs were sticking up like a volcanic mountain range in the seat.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The joke's on you, Handy!"

"What offers for this piece of junk?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So at last your pater is beginning to appreciate you, old man!"

Roaring with laughter, the Removites went away. The show was over. Handforth was left alone with his new property—except, of course, for Church and McClure, who always stood by him. Their feelings were too bitter for words now; they knew that within five minutes the whole of

St. Frank's would be ringing with laughter at Handforth's expense.

"Cheer up, Handy," murmured Church. "We'll manage somehow—"

"And my pater had the nerve to send me *this!*" exploded Handforth violently. "After all I've been saying, too! Why, the crabby old skinflint!"

"Rats! If you weren't such a hopeless optimist, you wouldn't have expected anything better," said McClure, with some impatience. "The chair's not so bad. Here, what the dickens are you doing, you ass?"

"I'll show you what I'm doing," roared Handforth.

He had grasped a handy axe, and utterly exasperated by everything that had happened, he set to with a will.

Crash!

The heavy axe-head descended and bit deeply into one of the arms of the chair.

"Stop it, Handy!" yelled Church. "You're mad!"

"You bet I'm mad," panted Handforth. "I'm as mad as a teased tiger! Stand clear, both of you, or you might get hit!"

Crash—crash—crash!

He had strong muscles, and in a surprisingly short space of time that old chair was reduced to ruins. It literally fell to pieces under Handforth's mighty blows. Suddenly there was a metallic tinkle, and Handforth thought it was caused by the springs, which were shooting out everywhere. But Church, risking death from the whirling axe, leapt forward and grabbed something.

"Look at this!" he shouted excitedly. "A golden sovereign!"

"What?"

Handforth took the coin. He hadn't seen many sovereigns, but he knew one when he saw it. And this was one.

"Look! There's another—and another!" ejaculated McClure, making a dive.

The way in which they tore the remnants of the chair to pieces was a sight worth watching. In the end they found no less than fifteen golden sovereigns. Corn in Egypt. The old chair had turned out to be a surprise packet after all.

"I'll bet these quids have been in here for years—perhaps twenty or thirty," panted Handforth, as he regarded the little golden pile in his palm. "Some pilfering servant, I suppose. Took 'em one by one, and stuffed 'em into the chair-padding. Then got the sack before he could recover the loot. Or it might have been a 'she.' What does it matter, anyway? The pater himself might have accidentally lost them in the chair."

An idea came to him. His eyes were glowing with triumph now. The tables were completely turned. Without explaining to his chums, he rushed away. Diving into the Ancient House, he heard yells of laughter coming from various quarters. But he took no notice.

He went to the telephone, and although it was against all regulations, he put through a long-distance call to London. He was, in fact, telephoning his father's City office.

And, as luck would have it, Sir Edward Handforth was presiding at an important company meeting when the interruption came.

"That you, Pater?" asked Handforth tensely, when he heard his father's voice.

"Good gracious, Edward, is that you? Is anything the matter?"

"That old chair you sent me, Pater," said Handforth eagerly. "It arrived this morning, and—"

"Upon my word, Edward, have

you rung me up to tell me that?" barked Sir Edward, over the wires. "I can't be bothered now. I'm busy."

"But the chair, Pater. It's mine, isn't it? All of it?"

"Are you out of your mind, Edward?" retorted his father. "Of course it's all yours! Stuffing, springs, and everything else that's in it."

"By George! Can I depend on that, Pater?" asked Handforth. "Is it a go?"

"Yes!" snapped Sir Edward.

"Good enough, Pater. I just wanted to tell you that I chopped—that the chair got broken up," said Edward Oswald serenely. "And what do you think? I found fifteen golden sovereigns in the stuffing."

"Good gracious! I didn't know—"


"But you know now, Pater," grinned Handforth. "Thanks awfully! I can buy some nice stuff for my study with the money. Sorry to butt in when you're busy. Cheerio!"

And Handforth's Pater, who was made of the right stuff, was too much of a sport to go back on his word. Indeed, after he had hung up he chuckled amusedly and told the joke to the meeting.

As for Handforth he got his new furniture after all—not so exquisite as Mr. Pycraft's, but far more serviceable for use in a junior study. And the laugh against him somehow fizzled out.

The Head, when he heard all the facts, decided that Handforth had made a natural mistake, and that he was not deserving of punishment. And as it was difficult to find the unknown japer, the matter was allowed to drop.

Even Forrest himself escaped the licking which Handforth had promised; for, as Handforth said, if Forrest hadn't played the jape, the old chair would never have been smashed up—and that little gold-mine would never have come to light.



THE END

THE DJAH OLD SCHOOL

Words by
FRANK RICHARDS

Music by
JEFF LYNTON

Moderato

Tempo di Fox-Trot

Gravioso

There are Eton and Harrow and

Stowe, And Rugby and Winchester too, But I think you'll agree, all you

fel lows with me That Bareroff blooms at the top of the tree There's a something a'je ne sais

qui' don't you see a - bout us, don't you think so? "WE DO!" I'm

r.h.

f
 not slatin' Repton or Rugby djah lads, I'm not sayin' Eton men always are cads, I'm

not sayin' Winchester can't be posh, I'm not sayin' Uppingham men never wash, Nor that

Scherzo

Har-row men are al-ways seen at Bill,..... In

bags as if they'd just roll'd down the Hill..... But

Barcroft's the pick of the bunch you'll admit! Ab-so-

-lute-ly and fi-nal-ly Barcroft is IT! CHO. The

Humorously, but with feeling
mf ad lib.

djah old school, The djah old school, Where the

Head non con- pos- mentis, Stood in lo- co- er par- en- tis and all that, The

djah old school, The djah old

school,..... Where we nev - er swear in Rugger, When

up for Con - firm - mug - ger, djah fel - lows, The djah old.

djah old djah old school..... The school.....

D.C.

"THE DJAH OLD SCHOOL"

(Continued)



II.

Of course, there were fellows, a few,
Whom a chap couldn't possibly know.
One could not be seen, if you know what I mean,
In the quad with a rotten outsider like Greene.
Oh, most frightfully poor, you know; hadn't a
bean.
A man couldn't know him.
CHO. : *Oh, no!*

Now, poverty isn't a crime, but gad!
It's doocid bad form—oh, most doocidly bad!
Bein' hard up, I think you'll acknowledge, is one
Of the things that most certainly never are done.
His hat, good gad! His trousers and his tie!
We barred the lout, of course, and passed him
by.
Not a bad chap, you know, in his way, but, my
hat!
A man should not parade in bags like that.

CHORUS

The djah old school,
The djah old school.
Where the good old Head still totters,
And we barred all cads and rotters and all that.
The djah old school,
The djah old school.
Where my name was on the panel,
When I became House-Flannel, djah fellows.
The djah old, djah old, djah old school.

III.

There were others, a few, you'll recall,
Who were barred by the House as too bad:
Perkins minor, the swot, was the worst of the lot,
He mugged up the classics, and that sort of rot,
And cared not a bean if the House went to pot.
He worked—really studied—
CHO. : *The cad!*

A man doesn't come up to Barcroft to learn,
But because his dear pater has money to burn.
The rottenest thing you can say of a chap
Is to call him a swot, or a greaser, or sap.
At Barcroft we disdained to learn at all.

But think, you men, of Speecher in Big Hall!
And the pots on the sideboard in silvery ranks!
Who cared if the brains were all perfect blanks?

CHORUS

The djah old school,
The djah old school.
The old Form-rooms that we sat in,
Picking up our scraps of Latin, and all that.
The djah old school,
The djah old school.
We had little, but we had some!
We could all at Roll say "adsum," djah
fellows.
The djah old, djah old, djah old school!

IV.

My fag, I remember, was Jones,
Decent kid in the Shell, don't you know.
It was really his joy, which seemed never to cloy,
To scud up the stairs when he heard me call,
"Boy!"
Believe me, no man-servant that I employ
Is as good as that fag was.
CHO. : *Bravo!*

You can't whop a valet who loses a stud,
Or leaves on your shoes a suspicion of mud;
You can't whop a butler who snaffles your port,
Or a cook if he doesn't do just as he ought.
At Barcroft School fag-masters keep a bat,
And if fags put on roll, just give them that!
It's wonderful how a junior never lags,
When he knows that it means for him six on the
bags.

CHORUS

The djah old school,
The djah old school.
Where we gave our fags a whopping,
For a plate or saucer dropping, and all that.
The djah old school,
The djah old school.
Where they thought themselves in clover,
If they weren't told to bend over, djah fellows.
The djah old, djah old, djah old school.



BALANCING YOUR BUDGET

By Monty Lowther

The humorist of the Shell Form at St. Jim's suggests ways and means for a schoolboy to balance his budget. But it seems to us that if you follow Monty Lowther's advice you'll become unbalanced yourself!—Ed.

I MAY as well admit that I've cribbed the idea for this feature from the "home" mags I looked through, while I was staying at Tom Merry's place last vac. After reading umpteen articles on Economical Housekeeping for Persons of Moderate Means, it came to me in a sort of blinding flash that the very thing the world was waiting for was an equally helpful article for the Schoolboy of Moderate Means. Here goes, then!

Let's suppose you're a raw and inexperienced youth, just starting life at St. Jim's. You step out of your first-class carriage at Rylcombe, with your first week's pocket money jingling merrily in your pocket, and the world at your feet, more or less. Take warning, my friend! Unless you pay strict attention to what I'm going to tell you, you'll be in the Wayland Bankruptcy Court before you know whether you're a School House gentleman or a New House waster!

Your first snag will be how much to tip the cabby who drives you up to the School. As a novice, you'll

be tempted to give him a pound and tell him to keep the change. Don't do it, old bean! Give him ten bob, instead. He'll be quite satisfied.

Having made your bow to the Head and parked your bags, you'll naturally toot right across to the tuck shop and order Dame Taggles to ask the company what they'd like at your expense. The instinct is to plank down a fiver and leave it to the boys to get rid of it for you. Resist the temptation, old chap! Two or three quid will be ample!

Back in the House, Skimpole will corner you and request a subscription for the Society for Bringing Determinism to the Abyssinians. Give him a guinea. You'll feel frightfully mean, but Skimmy will be quite happy about it.

Next comes the problem of furnishing your study. Take my tip, old sport, and do it in the simplest style possible. A Persian carpet, a mahogany desk, a couple of deep, well-sprung armchairs, a tasteful table and bookcase, a few choice etchings or water colours, and, perhaps, as

a concession to luxury, an antique clock for the mantelpiece—and you're finished. The whole lot shouldn't run you into more than a hundred quid.

Having settled down, you will, of course, lay in a stock of provisions for teas in study and occasional hospitality to colleagues. This is a mere trifle. A fiver, judiciously laid out on tinned and bottled tuck, ought to keep you going for at least a fortnight. If you belong to the New House, and Fatty Wynn is likely to pay you a visit, make it a tenner and be provided for all emergencies!

Then comes the question of your ordinary everyday expenditure. Apart from occasional loans of a pound or so to Mellish, and one or two other impecunious cases, you should spend little during school hours. It's the leisure hours you want to watch, old son! Don't always hire a Rolls-Royce to take you to the pictures, for instance; hire a taxi instead, sometimes it's cheaper!

Keep the thought of economies like these to the forefront all the time, and you won't go far wrong!

Now let's get your probable expenditure for the first year set down in a clear and comprehensive way:

	£	s.	d.
Cab from station ..	10	0	0
Tuck shop treat	10	0	0
Skimpole	1	1	0
Study furniture	100	0	0
Tuck for teas, etc. ..	100	0	0
Cinemas, say	25	0	0
Miscellaneous loans (never paid back), say	25	0	0
Rolls-Royces & taxis, say	100	0	0
Subs. to sports clubs, etc. (never paid) ..	NIL		
Tips to school servants, say			3½
	£352	1	3½



To raise money, Monty Lowther suggests, run a roast chestnut and baked potato business in the winter.

Assuming that your pocket money is £13 a year, this leaves a small deficiency of £339 is. 3½d. Here are a few ways in which you can easily raise this trifling sum:

1. Run a roast chestnut and baked potato business in the quad during the winter, and an ice cream business during the summer, till your profits amount to £339 is. 3½d.

2. Win any newspaper cross word competition in which the prize happens to be £339 is. 3½d.

3. Take out an insurance policy for £339 is. 3½d. against breaking your neck, then jump off the roof of the School House.

4. Write to any available wealthy relative, requesting a cheque for £339 is. 3½d.

5. Yell "Fire!" through the doorway of the bank at Wayland and wait till the clerks have vacated the building, then help yourself to £339 is. 3½d.

And so, old pal, you'll balance your budget. But don't blame me if in the process you become a trifle unbalanced yourself!

END



By FRANK RICHARDS

IT was in the Middle Ages, in the days of bards and sages,
Whom we read of in the pages of the chroniclers of old ;
In the time of war and wassail, in an ancient feudal castle,
Served by many a valiant vassal, dwelt a noble Baron bold !
And this Baron had a daughter, fair to see, and many sought her,
Knights and nobles came to court her, from the north, south, east, and west.

But among her many suitors, serenading tootle-tooters,
Young Sir Fatted de FitzBooters was the one she loved the best.

Now Sir Fatted was a chappy, might make any damsel happy,
But his heritage was scrappy, and his bank account was nil.
He could dance and caper lightly, he could give the glad-eye brightly,
He could serenade her nightly, but he couldn't pay a bill !
And her dad, with riches sated, would not see her humbly mated,
So she feared that she was fated all her days to mourn and mope.
So the sweet, romantic maiden had a soul with sorrow laden,
And indeed at times betrayed an inclination to elope.

When the subject once was mooted, the bold Baron fiercely booted
Young Sir Fatted till he scooted. So he seldom saw the maid.
But at midnight's solemn hour, he would stand beneath her tower,
And with lungs of wondrous power he would sing his serenade.
He would sing his faithful passion, in a wild romantic fashion,
With a voice like Bull of Bashan, to the maid above him far.
While the stars did shine and twinkle, or the rain-drops gently sprinkle,
To the tinkle-tinkle-tinkle of his second-hand guitar.

And at times, his love outpouring, while the Baron bold was snoring,
He would sing his song adoring and forget the flight of time.
In his ardour never heeding how the hours were fleetly speeding,
Most pathetically pleading in most melancholy rhyme.
Keeping on till early morning, e'en until the day was dawning,
While the beauteous maid was yawning as she listened high above ;
Till one morn, when day was breaking, the bold Baron, early waking,
Heard the din that he was making with his endless tale of love.

Heard him twanging, singing, sighing : " Love, the golden hours are flying,
And your lover true is dying for a tender clasp or kiss.
Oh, take pity on my plight, Love ! Fly, oh fly, with me to-night, Love !
All is ready for the flight, Love ! It's a chance you shouldn't miss !





True, too true, I have no gold, dear! But true love is wealth untold,
dear!

Hearts cannot be bought and sold, dear! Fly, oh fly, with me, I pray!
And in happiness most utter, we will live on bread-and-butter!
So, my darling ducky, flutter to these arms, and we'll away!"

It was certainly a pity that this sweet, love-laden ditty,
So pathetic and so pretty, did not make the Baron melt.
But he really seemed to hate it, it is painful to relate it,
But we cannot help but state it—it was wrath the Baron felt.
In his rage he stomped and spluttered, and some certain words he
uttered,

Which he scarcely should have muttered—they were hefty words and
strong,
And the Baron only stayed a tick to grasp his mace, and made a
Rush to catch the serenader in the middle of his song.

When Sir Fatted saw him coming, very quickly ceased he strumming,
Every thought of yum-yum-yumming disappearing from his mind.
Ceased he quick his song romantic, ceased he every love-lorn antic,
Fled he forth in hurry frantic, with the Baron close behind.
In his haste and hurry caring little whither he was tearing,
While the Baron, fiercely glaring, chased with arm upraised to whack,
Teeth that gritted, eyes that glinted, in red rage and wrath unstinted,
Breathing vengeance as he sprinted on the luckless lover's track.

Panting, gasping, springing, leaping, while the gentle maid was weeping,
And the Baron fierce was keeping close behind and seeing red,
Went the young unhappy lover, looking round in vain for cover,
Dodging under, round, and over, barely half-a-length ahead.
Twisting, turning, bounding, jumping—slipping, sliding, falling, bump-
ing—

Still behind him came the clumping of the Baron hot in chase;
While the dawn was gently beaming, and the lady fair was screaming,
And the perspiration streaming down Sir Fatted's flabby face.

"Arma," Virgil sang, in ages past, "virumque," in the pages
Of our school-books it engages our attention at the start.
"Crura," might have run his version, "puerumque"—not a worse 'un,
Had he seen that lad's exertion, as he legged it to depart.
"Oh, the fatal, fatal hour!" sobbed the maiden in the tower,
And her tears fell in a shower, as her brow she wildly smote.
"Oh, my hat! My only bonnet! This just puts the lid upon it!"
Gasped the youth, in consternation, as he reached the castle moat!

Just before him muddy water—just behind him, instant slaughter!
Pausing there he nearly caught a swipe the Baron handed out.
At the moat's edge wildly stopping, on his knees in terror dropping,
He expected instant chopping from the Baron bold and stout.
But he need not so have worried, for the Baron, flushed and flurried,
Rushed so headlong and so hurried, that he fairly looped the loop.
Stumbling headlong o'er the lover, the pursuer hurtled over,
And before he could recover he was fairly in the soup.

Deep into the water sinking, while Sir Fatted stuck there blinking,
Unintentionally drinking half-a-gallon of the moat,
The stout Baron went right under, through the water cleft asunder,
Which was really not a wonder—he was far too stout to float!
From the bank Sir Fatted peering, horrid gasps and gurgles hearing,
Saw the Baron disappearing in the water far from sweet.
But a few short moments later, like an active alligator,
The fair lady's angry pater struggled snorting to his feet.

By that castle tall and stately there had been no rainfall lately,
Which diminished rather greatly the supply of water, so
There was much more mud than water, and the Baron, breathing
slaughter,



Stood a third—at least a quarter—of his height above the flow.
 Red with rage, and rather redder after that unlooked-for header,
 In a gasping voice he said a word or two we shan't repeat.
 Drenched and dripping, but still ramping, through the mud he started
 tramping,
 Plunging, snorting, striding, stamping hard to disengage his feet.

But the mud was thick, as stated, and the Baron, heavy-weighted,
 With his armour thickly-plated, deeper sunk and deeper yet,
 First his tootsies, then his knees in mud beneath the moat were squeezin',
 A position far from pleasin' as his chin the water met.
 And the more he squirmed and struggled, deeper still his tootsies snug-
 gled,
 And he gurgled and he guggled, with the water round his neck.
 He was stuck there, as if planted. "By my halidom!" he panted.
 "Wish I'd had this moat decanted! Lend a hand, you pie-faced
 geck!"

Smiled the youth, no more in terror, "You are bunkered, and no error!
 Keep your wool on, sir, and peradventure I will help you land!
 Yonder, sir, is that fair donna, and you know I dote upon her.
 Noble sir, I have the honour to demand your daughter's hand!"
 "Grooch! Gug! Gug! Gug!" gasped the other. "Will you stand
 and see me smother?"
 "One good turn deserves another!" said Sir Fatted, with a bow.
 "Think no more of wrath and slaughter, let me wed your beauteous
 daughter,
 And I'll yank you from the water! Take my tip, and do it now!"

The bold Baron tried to shake a fist and say "Go to Jamaica!"
 But he gasped and gurgled "Take her!" as he felt the water mount,
 "Take her, bother you, and keep her!" For his feet were sinking
 deeper,
 He could neither crawl nor creep a step, and had to take the count.
 "Sir, I thank you!" said Sir Fatted, leaning over as he chatted,
 Grasping hair all wet and matted, and beginning hard to tug.
 "Sir, your moat is thick and whiffy, thicker far than Thames or Liffey,
 But I'll do it in a jiffy!" Said the Baron, "Grooch! Gug! Gug!"

It was really time for action, for in scarce another fraction
 Of a minute the extraction would have hardly been in time,
 With the water at his throttle, having swallowed quite a pottle,
 Like a cork drawn from a bottle came the Baron from the slime.
 On the grassy margin sprawling, when Sir Fatted finished hauling,
 In a sticky state appalling, shaking mud off in a shower,
 Lay the Baron, fuming, fretting, while Sir Fatted, him forgetting,
 Went off gaily pirouetting to the lady in the tower.

"Oh, my dearest and my fairest! Oh, my richest and my rarest!
 Wed me if for me thou carest!" sang Sir Fatted in his joy,
 "For the Baron has relented, and has happily consented
 That our wedding be cemented!" Said the lady fair, "Oh, boy!"
 "Oh, my dainty darling ducky, it has all turned out quite lucky,
 Though your pater looks so mucky!" sang Sir Fatted in his glee.
 "Ain't I glad he heard me singing, and came after me a-springing!
 Wedding bells will soon be ringing for my lady-love and me!"

And the bells of that gay wedding could be heard from Rye to Reading,
 As the brave Sir Fatted led in that fair lady bright and gay,
 Vassals cheering, jesters wheezing, everybody pleased and pleasing,
 Though the Baron bold was sneezing as he gave the bride away!
 Everyone the youth congratrated, and his back they gaily patted,
 And the face of young Sir Fatted shone just like the summer sun.
 All was merry joy and laughter, ringing loud from roof and rafter;
 They lived happy ever after—and so now our tale is done.



ST. JIM'S DOWN THE AGES!



DOCTOR STERNE
1637-1652.



ST. JAMES'S COLLEGE
- 1715. -



A WRESTLING BOUT.
A POPULAR SPORT
IN GEORGIAN DAYS
AT ST. JIM'S.



THOMAS MERRY
1850

BREAKING UP FOR THE HOLIDAYS, 1807



THE JAPE OF ST. JIM'S. KING MAL VISITS THE SCHOOL.

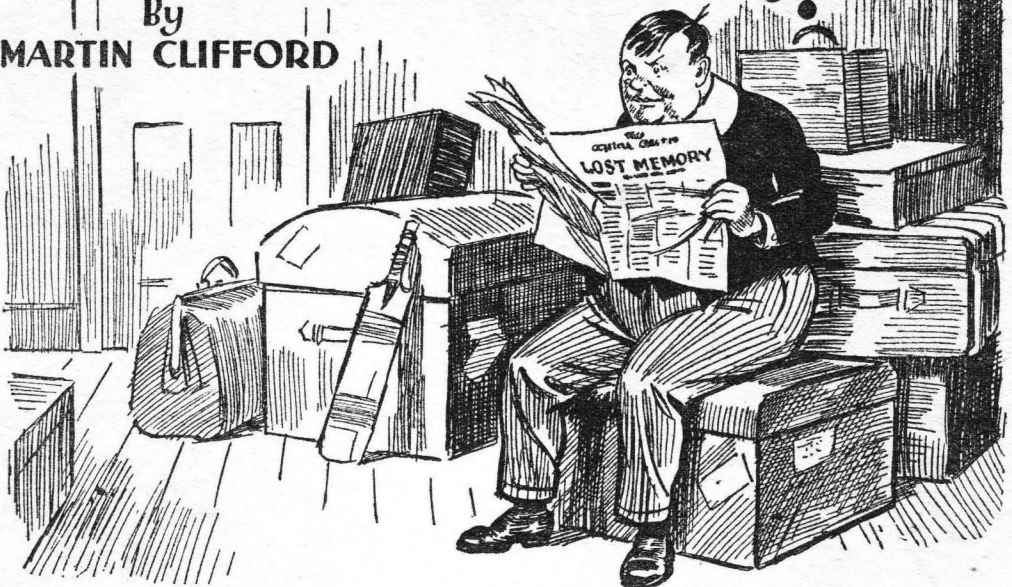


THE GREAT FIRE AT ST. JIM'S.

The Editor insisted that the Holiday Annual artist should include in his set of drawings a page of thumbnail pictures showing outstanding events in the history of St. Jim's. The result compares very favourably with the earlier full-page drawings of Rookwood and Greyfriars.

The SPOOFER!

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD



Baggy Trimble's brain-wave for dodging lessons was to lose his memory—but not for the first time does Baggy discover that the way of the "spoofer" is hard!

THE FIRST CHAPTER MYSTERIOUS!

"WHY not?"

Kit Wildrake of the Fourth could not help looking surprised.

He had come along the Fourth Form passage to Study No. 2, and was about to enter, when Baggy Trimble asked that question.

Baggy was not addressing Wildrake; he did not even see him. And the third member of the study, Mellish, was not there.

Baggy Trimble was sitting alone in his glory, as it were, in the study armchair, with his fat little legs

resting on another chair, taking his ease. His fat face was thoughtful in expression, and in his podgy paws he held a newspaper, which apparently he had been reading.

And he was addressing empty space when he propounded that question: "Why not?"

Then he chuckled.

Kit Wildrake stared in at the study doorway. Still Baggy, deep in his thoughts, whatever they were, did not see the Canadian junior.

"Why not? Easy as falling off a form! And it would be bound to be a success—the way I should do it! He, he, he!"

Evidently great thoughts were stirring in the fat intellect of Trimble of the Fourth.

"Why not?" asked Trimble, for the third time, apparently addressing the bookcase of Study No. 2.

The bookcase naturally did not answer; but Wildrake did.

"You fat jay——"

Trimble jumped.

He spun round in the armchair with alarm in his fat face, as he realised that his mumblings had been heard.

"Oh! I—I say, Wildrake, I wasn't saying anything!"

Wildrake came into the study.

"Off your rocker?" he inquired.

"N-no."

"Then what are you mumbling about, you fat jay?"

"N-n-nothing."

"What stunt have you got now in that podgy chunk you call a brain?" asked Wildrake suspiciously. "New dodge for borrowing money from the galoots along the passage?"

"I don't approve of borrowing money," said Trimble, blinking at him.

"Oh, my hat!"

"I—I was just thinking——" explained Trimble.

"What with?"

"Don't you be a cheeky ass, Wildrake. I—I was thinking about—— about my lessons."

Kit Wildrake laughed. Even in class Trimble did not think about his lessons, if he could help it. He really was very unlikely to think about them out of class.

Manifestly, the fat junior was afraid that Wildrake might have drawn conclusions from his mumblings, and learned what was passing in his fat brain—which apparently Trimble wanted to keep a dead secret. He

was blinking anxiously at the Canadian junior.

"Anything in the newspaper?" asked Wildrake.

Trimble suddenly clutched at the newspaper, folded it, and stuffed it under his jacket.

"Nothing!" he answered promptly.

"What are you hiding it for, then?" asked Wildrake, in increasing astonishment.

"I—I—— The fact is, you know——" Baggy stammered. "I haven't been reading about a case just admitted to the Wayland Hospital, Wildrake."

"Haven't you?"

"No! This isn't the Wayland paper at all."

"Not really?" grinned Wildrake.

"Not at all!"

"How odd that it should have 'Wayland Gazette' printed along the top, then!" remarked Wildrake. "You see, fathead, you've left the top of it sticking out."

"Oh!" gasped Trimble.

He hurriedly stuffed the paper out of sight.

"The—the fact is——" he stutted.

"Can it!" said Wildrake tersely.

"What are you rolling out lies for, Trimble? You've been reading something in the local paper about a case in the Wayland Hospital. No harm in that. Why on earth should you tell lies about it? Especially as I'm not interested."

"Have you got that footah, Wildwake?" inquired Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth.

An eyeglass gleamed in at the doorway of the study.

"Sure!"

Wildrake picked up an old footer from a shelf. He had come in for it for a punt about in the quad, when

he had surprised Baggy Trimble in his deep and mysterious meditations.

Trimble was watching him eagerly, evidently anxious for his study-mate to go.

"Any more whoppers to roll out, Baggy?" asked Wildrake, with a laugh.

"I—I——"

"Get them all off your chest," said Wildrake. "You see, I'm going to biff you on the cabeza with this footer for telling lies, so you may as well have your money's worth."

Trimble jumped away in alarm.

"Jollay good ideah, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy approv-

ingly. "Twimble is a feahful fabwicatah. Give him one for me, Wildwake!"

"Sure!"

"Yaroooh! Keep off!" roared Baggy Trimble, dodging round the armchair.

Biff!

Kit Wildrake reached across the chair and landed the footer on Baggy's bullet head.

"Bwavo!" chortled Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Well hit, sir! Now give the fat boundah anothat for me!"

"Yow-ow-ow! Gerroff!" yelled Trimble.



"Yaroooh! Keep off!" roared Baggy Trimble, dodging round the armchair. Biff! Kit Wildrake reached across the chair and landed the footer on Baggy's bullet head. "Bwavo!" chortled Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Well hit, sir!"

He fled frantically round the study table with Wildrake in pursuit, the footer raised for another smite.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Arthur Augustus.

The next moment Arthur Augustus ceased to laugh. Trimble made a frantic break for the doorway to flee, and he crashed suddenly and overwhelmingly upon Gussy. The slim swell of St. Jim's was simply nowhere when it came to stopping a charge with Baggy's weight behind it. He fairly flew across the passage and sat down with a bump and a yell.

"Wow!"

Trimble staggered from the shock for a second, and then he bolted down the passage.

"Come back!" roared Wildrake. "I owe you one more!"

"Yah!"

Baggy Trimble vanished.

"Oh cwumbs!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "Oh cwikey! That howwid boundah has fairly flattened me out! I have a pain in my—my waistcoat."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Wildwake, it is not a laughing mattah," gasped Arthur Augustus. "I have been thwown into a feahful fluttah. Wow!"

Blake and Herries and Dig came out of Study No. 6. They paused on their way to the stairs to glance at Arthur Augustus.

"What on earth are you sitting down there for, Gussy?" asked Blake.

"Taking a rest on the floor?"

"Wow!"

"You'll make your bags dusty," said Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies— Ow!"

Arthur Augustus staggered to his feet.

"That howwid wottah Twimble bowled me ovah!" he gasped. "I am goin' to thwash Twimble!"

"I guess you're coming to punt this ball about," said Wildrake. "Thrash Trimble another time."

"Trimble will keep!" grinned Blake.

"Yaas; but——"

"Come along, old hoss!"

Arthur Augustus adjusted his eyeglass, and looked round for Trimble. But that fat youth was far away by that time, and punishment had to be postponed.

"I will thwash the howwid boundah aftah tea!" said Arthur Augustus. "Undah the circs I feel bound to give him a feahful thwashin'. I am comin', deah boys! There is no need to dwag at my arm like that, Blake! Pway let go my collah, Dig! Weally, Hewwies——"

And Arthur Augustus went.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

TRYING IT ON!

BAGGY TRIMBLE had taken refuge in a box-room.

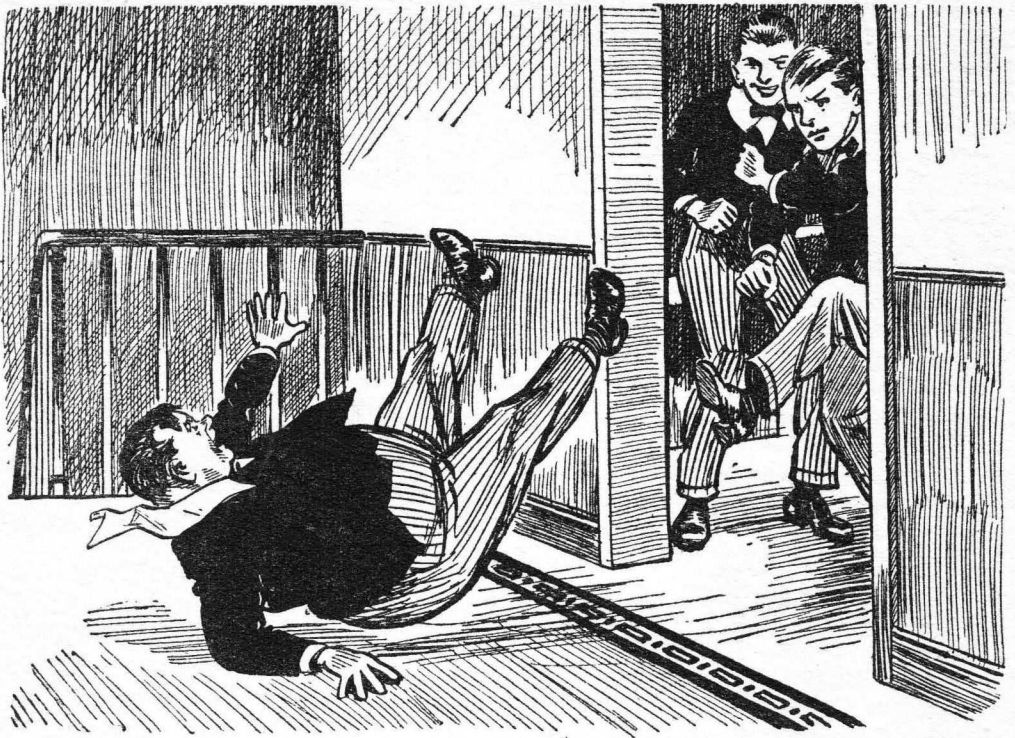
In that secluded spot the fat junior sat on a trunk and gasped for breath. Baggy was always short-winded, and his flight had deprived him of what little breath he had.

"Rotters!" gasped Trimble.

But a fat smile irradiated his unprepossessing countenance as he drew the crumpled paper from under his jacket, and blinked at a paragraph in its columns.

That paragraph was an ordinary item of local news; and any St. Jim's fellow would have been surprised at Baggy's deep interest in it. Yet it was clear that Baggy was deeply interested. He had already read it through five or six times, and now he read it again. It ran:

"A man at present unknown has been admitted to the Wayland Cottage



As Trimble tore open the door of the box-room to flee, Aubrey Racke rushed after him and kicked. Baggy reached the landing outside quicker than he had anticipated. There was a bump and a roar as he rolled on the floor. "Yarough!" he yelled.

Hospital. He was found wandering by the police, and apparently suffering from shock, and appears to have completely lost his memory. He has, so far, been unable even to state his name. Much sympathy is felt for the unfortunate patient. Investigations are being made, and it is hoped that the police will be able to make some discovery and communicate with his friends."

That was all. How it concerned Baggy Trimble would have seemed a deep mystery to any fellow who saw Baggy devouring the paragraph. Certainly, any reader might have felt a kind sympathy for a poor fellow who had received a shock and in conse-

quence lost his memory. But Baggy had never been noted for a sympathetic nature. His own little troubles he felt deeply. But he had always shown a remarkable amount of fortitude in connection with the troubles of others.

"Why not?" murmured Trimble. "Easy enough! I dare say the man's a spoofer, getting board and lodging for nothing. He, he, he! Much sympathy is felt— After all, a chap's bound to be sympathetic in a case like this. They ain't all as sharp as I am, and they wouldn't think their leg was being pulled. Tom Merry, f'rinstance, would walk a mile out of his way to do anything for a chap in a fix like that."

Trimble grinned complacently.

Evidently that item of local news had brought some wonderful scheme into Trimble's head.

He started a little as he heard steps on the stairs that led to the box-room.

"Oh dear! Those rotters——"

He had just time to shove the paper out of sight, when the door opened. He was relieved to see that the newcomers were not Wildrake and D'Arcy, as he had feared. Mellish of the Fourth, and Racke and Crooke of the Shell came into the box-room. Baggy did not need telling what they had come for. The black sheep of the School House had a way of sneaking into the box-rooms to smoke cigarettes in surreptitious safety.

The three juniors stared at Trimble.

"What are you doing here, tubby?" asked Racke.

Trimble drew a deep breath.

His wonderful scheme was cut and dried in his fat brain; a scheme that was to elicit much sympathy, as in the case at the hospital. It was to lead to much profit, if Baggy Trimble could work it.

He decided to strike the iron while it was hot, as it were, and try his new and amazing stunt upon Racke & Co.

So, instead of answering Aubrey Racke's question, he gave him a far-away look.

"Where am I?" he asked.

Racke & Co. stared harder.

"Eh? You're in the top box-room," said Crooke. "Don't you know where you are, you fat idiot?"

"Who are you?"

"Wha-a-t?"

"Have I ever seen you before?" asked Trimble.

"Mad!" said Racke.

"Do you chaps know my name?" asked Trimble.

"Know your name?" said Mellish blankly.

"Yes. Do you?"

"What are you getting at, you apology for a silly dummy?" demanded Racke. "Are you trying to pull our legs?"

"I want you to tell me who you are!" said Trimble.

"Don't you know who I am, fathead?" yelled Racke.

"No!"

"Well, my only hat!"

"You see, I've lost my memory!" explained Trimble.

Racke almost staggered.

"Lost your memory?" he repeated faintly.

"That's it! I don't even remember your name, Racke——"

"Wha-at?"

"Or Crooke's, either," said Trimble fatuously.

"Great Scott!"

"Or Mellish's," said Trimble. "My mind's a perfect blank. So far as I remember, I've never seen you fellows before."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mellish.

"There's nothing to cackle at, Mellish, in a misfortune like this," said Trimble sorrowfully. "I call it heartless. Some fellows would feel much sympathy."

"Is it a new stunt?" asked Racke, in wonder. "Do you think you'll get out of lessons with a yarn like that?"

"Look here, Racke——"

"If you're going to forget fellows' names," said Racke, "you'd better not call them by name while you're doing it."

Trimble started.

"I—I—I didn't—I mean——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mellish.

"Try it on the Form-master, Baggy! Why, he'll wallop you!"

Trimble stammered. He realised that he would have to be a little more careful if he was going to gain much sympathy as an unfortunate victim of loss of memory. Racke & Co. were howling with laughter. Baggy's first essay certainly could not be called a success.

"The—the fact is——" stammered Trimble.

"That's enough," grinned Racke. "If you're goin' to try a stunt like that, better play it on Tom Merry, or Figgins, or some other soft ass. We're rather too wide, you know."

"And now get out!" said Croke.

Trimble moved to the door. Evidently he was not to be asked to share the smokes of the three young rascals. Racke was opening a box of cigarettes on the top of a trunk.

"I—I say, before I—I go, will you tell me my name, Racke?" stammered Trimble.

Aubrey Racke looked round at him.

"Still keepin' it up?" he asked.

"Yes—I mean——"

"Well, I won't tell you your name," said Racke. "I fancy you know it as well as you know mine. But I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll jolly well kick you out of this room, you fat spoofer!"

"Here, I say—— Yarooooop!"

Trimble tore open the door to flee. Aubrey Racke rushed after him, and kicked.

Crash!

Baggy Trimble rolled out of the box-room, and rolled on the landing outside, with a terrific roar.

"Got your memory back?" asked Aubrey.

"Yaroooooh!"

"Well, I'll give you another——"

"Yow! Keep off, you beast!"

Baggy Trimble picked himself up and went down the narrow stairs

three at a time. Racke chuckled, and turned back into the box-room and closed the door. In a few minutes the cigarettes were going strong, and Racke & Co. were making a solemn and heroic pretence of enjoying them. Meanwhile, Baggy Trimble wandered away rather disconsolately.

He had tried it on Racke & Co., and it had not been a success. But Trimble was a sticker. He was going to be more careful next time—and in his mind's eye Baggy already saw himself an object of general sympathy, excused from lessons, and raising little loans from compassionate fellows with tenderer hearts than Racke's. In fact, he had a flattering vision of himself as a pig in clover—and it only remained to be seen whether that vision would be realised

THE THIRD CHAPTER

THE TERRIBLE THREE ARE NOT
TAKING ANY!

TOM MERRY came cheerily into his study in the Shell passage. It was tea-time, and Tom was first in of the Terrible Three. Manners was out somewhere with his camera; Monty Lowther had biked down to Rylcombe to look at the proofs of the "Weekly" at the printer's. Tom had been at football practice, and, being first in the study, he intended getting tea ready for his chums when they returned. He stared a little at the sight of Baggy Trimble seated in his armchair in the study.

"Making yourself at home?" he asked.

"Good-afternoon!" said Trimble, blinking at him.

Tom stared.

"Eh—what?" he ejaculated.

"Good-afternoon! Have I seen you before?" asked Trimble.

"A few hundred times, I suppose," said Tom. "What are you driving at, Trimble?"

"Trimble? Who's Trimble?"

Tom Merry staggered.

"Who's Trimble?" he repeated.

"Yes. Who?"

"Are you potty?" roared Tom Merry. "Mean to say that you've forgotten your own name?"

"Is it my name?"

"Is it?" gasped Tom. "Yes, you funny ass, it is! What's this game?"

Trimble passed a fat hand across a podgy brow.

"I don't seem to remember it, somehow," he said.

"You don't seem to remember your own name?" asked the captain of the Shell, in measured tones.

"It doesn't sound familiar."

"I suppose you're trying to pull my leg," said Tom Merry, after a puzzled pause. "If it's a joke, I don't quite see the point. Anyhow, get out of my study, will you?"

"Is this your study?"

"You know it is, you fathead!"

"I don't!"

"Well, you know it now I've told you," said Tom. "Get out! The fact is, Trimble, I feel inclined to kick you whenever I see you. Travel along. I'm going to fill the kettle now. If you're still here when I come back, you'll get the water. Catch on?"

The Shell fellow picked up the kettle from the fender and left the study. He did not understand Trimble's new stunt in the least, and wasn't interested anyway. He concluded that it was some unfathomable joke, or spoof of some kind, and all he wanted was Trimble's departure.

But Baggy Trimble was still there when the captain of the Shell reentered after filling the kettle at the

tap in the passage. Tom Merry frowned at him.

"Not gone yet?" he asked.

"No. You see——"

"I see! You're going to get wet."

Tom Merry lifted up the kettle and started towards the fat junior. Baggy was out of the armchair with a bound and dodging behind it.

"Hold on, you rotter!" he gasped.

"Don't chuck that water over me, you beast! I'll get out if this is your study."

"Well, get out!"

"Who are you?" demanded Trimble.

"Eh—what? Who am I?" ejaculated Tom, almost dazedly.

"Yes. I don't know your name."

"You don't know my name?" bawled Tom.

"No. If I ever knew, I've forgotten. I—I—I seem to have lost my memory somehow," said Trimble pathetically.

His pathos was wasted on the captain of the Shell. Tom Merry was a doubting Thomas just then.

"You'd better find it again, then," he said unsympathetically; "and when you've found it, use it to remember to keep out of my study! Travel!"

"But I say——"

"Bunk!" roared Tom Merry, quite fed up by this time; and he came round the armchair with the kettle in the air. A swish of water from the spout caught Baggy Trimble in his fat neck and he gave a roar.

"Yow-ow! Keep off, Tom Merry, you rotter!"

"Oh, you've remembered my name now, have you?"

"I—I mean——"

"Never mind what you mean—get out!"

Baggy Trimble jumped for the door,

just escaping another jet from the spout of the kettle. He realised that that little slip of the tongue had betrayed him; evidently he had to learn to be more careful. A fellow who had lost his memory was supposed to have lost it completely—not in streaks, as it were. This was his second failure.

“worked” on the masters; but, naturally, Trimble wanted to test it on the juniors first—it was safer. It was a case of “trying it on the dog,” as it were.

Manners came along the passage with his camera slung over his arm, looking very merry and bright. Apparently Manners of the Shell had



“This isn’t the place for fag jokes,” said Cutts, and he accompanied the remark with a “lick” from the ruler. “Yarough!” roared Baggy Trimble, and he was in the passage with a single bound. “Oh, you rotter!”

“Rotter!” he howled, and dodged out of the doorway.

Tom Merry slammed the door after him and proceeded to build a fire and boil the kettle, forgetting the unimportant existence of Baggy Trimble.

In the passage, Trimble wrinkled his fat brows in thought. Later on his sad loss of memory was to be

had a happy afternoon with his camera. Baggy Trimble rolled in his way.

“Excuse me——” he began.

“I’ll excuse you if you get out of my way,” said Manners. “Otherwise, I’ll kick you!”

“Would you mind showing me the way to my study?”

“What?” ejaculated Manners.

"I've lost my memory——"

"Lost your memory, have you?" asked Manners. "Better look for it, then, or put an advertisement in the 'Daily Telegraph.' What are you trying to pull my leg for, you fat fool?"

"Look here, you know——"

"Scat!"

Manners took Trimble by the collar and spun him against the wall, then walked on cheerfully, leaving Baggy gasping.

"Oh dear!" murmured Trimble, as Harry Manners disappeared into Study No. 10. "Of all the rotters! Lot of sympathy I seem likely to get from those cads! Ow!"

Monty Lowther came in a little later. He came along the passage at a trot, being hungry and in a hurry for tea.

Baggy Trimble caught him by the arm to stop him, so suddenly that Lowther spun right round the fat junior.

"You silly ass!" exclaimed Lowther. "Wharrer you at?"

"I say, I've lost my memory——"

"Wha-a-at?"

"I don't know my way to my own study!" said Trimble pathetically. "Would you mind showing me, though you're a stranger to me?"

"A—a—a stranger to you?" stuttered Monty.

"Yes. Have I ever seen you before?" asked Trimble innocently. "I can't remember your name, you know."

Monty Lowther looked steadily at the fat junior. Baggy met his gaze with a look of sad and sorrowful pathos. Baggy felt that his misfortune ought to have touched a heart of stone. With his wonderful imaginative powers, he was almost beginning to believe himself that he had really lost his memory.

"Oh! Lost your memory?" gasped Lowther, grasping it at last.

"I say, that's pretty bad."

"Awful, isn't it?"

"Fearful!" said Lowther. "You don't know your way to your own study?"

"No; haven't the least idea."

"Like me to guide you?"

"That's it, old fellow."

"Come on, then," said Monty Lowther, and he took Trimble by the arm and led him down the passage.

Baggy Trimble winked into space with the eye that was farthest from Lowther. He had found a believer at last; the plot was working!

Monty Lowther, with quite a sympathetic expression, led Trimble onward. They passed the door of Study No. 2 in the Fourth, which was Trimble's study, and the fat junior involuntarily halted. Lowther pulled at his arm.

"Come on!" he said.

"Oh, ah, yes!" gasped Trimble.

Certainly a fellow who had lost his memory couldn't insist that No. 2 was his study. Trimble rolled on with his conductor, with a dismayed feeling that the humorist of the Shell was exercising humour at his expense. But it was rather difficult for Trimble to raise objections, in the circumstances, so he rolled on apprehensively.

Monty Lowther led him into the Fifth Form passage.

"I—I say!" murmured Trimble.

"Nearly there!" said Lowther cheerily.

"But—but I say——"

"Here you are!"

A study door stood open, the study of Cutts and St. Leger of the Fifth. Cutts of the Fifth was there, talking to St. Leger. Monty Lowther led Baggy into the study.

"Now you're all right!" he said.

And he walked out rather quickly. The Terrible Three were not on good terms with Cutts of the Fifth.

Cutts and St. Leger stared at Trimble.

"What do you want, you fat jackanapes?" asked Cutts, with the brand of politeness he kept specially for juniors.

"I—I——" Trimble stammered. Cutts of the Fifth was a good deal of a bully, and not a safe person to "try" it on. But Trimble resolved to go ahead and do his best. "That chap——"

"What chap? What do you mean?"

"That chap who brought me here. I don't know his name——"

"You don't know Lowther's name?" ejaculated Cutts.

"No. I've lost my memory."

"Great gad!"

"He makes out that this is my study," said Trimble. "Is it?"

St. Leger stared at the fat junior in astonishment. Cutts gave him a look, and then picked up a ruler.

"This study isn't the place for fag jokes," he remarked, and he accompanied the remark with a "lick" from the ruler. Trimble was in the passage with a single bound.

"Yarough! Oh, you rotter!"

Cutts stepped to the door, ruler in hand. Baggy Trimble faded out of the Fifth Form passage.

Monty Lowther met him at the corner with a genial smile.

"Hallo! Not staying in your study?" he asked.

"Yah! It—it wasn't my study, you rotter!"

"How do you know, if you've lost your memory?" asked Monty pleasantly. "But we'll try again. Come on!"

He took Trimble's arm. Baggy jerked it away. He did not want any more guidance; he was afraid that Lowther might have led him to Knox of the Sixth next.

"Go and eat coke!" he snapped.

"Don't want any more help?" asked Lowther blandly.

"Yah! Rotter!"

Baggy Trimble rolled away, and Monty Lowther, with a chuckle, repaired to Study No. 10 in the Shell to tea. Baggy was left disconsolate, beginning to have doubts as to whether his amazing new stunt was going to be a success after all. Certainly the Terrible Three of the Shell were not taking any.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

USEFUL TO MELLISH!

"**B**AI Jove! Heah's the wottah!"

Blake & Co. came in to tea, very ruddy and cheery after punting a footer about in the quad. They found the fat form of Baggy Trimble of the Fourth adorning the doorway in Study No. 6.

"Waitin' for me, you fat boun-dah?" asked Arthur Augustus. "Thank you vewy much for we-mindin' me that I owe you a feahful thwashin'."

Arthur Augustus pushed back his cuffs. Trimble blinked at the swell of St. Jim's sorrowfully.

"Will you chaps help me?" he asked.

"We'll help you out of that doorway, if you don't clear," said Jack Blake. "What are you lolling in our doorway for, you fat image?"

"Is this my study?"

"What?"

"I've had a fearful misfortune," said Trimble. "I had a shock, and I've lost my memory."

"Bai Jove!"

"Well, you haven't lost it in our study," said Blake. "Go and look for it somewhere else."

"Bai Jove! If this is twue——"

"Fathead!" said Herries. "Some more of his spoofo, that's all."

"Yaas, wathah! I suppose that is the case, Hewwies?"

"Of course it is," grunted Dig. "Get out, Trimble!"

"Is my name Trimble?"

"You know it is, you silly ass!" howled Blake. "Don't try us with a yarn like that."

"I had a shock," said Trimble in a faltering voice. "I seem to remember rushing out of a study and biffing into somebody——"

"Bai Jove! It was me you biffed into, you fat boundah!"

"After that it's all a blank!" said Trimble dramatically. "When I opened my eyes all was dark!"

"What?"

"I haven't come here to tea," said Trimble. "In fact, I've forgotten tea-time. I want somebody to guide me to my study."

Blake and Herries and Dig glared at Trimble in utter unbelief. But Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had a soft heart and, according to his chums, a soft head. He looked rather serious.

"Bai Jove, if it's twue, it's a feahful thing to happen to any chap," he said. "Pway give him a chance, you fellows. I have seweval times thought that somethin' would happen to Twimble fwom eatin' so much. There is such a thing as fattay degeneration of the bwain, I believe."

"Ass!" said Blake.

Blake shoved Trimble aside and went into the study. It was tea-time, and Blake had no leisure to waste on Trimble. Tea was a more important consideration than Baggy's mis-

fortunes, real or assumed. But the tender-hearted Gussy lingered.

"Do you feel any pain, Twimble?" he asked.

"Is my name Trimble?" asked Baggy dreamily.

"Yaas, deah boy."

"It seems strange. What is your name?"

"D'Arcy, deah boy. Have you any pain?"

"Only a slight throbbing in the head," said Trimble; "a sort of buzz in the brain, you know."

"Gweat Scott, that's sewious!"

"I can bear it," said Trimble bravely. "I only want to be guided to my study, Smith."

"Smith? What are you callin' me Smith for, you ass?"

"Didn't you say your name was Smith?"

"I said my name was D'Arcy, Twimble."

"Oh, I'm sorry! I'd forgotten already." Trimble pressed his hand to his fat brow. "It's an awful thing to lose one's memory, D'Arcy. You might help me to my study. I may recover later on."

"Bai Jove! I weally twust so, Twimble. Heah, Wildwake, old fellow" —Wildrake was coming up from the stairs—"take Twimble along with you to your studay, deah boy!"

"Eh? What's the matter with him?" asked the Canadian junior, in surprise.

"He says he's lost his memoway, deah boy."

"Lost his grandmother!" said Wildrake.

"Bai Jove! If it is genuine, it is a vewy sad case, Wildwake. Pway take him along to the studay."

"Oh, I guess I'll do that!" grinned Wildrake. "Come along, you fat spoofoing bounder!"

Arthur Augustus went into Study No. 6 with a very thoughtful expression on his noble face. If Trimble had really suffered such a terrible misfortune as loss of memory, he was certain to find a kind and helping friend in Arthur Augustus. But Gussy—unuspicious as he was as a rule—could not help having some doubts. Trimble's reputation in the House was the very reverse of that of the late lamented George Washington. Indeed, there had been fellows who averred that Trimble could not have told the truth if he had tried—not that he was ever likely to try!

Wildrake, with a grin on his sunburnt face, piloted Trimble along to Study No. 2. The keen Canadian

junior was about the last fellow at St. Jim's to be spoofed.

He pushed Trimble into Study No. 2, and followed him in.

"Is this my study?" asked Trimble faintly.

"I guess so. Had your tea?" asked Wildrake.

"I don't remember."

"Oh, jumping Jehoshaphat!" said Wildrake. "May I advise you to can it, Trimble? It won't work, you know! It won't wash! Try something a bit easier!"

"I'm sorry to see you so unsympathetic towards a fellow in misfortune," said Trimble. "I'll try to bear it."

"Oh, cut it out!"



"I haven't come here to tea," said Trimble. "In fact, I've forgotten tea-time. I want somebody to guide me to my study. My mind's a blank!" "What?" Jack Blake & Co. stared at Baggy in astonishment.

Wildrake, still unsympathetic, began on tea. Mellish came into the study, looking rather white and sickly after his enjoyable smoke in the box-room. He grinned at Trimble.

"Hallo! Found your giddy memory yet?" he asked.

"So you've heard of it?" chuckled Wildrake. "What is the fat idiot spinning this yarn for?"

"Blessed if I know, unless it's to get out of lessons. Anything for tea?" asked Mellish.

"Anything you like to get from the tuckshop, I guess."

Mellish grunted.

The Canadian had brought in a parcel from the tuckshop. Baggy Trimble sat down on the table and helped himself from the supplies. Wildrake gave him a look, but said nothing. But when Mellish was following his example, Wildrake called a halt.

"Easy does it," he said. "There isn't enough for three. Chap wants his tea, you know."

"I'm stony!" growled Mellish.

"Go down to Hall, then."

"Blow Hall!" Mellish looked at Trimble, and grinned. "Sure you've lost your memory, Baggy?"

"Quite sure!" said Trimble.

"Then you can't remember anything that belongs to you."

"Can't remember anything," said Trimble pathetically. "It's an awful misfortune."

"Must be!" said Mellish, with a nod. "Well, as I'm stony, I'll sell a fives bat to young Tompkins, to raise the wind. I know he wants one, and we don't want fives bats just now."

He picked up a fives bat that belonged to Baggy Trimble, and started for the door.

Trimble jumped up. Apparently

his loss of memory did not go quite so far as that.

"Look here! Hold on——"

"What's the matter?" asked Mellish.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wildrake. "His memory's come back!"

Baggy Trimble gasped. He realised that if he was going to be a fellow without a memory the fives bat would have to go. It was a sacrifice, but, after all, Trimble felt that perhaps it was a sprat to catch a whale. If only he could convince fellows of his terrible misfortune, it would be worth more than the price of a fives bat to him.

"Well?" grinned Mellish. "Anything to say?"

"N-no!" gasped Trimble. "Just—just for a minute I—I thought I knew that bat. But it's gone again."

He sat down.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Mellish. "Are you sticking to it?"

Trimble covered his fat face with his hands, and groaned.

"It's a blank—a perfect blank!" he said. "I remember nothing! Oh dear! Is—is—is that bat mine, Mellish?"

"Not at all—mine!" grinned Mellish. "You can keep up this stunt as long as you like, Baggy. Useful at tea-time."

And Mellish walked out of the study, grinning. Certainly he had not expected to get off with the bat. He was in luck.

Wildrake looked very hard at Trimble.

"Look here, fatty!" he said abruptly. "Mean to say that you don't remember that that bat was yours?"

"My mind's a blank."

"Mellish is going to sell it to Tompkins, you ass!"



Facing page 161

NO SYMPATHY FOR BAGGY !

HA

Baggy Trimble, having "lost" his memory, gets into the wrong bed in the Fourth Form dormitory, but he doesn't stay there long! An amusing incident, specially pictured by R. J. Macdonald, from "The Spoofer!"

"Who's Mellish?"

"Oh, my Aunt Christina!" ejaculated Wildrake. And he let it go at that.

But his look was very curious. The incident of the bat had rather a staggering effect on him, and he wondered whether, after all, there was something at the bottom of Trimble's astounding statement. Percy Mellish came back into the study with a little parcel, and a grin on his face.

"Tompkins gave me two bob for my bat!" he remarked.

"It was Trimble's bat, you rotter!" said Wildrake.

"Who's Trimble?" asked Baggy, looking up from a plate of ham.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mellish.

Wildrake made no answer. He only looked oddly at the fat junior, and wondered. And he raised no objection when Baggy, in his usual style, annexed the lion's share of the feed, and a little over. Baggy Trimble felt that he was getting on.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER

NO SYMPATHY!

MANY curious glances were turned upon Baggy Trimble in the Fourth Form dormitory that night.

By that time all the Lower School, or nearly all, knew of Baggy's amazing new stunt, or terrible misfortune, whichever it was.

So far, the masters had not heard of it. Baggy, as a sufferer from so dreadful an affliction, ought really to have informed the masters at once, so that medical aid could be called in. Perhaps he had forgotten that there were such persons as masters. Or perhaps he was getting a little more practice before he ventured so far.

Certainly he was keeping it up remarkably well.

Practice, it is said, makes perfect.

At lying, Baggy Trimble had had a tremendous amount of practice, and he was nearly perfect.

So his new departure was not really a great difficulty for him; it was only a new variety of lying and spoof; and Baggy lived, moved, and had his fat being in lying and spoof.

Indeed, after a time, Baggy began to take himself at least half seriously. No one, nor even Baggy himself, knew how much he believed of his magnificent yarns concerning Trimble Hall, and the lofty connections of the Trimble family. In moments of enthusiasm, as it were, Baggy really did believe there was such a place as Trimble Hall. And it was the same with his new stunt. Having set up as a fellow who had lost his memory owing to a shock, Baggy looked upon himself as a fellow who had lost his memory owing to a shock—and he was greatly aggrieved and indignant because the other fellows declined to look on him as a fellow who had lost his memory owing to a shock. In his keenness to convince others, Baggy really had no time to reflect that his statements weren't true.

In the dormitory there was a general stare and a general grin. Baggy blinked round him pathetically when he came in.

"Is this the Fourth Form dormitory?" he asked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Not at all," said Cardew of the Fourth. "Go down the passage and turn to the right."

Trimble appeared not to hear those instructions, which would have landed him in the sleeping quarters of the Third. He rolled in, and blinked up and down the room.

"Which is my bed?" he asked.

"You fat fool!" said Levison, in measured tones. "Chuck it! Do

you think anybody here believes you've lost your memory?"

"Too thick!" said Clive, with a laugh. "Try something else, Baggy. Tell us you've lost your brain—if you ever had any. We'll believe that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think this is heartless," said Trimble. "Some fellows labouring under an awful misfortune like this meet with much sympathy."

"Bai Jove! I am suah we should sympathise like anythin', Twimble, if we believed you," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "But weally, you know, it is wathah thick."

"Somebody might point out my bed, at least," said Trimble.

"Here you are!" said Cardew.

He led Baggy Trimble to George Herries' bed. Herries, who was taking his boots off, glared at Trimble. The other Fourth-Formers looked on with interest. If Baggy attempted to take possession of Herries' bed there was trouble to come, that was certain. But if he had lost his memory, certainly he couldn't know that that bed belonged to Herries.

Baggy blinked rather uneasily at George Herries out of the corner of his eye. Herries looked rather dangerous. He did not believe in Baggy's affliction in the very least. But there was no help for it; and Baggy sat on the edge of the bed and unlaced his boots.

"Bai Jove, he thinks it is his bed, deah boys," murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Rats!" said Blake.

"Let's see him turn into it," grinned Dig. "Herries will soon have him out again!"

"Yaas, wathah! But——"

Arthur Augustus shook his noble head doubtfully. He was beginning,

at least, to place some faith in Trimble's remarkable claim.

Baggy Trimble went ahead. Apparently under the impression that Herries' bed was his bed, he turned into it. Herries watched him with a glare resembling that of the fabled basilisk. When the fat junior settled down Herries strode towards him.

"So you think that's your bed, do you, you spoofing toad?" he demanded.

"Isn't it?" asked Trimble innocently.

"I'll show you whether it is or not!"

"Yaroooooh!"

Herries proceeded to demonstrate to Trimble in quite a drastic way. He wrenched off the bedclothes, and bestowed a sounding spank upon Baggy's fat person. Baggy rolled off the opposite side of the bed without waiting for another spank.

"Still think it's your bed?" asked Herries pleasantly.

"Yow-ow-woooooop!"

"I'll give you some more if you like, if your memory hasn't come back."

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Cave!" murmured Roylance.

Kildare of the Sixth came into the dormitory to see lights out.

"Now then, what's the row?" asked the captain of St. Jim's. "What are you sprawling on the floor like that for, Trimble?"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" roared Trimble. "I'm hurt! Wow!"

The prefect came over to him. He took hold of one of Baggy's fat ears and jerked him up.

"Turn in!" he said tersely.

"He doesn't know which is his bed!" chuckled Cardew.

"What!"

"Lost his memory, you know,"



"My hat!" exclaimed Kildare. "You don't know what a prefect is, and you don't know that he licks a junior when he's cheeky?" "N-n-no!" stammered Trimble. "Then it's time you learned!" said the St. Jim's captain. "Bend over!"

said Ralph Reckness Cardew pleasantly. "We're all no end sympathetic."

Kildare stared.

"Is this a joke?" he asked.

"Not at all! Awfully serious! Ask Trimble."

"What does this mean, Trimble?" asked the St. Jim's captain, fixing his eyes upon the fat Fourth-Former.

Baggy Trimble breathed rather quickly. With all his "neck," he had shrunk from springing his surprising yarn upon persons in authority. It was his intention to do so, but he was putting it off till he had screwed up his courage to the sticking-point. Now there was no help for it; he had to stick to his story or own up. He put on his most pathetic blink.

"It's true," he said feebly. He almost said, "It's true, Kildare," but fortunately stopped himself in time. "I've lost my memory."

"You young ass!"

"I don't know who you are," said Trimble, blinking at him. "Do you belong to the Fourth Form?"

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

"Do I belong to the Fourth Form?" gasped the great man of the Sixth. "You cheeky little scoundrel, what do you mean?"

"You see, I don't know you."

Kildare looked at him.

"You don't know I'm Kildare of the Sixth?" he asked, letting his ashplant slip from under his arm into his hand.

"Not at all."

"You don't know I'm a prefect?"

"What is a prefect?" asked Baggy innocently.

"My hat! You don't know what a prefect is, and you don't know that a Sixth Form prefect licks a junior when he's cheeky?" asked Kildare.

"N-n-no!" stammered Trimble.

"Then it's time you learned," said the captain of St. Jim's pleasantly. "Bend over, Trimble!"

"I—I—I——"

"He doesn't know how," murmured Cardew. "He's forgotten."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I give you one second, Trimble!" rapped out Kildare.

Baggy bent over gingerly.

Swish!

"Yoooooop!"

"Now turn in, and don't let's have any more of this nonsense," said the prefect.

Baggy rubbed himself.

"I—I don't know which is my bed!" he gasped.

"No? Better guess quickly," said Kildare genially. "I'm going to touch you up with my cane till you turn in! Like that!"

"Yaroooh!"

"And that!"

"Whooooop!"

Baggy Trimble made a rush for his bed. Apparently he remembered all of a sudden. There was a roar of laughter in the dormitory as Trimble dived into bed.

Kildare tucked his ash-plant under his arm and walked to the door.

"Good-night, kids."

"Good-night, Kildare."

The prefect put out the light and closed the door. A chuckle ran from bed to bed along the Fourth Form dormitory.

"I—I say!" gasped Baggy Trimble. "I—I say, who was that chap?"

"What?" roared Blake.

"Who was he?" asked Trimble.

"Still keeping it up?" shrieked Digby.

"Keeping what up? I've lost my memory, if that's what you mean."

"Bai Jove!"

"Then how did you remember which was your bed when Kildare touched you up?" roared Blake.

"I—I didn't!"

"What?"

"I—I—I—— You see, I—I——" Trimble stammered. "It—it—it was the only bed left empty, you see, so—so—so I guessed. Of course, I don't know whether this is my bed or not. I hope you fellows believe me."

"Believe you!" gasped Blake.

"Oh, my hat!"

"I suppose you can take my word?"

"Great Christopher Columbus!"

"You see, this is an awful misfortune," said Trimble. "It's bad enough, even if a fellow meets with much sympathy. It's rather caddish to doubt a fellow's word."

Blake sat up in bed.

"It's no good talking to you, Trimble!"

"Eh? Who's Trimble?"

"Shut up!" roared Blake. "You've lost your memory; but you'd better find a little bit of it, and remember that if you try any more spoof to-night I shall buzz a boot at you! Remember that!"

"I can't remember anything——"

Whiz! Crash!

"Yow-ow-ow-woooooop!"

"There's another boot to come if you try it on again!" said Blake in a sulphurous voice.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Trimble did not try it on again. In spite of his complete loss of memory, and his fat mind being a perfect blank, he contrived to remember the other boot, and he was silent.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

LUCK AT LAST!

TOM MERRY grinned when he sighted Trimble in the quad the following morning. Manners and Lowther chuckled.

"Found it, Baggy?" called out Monty Lowther.

"Eh? Found what?"

"The giddy lost memory!"

"Yah!"

Trimble rolled away, frowning. He was, as a matter of fact, feeling rather disconsolate that morning. Doubting Thomas, of old, was simply "not in it" compared with the St. Jim's fellows. The amount of incredulity Baggy had met with was staggering.

But having set his hand to the plough, as it were, Trimble could not withdraw it. So far, his new stunt had earned him more kicks than halfpence. But he still hoped that there might be something in it. Surely everybody at St. Jim's was not a doubting Thomas! Why shouldn't they believe him? Trimble asked himself angrily. There was the chap admitted into Wayland Hospital with loss of memory—nobody disbelieved him. Why should they disbelieve Trimble? Baggy felt that it wasn't fair and reasonable. Hadn't a fellow a right to expect his word to be taken?

When Baggy rolled out after breakfast—he did not forget breakfast—he found a chuckling crowd of juniors gathered under the elms in the quad. A placard was stuck on a tree, and the juniors were reading it with loud laughter.

"Hallo, this concerns you, Trimble!" shouted Herries.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Trimble rolled up. He blinked at the notice on the tree in great wrath and indignation. It ran, in Monty Lowther's hand:

"NOTICE OF LOST PROPERTY!
LOST—A MEMORY!

A rotten bad one, especially in money matters!

ANYONE finding same is requested to return it to the owner, Bagley Trimble, Study No. 2, IVth Form."

"You silly chumps!" gasped Trimble. "This is some of Lowther's silly rot, of course! I call it heartless!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove, you know, it's weally too bad, if Twimble has weally lost his memowry, you fellows."

"If, fathead!" said Herries.

"His memowry might have gone, you know. It was wotten bad—Lowthah is wight there! Pewwaps it has got a little worse, and gone entirely, you know."

"That's just it," said Trimble.

"It's quite gone. You've hit the right nail on the head, D'Arcy."

"Bai Jove! You wemembah my name all wight!"

"I—I mean——"

"Hallo, there goes the bell!" said Blake. "Come along—not you, Trimble. You've forgotten all about lessons, haven't you?"

"Y-e-e-es; quite!"

"Good! Then stay in the quad till Lathom comes after you with a cane."

"Who's Lathom?"

"You'll know if you stay out of class," grinned Blake.

And the chuckling juniors started for the School House.

Baggy Trimble followed on. Whether or not he had forgotten who Mr. Lathom was, he did not mean to cut lessons. The Fourth Form went into their class-room, and Baggy Trimble was following them in, when Kit Wildrake stopped him.

"What are you coming in here for?" he asked.

"Eh? Lessons, of course!"

"Is this your Form-room?" grinned Wildrake.

"You know it is, you rotter. I—I mean——"

"Ha, ha! Do you remember that you're in the Fourth?" howled Blake.

"Oh dear!" murmured Trimble. He realised that there were an enormous number of things for a fellow to forget when he lost his memory. "The—the fact is, I—I don't!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear boys——" murmured Mr. Lathom, appearing in the doorway. "Silence, please, in the Form-room!"

The juniors went to their places—all excepting Trimble. Baggy Trimble remained where he was. His podgy heart was beating fast; but he realised that it was now or never. Mr. Lathom was a kind-hearted and unsuspecting gentleman, and Baggy had resolved to put it to the test there and then. If one of the masters believed in him he felt that it would have an effect on the unbelieving juniors. So far, his amazing yarn had been greeted with ridicule. It remained to be seen what effect it would have on the master of the Fourth. Mr. Lathom was already blinking at him inquiringly over his glasses.

"Why do you not go to your place, Trimble?" he asked.

"If you please, sir, I don't know where my place is."

"What?"

"Is this the Fourth Form room, sir?"

"Eh?"

"Am I in the Fourth, please?"

Mr. Lathom's glasses almost fell off in his astonishment.

"Bless my soul!" he ejaculated.

The juniors watched Baggy in breathless excitement. Well as they knew Baggy's unexampled "neck," they had never believed he would have the effrontery to "work" this stunt on his Form master. They could scarcely believe their ears.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus. "Eithah Twimble is genuine, deah boys, or he is askin' for feahful twouble."

"Trimble!" gasped Mr. Lathom.

"Is my name Trimble, sir?" asked Baggy.

"What," Mr. Lathom stuttered, "what do you mean by that absurd question, Trimble?"

"I've lost my memory, sir!"

"Wha-a-a-t?"

It was out at last! A shiver of apprehension ran through Baggy Trimble's fat frame. He was no hero, yet he had taken a venture that many a plucky fellow might have shrunk from. If Mr. Lathom took the same view as the juniors——

In almost an agony of apprehension Baggy watched him, to see whether his hand strayed to the cane.

Mr. Lathom did not reach for the cane. He stared at Trimble in blank amazement.

"You—you—you have lost your memory, Trimble?" he ejaculated.

"Yes, sir."

"Impossible!"

"It's an awful fact, sir!" said Trimble pathetically. "My mind's a perfect blank, sir. I don't even know your name, sir. I had a shock—a terrible shock! That did it, sir!"

" Bless my soul ! If your statement is well-founded, Trimble, this must be seen to at once. What kind of shock did you receive ? "

" A fellow was hitting me on the head with a football, sir— "

" Oh gum ! " murmured Wildrake.

" Escaping from him, sir, I rushed into another fellow and was hurled to the floor with terrific violence. "

" Oh cwumbs ! "

" Then I found myself in a box-room, sir, " said Baggy. " Some boys were there smoking, and they flung me down the stairs. "

Mellish fixed his eyes on Trimble with a glitter of rage and apprehension in them.

" Was the fat villain going to sneak

about the smoking ? " was Mellish's thought.

" Upon my word ! " gasped Mr. Lathom. " This— this is extraordinary ! When did all this happen, Trimble ? "

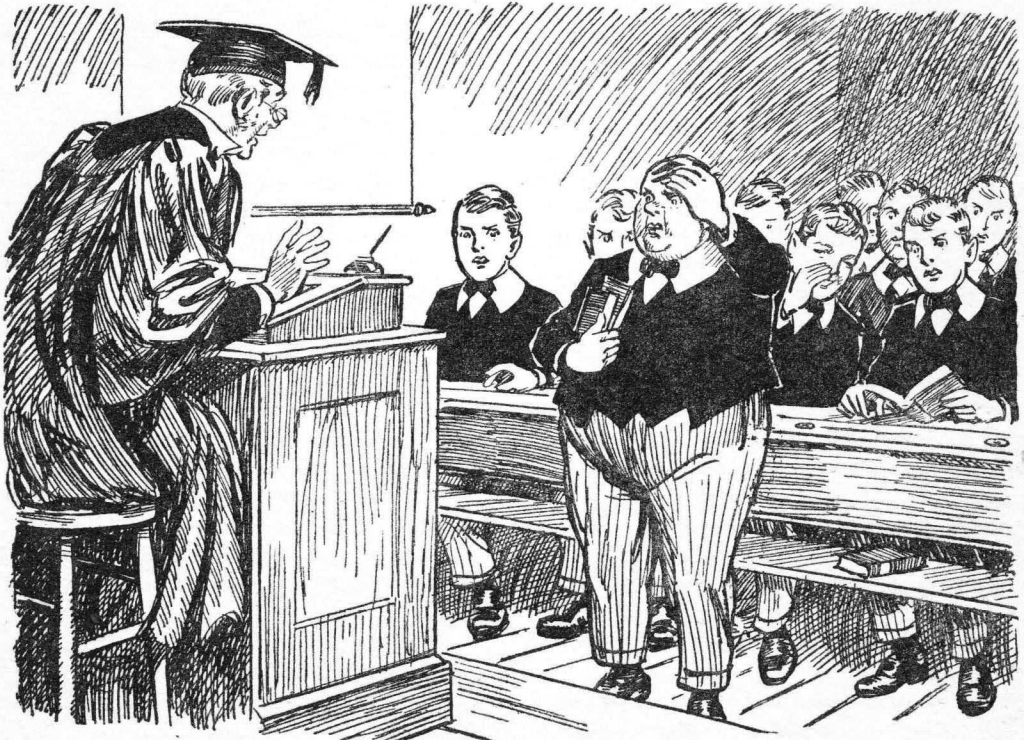
" Yesterday afternoon, sir. "

" Did you tell anyone what had resulted—that you had lost your memory ? "

" Yes, sir, a lot of fellows. I'm afraid they were rather brutal, sir. One of them flung a boot at me in the dormitory. "

" Oh ! " gasped Blake.

Mr. Lathom came away from his high desk. He stood before Trimble and blinked at him keenly. He was an unsuspecting gentleman, but a story



" Trimble ! " gasped Mr. Lathom. " Is my name Trimble, sir ? " asked Baggy. " What do you mean by that absurd question ? " exclaimed the master of the Fourth. " I've lost my memory, sir ! " answered Baggy. It was out at last !

of this size required some swallowing, so to speak.

"You assure me, Trimble, that you have lost your memory?" he demanded.

"Yes, sir. Is my name Trimble?"

"Your name is Trimble," said Mr. Lathom.

"Thank you, sir. It—it's very awkward for a fellow not to know his own name."

"H'm!" Mr. Lathom looked round at his class. "Can any boy present throw any light on this matter?"

Kit Wildrake rose.

"I guess I'd like to ask Trimble, sir, how he remembers that I biffed him on the head with a footer, if he's lost his memory?"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Trimble in dismay.

"Yaas, wathah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "And how does he wemembah wushin' into me in the passage, if he has lost his memow?"

"You should not have struck Trimble with a football, Wildrake, especially on the head. Such actions are dangerous."

"It was only a tap, sir."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"However, you seem to remember the circumstances, Trimble," said Mr. Lathom, turning to the sufferer again. "This does not seem consistent with your statement that you have lost your memory."

"How's the spoofer going to get out of that?" murmured Blake.

Trimble, however, rose to the occasion.

"I seem to recall some things and not others, sir," he stammered. "I—I can remember things that happen. I—I can't remember names or—or places or—or lessons, sir."

Mr. Lathom wrinkled his brow.

"It is possible, Trimble, that your statement is correct. Far be it from me to deal harshly with any boy who may be suffering under an affliction. You must be examined by the school doctor, Trimble. Are you prepared to see Dr. Short?"

"I'd be glad to, sir. I—I'm quite alarmed."

"Very well. You may take your place, Trimble, and after lessons I will communicate with the doctor."

"Thank you, sir!"

Trimble made a movement towards the desks, and stopped, remembering that he had forgotten, as it were.

"Where's my place, sir?"

"Your place, Trimble, is at the bottom of the class," said Mr. Lathom dryly. He pointed to an empty desk.

"Oh, thank you, sir!"

Trimble went to his place.

On the strength of his new "stunt," Trimble had "chucked" prep the previous evening, hoping for the best. His hopes turned out to be well-founded. The mere possibility that Trimble was suffering under a serious affliction made the Form master very careful with him.

"You will not take part in the lessons this morning, Trimble," he said. "You may sit and listen."

"Thank you, sir!"

And Trimble, with considerable satisfaction, sat idle while the rest of the Fourth worked. His new stunt was "panning out" at last.

It was something to get out of lessons. But, after a time, Baggly Trimble felt that that was not enough. Having gained so much, he sighed, like Alexander of old, for new worlds to conquer. Lessons in the Fourth Form room were suddenly interrupted by a groan from Trimble.

Mr. Lathom jumped.

"What—why—what——"

"Sorry, sir!" said Trimble. "I—I'm feeling rather faint, sir. M-m-may I go into the open air, sir?"

"You may go, Trimble."

"Thank you, sir!"

Baggy screwed up his fat face into an expression of suffering as he left the Form-room. As soon as the door closed after him he grinned. With great satisfaction he rolled out into the sunny quadrangle, leaving the rest of the Fourth to the morning's grind.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

A TREAT FOR TRIMBLE!

"WHERE'S that fat spoofer?"

Jack Blake asked the question when the juniors were dismissed. Most of the fellows were anxious to see Trimble.

A fellow who could dodge a morning's lessons by pulling his Form master's leg was naturally an object of interest. Indeed, Mellish had begun to consider whether he hadn't better lose his memory, too! He hated work as much as Baggy Trimble did.

Trimble was not to be seen in the quad or the passages. The juniors proceeded to look for him. Blake, especially, was keen to tell Baggy what he thought of him.

"In his study, perhaps," said Dig.

"Did you leave anything to eat in your study, Wildrake?" asked Blake.

"Ha, ha! Nope."

"Then he won't be there."

"He'll turn up at dinner," said Tom Merry, laughing. "He won't forget dinner-time."

"Weally, you fellows," said Arthur Augustus thoughtfully, "I hope you are not goin' to be wuff with Twimble. Mr. Lathom thinks there may be somethin' in it."

"We're not quite so soft as Lathom, I hope," grunted Herries.

"Weally, Hewwies——"

"I'm going to rout him out!" said Blake. "I'm not going to be rough with the poor fellow, Gussy. Only going to kick him a little."

"Weally, Blake——"

"He's dodged work this morning," said Blake. "Left us to it! He ought to be kicked for that. Let's rout him out."

The juniors proceeded to look in the Fourth Form studies. There was the sound of a deep snore from Study No. 6 as they were passing that celebrated apartment. They knew that snore.

"In our study!" roared Herries.

Blake threw open the door of Study No. 6. The fat form of Baggy reposed in the armchair, in what a novelist would call an attitude of unstudied grace. His fat legs were stretched out, his bullet head leaned back, and his large mouth was wide open. There was a smear of jam on the fat face.

He was fast asleep. He continued to snore as the juniors crowded in the doorway.

"Sleeping off a feed!" chuckled Monty Lowther.

Blake jumped.

"My hat! If he's raided our study——" Blake rushed to the study cupboard.

Funds were good in Study No. 6, and there had been a good supply in the study cupboard. But when Blake glared into it he found it in the state of the cupboard which belonged to the celebrated Mrs. Hubbard. It was quite bare!

"The—the—the fat burglar!" gasped Blake. "He's scoffed all the tuck! Three jars of jam——"

"And the pickles!" howled Herries.

"And the cake!" roared Digby.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a howl from the passage. Study No. 6 were excited, but the rest of the juniors seemed to see a comic side to the affair.

Blake grasped the fat junior by the shoulder, and rolled him out of the armchair. Trimble landed on the floor with a bump and a yell.

"Yow-ow! Wharrer marrer! 'Tain't rising-bell!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You fat freak!" roared Blake.

"You've raided the study."

Trimble scrambled up in alarm.

"I—I say, I—I haven't, you know. I—I just dropped in here for a—a nap. I—I felt faint!"

"I'll make you feel fainter!" howled Blake. "Where's your dog-whip, Herries?"

"I—I say, I haven't touched a thing!" yelled Trimble. "Honour bright, you know. I—I thought this was my study! I—I've lost my memory, you know."

"That will do for Lathom," said Blake. "It won't do for Study No. 6."

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yarooooooh!"

Baggy Trimble made a bound for the door, with the dog-whip curling round his fat legs. But the doorway was crammed with juniors, and there was no escape for Baggy.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Yoop! Help! Help! Oh, my hat! Stoppit!" roared Trimble. "I won't do it again! I never did it at all! I—I was hungry, you know! I never touched a thing! Oh crumbs! Yooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What—what—what——" came a startled voice from the passage.

"Look out! Cave! There's Lathom!" gurgled Manners.

The juniors crowded back to make room for the Form master. Blake was too excited to heed. He had Trimble by the back of the collar now, and he was bumping his head on the study carpet. The roars of Baggy Trimble were like unto those of the Bull of Bashan.

"Yooooop! Leggo! Help! Oh, my hat!"

"Blake!" thundered Mr. Lathom.

"Oh!" gasped Blake.

He released the fat junior quite suddenly, and jumped back. Baggy Trimble sat up on the carpet and roared.

"What does this unruly scene mean?" exclaimed Mr. Lathom angrily. "Trimble, I came to look for you——"

"Yooooop!"

"Get up from the floor immediately, Trimble!"

"Yaroooooh!"

"Blake, this—this——"

"Sorry, sir!" gasped Blake. "But that fat bounder——"

"What—what?"

"He's raided the study," roared Herries. "Scoffed all the tuck! The fat villain!"

"Oh!" said Mr. Lathom. "Trimble, rise to your feet at once, and cease those ridiculous noises, sir!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

Baggy Trimble scrambled to his feet.

"Have you taken anything in this study that does not belong to you, Trimble?" demanded Mr. Lathom severely.

"I—I—I don't know, sir!" gasped Trimble.

"You do not know?"

"No, sir. I—I can't remember."

"Bless my soul!"

"I—I came over faint in the quad, sir," said Trimble. "I tried to find



As the juniors heard a deep snore from Study No. 6, Jack Blake threw open the door. They knew that snore. The fat form of Baggy reposed in the armchair, and he was fast asleep. A smear of jam on his face told only too plainly that he had been raiding their study cupboard.

my study. I—I don't know which is my study, sir, so I—I came in here to—to rest. What happened next, sir, is a blank!"

"Upon my word, Trimble——"

"A perfect blank, sir!" said Trimble. "My memory's quite gone, sir! I think Blake's brutality, sir, has made it worse. I have a terrible throbbing in my head, and a pain like—like burning needles!"

"Like what?"

"Burning needles, sir—or daggers. More like daggers than needles," said Trimble. "I'm suffering terribly, sir! If this should cause my death, sir, I forgive Blake. I know he can't help being a beast."

"I—I——" stuttered Blake.

"Blake, you should be more careful!" said Mr. Lathom severely. "I

can make allowances for your natural exasperation in the—the circumstances, but you should have remembered that Trimble states that he is suffering from a serious affliction. I am surprised at you, Blake! You will take two hundred lines!"

"Oh!" gasped Blake.

"My boys, I request you to be very careful with Trimble until this matter has been thrashed out," said Mr. Lathom. "Any violence may do great harm. I must warn you that if a finger is laid on Trimble again before he has seen a doctor, the delinquent will be reported to the Head for a flogging!"

"Oh! Hem!"

"Trimble, I have mentioned this matter to Mr. Railton, and he desires to see you before a doctor is

sent for. You will come to Mr. Railton's study in a quarter of an hour!"

"Who is Mr. Railton, sir?"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Have I ever heard the name before, sir?" asked Trimble calmly.

"Bless my soul! Mr. Railton is your Housemaster! Merry, may I request you to bring Trimble to Mr. Railton's study at the time I have mentioned?"

"Certainly, sir!" said Tom Merry.

Mr. Lathom rustled away, and Baggy Trimble was left with the juniors. But he felt quite secure now, and he grinned triumphantly. Nobody wanted to be reported to the Head for a flogging. And Baggy was safe from the fingers—and the fists—that otherwise certainly would have been laid upon himself—hard!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

QUITE NICE FOR BAGGY!

"YOU fat rotter!"

"You spoofing walrus!"

"You awful spoofer!"

The passage and the study were crowded, and every fellow present seemed to have something to say to Baggy Trimble. If they could not punch him, they could at least tell him what they thought of him.

Baggy did not seem to mind. Hard words break no bones. And Baggy would have preferred all the hard words in the dictionary to a single punch from Blake's hefty right arm.

"I hope you're ashamed of yourself now, Blake," he said with dignity. "You other fellows, too. I must say you're a lot of rotters!"

"What?" howled Blake.

"Sneaking rotters!" said Trimble calmly. "I've a jolly good mind to

thrash you, Blake! But a weak-kneed waster like you ain't worth thrashing!"

Blake made a jump towards Trimble. Then he remembered, and jumped back. Trimble was safe enough, unless Blake wanted to give the Head the trouble of administering a flogging. Blake didn't.

"You—you—you——" stuttered Blake

"Shut up!" said Trimble.

"Wha-a-at?"

"Hold your silly tongue!" said Trimble victoriously. "You talk too much, Blake! You're like a sheep's head, you know—all jaw!"

Blake choked.

"Get out of my study, you worm!" he gasped.

"Rats!"

"Bai Jove! Get out, Twimble, you cheekay wottah!"

"Shut up, D'Arcy! I'll stay as long as I choose, and I dare you to put me out!" said Trimble coolly. "Not that you could! I'd thrash the lot of you as soon as look at you! Set of measly funks!"

Study No. 6 looked at Trimble as if transfixed. There was a chuckle in the passage.

"Go it!" chortled Monty Lowther. "Now's your chance, Baggy! You can say what you like! Give us some more eloquence!"

"You go and eat coke, Lowther! You're a rotten cad!"

"What?" yelled Lowther.

"So is Tom Merry—a sneaking worm!" said Trimble. "As for Manners, I'd pull his ears if he were fit for a decent chap to lay hands on. He ain't!"

The Terrible Three blinked at Trimble.

"Well, my hat!" said Tom, with a deep breath. "This is rich! Let

the fat idiot alone. We don't want a Head's flogging!"

"Wathah not! But, weally——"

"I—I—I'll smash him into little pieces later on!" gasped Blake.

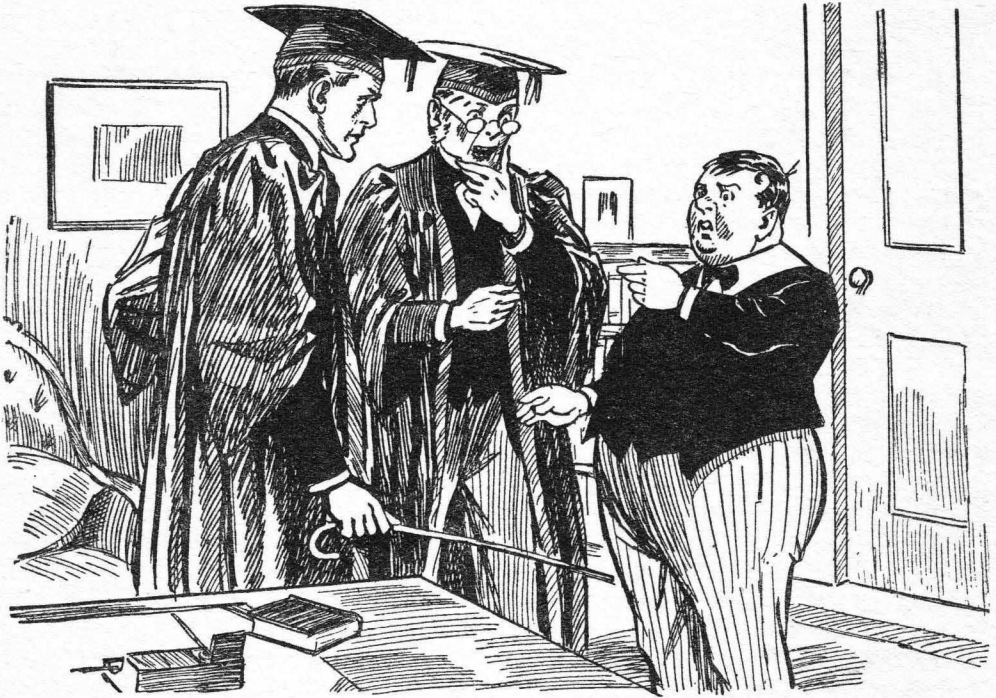
Trimble sniffed contemptuously.

"You!" he sneered. "You couldn't smash a bunny rabbit! You'd run away from a fag in the Third Form, Blake! I've seen you

"Lathom meant business. Can't you see the fat villain is trying to book you for the Head?"

"I—I—I'll——" spluttered Blake.

Baggy Trimble grinned complacently. He had never had such an opportunity of slanging Study No. 6 and the Terrible Three before. It was like the worthy Baggy to use his advantage to the full.



"If you have lost your memory, Trimble," said Mr. Railton, "your case is a serious one and requires special care and attention such as you cannot receive in a crowded school. So you will pack your box——"

"P-p-pack my box!" stuttered Baggy. "Oh, lor'l"

running away from the Grammar School fellows!"

"You haven't!" shrieked Blake.

"Fibber!"

Jack Blake ran right at Trimble. Flogging or no flogging, this was too much for flesh and blood to stand. Fortunately, Dig and Herries grasped him and yanked him back in time.

"Hold on, you ass!" gasped Dig.

"Are you going out of our study?" asked Blake, in a suppressed voice.

"Not unless I choose," said Trimble independently. "And you're too funky to put me out! Yah!"

With great self-control Blake walked past the fat junior, and left the study himself. His chums followed him.

"Yah! Funks!" howled Trimble after them.

Blake half-turned, but went on. Baggy Trimble was left in triumphant possession of Study No. 6.

When the quarter of an hour had elapsed, Tom Merry looked in for him. Trimble met his glance with a cheeky leer.

"What do you want, you dummy?" he asked.

"Time for you to come to Railton," said Tom, manfully suppressing his feelings.

"Go and eat coke!"

"Well, suit yourself!" said Tom, turning away.

"Oh, I'll come!" said Baggy, following him into the passage. "Look here, Merry! You don't believe I've lost my memory—what?"

"No!" snapped the captain of the Shell. "I know you're lying, Trimble, if that's what you mean!"

"That's because you're untruthful yourself," said Trimble calmly. "Fellows like you wouldn't understand a high-principled chap. Now, you're not what I call honourable, Tom Merry."

Tom clenched his hands hard. But he led the way in silence, at a good speed. It was quite unnecessary for Trimble to be guided to the Housemaster's study, and Tom Merry knew it; but he had to do as Mr. Lathom had requested. He was only anxious for his task to be over.

Baggy Trimble quite enjoyed the little walk. He filled in the time by telling the captain of the Shell what he thought of him. Apparently he thought a good deal, and all of it uncomplimentary. Tom was almost at boiling-point by the time they reached Mr. Railton's door.

Tom Merry tapped at the door and opened it.

"Here's Trimble, sir!" he gasped.

"Ah! Come in, Trimble!" said Mr. Railton's deep voice.

Baggy rolled into the study, and Tom Merry drew the door shut and retired, and he sparred in the air as he went down the passage, wasting upon the desert air what he yearned to bestow upon the fat features of Baggy Trimble of the Fourth.

THE NINTH CHAPTER

ALL U.P.!

MR. RAILTON fixed his keen eyes upon Trimble.

Baggy felt an inward tremor.

"Mr. Lathom has informed me of a very extraordinary circumstance, Trimble," said the Housemaster.

"Yes, sir!" faltered Baggy.

"You have stated that you have lost your memory, owing to receiving a shock."

"That is so, sir."

"Yet, in spite of this loss of memory, you were able to give Mr. Lathom details of the shock."

"I—I—I——"

"If your statement is correct, Trimble, you will receive every care and sympathy," said Mr. Railton more kindly.

"Yes, sir," mumbled Baggy. "Some—some fellows in this—this awful state, sir, receive much sympathy."

"It is not a trick on your part, Trimble, to impose upon your Form master and elude lessons?"

"Oh, sir!"

"Before sending for the doctor," said Mr. Railton, "we will go into the matter a little ourselves. I cannot help suspecting, Trimble, that your claim is founded merely upon trickery."

"Oh, sir!"

"But you shall have the benefit of the doubt, Trimble, if there is a doubt. Can you remember my name?"

"No, sir."

"Not if you make an effort, Trimble?"

"Impossible, sir! My mind's a perfect blank."

"You are sure of that, Trimble?"

"Quite, sir!" said Baggy cheerily.

"I—I think I may recover later, sir, if I don't have any lessons, and—and have plenty to eat, sir. This awful affliction makes me unusually hungry, sir, somehow. And—and when I even think of lessons, sir, I get fearful pains like burning daggers."

"That is a very serious matter, Trimble, if true. For the last time, you assure me that the case is as you state?"

"Exactly, sir. I—I hope I'm not a fellow whose word could be doubted."

"On the contrary, Trimble, your Form master tells me that you are the most untruthful boy in his Form!"

"That is certainly the case," said Mr. Lathom, with a nod.

"However, if you persist in your statement, Trimble, we must act upon it!" said Mr. Railton grimly. "You appear to have some curious idea that you may be allowed to remain at school spending your time in idleness. That is not the case. I shall send a telegram to your father requesting——"

Trimble jumped.

"Requesting him to come to the school immediately. He will see you in the Head's presence——"

Trimble's jaw dropped.

"And if this unfortunate state of affairs persists, your father will take you home with him——"

"Tut-tut-take me home!" gasped Trimble.

"Certainly! If you have lost your memory, Trimble, your case is a serious one, and requires special care and attention, such as you cannot

receive in a crowded school. So you will pack your box——"

"P-p-pack my box!"

"Yes, immediately!"

"Oh, lor'!"

Trimble gazed at the Housemaster blankly. Whatever he had expected to come of his amazing stunt, certainly he had not expected this. He shivered at the bare thought of facing his father with such a yarn.

Mr. Railton's eyes rested upon him grimly.

"You may go, Trimble!" he said.

"I—I—I——"

"Have you anything more to say?"

"Ye-e-es!" gasped Trimble.

"Lots! I—I mean——" He passed a fat paw over his brow dramatically.

"It—it's coming back! I—I can remember your name, sir, now!"

"You—you—you are beginning to remember!" gasped the Housemaster.

"Yes, sir! All is clear now!" exclaimed Baggy dramatically.

"You're Mr. Railton, sir. I—I remember now. This—this is Mr. Lathom. I—I remember your name now, sir. I—I've got my memory back, sir!"

"Bless my soul!"

Mr. Railton rose to his feet. Methodically he selected his stoutest cane.

"Trimble, you untruthful young rascal! Do you suppose for one moment that you can deceive me with these astounding and palpable falsehoods? Bend over!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Swish, swish, swish, swish, swish!

Trimble's wild yells rang far beyond the walls of the Housemaster's study.

Mr. Railton was breathing hard when he laid down the cane.

"Trimble, you have been punished for your attempted deceit——"

"Yoow-ow-ow-ow-woop!"

" Silence ! Mr. Lathom, it appears that Trimble has eluded a morning's lessons by this disgraceful trickery. I may rely upon you to award him such an imposition as will make up for the loss of time ! "

" Most certainly, sir ! " gasped Mr. Lathom. " Trimble, you will write out a thousand lines of Virgil, and you will be detained on half-holidays until they are written ! "

" Oh crumbs ! "

" You may go, Trimble ! "

" Yow-ow-ow-wow ! "

Trimble went.

Quite an army of fellows wanted to see Trimble after his interview with the Housemaster, with thoughts of vengeance. But the fearful yells from the Housemaster's study showed that Trimble had received what he had been asking for, and Tom Merry & Co. generously let him off. They had fully expected that " old Railton " would bowl out the fatuous Baggy, so they were not surprised to hear that Trimble had recovered his memory now. Only too clearly it had been borne in upon Baggy's fat brain that that chicken would not fight.

During the next week or two, the most doleful fellow at St. Jim's was Trimble of the Fourth. He had escaped a morning's lessons, and he had a tremendous imposition to write out as a reward, which used up three half-holidays. On Baggy's profit-and-loss account there was not much to be put down on the profit side. Baggy realised dismally that the way of the transgressor was hard, and in his woe he received just as little sympathy as for his loss of memory. Tom Merry & Co. kindly refrained from kicking him—which they felt was kindness enough for the spoofer.

THE END

Greyfriars Jingles

By PETER
TODD



FROM China's great dominion came
A cheerful youth, Wun Lung by name,
Who, when he cannot recognise
The meaning of our questions, cries
" No savvy ! "

The said Celestial isn't dense,
No fear ; he's got a lot of sense !
He often understands quite well
Despite the fact we hear him yell,
" No savvy ! "

It might not be convenient
To understand just what we meant,
So when he finds that silence pays,
He shakes his head and blandly says,
" No savvy ! "

At times we ask him to explain
A certain thing. We ask in vain !
When these contingencies arise
He smiles politely and replies,
" No savvy ! "

" You savvy right enough ! " we roar ;
" We'll knock your head against the door
Unless you answer like a bird ! "
He does—with just the same old word,
" No savvy ! "

We knock his head, then squash him flat !
We bump him—what's the good of that ?
Although a heap of rags and bones,
The obstinate Celestial groans,
" No savvy ! "



—By Henry Samuel Quelch, M.A.—

“What does Mr. Quelch think of me?” must be a question every Remove boy has asked himself. So we got the Remove master to give a few comments—candid and captious—upon the prominent members of his high-spirited Form.

HANDLING a Form like the Remove Form at Greyfriars is not an easy task. My colleague Mr. Capper tells me he would rather have the task of handling a wagon-load of monkeys! Yet I am glad that it has fallen to my lot to preside as master over this high-spirited Form, for I feel that in so doing I am helping to mould into shape some really excellent material.

Wharton, the head boy of the Form, is a lad of great promise, whose sincerity and public spirit can hardly fail to gain him a prominent place in his country's roll of fame in the years to come. I shall watch his career with much interest.

There are others about whom I can say much the same thing—without

making invidious distinctions, I might instance Cherry, Redwing, Brown, Linley and Ogilvy.

Please understand that these boys are in no sense what I once overheard Skinner describe as my “pets.” Cherry, to take one example, is rarely a “pet” of mine in class; but, despite my reputation for being merely a hard, unbending purveyor of academic knowledge, I do not judge a boy solely by his classwork!

Probably the most interesting boy in my Form is Vernon-Smith. This tempestuous young man has given me more trouble than the rest of the Form put together, troublesome though many of them are at times! He is an extraordinary mixture. Rebellious, undisciplined, hard and cynical when

things do not go according to his wishes, he is yet capable of admirable devotion to duty, self-denial and unflinching heroism when occasion demands. I am afraid I am a little prejudiced against Vernon-Smith—it is difficult for me to be wholly just to one who has at times brought me great distress and worry!—but I cannot help admitting that his vital, aggressive personality and acute brain may carry him to heights which those I have previously named may never reach!

It is a long step from the dynamic Vernon-Smith to those with whom he allies himself in his less creditable moments—Skinner, Snoop and Stott. These are three whom I hope to turn into useful citizens one day—but a long struggle lies ahead of me before that happy state of affairs comes to pass! Skinner has ability, but I am afraid it is being turned into the wrong channels at present. Snoop and Stott do not seem to possess anything commendable at present; but by the judicious use of the cane I hope to discover virtues of some kind in them sooner or later!

In Bolsover we have another type. Big and blustering, he is regarded by many simply as a bully; but to me he is not altogether that. That he is clumsy and loud and a little simple, I agree; but fundamentally I believe he is quite a good-hearted lad.

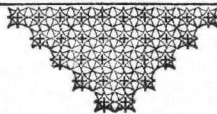
What can I say of Bunter? This fat, egregious young rascal almost

defies description! Most people at Greyfriars look on him as a joke; but I am afraid the funny side of Bunter frequently eludes me. Really, Bunter can be said to be practically hopeless. Hopeless as he seems, however, I shall, of course, sternly continue to try to make something out of him. But what that "something" will prove to be is another matter!

With Fisher T. Fish I have, if anything, even less sympathy. His colossal impudence, meanness and duplicity are a byword among the boys of my Form. As with Bunter, I try to make him see the error of his ways; but I gravely doubt whether I shall ever succeed!

Unquestionably, I have some strangely assorted types to deal with in the Remove of to-day. But there is character and colour in all of them, and if the character and colour does not always please me, I comfort myself with the thought that it takes all kinds to make a—Form!

To close on a personal note, I hope that the boys for their part may get comfort from the thought that their Form-master takes a deep and kindly interest in every one of them. I expect most of them regard me as an exacting old martinet with too great a fondness for the cane. If it is any consolation to them to know it, I can truthfully say that even when I wield the cane with the deadliest effect, I am only doing it for their own good!





TWINK, *the* Tail Wagger!

A Delightful Nature Story by Clive R. Fenn

TWINK was the tinker's dog and of no particular breed. You would pass him by as a mongrel with a terrier touch about him, but, mixed as might be his ancestry, in sagacity he was second to none.

The animal had got the eye of knowledge and alertness. See him asleep by the side of Timmins', his owner's, little caravan, lying in the deep shade by the wayside some summer afternoon. You would say he slept, but not so. One eye was on the qui vive. There would have been short work with the clothing of any misguided tramp who tried to rob the tinker's go-cart of its pots and pans.

Up and down the country they went, Timmins, the repairer of leaky tea kettles and frying pans, and Twink, the faithful dog.

The tinker had a great respect for the dog. The latter liked the tinker well enough in his way, but knew the fellow's limitations. Where Twink would have barked defiance at some mean customer who complained of the workmanship of a mend, simply to

get the price down, Timmins took it all as meekly as a lamb.

There were lots of things of which the tinker was afraid. Twink was scared of nothing.

There were other points of difference, but, maybe, it is not needful to deal with these, apart from the tinker's love of peace at almost any price, whereas Twink was always keen as mustard on a fight. Many a mill he had been in with dogs of superior fighting weight. Twink was a hardy fellow who had lived a spartan life. Of course, he shared things with Timmins, but the tinker lived poorly, for he was a poor helpless sort of man.

It was some considerable pleasure to Twink when on a certain lowering afternoon in midsummer the threatening storm broke. The tinker trembled for the lightning, fearing that the next flash would have him for sure. Twink splashed joyfully in the sloshing rain, which fell in big white crowns on the surface of a canal near which they had been camped.

Timmins started pushing his little cart down the path, making like mad for a culvert, where he hoped to get refuge.

There was no shelter there! The waters of the canal were rising fast and the track was as wet as could be. Twink defied the lightning like Ajax of old, barking at the flashes furiously, while his master cowered, and, with the perspiration pouring down his face, pushed his cart towards a grey pile of buildings which loomed up a hundred yards away.

The place looked forbidding, but any port in a storm, and so Timmins felt as he gained the covered courtyard of the house.

What a ruin! There were broken windows, doors which had broken adrift from their hinges; there were dim passages right and left, and the tinker shivered at the dismal loneliness. Still, he was out of the rain!

"Better than nothing, eh, Twink?" he muttered.

The dog barked, shook off the wet from his coat, and then stood, ears cocked, listening to something. The next second he was off down one of the dusky passages as if possessed.

"Here, Twink, come back!" shouted the tinker.

But Twink turned a deaf ear. He knew what it was he had heard—not the quavering voice of his companion, who was getting the little brazier alight so as to make a cup of tea, but the sound of rats, and the scuffling of rats was like music to the dog. He felt in his element at last, for the old Moat House where he and Timmins had found sanctuary from the blinding storm was the headquarters of whole tribes of rodents.

Twink barked gleefully as he made his first catch, a big bull rat which had been trotting along by the rotting

wainscoting of a corridor. The dog snapped and the rat's squeal ended suddenly, for Twink had a short way with rodents. The first kill! The bag promised to be big, and from far away Timmins heard triumphant barking as the dog charged on into the interior of the mansion.

The place had been derelict for years, and Twink felt that he had been missing much grand sport through not having looked in before. The dog had no time to think of his master, who had made himself a cup of tea and was trying to feel less lonely and miserable as he crouched by his little coke fire. For Twink, the first business was rats. But rats did not represent the whole population.

It was the fate of the tinker to discover that, for just as he was brewing himself a second cup of tea, a quick step close behind him followed by a growl of anger, caused him to start to his feet.

Three burly-looking roughs glared at him savagely. The tinker wanted to flee, but his legs gave way. He was not fitted for fight or flight.

"Spying on us, eh?" rumbled the leader of the newcomers, as he shook the tinker.

"I didn't! I wasn't! I never!" stammered Timmins.

"Oh, yeah?" jeered Jinks, the rough-looking fellow who had grabbed the tinker. "You're not squatting here over your tea for the police, to find out what we are doing? Oh, dear me, no!"

The speaker gave the little equipment a kick. Over it went, brazier, tea-kettle and all. Then, despite his protests, Timmins was hustled down a long corridor, where there was less evidence of decay.

No use his declaring that he knew nothing of the doings of the gang who

had put the Moat House to good service, as far as they were concerned. The deserted place was ideal as a store-place for stolen goods, and Jinks was a "fence" in a large way of business, while the canal with its barges—from which the droves of rats found much good food—was the means of access.

Timmins was roughly handled and slung into a dark and gloomy cellar. The key was turned in the lock and thrown away. The tinker felt his last hour had come, for Twink had vanished.

From a distance the thieves heard excited barking, but paid it scant attention. Leaving the tinker in tears, they hurried up with preparations for their departure in their motor-boat on the canal, with all their swag. They were smart fellows, always

prepared for emergencies, and all might have gone well for them, though not for the tinker, had it not been for Twink. He had just accounted for Rotan, a veritable king of rats, who had shown plenty of fight and had left his marks on the dog. Twink had won in the end.

But even the dog felt one could have enough rat killing for one day. Moreover he was a good deal the worse for wear, and one eye was closed for temporary repairs.

It was then that it flashed through his canine mind that there was a tinker named Timmins who drank tea and mended pots and things.

The trifling fact had entirely escaped his memory!

But where was this Timmins? Twink dashed back the way he had come, through the rambling old ram-

The scuffling of rats was like music to Twink's ears. The old Moat House was the headquarters of scores of rats, and Twink barked gleefully as he made his first catch—a big bull rat.



shackle place, in search of his master. But Timmins had gone. Then, suddenly, from somewhere below Twink heard a sound. His ears cocked up alertly. He knew that sound. It was the tinker sobbing. Not the faintest doubt! Twink had heard that sob before. It was when an angry housewife had whacked the tinker over the head with a saucepan which had been badly mended. Twink traced the sound to the locked cellar and barked a cheerio! The tinker whimpered. The dog threw himself at the door again and again, scratching at it with energetic paws, but it was no use. Then he darted off, barking, to raise all the sleeping echoes. He streaked out of the ruin and across the moat, gaining a road. He wanted to tell the world that something had happened to his master while he (Twink) was ratting, but the only sign of the world he met consisted of a couple of policemen.

Then Twink remembered that policemen were useful folk. He barked lustily.

"Hallo, Twink!" said one of the officers, stooping to pat the dog. He knew Twink, for he had often had a chat with the tinker.

Twink barked, and ran backwards and forwards excitedly.

That something was much amiss was evident, for the dog was covered with blood, while he kept on baying in the direction of the Moat House.

It was Twink who led the policemen to the place, and they were just in time to make the catch of the season, for Jinks and his two friends were just escaping by water. And shortly after Timmins saw the door of his cellar prison open. Outside stood more police, and Twink.

And actually when the officers, who had made their haul, started thanking the tinker for the part he had played, Timmins only blushed, and at most protested as if he knew that he really had done something worthy of note, whereas he had only cried.

As for Twink, he merely gave a short bark, half of scorn, half of understanding. So far as he was concerned, anybody who liked could take any credit that happened to be going. It was quite enough for him to make a note of the fact that the Moat House and its myriad rats would offer endless sport whenever he and Timmins came that way. After all, rats were rats.



WHY NOT FILM GREYFRIARS?

By Bob Cherry



Bob Cherry has some staggering suggestions to put forward on this interesting topic, but we think they are a little too staggering for Greyfriars. See what you think.

Ir licks me that some enterprising film johnny doesn't come along and make a film at Greyfriars. Believe me, there's unlimited scope for him!

Why, at this old school of ours a go-ahead producer could turn out a film with an atmosphere all of its own. We've got the backgrounds. We've even got the actors.

Our old pal Harry Wharton would make as convincing and good-looking a hero as anyone could want. For comedians we could supply Bunter and Coker, whose appearance alone would draw shrieks of mirth from the most jaded movie audience. While as to a villain, Loder, Carne, Hilton, Skinner and half a dozen others I can name would make diabolical villains without having to bother about make-up!

Of course, there would have to be a story. I favour a simple, unpretentious tale of English school life myself—something, for instance, about a chap who wins a scholarship and finds the school made up of fiends who spend all their time hatching fearsome plots against him, but by his manly example gradually makes them all paragons of virtue like himself. A plain, unvarnished tale of school life that would appeal by its very simplicity—that's my idea of what's wanted!

Just to bring a spectacular touch into it, our producer could introduce a spot of drama here and there—let's say a school rebellion, a flood, an aeroplane crash, an invasion by Chinese pirates and perhaps the burning down of the school as the climax. The sort of thing that doesn't exactly



Just picture Wharton and Mrs. Mimble singing a love duet to the strains of Bulstrode's Comb-and-paper Band ! Why, Hollywood would turn green with envy !

happen every day, but might possibly happen every week or so !

Another thing that would stand improving a little is the dialogue. Film patrons might not take kindly to the sort of thing you usually hear at Greyfriars. Imagine this :

Mr. Quelch : " Bless my soul ! Wretched youth ! Depraved juvenile ! How dare you ! "

Cherry : " If you please, sir, and begging your pardon——"

The style would have to be made smart and snappier. Like this, for instance :

Mr. Quelch : " Oh, boy ! I'll tell the world you're gonna get every bit of what's coming to you ! "

Cherry : " Aw, nuts ! Sez you ! Attaboy ! "

Polish up the conversation while endeavouring to preserve the authentic touch. Get the idea ?

Just to give the film that glitter the fans appreciate, there would have to be a spot of singing and dancing

here and there, and this is where a shrewd producer would get results worth showing. Mr. Prout and Gosling in a sort of Nervo and Knox act would certainly bring down the house, while a well-trained beauty chorus of Beaks armed with canes would cause a regular riot in the film world !

Finally—Romance. No film is complete without it ! The hero of the picture would simply have to fall in love with the tuckshop dame, or somebody, if only to provide an excuse for occasional sentimental ballads. Here again Greyfriars could provide something unique. Just picture Wharton and Mrs. Mimble singing a love duet to the strains of Bulstrode's Comb-and-paper Band ! Why, Hollywood would turn green with envy !

I think I've said enough to convince you that we've the material here for turning out something really original in the way of pictures. That being so—WHY NOT FILM GREY-FRIARS ?

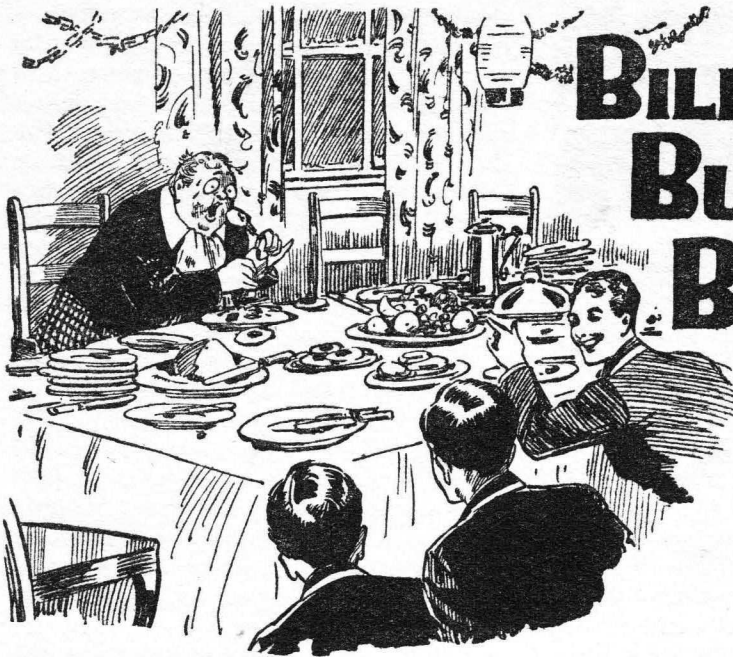
Dashed if I don't trot along to Wingate and ask him !

Wingate's just supplied the answer. It seems that the film people have asked the Head about it more than once, and the old bean has gently but firmly declined.

So that's that ! All I can hope now is that the Head will read this, wake up to the possibilities and change his mind.

You never know !





BILLY BUNTER'S BUST UP!

By
FRANK
RICHARDS

There's nothing Billy Bunter enjoys better than a really good "tuck-in"—if someone will stand him treat, which is seldom or never! But the Owl of Greyfriars is a pastmaster at bagging feeds, as he proves once again in this sparkling long story.

THE FIRST CHAPTER REGARDLESS OF EXPENSE

"CHRISTMAS——"

"Eh?"

"Christmas is coming," said Billy Bunter.

He was standing in the doorway of No. 1 Study, in the Remove passage, and blinking in through his big spectacles. Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, and Johnny Bull occupied easy-chairs, on either side of the hearth, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh was sitting on the table between them, with his feet on another chair. The chums of the Remove had simply turned their heads and looked at Bunter when he opened the door—merely that, and nothing more! They did not ask him in to

sit down; they did not even remark that it was cold. They stared at him.

"Christmas——" Bunter recommenced.

"Is coming," agreed Frank Nugent. "Where did you hear the news?"

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"You're sure you've got it quite correct—quite sure there won't be any oversight this year, and that Christmas won't get missed out of the calendar?"

"Look here——"

"Well, then, Christmas is coming," said Frank; "admitted unanimously. Would you mind shutting the door after you?"

"There's a draught," remarked Harry Wharton, and Hurree Singh

added his opinion that the draughtfulness was terrific.

Bunter blinked wrathfully at the four juniors.

"Look here," he exclaimed, "I didn't come here to be funny. I wanted to mention to you fellows that as Christmas was coming——"

Frank Nugent poked the fire, and in the clatter of the poker and the coals, the rest of Bunter's speech was lost.

"Do you hear me?" roared Bunter angrily. "I should think that even you chaps might be thinking about peace and goodwill and things, just now."

"But Christmas isn't here yet," said Harry Wharton. "As a matter of fact, it's a jolly long time off, Bunty."

"But we break up before Christmas," said Bunter, "and if we're going to give that Christmas feed——"

"What Christmas feed?"

"I was thinking of a big Christmas feed, to—to celebrate Christmas, you know," said Billy Bunter. "It ought to be a time of plenty, and good cheer, and so on. I'm thinking of standing a big feed—a real bust-up, you know—entirely at my own expense. You fellows needn't be afraid of being asked to contribute, if that's what you're thinking of. The thing will be done entirely by me, regardless of expense."

"Good!" said Frank Nugent heartily. "Go and arrange it, Bunter, and—and shut the door after you, will you?"

Bunter snorted.

"I was going to ask you chaps your opinion about the idea."

"Jolly good," said Nugent.

"Ripping," said Wharton and Johnny Bull.

"The rippingfulness is terrific."

Yet Bunter did not seem satisfied.

He was edging his way into the study. Billy Bunter was no longer a tenant of No. 1 Study, and since he had changed into No. 14, he had felt the lean years set in, so to speak. He had been accustomed to living on the fat of the land, and when he became his own provider, the difference was striking.

"I—I can't very well discuss it standing here," he remarked. "You might ask a fellow to sit down, at all events."

"Sit down at all events," said Nugent.

"Oh, really, you know!"

Bunter came in and closed the door. He came towards the fire, and coolly placed himself in front of Hurree Singh, shutting all the fire off from him. Then he blinked at Wharton and Nugent and Bull.

"I never could be really comfy unless I had an armchair," he said.

"Go hon!" said Nugent, stretching out his legs lazily.

"Same here," said Wharton.

Bunter blinked at them again, and then, with a grunt, sat on the fender. There was an ominous creak from the fender under the weight of the Owl of the Remove.

"Well, speaking about that Christmas feed," he said. "You see, we shall have to give it before we break up, so we can't wait till Christmas. My idea is the sooner the better. Why shouldn't a Christmas feed be had as early as a Christmas number? I think the chief question about it is, how to raise the funds."

"Yes, rather," said Wharton, laughing.

"Well, I'm attending to that," said Bunter grandly. "I'm standing this feed regardless of expense."

"To whom?"

"Eh?"

"Regardless of expense to whom?"

" Oh, really, Nugent ! To myself, of course ! "

" Rats ! "

" If you are going to cast doubt upon my word, I think this whole discussion had better cease," said Billy Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

" Much better. Shut up, then. "

" Oh, really, you know ! My idea is to issue cards of invitation to all the fellows who ought to come to the feed," explained Bunter. " Nothing like doing the thing in style, especially as it is possible that some of my titled friends may look in. Now, I want you fellows to come. "

" Thanks awfully. "

" The thankfulness is terrific. "

" Not at all. I used to be in this study," said Bunter. " I wasn't very well treated here ; but bygones can be bygones at a time of the year like this. I'm not the chap to bear malice at Christmas time. "

" Noble Bunter ! " murmured Nugent.

" Well, yes, I am rather a noble chap," agreed Bunter fatuously. " I don't get justice done me as a rule. "

" My hat ! You'd have an awful time if you did get it ! "

" Oh, really, Nugent ! "

" The awfulness would be terrific. "

" Look here," said Bunter. " To come back to bizney, I want you chaps to come to the Christmas feed. I want to show the whole school that bygones are bygones, and that I'm not the chap to remember any little unpleasantness at Christmas time. Will you come ? "

" Oh, we'll come ! "

" Then I'll put your names down in the list ? "

" Put 'em down. "

" I'll send you the cards of invitation a little later," said Bunter. " The whole thing is going to be handsomely

done, regardless of expense. I'm expecting a postal-order—in fact, several postal-orders, and I shall be in funds, and shall not have to ask anybody for financial help. "

The chums of the Remove looked at Bunter. He spoke so seriously that they almost believed him. Up to this moment they had deemed the Christmas feed merely an excuse for raising money for a feed for himself. His statement that he didn't want any money was generally a preliminary to borrowing. But of borrowing Bunter said not a word.

" Well, that's about all," said Bunter, taking out a notebook, and writing the names in it. " Wharton, Nugent, Bull, Inky. Good. I can depend on you ? "

" Oh, yes ! " said Nugent. " Look here, out with it, Billy. "

" Eh ? "

" How much do you want ? "

" How much what ? "

" Cash. "

Bunter blinked at him indignantly.

" If you think I've come here to borrow money, Nugent——" he began.

" You don't mean to say that you haven't ! " exclaimed Frank, in astonishment.

" Oh, really——" "

" Well, wonders will never cease ! "

" The wonderfulness is terrific. "

" I say, you fellows, draw it mild," said Bunter. " This isn't a nice way to treat fellows who are getting up Christmas feeds, more for your sake than anything else. I'm doing this thing entirely at my own expense. "

" Well, my only Aunt Selina ! "

" I want Bob Cherry to come, too," Bunter went on. " I can't quite forget that we all used to be in this study together, and we were very comfy, except that I never had quite enough

to eat. I can't see Cherry just now, as he's being ragged in Bulstrode's study——"

Wharton jumped up.

"What's that? Bob Cherry's being ragged in Bulstrode's study?"

"I think they're singeing his hair with a red-hot poker," said Bunter. "I noticed a smell of burning. I don't suppose they'll really hurt him. I say, you fellows, where are you going?"

But the fellows did not reply. Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh were tearing at top speed out of the study to the rescue of their chum.

Billy Bunter blinked after them with a grin on his face. He crossed quickly to the door, and locked it, and then turned to the cupboard.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

BUNTER CAPTURES THE PUDDING.

"BUCK up!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

With excited faces the Greyfriars chums dashed towards Bulstrode's study. Bulstrode was the bully of the Remove, and though he was terrible to small boys, he generally let Harry Wharton & Co. alone. But there was no doubt that he would always have liked to rag the chums of the Remove, if opportunity offered.

The juniors did not doubt for a moment that Bob Cherry had been inveigled into Bulstrode's study, and that the Remove bully and his friends were ragging the unfortunate Bob.

They did not stand upon ceremony.

If the ragers learned that rescue was coming, they would doubtless lock the door; and Harry Wharton did not mean to give them a chance to do that.

He dashed up to Bulstrode's door, threw it open without thinking of knocking, and rushed in with Nugent, Hurree Singh and Johnny Bull.

So quick and fierce was the rush that the four juniors dashed right up to the study table, and crashed against it before they could stop themselves.

Bulstrode was seated at the table, writing. Hazeldene was standing beside him, handing him some blotting-paper. There was no sign of Bob Cherry, or of either ragers or ragging in the study.

The collision with the table sent it reeling.

The four chums clutched at it to save themselves, and threw their weight upon it, and the table shot along the floor, crashing into Bulstrode and Hazeldene, and hurling them into the fender.

Then the table reeled over towards them, shooting down upon them books and papers and pens and ink.

Bulstrode roared.

"You mad idiots! W-w-what are you up to?"

"M-m-my hat!" gasped Hazeldene.

Wharton let go the table, and stood up gasping. Hurree Singh had rolled over, and was sitting rather dazedly on the carpet. Nugent had stumbled upon the waste-paper basket, and sat down upon it. The waste-paper basket was tall and narrow, and Nugent had sat in it with considerable force; with the result that he could not unseat himself. His feet shot up into the air, and he sat wedged in helplessly.

Bulstrode and Johnny Bull scrambled out of the fender.

Bulstrode's face was red with fury, and black with ink in fairly equal proportions of colour.



So fierce was the rush of Harry Wharton & Co. as they dashed into Bulstrode's study that they crashed into the table before they could stop themselves. "You mad idiots!" roared Bulstrode as the table knocked him and Hazeldene flying. "W-w-what are you up to?"

"You dangerous asses!" he yelled.

"Is this a silly rag?"

"My hat!" gasped Wharton.

"Where's Bob?"

"Bob! What Bob, idiot?"

"Bob Cherry! I—I thought he was here."

"And if he was here, do you generally come in like a mob of Red Indians to look for a chap?" roared Bulstrode.

"No— Ha, ha, ha! I'm sorry!"

"You—you—"

"Help!" groaned Nugent. "I can't get out! Lend me a hand, somebody!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, lend a hand!"

Wharton grasped Nugent's hands,

and drew him to his feet. The wastepaper basket still remained stuck on to him, Nugent being bent in the middle at an obtuse angle. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh obligingly kicked the basket off, and a yell from Nugent showed that it was not only the basket that suffered from the kick.

"Yaroooh! You ass!"

"The sorrowfulness is great if the esteemed kickfulness was too terrific," murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"You chumps!" said Bulstrode.

"You frabjous burblers! Look what you've done to my study!"

"B-b-but Bunter said you were ragging Bob Cherry here!" exclaimed Harry, in bewilderment. "We came in here to rescue him."

"He hasn't been in here, idiot."

"Then that young rascal was taking us in. It's a jape," said Harry ruefully. "Still, you've only got yourself to thank, Bulstrode. If you weren't such a beastly bully, you know, I shouldn't have been taken in."

"Get out of my study!" roared Bulstrode.

Hazeldene was rubbing his limbs, and looking far from pleasant, but he did not speak.

"I'm sorry," said Harry. "Ha, ha—I mean, I'm very sorry. So long!"

And the chums of No. 1 Study cleared out. Bulstrode growled furiously as he mopped the ink off his face, and Hazeldene scowled as he picked up the fallen books. Neither of them was in a sweet temper.

"What did that young villain take us in like that for?" said Nugent, as they went into the passage. "I suppose it was his idea of humour."

Harry Wharton frowned.

"Then we'll jolly well teach him not to tell lies for fun," he said, as he strode to the door of No. 1 Study. "Hallo, here's Bob Cherry!"

Bob Cherry and Mark Linley were just coming down the Remove passage. They looked in surprise at the excited and dishevelled juniors.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob. "What's the row?"

"You are!" grunted Nugent.

"Eh?"

"Have you been ragged by Bulstrode?"

"Bulstrode! Ragged! Certainly not."

"Then why haven't you?" demanded Nugent indignantly. "We went in to rescue you, and the least you could have done was to be rescued."

"What the dickens——"

Wharton explained, and Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Bunter wanted to clear you out of your study for something," he said. "Have you got anything in the cupboard?"

Harry Wharton looked alarmed.

"My hat! The Christmas pudding!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "That's what Bunter's after!"

"But—but he mustn't eat it; it'll make him ill!" gasped Wharton.

"It's a doctored pudding—for a jape, you know. If he eats it—my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bob again. "He's bound to eat it."

Wharton hastily turned the handle of the door, and tried to open it. It was locked on the inside.

He knocked at the upper panels with his knuckles.

"Bunter! Bunt! Bunt!"

There was no reply from within. But the juniors, listening outside the door, could hear the click of a knife on a plate.

"He's gorging already," said Nugent.

"It must be the pudding," said Harry Wharton. "That's what he must have come for. It was sent in by Mrs. Mible, who boiled it for us, a quarter of an hour ago. Bunter must have seen it sent in, and——"

"And laid this little scheme to scoff it," grinned Bob Cherry. "Well, he's scoffing more than he bargained for, this time. Ha, ha, ha!"

"What is there in the pudding?" asked Mark Linley.

"Liquorice powder," said Harry Wharton. "We mixed it in, you know, and put in lots of spices and things to disguise the flavour."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If Bunter bolts a lot of that pudding, he'll have some first-class pains under the waistcoat, that's all."

"He'll bolt the lot!" roared Bob

Cherry. "Ha, ha, ha! He won't leave a morsel of it, old man!"

Harry Wharton looked alarmed.

"We must stop him somehow!" he exclaimed. "He'll be ill!"

He kicked at the door. There was no reply from within the study. Billy Bunter was too busy. The noise in the corridor drew many juniors out of their studies, and there were loud inquiries as to what was on.

"Faith, and phwat is the disturbance about?" demanded Micky Desmond. "Sure, it's interruptin' me prep. ye are!"

"Can't be helped. Bunter's locked up in my study——"

"Well, I said a long time ago that Bunter ought to be locked up," said Ogilvy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's got on the track of the Christmas pudding that Mrs. Mimble was boiling for us," said Nugent. "He's bolting it now."

"Ha, ha! You'll never see it again," grinned Morgan. "Bunter won't leave a trace of it to stain the dish, look you?"

"But the pudding's been doctored."

"What!"

"My hat!"

"It was for a jape on the Highcliffe fellows," said Wharton ruefully.

"You see, those rotters got up a dodge the other day to doctor some stuff for us—I needn't go into particulars, but that was their game—they wanted to put us off colour just before a football match, so that they could lick us."

"The cads!" said Ogilvy. "I



"Bunter!" shouted Harry Wharton, knocking on the door. A voice, muffled as if it came from a mouth full of pudding, replied: "Hallo! Go away!" "Open the door!" roared Wharton. "Rats!" retorted Bunter. "This is jolly nice Christmas pudding."

never heard this. How did you find out?"

"One of the Courtfield chaps found it out, and warned us. But this Christmas pudding was a Roland for an Oliver, you see. We were going to send it to the cads by post, without any name or address on it, and of course they would have scoffed it at once. It was a nice pudding—jolly nice—and the liquorice powder we mixed in it was disguised by the spices. As they had tried to give us a dose of stuff, we thought they might as well have a tummy-ache themselves, to see how they liked it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And now that young villain's scoffing the pudding, and spoiling the jape!" said Nugent wrathfully.

"He'll rope in the tummy-ache!" roared Bob Cherry. "He'll eat six times as much as any of the Highcliffe fellows would."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The ha-ha-ha-fulness is terrific!"

Harry Wharton knocked at the door again.

"Bunter!" he shouted through the keyhole.

A voice, muffled as if it came from a mouth full of pudding, replied:

"Hallo! Go away!"

"Open the door!"

"Rats!"

"Are you eating the pudding?"

"Yes."

There was a roar of laughter from the Removites. Harry Wharton kicked at the door again. There was no sound from within the study save the click of a fork upon a plate, and a low, steady murmur of champing jaws. Billy Bunter was very busy.

The crowd in the Remove passage was thickening. The banging on the door had attracted attention from all quarters. Shell fellows and Fifth-

Formers were coming along as well as Removites, and there was a whisper that a prefect would be on the scene soon to see what the row was about.

So far as the jape on Highcliffe was concerned, Harry Wharton had given that up—Billy Bunter had wrecked the pudding by this time. His concern was now for the fat junior. The Highcliffe fellows would have eaten the pudding in normal helpings, and would have experienced a considerable ache inwardly, which would have been a just punishment for their attempt upon the Greyfriars footballers. But Bunter was never normal when it came to eating. He was certain to stuff in the pudding till he could hold no more. The result would be decidedly painful for Bunter.

Harry knocked at the door again.

"Bunter—I say, Bunter!"

"Hallo!" came from a mouth full of pudding again. "It's all right, you fellows; I'll leave you some. I can't eat all this!"

"My hat! I should think not!" gasped Nugent. "Why, there's enough for twelve fellows to grow fat on."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter, let that pudding alone!" shouted Wharton through the keyhole. "It will make you ill."

"Rats! It's a jolly nice pudding. I had my eye on you fellows all the time," said Bunter, pausing in his eating. "I knew you were making a Christmas pudding. I knew you had taken it to Mrs. Mible's to be boiled for you. You couldn't take me in. I had an eye on you all the time. Yah!"

"Look here——"

"Decent chaps would have asked an old study-mate to come in and have a snack," said Bunter; "especi-

ally a chap with a delicate appetite like mine, who wouldn't be likely to eat a lot. You know I've got a delicate constitution, and can only keep going by taking constant nourishment. I think you're selfish. Yah!"

"Bunter——"

"Oh, go and eat coke! I'm on this pudding. Blessed if I ever thought

of the door, and shouted through the keyhole again.

"Look here, Bunter, I'm speaking for your own good. That pudding has been doctored."

"Rats!"

"We made it for a jape on the Highcliffe chaps, and were going to send it to them, to pay them out for a rotten trick they played us."



As Harry Wharton & Co. entered the room, a deep groan greeted them. Bunter was sitting on the floor, leaning against the wall, his fat hands pressed to his waistcoat. "Groo!" moaned Bunter. "What's the matter, Billy?" asked Bob Cherry. "Feeling bad?" "O-o-o-oh!"

that you fellows could make a pudding like this! It's simply all right. I haven't eaten half of it yet. Go and eat coke! Yah!"

"Open the door, old man."

"Yah!"

That expressive monosyllable seemed to express Bunter's sentiments exactly. Wharton rattled the handle

"Yah!"

"There's a lot of liquorice-powder mixed in it."

"Bosh! I should taste it."

"We put in a lot of spices and things to cover the flavour. Look here, Bunter, if you eat much of that pudding you'll be ill!"

"Rats!"

"You'll get some awful pains."

"Yah!"

"Do you mean to say you don't believe me?" roared Wharton furiously.

"Of course I don't!"

"What!"

"Oh, go and chop chips!" said Billy Bunter. "Yah!"

"Bunter! Look here, I give you my word——"

"Yah!"

"You can't doubt my word, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! You've often doubted mine."

There was a chuckle in the passage. Harry Wharton might be anxious for Billy Bunter's health, but the other fellows were thoroughly enjoying the fun.

"That's a different matter, you young ass!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Look here, Bunter, let that pudding alone or you'll be ill, I tell you!"

"Rats!"

"Bunter——"

"Yah!"

Harry Wharton ceased. The fork was still clicking on the dish in the study as Billy Bunter shovelled the pudding into his capacious mouth.

"My hat!" exclaimed Wharton. "What on earth's to be done? It isn't as if the young pig would be moderate! He'll make himself ill! I——"

"Ha, ha, ha! Let him alone."

"Cave!"

Loder the prefect, with a frown on his face and a cane in his hand, was coming up the stairs three at a time. The noise in the Remove passage had evidently reached the senior studies.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

NEMESIS!

L ODER looked surprised as he saw the extent of the crowd in the junior passage. He had expected to

find a crowd of juniors there in the throes of a passage row, and had meant to lay about them impartially with the cane. But the crowd was too thick for that, and there were Shell fellows and some of the Fifth in it, and Loder did not care to take the risk of laying the cane about big fellows like Coker of the Fifth, or Hobson of the Shell. So he "slanged" instead of hitting out.

"What's all this row about?" he demanded. "I suppose you're at the bottom of it, as usual, Wharton?"

"I can't get my study door open, Loder," said Harry.

"Why not?"

"It's locked."

"Well, I don't see that there's any reason to cram half the school in the Remove passage, on that account," said Loder. "What do you mean—is somebody locked up in your study?"

"Well—yes."

"Who is it?"

"A Remove chap."

"Name?"

There was no withholding the name from the prefect, of course.

"Bunter."

"He's locked you out of your study?"

"Yes."

"Very well, lick him when he opens the door," said Loder. "Don't make a row to alarm the whole school. Keep quiet here."

"But he's bolting a Christmas pudding——"

"More fool you for giving him the chance."

Harry Wharton coloured.

"I don't mean I mind the pudding going," he exclaimed. "But it was a doctored pudding, doctored for a jape, and it will make him ill if he eats much of it."

Loder's frowning face melted into a grin.

"Serve him right!"

"But——"

"That's enough, Wharton. If Bunter chooses to steal a pudding and make himself ill, that's his own look-out. Not another sound in this passage, mind, or I'll give you a hundred lines each all round."

And with that threat Loder departed, chuckling. The juniors looked at one another.

"Well, it's all up now," said Wharton. "Bunter will have to take his chance."

"The chancefulness is terrific."

"Well, it's his own look-out," said Bob Cherry. "He won't open the door, any way, and I'm not inclined to get a hundred lines trying to make him."

"Not much!"

The juniors dispersed, most of them laughing. The reckoning was coming for Billy Bunter, and the Remove were anxious to see it when it came. Bunter was a deadly raider whenever he got scent of anything really tasty in another fellow's study, and it was only fair that Nemesis should get on his track sometimes.

The chums of the Remove did not return to their study until it was time to do their preparation, and by that time they had almost forgotten Billy Bunter and the Christmas pudding. When they reached the study it was clear that Bunter had been gone a long time. The room was in darkness and the fire was nearly out.

"Well, Bunter's not here," grinned Nugent, as he switched on the light. "I wonder how he's negotiating that pudding."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I fancy he must be beginning to feel the effects of it by this time."

"He's getting his Christmas bust-up a little sooner than he intended, that's all."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums dismissed Bunter from their minds, and sat down to their preparation. They finished it, and they went down for a chat in the common-room before going to bed. They looked round for Bunter when they came into the junior room, but the Owl of the Remove was not to be seen.

"My hat, I hope he isn't really ill!" Harry Wharton exclaimed, seriously. "I say, Bob, have you seen Bunter?"

"Not a sign of him," said Bob Cherry.

"Where can he be?"

"Might be in his study."

"Well, I'll go and look," said Harry.

Four or five juniors went with him to look for Bunter. And as they approached the study a deep groan from within warned them that Billy was indeed there.

"I can hear sweet music stealing," murmured Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Another groan.

The juniors entered the study. Wharton switched on the light. Billy Bunter was sitting on the floor in a corner against the wall. His fat face was thick with perspiration, and he had both his large, fat hands pressed to his waistcoat.

He blinked up at the chums of the Remove over his spectacles. The glasses had slid down his fat little nose, but Bunter had not sufficient energy left to replace them.

The juniors crowded in the doorway staring at him.

"Ow!" groaned Bunter. "Ow!"

"What's the matter, Billy?"

"Ow!"
"Feeling bad?"
"Yow!"
"Is it the pudding?"
"Groo!"
"What sort of pain is it?"
"Yowp!"
"Does it hurt?"
"O-o-o-o-oh!"

Bunter finished with a hair-raising groan. The juniors grinned. Bunter always made out his pains to be much greater than they were, and exactly how much pain he was suffering at the present moment they could not tell. But it was pretty clear that it was not all "spoo" this time.

"Well, I warned you about the pudding," said Harry Wharton. "I told you exactly how it would be, Bunter."

"Ow!"
"If you hadn't bolted so much, too——"

"Yaroo!"
"Does it hurt very much?"
"Groo!"
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.
"Ow!"

There was evidently nothing to be done for Bunter. Harry Wharton & Co. departed, with his deep groans following them. Juniors came, and juniors went, looking in at Billy Bunter, still sitting in the corner of the study groaning in the throes of a stomach-ache which Hurree Singh justly described as terrific.

Half the school came to look at Bunter, but Bunter did not care. He was past caring.

When bedtime arrived at last, Billy Bunter did not come to the dormitory. Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, had to put out the lights for the Remove that evening, and he looked round for the missing junior.

"Where's Bunter?" he asked.

"I don't think he's quite well, Wingate," said Wharton.

"Well, he will have to go to bed, anyway. I suppose he is malingering again. Where is he?"

"In his study, I think."

"Fetch him up."

"All right."

Harry Wharton went down to No. 14. Billy Bunter was not there. But there was a light in No. 1 Study, and Wharton looked into his own quarters, to find the fat junior in the armchair before a roaring fire.

Wharton stared at him.

Bunter groaned.

"Ow! I'm so ill!"

"Well, you young spoofer!" exclaimed Wharton indignantly. "What do you mean by burning up my coal like that? I was going to make that scuttle last over to-morrow, and now you've scoffed nearly the lot!"

"Yow, I'm ill!"

"Well, you've got to come to bed now!"

"I'm too ill to move!"

"Come on!"

"Oh, these fearful pains——"

"I'll help you. Wingate's waiting to turn the light out, and you'd better not keep him waiting."

Bunter thought so, too. He staggered from the armchair, and, leaning heavily on Wharton's arm, left the study. Harry supported him manfully up to the Remove dormitory.

Wingate stared at them as they came in. The twisting and perspiring face of Billy Bunter showed that it was not wholly humbug this time.

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Wingate.

"Groo! I'm ill—fearfully ill!"

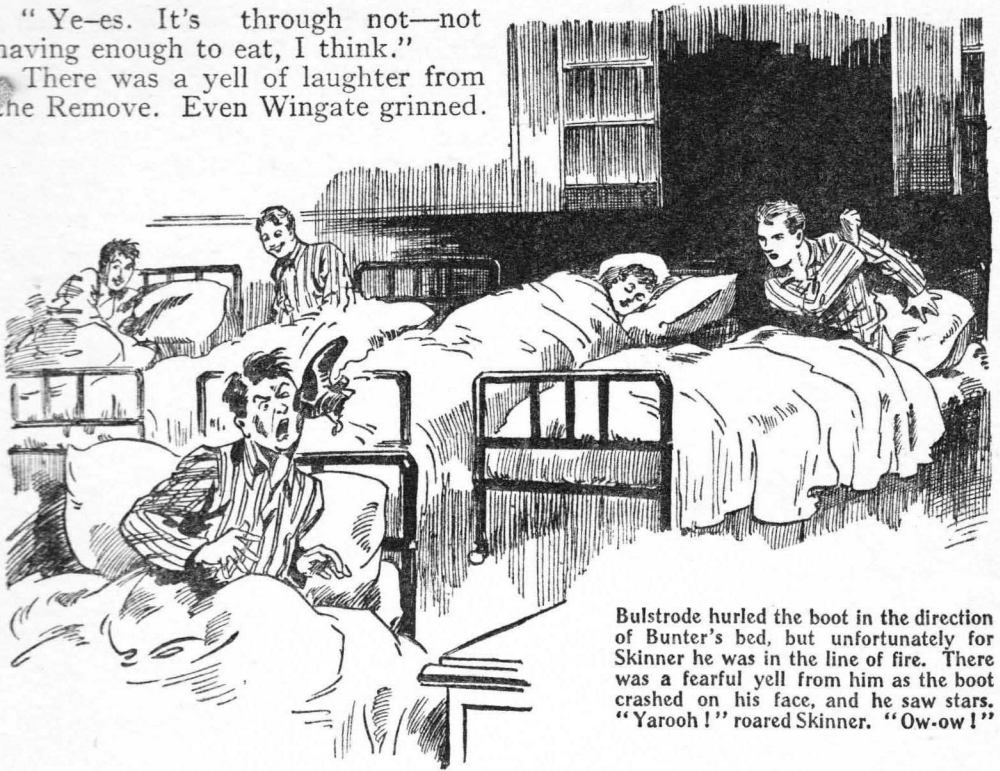
"What is it?"

"An awful pain!"

"But what's the cause of it?" said Wingate. "I suppose it has a cause."

"Ye-es. It's through not—not having enough to eat, I think."

There was a yell of laughter from the Remove. Even Wingate grinned.



Bulstrode hurled the boot in the direction of Bunter's bed, but unfortunately for Skinner he was in the line of fire. There was a fearful yell from him as the boot crashed on his face, and he saw stars. "Yaroo!" roared Skinner. "Ow-ow!"

"Out with the truth, you young spoofer!" he exclaimed. "I suppose you've been gorging, as usual, and eaten something that doesn't agree with you."

Bunter groaned.

"Do you chaps know?" asked Wingate, looking round. "He's a ghastly young pig, I know, but if he's really ill a doctor ought to be sent for."

"He's been scoffing a Christmas pudding," said Wharton.

"Oh, I see!"

"Yow!" groaned Bunter.

"It was a doctored pudding," said Harry. "There was—was liquorice powder in it. You see, it was meant for a jape, and—and it would have given a bit of a twist to anybody who ate a normal amount. But Bunter

bolted nearly the whole of the pudding, so——"

Wingate burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter gave a deep groan.

"Get into bed, you young porker!" said Wingate. "You'll be all right in the morning. If you've got a pain, serve you right. Bundle in!"

Bunter bundled in, and Wingate turned the light out and retired. But it was not easy to settle down to sleep, for from Bunter's bed came deep groans, all the more deep and deadly because Bunter was determined that nobody else should sleep if he couldn't.

"Shut up [that row, Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry, at last. "You're keeping me awake."

"Groo!"

"Dry up!"

"Ow!"

"Will you cheese it?" yelled Skinner.

"Ow! I'm in awful pain!" groaned Bunter. "I'm suffering fearfully!"

"Well, suffer in silence, then, can't you?"

Apparently, Bunter couldn't—at all events, he didn't. Groan after groan came from the fat junior's bed, till the Remove were in a state of almost ferocious exasperation.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

VERY PAINFUL

GROAN!
Groan!

"My only hat," said Bob Cherry, sitting up in bed, "I'm getting fed up with this! Bunter, will you stop that row?"

Groan!

"Stop it!" shrieked Bulstrode. "I'll get out to you soon."

Groan!

"Swamp his bed with water," suggested Vernon-Smith. "If the beast will groan, give him something to groan about."

"Hear, hear!" said Skinner.

Groan!

"Bunter! Shut up!"

Groan!

"Bunter, you ass, draw it mild!" said Harry Wharton impatiently. "I dare say you're in pain, but you know it's not necessary to keep up a row like that. Shut up! Make a little less row, and let us go to sleep."

But that was just what Billy Bunter did not intend to do. If he couldn't sleep, why should anybody else? That was the way Bunter looked at it. And in response to Harry's appeal, he delivered a more hair-raising groan than ever. If he had been a ghost in a melodrama, he could not have groaned more terribly.

Bulstrode gave a snort of rage.

"I'll jolly soon stop that!" he exclaimed.

He groped beside his bed for something to throw. His hand encountered a boot, and he picked it up.

He knew where Bunter's bed was. For the moment he forgot that most of the fellows were sitting up in bed now. He hurled the boot in the direction of Bunter's bed, and it whizzed through the darkness.

There was a fearful yell from Skinner. If Skinner had been lying down, the boot would have passed over him. But Skinner was sitting up. The boot crashed on his left ear, and Skinner saw stars.

"Yaroo!"

"My hat, there's another one beginning!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Have you been bolting a Christmas pudding, too, Skinny?"

"Ow!" roared Skinner. "Somebody's buzzed a boot at my head. Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My hat, I'm sorry!" exclaimed Bulstrode. "I meant it for Bunter."

"Ow! You silly ass! Ow!"

"Well, you shouldn't have been in the way, you know."

"You chump!"

"Oh, dry up! Gimme my boot back."

Skinner had already determined to do that. He grasped the boot in the darkness, and hurled it with deadly aim in the direction of Bulstrode's voice. But, as before, somebody sitting up was in the way of the boot. Bob Cherry gave a yell that rang through the dormitory.

"Gerrooh!"

"Oh, my hat! Cherry——"

"Who chucked that boot?" roared Bob Cherry. "Look here, Bulstrode——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bulstrode. He guessed that Skinner had flung the boot back, and that Bob Cherry had had the benefit of it.

But the laugh was ill-timed. It made Bob think that Bulstrode had thrown the boot.

He scrambled out of bed, and rushed to Bulstrode's, and clawed the bed-clothes off him.

"Hallo!" roared Bulstrode. "Stop that! Oh!"

Spank! spank!

"Yaroo!" roared Bulstrode, as Bob Cherry's large-sized hands came spanking on his lightly clad limbs. "Ow! Chuck it! I didn't throw that boot, you ass!"

Bob Cherry paused.

"Oh, didn't you!" he exclaimed.

"Who did, then?"

"Skinner, you fool!" yelled Bulstrode. "By George, I'll——"

"Oh, I'm sorry, then," said Bob; "but it serves you right for starting chucking boots about in the dark!"

"You—you frabjous ass!"

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

Bulstrode rubbed his tingling limbs, and Bob Cherry and Skinner rubbed their heads. All three of them were hurt.

The laughter died away, and then Bunter thought it was time for him to appear on the scene again. There was a deep groan once more.

This time a yell of exasperation rose.

"Stop that row, Bunter."

Groan!

"Will you shut up?"

Groan!

"My dear Bunter," said Alonzo Todd, "it is really terrible to hear you groaning in this manner! Would it relieve you if I were to sit by your bedside and hold your hand?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Remove. "My dear fellows——"

Groan!

"It is really terrible to hear Bunter. My Uncle Benjamin would feel it very much. I wish I could do something to relieve you, Bunter."

Groan!

"I'll do something to relieve him!" exclaimed Bulstrode, jumping out of bed.

He took his braces, and groped his way to Bunter's bed.

Swish!

Slash!

"Yaroo!" roared Bunter.

Swish! slash! swash!

"Ow! Yow! Help! Murder! Fire! Yaroo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Does that relieve you?" demanded Bulstrode.

"Ow! No! Yow!"

Slash! swish! slash!

"Help! Yaroo! Yah!"

"Are you feeling better?"

"Yow! No! Yes! Whoop!"

"Good. Do you think you will groan any more?"

"Yes—no! No!"

"Good," said Bulstrode. "If you do, and I have to get out of bed again I'll give you a real licking, and not joke with you like that."

"Ow!"

"Hallo! Are you beginning again?"

"Yow! No. I—I'm all right."

"Better keep all right, then."

And Bulstrode went back to bed.

Billy Bunter gasped and snorted. But he did not groan any more. The juniors chuckled over the cure Bulstrode had administered.

Alonzo Todd was astonished. He had never heard of pain being cured by an application of braces through the bed-clothes. But that application seemed to have cured Bunter.

The Remove was able to get to sleep at last.

In the middle of the night, however, Harry Wharton awoke. There was a sound of a groan in the darkness. Starlight was glimmering in through the high windows of the dormitory, and he could see Billy Bunter sitting up in bed, rocking to and fro.

"Hallo, Bunter!" he said sleepily. "At it again?"

"Ow! I feel awfully bad!" groaned Billy Bunter.

"Where's the pain?"

"Inside."

"It's Nemesis, old man."

"Taint!" groaned Bunter. "It's the tummy ache."

Wharton chuckled.

"I mean it's Nemesis—justice—on your track," he said. "Nemesis was the lady of ancient times who used to give people beans when they got offside. I knew Nemesis would be on your track when you scoffed the pudding, Bunty. Go to sleep."

"I—I c-c-can't!"

"Better not wake Bulstrode up."

Billy Bunter thought so, too, for he ceased groaning. But Nemesis gave him very little rest that night. In the morning, Bunter was looking very pale and ill. He astounded the Remove by having only a slight appetite for breakfast. And then even Bulstrode agreed that he must be suffering terribly.

But during the morning the effects of the Christmas pudding wore off, and Billy Bunter became himself again. At dinner-time he more than made up for any little deficiencies at the breakfast-table.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER

NOT A CHEQUE!

"LETTER for Bunter!"

Billy Bunter was coming downstairs in the morning a few days

later—last down, as usual—when Ogilvy spoke. Bunter made a rush.

"Where is it? Hand it over!"

Ogilvy took the letter down and tossed it to Bunter. The fat junior caught it eagerly.

It was a large, square envelope of thick white paper, and on the flap at the back were three initials in gold, in old English type.

"C. D. A."

Bunter took the letter and turned it over in his fat hands. A good many fellows looked at it, too, wondering who could have written to Bunter in that imposing envelope.

"One of your titled friends, Billy, I suppose?" Bob Cherry remarked, with a grin.

Bunter blinked at him.

"I expect it's from Sir William," he said.

Bob Cherry staggered back, and caught at the wall as if to support him—apparently quite overcome.

"Sir William! My only maiden Aunt Matilda! Uncle of yours?"

"Old friend of the family," said Bunter indifferently.

"They're his initials on the back, of course," Ogilvy remarked sarcastically. "Which of them stands for William—C. D. or A.?"

"Oh, really, Ogilvy——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo! What's the joke?" asked Temple of the Upper Fourth, coming along with Dabney and Fry. "Bunter got a postal-order at last?"

"No. Letter from a titled friend," said Bob Cherry. "Sir William Walker."

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

"Or is it Sir William Spoofo, or Lord Knowswho, or Duke Humphrey?" asked Skinner, with heavy sarcasm.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you fellows, it's from Sir William Thorne," said Bunter. "He's the head of the Christmas Dinners Association."

"Well, that sounds like a jolly good association," said Snoop. "Have you been writing him a begging letter for a Christmas dinner?"

Bunter disdained to reply to that question. He opened the envelope by the simple expedient of slitting it with his thumb, and took out the letter. He opened that with the expectation of finding something inside, but there was nothing. The look of disappointment on his fat face made the Removites roar again.

"Sir William hasn't dubbed up!" roared Bob Cherry. "I'm sure his name is William Walker, after all."

"Mean of him," said Ogilvy. "I should sack my titled friends, if I were you, Bunty, and get some common or garden untitled ones."

Bunter read the letter and snorted.

"Well, of all the rot!" he exclaimed.

"What's the matter?"

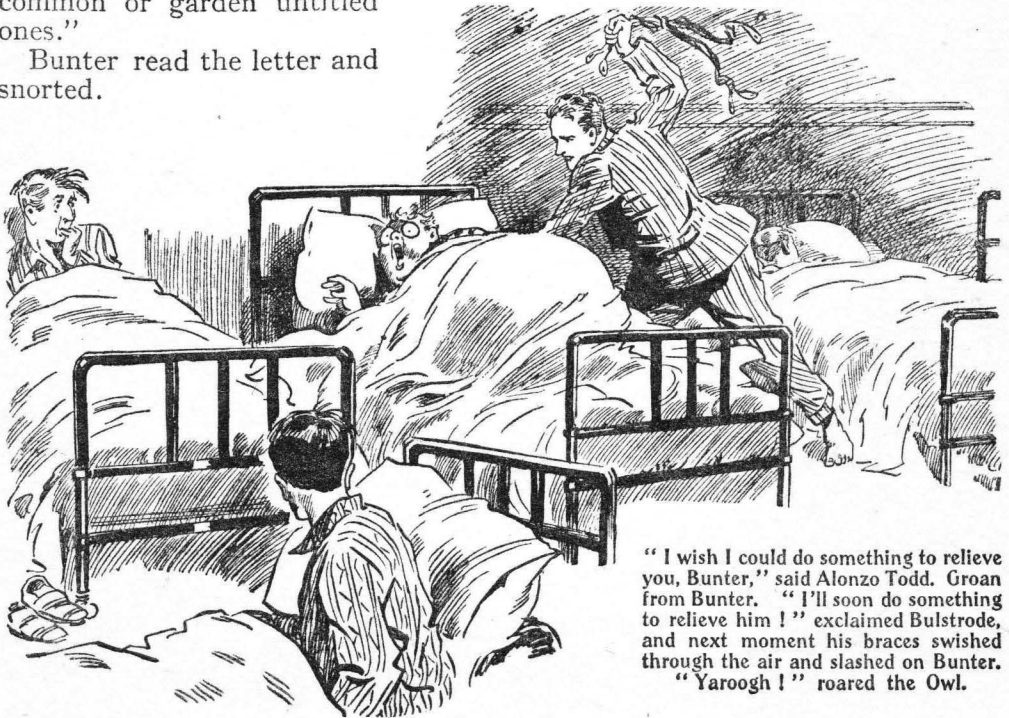
"Oh, it's rotten!" said Bunter, in great disgust. "I wrote to this chap, and explained my wheeze of—of standing a big bust-up for the special benefit of fellows who couldn't afford to buy a Christmas dinner. That's my real object, of course, in standing this Christmas feed."

"First I've heard of that," grinned Bob Cherry. "I thought your object was to get a big feed yourself, regardless of expense to the chaps who found the tin."

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Faith, and go on with the letter!" said Micky Desmond.

"You see, this rotten association looks after poor people at Christmas and provides them with dinner, and things," Bunter explained, "so, of



"I wish I could do something to relieve you, Bunter," said Alonzo Todd. Groan from Bunter. "I'll soon do something to relieve him!" exclaimed Bulstrode, and next moment his braces swished through the air and slashed on Bunter.

"Yarough!" roared the Owl.

course, when I wrote to the president of it and explained my great idea of—of feeding the poor at Christmas, I expected he would send a decent contribution."

"My hat! So you've started writing begging letters, have you?" exclaimed Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent, I wish you wouldn't put a bad construction on everything I do," said Bunter peevishly. "Blessed if it isn't enough to make a chap stop sacrificing himself for others. I never get any thanks for it, I know that. Well, instead of sending me a contribution, the beast—I mean Sir William——"

"An old friend of the family, you know," said Ogilvy.

"Well, my father knew him, I mean," said Bunter hastily. "That is——"

"Oh, I know all about it!" said Skinner. "Bunter senior supplies Sir William's household with butter and eggs, and cheats him in the quality of the eggs."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"As I was saying," said Bunter hastily. "The beast——"

"Look here, Bunter, you're not to speak of your father that way. If he's anything like you, he may deserve it—but it's bad form."

"I was speaking of Sir William, you ass! Sir William has written me a rotten letter instead of sending me a contribution."

"Let's hear the letter," grinned Ogilvy.

Bunter, glowering with indignation, read out the letter.

"*Sir,—In reply to your request claiming a contribution from the funds of the society for charitable objects in Friardale, I beg to inform you that our Mr. Sharpe will call upon you on Thursday morning to inquire into the*

circumstances. If the same be found satisfactory, your request will be placed before the Donations Committee at the next meeting.—Yours faithfully,

"H. JONES, Secretary."

"Not even a letter from Sir Bill!" exclaimed Skinner. "Why, anybody could have a letter from a common or garden secretary. Rats!"

"And no remittance!" said Bob Cherry sympathetically. "Curious how these people know when you're trying to spoof 'em."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I regard this letter as an insult!" said Bunter. "It's jolly near expressing a doubt of my personal honour."

The juniors gaped.

"His personal honour!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Where do you keep it, Bunter? You've never let us see anything of it!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Well, if you succeed in spoofing 'our Mr. Sharpe,' you'll be clever!" grinned Skinner. "Why, the man will turn you inside out, you duffer!"

"I shall treat him very sharply, I can tell you!" said Bunter. "I'm not going to have my bona fides doubted in this rotten way."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter thrust the letter into his pocket and rolled away. He doubted very much now whether he would succeed in extracting anything from the Christmas Dinners Association. They were not likely to provide a Christmas dinner for him. He would have to look elsewhere for the funds for the great bust-up.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

A SUDDEN RECOVERY.

"RAISED the wind yet, Billy?" asked Bulstrode, with a grin, as he came upon the fat junior in the doorway of the schoolhouse.

Billy Bunter blinked at him despondently.

"Not yet, Bulstrode. I'm expecting some postal-orders this evening. But just at the present moment I'm short of money. Did you say you were going to advance me something towards the bust-up?"

"No, I didn't!"

"H'm! It would really be like putting your money in the bank, you know, to have it back with interest at Christmas," said Bunter persuasively. "As a business chap you ought to see the advantage of that, Bulstrode."

Bulstrode grinned.

"Besides, the feed is really being stood in your honour," Bunter explained.

"Mine!" exclaimed Bulstrode.

"Yes. You see my real object is to show the Remove that they ought to look up to you, and not make so much of Wharton, you know. You will, of course, be the guest of honour at the feed, and the whole thing will be intended to mark our respect for you."

"Not good enough, Bunty!" grinned Bulstrode.

And he walked away.

"Beast!" muttered Bunter. "Rotter! Mean bounder! I wonder whether I could——" He paused, as Hurree Jamset Ram Singh came in.

"I say, Inky, stop a moment."

The nabob was always polite. He paused, with a graceful inclination of his head to the fat junior.

"Certainly, my worthy and esteemed fat chum. I am in a somewhat hurry."

"I won't keep you a minute. It's about that bust-up, you know."

"The knowfulness is great."

"My real object in standing this feed," went on Bunter, "is to show

the fellows that it's all rot to talk about you being a nigger, or anything of that sort. You, of course, will be the guest of honour, and the whole thing will be got up regardless of expense to mark our respect for you. I think that at Christmas time something ought to be done to promote peace and good feeling, and so on, and to show that we're all brothers—I mean, brethren—in spite of differences of colour. What do you think, Inky?"

"I think the honourable Bunter is an esteemed and terrific ass!"

"Oh, really, Inky——"

"I think also that his rottenness is great."

"Look here, Inky, I think you might be decently grateful when a chap gets up a celebration, regardless of expense, to do you honour!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "Some chaps would bar a nigger. I don't."

"The graciousness of the esteemed Bunter is terrific."

"Well, I mean to be gracious, on an occasion like this," Bunter explained. "I don't see why you're not as good as I am myself, for that matter, though you're darker. And you're not so very dark, either. If you could stand me a fiver——"

"I fear that I cannot stand the honourable Bunter at all."

"Look here, Inky, make it a pound."

"The ratfulness is terrific."

"You blessed nigger——"

"The esteemed Bunter has stated that my worthy self is not so very dark!" the nabob exclaimed with a grin.

"You—you ace of spades!" grunted Bunter. "Look here, I think you might make a contribution like a decent chap. I——"

"The good-byefulness is great."

"Hold on a minute, Inky. Look

here, I think you might make some slight contribution. I'd take ten bob."

"Not from me, my worthy chum."

"Well, say, half a crown."

"The esteemed Bunter may say it if he wishes."

Bunter snorted.

"Look here, you black beast, are you going to make a contribution or are you not?" he roared.

"The notfulness is terrific."

"You—you black bounder!"

"There is one thing I shall have great pleasurefulness in presenting to the esteemed and ludicrous Bunter."

"What's that?" asked Bunter eagerly.

"The kickfulness of my august foot."

"Ow! Leggo!"

Bunter was spun round, and the nabob's foot was planted behind him.

The fat junior went sprawling, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh walked on his way with a soft and placid smile.

"Ow!" groaned Bunter. "The black beast! Yah!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

MR. SHARPE CALLS

TROTTER, the House page, put his head into the Remove Form-room the next morning during lessons. Mr. Quelch was guiding the Lower Fourth through the labyrinths of deponent verbs, and in the thrilling interest of that pursuit he did not notice Trotter. He was tackling Billy Bunter, and Bunter, whose knowledge was not what Hurree Singh would have called terrific, had just given him the extraordinary information that a deponent verb was normal in form and abnormal in meaning. Mr. Quelch had taken up his pointer, with the idea of pointing out to Bunter that his definition was not quite correct—through the

medium of the palm of the hand—when Trotter's voice was heard:

"If you please, sir, Master Bunter's wanted, sir!"

Mr. Quelch looked round.

"Master Bunter's wanted, sir."

"Indeed? What is it?"

"A visitor, sir."

Bunter blinked round.

"If you please, sir, I expect it's one of my titled friends, sir, come to give me a Christmas tip!" he exclaimed.

"Who is it, Trotter?"

"A Mr. Sharpe, sir."

"Oh!" ejaculated Bunter.

He had forgotten the promised visit of the representative of the Christmas Dinners Association.

"Which the 'Ead sent me for Master Bunter, sir," said Trotter.

"You may go, Bunter."

"Ye-es, sir."

Billy Bunter left the Form-room. He left the Remove grinning. They did not think that he would get very much change out of the representative of the Christmas Dinners Association.

Bunter followed Trotter down the wide, flagged passage.

"Where is he?" he asked.

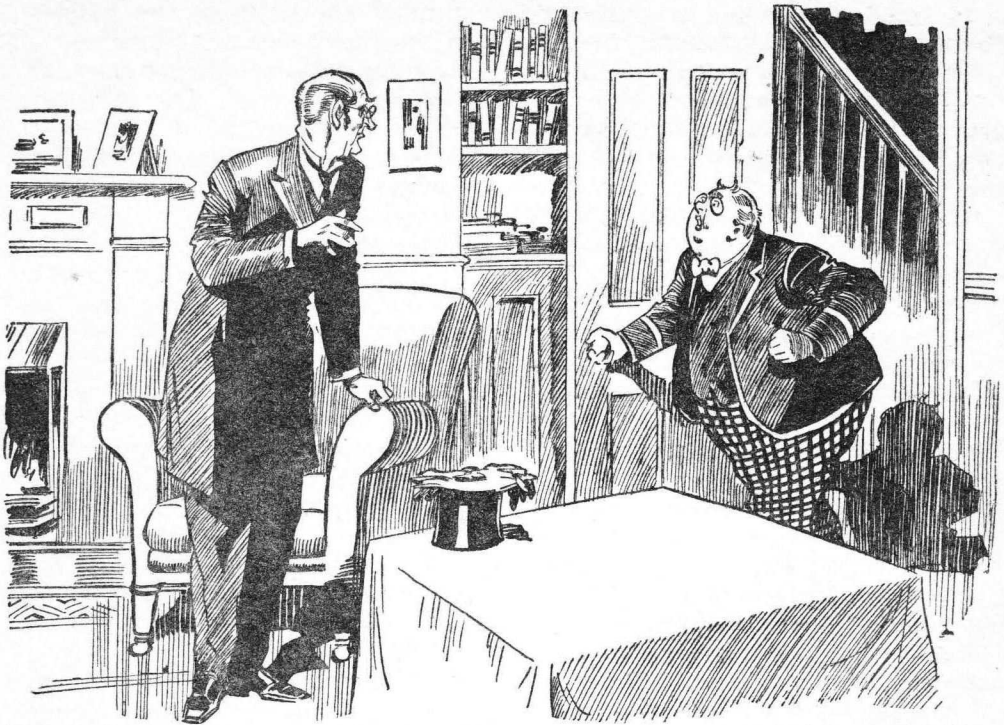
"In 'ere, sir," said Trotter, opening the door of the library. "I took in 'is card to the 'Ead, Master Bunter, and he sent me to tell you there was a visitor for you."

"The Head's not there?" exclaimed Bunter, startled.

"Oh, no, Master Bunter!"

Billy Bunter drew a breath of relief.

He went into the library, and a tall, thin gentleman rose from a chair. The gentleman was so thin and so tall that it seemed to Bunter as if he would never leave off rising up, to so great a height did he go. He was certainly over six feet, and his thin form was



Bunter blinked in surprise at the tall, thin gentleman who rose from a chair as he entered. "Mr. S-s-sharpe?" he asked. "Certainly," said the tall gentleman. "I expected to see Mr. Bunter." "I'm Bunter, sir," said the fat junior.

clad in a tightly-buttoned frock-coat, which made him look longer and thinner, and, in fact, almost telescopic.

Bunter blinked up at him, with almost a crick in the neck.

"Mr. S-s-sharpe?" he asked.

"Certainly!" said the towering gentleman, in a deep bass voice. "I expected to see Mr. Bunter—Mr. William Bunter."

"I'm Bunter, sir."

The stranger adjusted a pair of gold-rimmed glasses upon a prominent thin nose, and looked at Bunter in surprise.

"You are Bunter?" he repeated.

"Certainly."

"But—but the application which was received by our committee,"

said Mr. Sharpe. "It was—er—it was sent in for a contribution to a scheme for feeding the—er—in fact, the poor."

"Exactly, sir. I sent it in."

"But you are—er—in fact, a boy," said Mr. Sharpe.

"Well, I'm a bit older in most things than the other fellows," said Bunter. "I'm rather a clever chap, you know, and very experienced. And, besides, I like helping the poor, sir. That's really what I live for."

"Indeed!"

"Certainly, sir. If this contribution is sent by the Christmas Dinners Association, sir, they can rest assured that it will be well spent—entirely on grub, sir."

"Ahem!"

"My object in standing the bust-up—I mean the feed—is to help the poor over Christmas, sir," said Bunter. "I have already written invitations to a number of poor Council-school boys in the neighbourhood, sir, and they're all coming."

"That is certainly a very worthy object," said Mr. Sharpe, scanning the fat junior very closely.

"Yes, sir. My real object is to promote peace and good feeling between the fellows here and the County Council School chaps," Bunter explained. "I'm getting up a feed, regardless of expense, for that reason solely."

"Very good. You are, however, very young to be entrusted with the spending of money," said Mr. Sharpe, "and I should have, of course, to be satisfied of your bona fides before I could recommend your claim to the committee."

"I should give you my word of honour, Mr. Sharpe," said Bunter grandly.

"Ahem! I think I should prefer a word or two with your headmaster, first," Mr. Sharpe observed.

"I—I hardly think it's necessary, sir. If you hand the money over to me the whole thing will be quite satisfactory."

"I am afraid I could not do so. Perhaps you will wait while I have a few words with your headmaster?"

"Please don't trouble, sir. Dr. Locke is a very busy man, and—and he—he gets very bad-tempered when he's interrupted, especially in the mornings."

"Ahem——"

"He might even be violent, sir," said Bunter desperately. "There—there was a chap he nearly brained once for interrupting him in the morning."

"Dear me!"

"I'm standing this Christmas bust-up entirely at my own expense, except for any little help I get from your committee, sir. I am being perfectly lavish—the whole thing is being got up regardless of expense."

"I think I had better see your headmaster."

"Quite unnecessary, sir."

Mr. Sharpe appeared to have his own ideas about that. He touched the bell and Trotter reappeared, and conducted him to the Head's study, leaving Billy Bunter waiting, in a far from enviable frame of mind, in the library.

Bunter waited with a dismal face.

That the headmaster would allow him to receive any contribution from the Christmas Dinners Association, if they were willing to send one, was doubtful.

"It's rotten!" muttered Bunter. "I call it rotten! The suspiciousness of some people is simply fearful. It's just as if they couldn't trust their money into my hands."

Trotter came in with a grin on his face, and Bunter blinked at him.

"Is that gentleman with the Head?" he asked.

"Yes, Master Bunter. The 'Ead wants you to go to his study."

"Oh! Are you sure?"

"Yes," grinned Trotter. "He sent me to fetch you, sir."

"I—I suppose I'd better go," murmured Bunter.

And he took his way to the Head's study.

He did not like the prospect of facing Mr. Sharpe and the Head together. He was greatly inclined to bolt instead of obeying the summons. But, after all, where could he bolt to? He was in for it now, and with slow and unwilling steps

he made his way to Dr. Locke's room.

His hand trembled as he tapped at the door.

"Come in!" said a deep voice.

The voice was familiar enough, but it made Bunter jump. He pushed the door open, and went into the study.

Mr. Sharpe was sitting by the window, the Head at his desk. Dr. Locke turned a severe glance upon the Owl of the Remove as he came in.

"Bunter!"

"Ye-e-es, sir?"

"I hear that you have written to this gentleman for money," said the Head sternly. "Will you kindly explain yourself, Bunter?"

The Owl of the Remove blinked.

"Well?" snapped the Head. "I am waiting for an explanation. I may mention that unless it is a perfectly satisfactory one I shall cane you severely, Bunter."

"Oh, really, sir——"

"I am waiting, Bunter!"

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

THE WAY OF THE TRANSGRESSOR!

BILLY BUNTER'S knees knocked together.

The dark frown upon the doctor's face terrified him, and put to flight whatever little wit he might have had.

"Well, Bunter," said the Head, in a voice that seemed to the fat junior like the rumble of thunder, though it really was not very loud. "Well?"

"If you please, sir——"

"Go on, Bunter!"

"I—I—I——"

"You have written a begging letter, Bunter."

"Oh, no, sir! I—I hope you wouldn't think that I should do anything of that sort, sir! I despise a

chap who wants money. You see, sir, the idea really was to stand a Christmas feed to the poor, and I was getting it up regardless of expense. I thought the Christmas Dinners Association would like to send in a bit of a contribution to so—so noble an object, sir."

"Ah! And who are the poor you are thinking of feeding at Christmas, Bunter?" asked the Head grimly.

"Oh, the poor, sir!" said Bunter vaguely. "There are lots of poor, sir."

"The poor of Friardale, perhaps?"

"Yes, exactly, sir."

"And how will you be able to feed them at Christmas, Bunter, when you will not be here? The school breaks up before Christmas, and you will be gone home."

"I—I meant the bust-up to take place before we broke up, sir. I—I've already invited some poor Council-school boys, sir—the Courtfield fellows."

"Have they accepted?"

"Not yet, sir. I'm expecting to hear from them to-day. I thought you might approve of my trying to— to put things on a better footing between the two schools, sir, by means of a Christmas bust-up, regardless of expense."

"You tell Mr. Sharpe that you are providing most of the funds yourself."

"Practically the whole, sir," said Bunter, recovering his confidence a little. "Two-thirds, at least, sir, regardless of——"

"Indeed! You have purchased the provisions?"

"N-n-not yet, sir."

"Then you still have the money in hand?"

"In a way, sir."

"Can you show it to me, Bunter?"

"I—I—I——"

"Please show me the money!" thundered the Head.

"I—I c-c-can't, sir!" stammered Bunter. "It hasn't come yet, sir. I—I'm expecting a large number of postal-orders, from some rich relations and from some titled friends of mine, and——"

"Don't talk nonsense, Bunter!"

"Oh, sir!"

"You have no money, and your talking of feeding the poor at Christmas is all empty nonsense," said the Head sternly. "You have attempted to obtain money from the very worthy society this gentleman represents, but I fear very much that it would not be devoted to the promised object if you succeeded in obtaining it."

"Oh, really, sir——"

"I apologise to this gentleman," said the Head, with an inclination towards Mr. Sharpe, "for the trouble he has been put to, and assure him that you will be punished for having given him this unnecessary journey."

"Not at all, sir!" said Mr. Sharpe politely.

And he took his silk hat and his leave.

Bunter remained all alone with the Head.

He blinked after the tall gentleman till he disappeared, taking with him, as it were, Bunter's last hope of a free contribution of funds for the Christmas bust-up. But Billy Bunter had little time to think about that. The voice of the Head called his attention back.

"Bunter," said Dr. Locke sternly, "you have acted in a disgraceful manner."

"Oh, really, sir——"

"I fear very much that you hoped to obtain a contribution from this

charitable society, for the purpose of keeping it for your own uses."

"Oh, really——"

"You have not, I suppose, considered how dishonest that would be," the Head continued. "But perhaps a caning might impress that consideration upon your mind, and induce you to reflect upon your conduct."

"If—if you please, sir, I—I'd rather reflect without being caned, sir," ventured the fat junior nervously.

"Probably you would, Bunter, but that would not meet my views. You will kindly hold out your hand," said the Head, rising from his seat.

He took up his cane, Bunter received two swipes on each hand, and they doubled Bunter up like a pocket-knife. The Head eyed him grimly.

"There, Bunter! I think that will perhaps be a lesson to you. If it fails to prove so I must see what a further application of the same kind of correction will effect. You must learn, Bunter, that the way of the transgressor is hard. You may go."

Bunter tucked his hands under his arms in the passage, and went along groaning dismally.

The classes were being dismissed now for the morning recess, and Bunter ran into Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth, in the passage.

"Hallo!" said Temple. "Here's Bunter in trouble again! What was it this time, Bunter?"

"Nothing," groaned Bunter. "All through my desire to do good to the poor at Christmas-time, that's all. Ow!"

"Good old Bunter!" chuckled Temple. "Always some spanking whopper, and each one bigger than the last."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

Bunter blinked at them.

"I say, you fellows, speaking of Christmas feeds——"

"Who's speaking of Christmas feeds?" said Temple.

"I am," said Bunter. "Speaking of Christmas feeds, look here, suppose you chaps were to make a contribution towards the bust-up."

"What bust-up?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. I——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows—— Look here, don't walk away while I'm talking to you. I tell you—— Look here—— Beasts!"

Temple & Co. walked away, laughing. Bunter tucked his hands under



"Bunter," said the Head sternly, "I hear that you have written to this gentleman for money. If you cannot give me a satisfactory explanation I shall cane you severely." "Oh, really, sir——" gasped Bunter.

"I'm standing a big Christmas bust-up before the school breaks up," Bunter explained. "You, of course, would be the guests of honour. My real object is to——to promote good feeling between the Upper and the Lower Fourth, and——and make the two Forms get on better, by——by showing our respect for the Upper Fourth. Now, if you chaps cared to make a contribution——"

his arms once more, and recommenced groaning.

THE NINTH CHAPTER

MARJORIE'S REPLY.

"SATURDAY's the day after to-morrow," Billy Bunter remarked, cornering Harry Wharton & Co. in the tuckshop, where they were discussing gingerpop, and he blinked at the chums of the Remove significantly.

"Dear me!" said Nugent. "To-day's Thursday, so the day after to-morrow is really almost certain to be Saturday. Quite right, Bunter; but did you do that in your head?"

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"Why don't you go in for higher mathematics, Bunty?" asked Bob Cherry. "A fellow who can work out things like that——"

"Look here, you fellows, I'm talking business. Saturday's the day after to-morrow, and that means that the bust-up has got to come off in two days' time, or not at all."

"Then I fancy it will be not at all," said Wharton, laughing.

"The not-at-allfulness will be terrific."

"Oh, very well; if you fellows want the guests to be disappointed, and Greyfriars to get a name for inhospitality, I don't see why I should care," said Bunter loftily.

"What! What guests?"

"Oh, the Cliff House girls."

"What!" shouted the juniors in chorus.

"Of course, I've invited them," said Bunter. "I shouldn't be likely to leave Marjorie & Co. out of a Christmas feed, I suppose."

"You cheeky young ass! But they won't come," said Harry. "They know you too jolly well for that."

Bunter snorted.

"Then there are the Courtfield fellows."

"The Courtfield fellows?" repeated Harry.

"Yes, I've asked them."

"You've asked Trumper & Co.?"

"Yes. You see, my object is to feed the poor at Christmas, and I don't suppose those Council-school chaps have any Christmas dinners," said Bunter. "They are coming to the feed, and I should think you

fellows would stand by me, in case anything goes wrong and I don't get a remittance in time."

The chums of the Remove stared at Billy Bunter. They had had some samples of the fat junior's coolness before, but this really seemed to beat all previous records.

"My only hat!" said Bob Cherry at last.

"You've asked them to come, Bunter?"

"Of course. And I should think you fellows would——"

"Have they accepted the invitation?"

"I'm expecting their reply to-day. Under the circumstances, I should think you fellows would shell out. I suppose you don't want those Council-school chaps to go away saying that they were asked to a feed here, and when they came there wasn't anything for them."

"My word!"

"The wordfulness is terrific."

"You see, they're certain to come," Bunter explained. "I put it very tactfully to them in my letter. I pointed out that as they were probably too poor to have a decent feed at Christmas, this was really a good thing for them."

"You—you said that?"

"I wrote it."

"And that's what you call being tactful?"

"Well, it was just as well to speak plainly, you know. I told them we should treat them well, and not take any notice of the fact that they were Council-school bounders, and not our class."

"My hat!"

"They'll be jolly glad to come, I should think," said Bunter. "I mentioned that they would be treated just as if they were on an equality

with me, although I am a gentleman."

"Great Scott!"

"Probably Trumper will call in and tell me he's coming to the bust-up," said Bunter. "Anyway, I'm sure they'll come. They're not likely to miss a chance of a feed, especially with a chap so far above them socially. Marjorie is sure to come, too. Of course, she wouldn't miss——"

"Miss what?" asked Bob Cherry, with a dangerous gleam in his eye.

"Miss seeing us all," said Bunter hastily. "Hallo, there's the postman! I expect he's got Marjorie's reply to me."

And the fat junior dashed out of the tuckshop to intercept the postman. The chums of the Remove followed him. A crowd of juniors gathered round the postman; but he had only one letter to hand out, and it was addressed to Billy Bunter—or, to be more exact, to Master William Bunter.

Bunter grinned as he took it. A dozen fellows observed that it was addressed in a girl's hand, and some of them knew it to be Marjorie's.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "That's the letter, then. I'll bet you a dozen to one in thick ears that Marjorie has refused, Bunter."

"Oh, rats!" said Bunter.

"Well, let's see."

"Oh, I'm not going to open the letter here," said Bunter, with a look of exceeding slyness. "Never show a girl's letter in public, you know. A chap mustn't kiss and tell."

"You young cad!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

Harry Wharton grasped the fat junior by the collar as he was walking away with the letter, and swung him back.

"Hold on," he said grimly.

"Oh, really, you know, I want to read my letter."

"You'll read it here. * You heard what the young cad said, you fellows," said Harry, looking round at the juniors. "He's trying to make out that Marjorie has written something he wouldn't show to us—something chummy. Of course, it's his rotten lying; Marjorie can't bear the sight of the beast."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"If Marjorie knew what a cad you were, Bunter, she wouldn't write you a line at all," said Wharton. "As it is, I'm not going to let you make capital out of it. You know very well that the letter is quite a formal one, in answer to your impudent invitation. After what you've implied, you'll open the letter here, and read it out to all the fellows."

"Oh, really, I jolly well shan't. I'm not going to have all my little secrets made public, I can tell you. Ow, ow, ow!"

Wharton shook the fat junior till his arm ached.

"Yow!" roared Billy Bunter. "Yow! Chuck it! You'll make my glasses fall off, and if they get broken you'll have to pay for them."

"Open that letter! After what you've said, every chap here is going to know what's in it, so that you will be convicted of being a lying, bragging cad."

With Wharton's knuckles grinding into the back of his neck, Bunter was not in a position to refuse. He sulkily split the envelope with a fat thumb.

"I—I don't object to reading out the letter," he mumbled. "Of course, what I just said was a—a figure of speech."

"Read out the letter, you worm!"

Bunter read it out. With three or four fellows looking at it, too, he

could not falsify it in the reading. It was short if not sweet.

"We are sorry we cannot accept your invitation.

"M. HAZELDENE."

That was all.

A more direct snub had probably never been administered even to Billy Bunter, who seemed to spend most of his time in asking for snubs and deserving them.

There was a shout of laughter as the contents of the letter were made known. After what Bunter had said and implied, the snub direct from the Cliff House girls was extremely comic.

"Well, if that's a sample of the little secrets, you're welcome to 'em!" grinned Bulstrode.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I should think that could get through the hide of a hippopotamus," Mark Linley remarked. "Even Bunter ought to feel a little smaller."

"I—I—of course, this is only in fun!" said Bunter.

Wharton released the fat junior, with a look of contempt. At that moment there was a shout from the direction of the gates.

"Courtfield cads!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "Here come Trumper & Co. with an answer to your invitation, Bunter!"

THE TENTH CHAPTER

AN INVITATION NOT ACCEPTED.

TRUMPER & Co. marched into the Close with grim faces. They certainly did not look as if they had come to accept an invitation in an amicable spirit.

"Here they are!" said Nugent. "Here are your guests, Bunty!"

Bunter grinned.

"I suppose you chaps will stand by me in getting up the feed now," he remarked.

"You'll need somebody to stand by you now, to judge by Trumper's expression," said Wharton, laughing. "Eh?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Tom Brown. "Trumper looks wrathful! You must have worded the invitation rather crudely, Bunter!"

"Oh, rot! I put it delicately!"

"The delicateness was terrific."

Trumper & Co. had caught sight of Bunter, and were marching straight towards him. The fat junior was too short-sighted to make out the expressions upon their faces till they came very near.

Greyfriars fellows were gathering round, none too well pleased by this invasion of the Close by the Courtfield fellows. Trumper & Co. were in great danger of a general ragging. But the Removites waited for Harry Wharton to take the lead, and Wharton showed no sign of hostility towards the Council School fellows.

"Bunter! Bunter there!" roared Trumper, in his big, bass voice.

"Yes, here I am, Trumper!"

"You wrote me this letter?"

Trumper held out a letter, scrawled and blotted and smeared in Bunter's well-known style. Bunter blinked at it.

"Yes, that looks like my letter, Trumper."

"My hat, it does!" gasped Nugent.

"Look at it!" roared Trumper. "Listen while I read it out, and then tell me what you think of it, you fellows!"

"Go ahead!" said Nugent. "Coming from Bunter, it's bound to be written in a really decent and gentlemanly spirit. And I bet the spelling is original, too!"

“ Ha, ha, ha ! ”
Trumper read out the letter.

“ Dear Trumper,—I am standing a Christmas feed, a regular bust-up regardless of eggspense, and I want you and your friends to come. Although you are all Council-school chaps, and kannot as a rule eggspect to mix with fellows of my klass, we shall treat you quite well, just as if there were no distinkshun between us sochially. At Christmas time, I really think that even fellows like you ought to be treeted with friendliness, and so I hope you will come to the bust-up. Of corse, you will see that your friends wash their hands and put on klean kollars, and that sort of thing, and don't wear down-at-heel boots, or anything of that sort, so as not to

disgrase me. It will be a splendid feed, and as I don't suppose you fellows get any Christmas diners to speak of, it will be a treet for you.
Yours, WILLIAM G. BUNTER.”

The Greyfriars fellows roared as the letter was read aloud. The Courtfielders were red with wrath.

“ Well,” roared Trumper, “ is that the sort of letter they teach you to write here? You'd learn better manners at a Council-school, I can tell you ! ”

Wharton flushed.

“ Look here, don't put it down to us ! ” he exclaimed. “ It was that fat cad who wrote the letter, and none of us knew anything about it. We shouldn't have allowed him to send it if we'd known.”



As Trumper made a grab at him, Bunter dodged behind Harry Wharton. “ Ow ! Keep off ! ” “ You fat cad ! ” exclaimed Trumper. “ Get from in front of him, Wharton ! I'm going to lick him ! ”

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

Trumper tore the letter into pieces.

"Look here, I don't see anything wrong with that letter," said Bunter. "If a blessed Council-school bounder is coming here to teach me, why, I think——"

Bunter paused to dodge behind Wharton as Trumper made a grab at him.

"Ow! Keep off!"

"You fat cad!"

"Oh, really——"

"Get from in front of him, Wharton. I'm going to lick him!"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Bulstrode aggressively. "You can't come here and swank on our ground, you know."

Trumper turned on the Remove bully.

"The fat little rotter isn't worth licking!" he exclaimed. "But if you like to take the matter up for him, I'll lick you instead!"

"Yeth, rather!" said Solly Lazarus. "Lick the thilly ass, Trumpy!"

Bulstrode looked warlike at once. It was not so long ago since he had stood up to Trumper and had been soundly licked. But Bulstrode had heaps of dogged courage, and he was quite ready to fight again.

"Come on, then!" he exclaimed.

Wharton interposed.

"Hold on, Bulstrode——"

"Oh, keep out of it, Wharton! What will you always be shoving your oar in for?" the burly Removite exclaimed angrily.

"Do you want the Head to see you?" said Harry angrily. "Do you think you can fight here almost under his study windows?"

Bulstrode paused.

"Well, there's something in that!" he admitted.

"The somethingfulness is terrific," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur. "I

also think that the causefulness of the fight is terrifically small."

"I'm going to lick that fat bounder!" said Trumper doggedly. "If you think I'm too big for him, the smallest chap here will take him on. He's bigger than Solly—and Solly will take him in hand."

"Yeth, rather!" said Solly.

"Oh, Bunter can't fight!" said Harry. "He can't fight in glasses, and he can't see without them."

"Well, I'm jolly well going to lick somebody!" roared Trumper. "Do you think I'm jolly well going to be insulted for nothing?"

"Come into the gym.," said Bulstrode.

"I'm ready! I——"

"Stop it!" said Wharton. "If you don't shut up, Bulstrode, you'll fight me instead of Trumper. Bunter has acted in a disgraceful way, and I'm as ashamed of it as anybody could be——"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Anybody who stands up for Bunter now, and takes his part, is as bad as he is," said Harry. "I suppose nobody here will say that letter ought to have been written, or that any decent chap could have written it?"

"Rather not!"

"The notfulness is terrific."

"Well, I don't uphold that letter, of course," said Bulstrode. "But I'm not going to have fellows swanking about here."

"If there's any swanking to be done, Bulstrode is quite equal to it himself," Nugent remarked, and there was a laugh.

"We didn't come here to swank," said Trumper. "But if one of you fellows got a letter like that——"

"We're not Council-school chaps!" said a voice in the crowd, which sounded very like Snoop's.

Trumper turned round with blazing eyes.

"No," he said, "you're not! But if what they say is true, there are some chaps here who go down to the inns in Friardale of a night, and that's a thing we don't do in Courtfield. And if I wrote you a letter of invitation, and said you mustn't come drunk, or with packs of cards in your pockets, how would you like it?"

"Oh, draw it mild!"

"Cheese it, you bounder!"

"Chuck them out!"

"Stop that!" said Harry Wharton.

Look here, Bunter has insulted these chaps, and he's such a booby that he can't fight. He'll have to apologise, or take a licking!"

"We're not going to let anybody stalk in here and lick a Greyfriars chap, whatever he's done," said Bulstrode.

"I'll lick him myself, as far as that goes!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"You hear that, Bunter? You'll apologise humbly to these fellows, or you'll take the licking of your life, so you can choose!" exclaimed Wharton.

"I—I—— Oh, really——"

"Take your choice—and quick about it."

Billy Bunter blinked round. But there was no sympathy in any of the faces he blinked at. No one was likely to uphold his action. And Harry Wharton was in a mood few of the fellows cared to cross. His teeth were set, and his brows darkly contracted, and when Wharton had that expression on his face, he was in a dangerous temper.

"I—I—— Of course, I haven't the least objection to apologising," said Bunter. "I—I didn't mean that letter as an insult. I intended it to be delicate and tactful."

Even the Courtfield fellows could

not help grinning at Bunter's idea of delicacy and tact.

"I—I apologise!" went on Bunter. "I'm awfully sorry—sincerely sorry—and I take it all back. Is that all right?"

"Yes," said Trumper, with a snort. "that's all right, you worm! And now look out, you Greyfriars bounders; after this, whenever we meet you, anywhere, there'll be trouble."

"Yeth, rather!"

"Oh," said Bulstrode, "then it may as well begin now! Rush the bounders!"

There was a threatening movement on the part of the Remove. But Harry Wharton stepped in front of the Courtfielders.

"Stop that!" he said curtly. "These chaps will go without being touched. Bunter's to blame all through, and they're not going to be ragged while I can stop it!"

Trumper & Co. turned towards the gates. The juniors looked very unwilling to let them go, but Harry Wharton had his way. Wharton walked with them to the gates.

"Look here," he exclaimed. "I'm sorry this has happened—Bunter is a howling cad, and we're all ashamed of him—I should think you chaps could look over it."

Trumper's face melted a little.

"Well, if you don't stand by him——" he began.

"Of course, we don't," said Harry. "Bunter's a rank outsider—the limit, in fact. He hasn't the faintest idea of decency."

"Well, it's all right!" said Trumper.

"All therene, dear boy!"

"Certainly!" said Grahame. "I suppose it was silly to get ratty about what a worm like that wrote, only——"

"Well, let's shake hands on it," said Harry, cordially.

The Courtfield fellows could not resist that. Wharton's heartiness was infectious.

They shook hands with him in turn, and went down the road from Greyfriars in cheerful spirits.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER

THE ONLY WAY.

"I SAY, you fellows——"

Harry Wharton & Co. were going into the tuckshop after lessons on Friday. It was the day before the day Bunter had fixed for his celebrated bust-up; but the fat junior was no "forrarder."

It began to look as if the bust-up would really never come off at all.

The chums of the Remove looked at Bunter, and walked into the shop. Billy Bunter followed them in at once.

The juniors stopped at the counter, and Mrs. Mimble looked at them all smiles. Mrs. Mimble had more smiles for Harry Wharton than for Bunter. Wharton was a paying customer, Billy Bunter never paid anybody for anything if he could help it. His maxim was apparently that of our old Shakespearian friend—"Base is the slave that pays."

"I say, you fellows——"

No one replied. Harry Wharton & Co. seemed to have made up their minds to ignore Bunter.

Harry Wharton opened his pocket-book, and took out a rustling bank-note. Billy Bunter's eyes almost started from his head at the sight of it. It was a generous Christmas tip sent to Harry by his uncle, Colonel Wharton, and Harry was intending to "blow" it in a feed to the whole Form as a way of celebrating the approaching break-up for the Christmas holidays. It was to be a bust-up, regardless of expense, as Bunter would

have put it, but it was not to be a bust-up for Billy Bunter. The Owl of the Remove was barred.

"I want a really good feed for to-morrow afternoon, Mrs. Mimble," said Harry. "I'm going to order the things now."

"Yes, Master Wharton."

"I'm going to stand a bust-up, you know, regardless of expense," Harry explained, still addressing his remarks to Mrs. Mimble, and taking no notice of Bunter.

"Certainly."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Get out the list, Nugent."

Frank Nugent produced a pencilled list from his pocket.

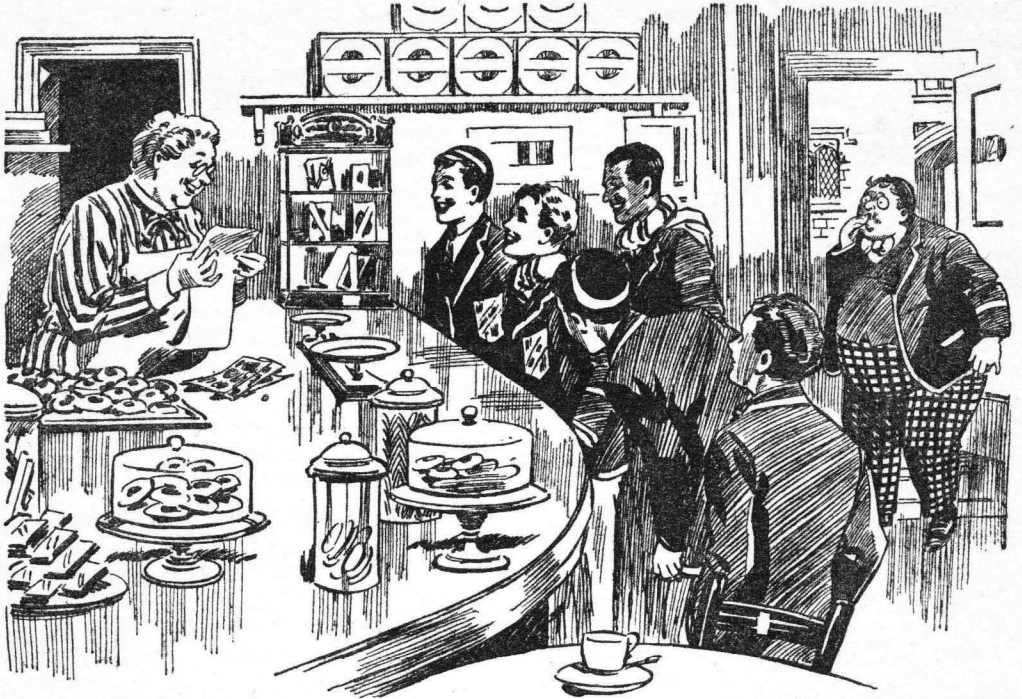
It was a very long list, and a single blink at it made Bunter's mouth water. The articles mentioned in that list were certainly enough to feed the whole Remove, and a couple of other Removes as well.

Wharton laid the five-pound note on the counter, and Hurree Singh laid a couple of pound notes on it, and Bob Cherry, Nugent and Johnny Bull ten shillings each. Each was contributing to the bust-up according to his means.

"M-m-my hat!" gasped Bunter. "Are you chaps really going to spend all that money on a feed?"

There was no reply. Harry Wharton & Co. seemed to be quite unconscious of Billy Bunter's presence in the tuckshop.

Bunter watched Mrs. Mimble hungrily as she looked over the list. The good dame read out the items, and Bunter almost wept with emotion. There were cold fowls, and ham and tongue, cold beef and game-pies, rabbit-pies, and meat-pies—all sorts and conditions of pies, to say nothing of puddings. There were cakes and biscuits and fruits, fresh fruits and



Billy Bunter watched Mrs. Mimble hungrily as she read out the long list of eatables. "Is that all, Master Wharton?" she asked. "That's all, I think," said Harry. What a feed the Greyfriars Christmas bust-up was going to be. And Bunter wasn't invited!

preserved fruits, and candied fruits, in great variety. There were eatables of all sorts, in fact, galore.

There was no doubt that the Greyfriars Christmas bust-up would be "regardless." Mrs. Mimble opened her eyes in surprise behind her spectacles as she went on with the list. Bunter watched her with his mouth open.

"Is that all, Master Wharton?" asked Mrs. Mimble.

"That's all, I think," said Harry. "We're getting a good many guests here, you know, as well as the Remove chaps—nearly all the Remove; but I think there will be enough to go round."

"Dear me! I should think so."

"We want the lot delivered in the Remove Form-room for teatime tomorrow," said Harry Wharton, "and

they're not to be given to anybody who may come for them."

"I quite understand, Master Wharton."

"There'll be some change out of this cash," said Harry. "You can let me have it when you've made out the bill, Mrs. Mimble."

"Certainly."

"I say, you fellows——"

Harry Wharton & Co. walked out of the shop. They had not spoken a word to the fat junior all the time. Bunter rushed after them excitedly.

"I say, you fellows——"

They walked on.

Bunter grasped Wharton desperately by the coat, and stopped him. Then the captain of the Remove appeared to see him for the first time.

"Hallo, is that you, Bunter?" he said.

"You jolly well know it is!" roared Bunter. "Look here——"

"Well, I'm looking——"

"The lookfulness is terrific."

"Well," said Bunter, in a mollified tone, "it's all right. I want to thank you fellows—to thank you most sincerely."

They stared at him.

"You want to thank us?" echoed Harry Wharton.

"Yes, rather. It's jolly decent of you."

"What is?" demanded Harry.

"Ordering those things for me, for my bust-up," said Bunter, blinking at him. "Of course, you were ordering them for me?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you fellows——"

"There's a slight mistake somewhere," said Harry. "We weren't ordering them for you, Bunty; we were ordering them for ourselves."

"Oh, really——"

"Good-bye!"

"I say, you fellows, it was my idea, you know, to stand a bust-up for Christmas," said Billy Bunter, in an aggrieved tone. "I don't think you ought to take the matter out of my hands in this way. Still, I don't mind, so long as I come."

"But you're not coming!"

"What?"

"Porpoises are barred," said Bob Cherry sweetly. "Pigs not admitted! No entrance for porkers! Fat toads need not apply!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"My dear chap, you said that you wouldn't accept the hospitality of No. 1 Study any more," said Wharton. "Stick to it. It's lucky, too, because there isn't any hospitality for you to accept. The fact is we're having the

Cliff House girls, and we can't inflict you upon them."

Bunter glared through his spectacles.

"Well, you blessed rotters——"

"Thank you!"

Bunter stood regarding them with silent wrath and indignation for a minute, and then rushed after them again, and caught them up in the doorway of the School House.

"I say, you fellows, I suppose you're joking?" he exclaimed.

"Not a bit of it!"

"You're going to ask me to the feed?"

"Rats!"

"Well, I shall jolly well come, anyway!"

"You'll be jolly well kicked out if you do!"

"I—I say, you fellows, I want to help you, you know," said Bunter feebly. "What I said the other day was only a—a figure of speech. Look here, I don't really want to come to the feed for my own sake at all, you know. My real object is to help you, and—and wait on the others, and show my friendship for you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You see, the Courtfield fellows are coming, too," said Harry. "You've pointed out that there's a great difference between you and them, so you can't very well come to the same feed."

"I should be willing to waive that, you know."

"Yes; but they mightn't."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"By Jove, I've got a wheeze!" said Bob Cherry. "Bunter says that what he wants to do is to come and look after the other fellows, and help, and so on——"

"Of course!" said Bunter eagerly.

"That—that's just what I've been

looking forward to, you know. I want that more than anything else."

"Good!" said Bob. "And I suppose it's admitted that we can't very well ask the Courtfield chaps to sit down to a feed with a chap like Bunter in the company——"

"Oh, no! They'd feel so insulted."

"Well, then, let Bunter come as a waiter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I—I'll come as a waiter, or—or——"

"Or anything else, so long as you come!" grinned Nugent. "All serene, then! Bunter can be waiter, and perhaps we may let him finish up some of the grub afterwards—if there's any left over."

"Oh, really, you know——"

"Well, that's settled!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "If you like to come as a waiter, Bunter, you can come. If not, not. Is it a go?"

"Yes," grunted Bunter, "it's a go."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

BUNTER THE WAITER.

THERE was one yell of laughter in the Lower School when it became generally known that the Remove were standing a Christmas feed and that Billy Bunter was to officiate as a waiter.

Bunter had talked so much about the bust-up, that what was really to happen was screamingly funny. After so many extensive plans for bust-ups regardless of expense, to officiate as a waiter at somebody else's bust-up was a fall for the fat junior.

But Bunter did not seem to care, so long as he got to the feed somehow.

Wharton's invitations were promptly sent out, and were couched a little more tactfully than Bunter's.

The Cliff House girls promised to come, and so did Trumper & Co., of Courtfield Council School. All the Remove fellows who were asked agreed willingly enough, and those who weren't asked declared that they weren't going to stand on ceremony with old Wharton, and that they should come all the same.

Upper Fourth fellows heard of it, and condescendingly remarked that they would drop in, to which some of the Removites retorted that if they did they would very promptly be dropped out again. Hobson, of the Shell, told Wharton that he was coming, and Wharton promised to have his football-boots on ready, at which Hobson smiled in a sickly way and dropped the subject. Even Coker—the great Coker—of the Fifth, mentioned to Harry that he would be glad to come to the Remove Form-room on Saturday afternoon. And Wharton heartily replied that he had no doubt of it, and he had no doubt that Coker would be still more glad to get out of the Form-room again. And Coker gave up the idea of coming.

When, after school on Saturday, Mrs. Mible's supplies were delivered in the Form-room the juniors' eyes opened at the extent of them.

There was a powdery snow falling when the fellows from Courtfield arrived, tramping up the lane in their overcoats. They were given a hearty welcome. Even fellows who were inclined to indulge in a snobbish sniff or two felt that they could not do otherwise than be civil to Wharton's guests when they themselves were at the feed.

Trumper & Co. had nothing to complain of in the way of lack of courtesy. In fact, Solly remarked, with great satisfaction, that it was "all therene."

"Look here," said Trumper, tap-

ping Wharton on the arm in the Form-room, "you said that Bunter wasn't coming; but—but if you're leaving him out on our account, don't do it. We don't mind him."

"It's all therene!" assured Solly.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"It's jolly decent of you to say so," he said; "but it's too late now. He can't come to the feed."

"Why not?"

"He's engaged as waiter."

"As—as what?"

"Waiter!"

The Courtfield fellows roared.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter rolled into the Form-room.

Ever since the compact had been made Billy Bunter had tried to squirm out of it, and to get an assurance that he would be tolerated at the feed in the capacity of guest. He had failed. It was made quite clear that he could come as a waiter, or not at all; and so he had kept to the agreement.

He blinked at the juniors through his spectacles, and a roar of laughter greeted him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here's Bunter!"

"Here's the waiter!"

"Waiter! Waiter!"

"Garçon! Garçon!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Now, then, none of your beastly familiarity, waiter!" exclaimed Nugent. "What the dooce do you mean by addressing us as 'fellows'? Kindly remember that there's a social distinction between you and Master Trumper."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you know, I jolly well don't look like a real waiter!" roared the fat junior.

Bob Cherry looked at him critically.

"No, you don't," he agreed; "your figure's not good enough."

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"And your manners are too crude."

"Look here——"

"Silence, waiter! Get the things out for the feed, and lay the cloths," said Harry Wharton. "Some of you fellows keep an eye on that waiter. I had him without a character, and he may try to pinch some of the grub."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, I'll watch him!" said Ogilvy. "He won't pinch any grub while I've got my eye on him."

"Oh, really, Ogilvy——"

"Mister Ogilvy, please, you cheeky low-class bouncer!"

"Get on with your work, waiter. There's plenty to do."

Bunter, simmering with rage and indignation, was set to work. There was, indeed, plenty to do, and the Removites made him do it. And sharp eyes saw to it that he did not purloin any of the eatables he handled in the course of his duty. The early dusk was closing in over the Close and the lights were going in the Form-room, and a huge fire blazed and roared away in the grate. Two or three juniors were on the look-out for the girls from Cliff House, and presently there was a shout:

"Here's Marjorie!"

And the chums of the Remove rushed to greet the guest of honour.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER THE BUST-UP!

MARJORIE HAZELDENE came in with her pretty face pink and her eyes dancing.

Harry Wharton & Co. received the Cliff House girls with enthusiasm. Miss Clara and Wilhemina and Grace were with Marjorie, and all of them

looked cheerful and bright. They had smiles for everybody, Trumper & Co. getting as many as anybody else. Indeed, Miss Clara seemed to be taken with Trumper's rugged, good-natured ways that she showed a disposition to allow him to become her cavalier for the afternoon—a position which half the fellows there would gladly have taken up.

The girls were given seats near the fire, and the tables—made of boards laid across desks, and covered with cloths lent by Mrs. Mimble—were already groaning, as the novelists say, under the viands. Round the walls of the room were coloured paper chains, balloons and bunches of holly, upon which the light sparkled and

gleamed. Marjorie & Co. looked round in great admiration. The juniors had certainly done very well in the way of adornment, considering, as Miss Clara remarked, that they had done it without the assistance of girls.

As the seats were taken, there was an uproar from the improvised side-board, where Bunter, the waiter, was in charge of the provisions not yet set out on the tables.

"The thafe of the world!" rang out the indignant voice of Micky Desmond—"the unholy thafe!"

"What's the matter there?"

"It's the waither."

"Oh, that fellow Bunter again! What has he been doing?"



As Alonzo Todd helped Bunter to place the pie on the table, his fingers slipped on the dish. "Dear me!" he gasped. "Look out!" But the warning came too late. The pie crashed down on the table and the contents shot fairly over Skinner and Bulstrode. "Yow! Yarough!" they roared.

"Faith, and I caught him eating a mince tart!"

There was a roar of laughter.

"Kick him out!" called out Bulstrode.

"I—I say, you fellows, I won't eat any more!" gasped Billy Bunter. "I—I felt that I ought to have a snack, you know, to keep up my strength."

"Silence, waiter!"

"Oh, really——"

"Well, we'll give you another chance," said Harry Wharton severely. "But, mind nothing of that sort occurs again, waiter."

"Oh, really——"

"Silence!"

Billy Bunter was silenced, but the other fellows were making noise enough. There was a cheery steam of tea and coffee, and at the same time corks were popping, and ginger beer and lemonade flowed in abundance.

The only person who wasn't quite happy was William George Bunter.

Bunter was suffering the woes of Tantalus. He was in the midst of plenty, which he could not touch.

The chums of the Remove meant to let him have a feed when the rest were finished; but Bunter was not sure of it, and the doubt was quite sufficient to keep him on tenterhooks all the time.

And he was kept busy, too.

Through all the laughter and talking there was a continual cry:

"Waiter! Waiter!"

"Where's that blessed waiter?"

"Wharton, I'm not satisfied with that man of yours."

"I conthider him a thilly ass."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Bunter ran, and rushed to and fro till his fat face was steaming with perspiration, and his fat legs seemed to bend under him. Only

Alonzo Todd took pity upon him. As Bunter carried up a big pie in a dish from the sideboard, Alonzo rose to help him. There was a shout:

"Sit down, Todd!"

"Let that waiter alone!"

"My dear fellows, my Uncle Benjamin——"

"Order!" yelled Micky Desmond. "Silence for Todd's Uncle Benjamin."

"My dear Desmond, my Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to be useful and obliging. Although I candidly acknowledge that the incessant reprehensible actions of Bunter have fully merited the punishment meted out to him, yet, on the other hand, it appears to me that it would only be considerate, and, according to the precepts of my Uncle Benjamin, to accord him a slight assistance in dealing with the heavier portion of his multifarious duties."

"How does he do it?" said Bob Cherry, in great admiration. "Why, he beats a gramophone hollow."

"Go it, Todd! Go on talking."

But even Todd had done talking. He was assisting Bunter. He had hold of one end of the pie, and was assisting Bunter to place it on the table, reaching over the shoulders of Stott and Skinner. It was unfortunate that Alonzo's best-intended efforts ended in disaster. Somehow, his hand slipped on the dish—perhaps because it was hot.

"Dear me!" he gasped. "Look out!"

"The look-outfulness is terrific."

But the warning was too late.

The pie had crashed down, and the dish broke on the edge of the table, and the contents shot fairly over Skinner and Bulstrode. Several other fellows were splashed, but Skinner and Bulstrode were simply smothered.

"Yow!" roared Bulstrode, jump-

ing up. "I'll—I'll kill that duffer!"

"The waiter's to blame!" shouted Ogilvy. "Kick the waiter out. Wharton—Bulstrode's not satisfied with the man you've engaged to wait."

"Oh, dear!" gasped Alonzo. "I'm sorry—so sorry!"

Bulstrode seized hold of Bunter. The fat junior yelled, and two or three fellows dragged the infuriated Bulstrode off.

"Hang it all, not with the girls here," said Morgan. "Behave yourself, Bulstrode."

"Look at what he's done."

"Well, go and change."

Bulstrode coloured under the glance of Marjorie. He stamped from the room to change his clothes, snorting with wrath, and Skinner followed him.

"Be more careful, please, waiter," said Wharton. "Todd, don't you help him again."

"I'm so sorry."

"Yes, I dare say you are, but that won't mend the pie. Sit down."

"But my Uncle Benjamin——"

"Dry up!"

"Always impressed upon me——"

"Cheese it!"

"Always to be obliging and——
Ooch!"

A jam-tart caught Alonzo in the mouth, and his remarks ceased quite suddenly. Uncle Benjamin was not mentioned again.

A gleam had come into Bunter's eyes, as if a new thought had dawned upon him. Perhaps the accident with Bulstrode, and his escape from punishment because the girls were present, had put it into his mind.

The cries for the waiter were still as incessant as ever. Bunter was being kept very busy.

"Ginger-pop here, waiter!" shouted Russell. "Open it, you chump!"

Pop!

Russell gave a roar as the cork smote him behind the ear, and the ginger-beer bubbled out and poured down the back of his neck. He jumped up, kicking his chair over backwards, and it caught Bunter on the shins and sent him staggering.

The fat junior fell with a bump, and the infuriated Russell seized a water-jug and emptied it over him, and added jam-tarts and fruit-pies with a reckless hand.

"Order!" roared the juniors.

But Russell was too wrathful to listen. Bunter yelled and squirmed.

"Hold on!" he shrieked. "It was an accident. I won't do it again. Yow! It was an accident, and——
Yow! Gerrooh!"

"There!" panted Russell. "I'll guarantee you won't do it again now."

Bunter didn't. He sat on the floor, a gasping and sticky mass, and it was a long time before he moved.

By the time Billy Bunter had recovered the feast was over, the juniors waiting upon themselves and upon the girls for the rest of the time. Then Wharton proposed an adjournment to the drawing-room, a proposal that caused some surprise, till it turned out that the drawing-room was another Form class-room, which the chums had obtained permission to use for a couple of hours in the evening.

The Cliff House girls and the Court-field fellows and the whole Remove crowded into the next room, where Trotter had kept a bright fire blazing, and where the walls were decorated with holly and mistletoe in a really charming way. Mr. Quelch's piano had been lent for the occasion, and soon the cheerful strains of music were heard, mingled with voices in song. The girls sang, and the juniors sang, and there was part singing, and

a comic dance by Micky Desmond, the fun waxed fast and furious. Solly Lazarus brought down the house with a song delivered in his peculiar accents, and all too soon the time came for the Cliff House girls to depart.

Then there was a putting on of coats and scarves, and Harry Wharton & Co., and Trumper and his friends, walked home with Marjorie to Cliff House.

"It's been an awfully jolly time," said Miss Clara, when they parted at the gate. "Hasn't it, Marjorie?"

"Very jolly!" said Marjorie. "Thank you so much!"

Trumper & Co. and the Greyfriars juniors walked back to Greyfriars in the best of spirits, and on the best possible terms. They parted at the gates of the school, Trumper & Co. going on to Courtfield.

Harry Wharton looked in at the Remove Form-room when he returned. A light was still burning there, and there was a sound of a knife and fork upon a plate.

"My hat!" said Bob Cherry. "He's still at it!"

"Bunter! Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter blinked up at them through his spectacles. The fat junior was busy. He had not troubled to change or clean down after his little affair with Russell. With his face smeared with jam, his hair matted with ginger-beer, the fat junior sat at the table, very busy. Puddings and pies, eatables of all sorts, were going the same way. Billy Bunter just glanced up at the juniors, and then dropped his eyes upon his plate again. He did not speak. He was too busy for words.

Billy Bunter was having his bust-up, after all!

THE END

Taking The Risk

A Thrilling Incident in a Hard-fought Motor Race.

THROUGH a windscreen white with dust, gathered during lap after lap of the Grand Prix de l'Ouest, the great French road-race, the driver of the green British car peered along the road to where a rival racer, a dancing blurr of red, thundered ahead. Only one more bend now, only that one red car to pass, and then to the finish—and victory!

The red Italian machine swung over to the right, giving room to pass, and, yard by yard, the gap between the two cars closed. They were nose to tail, level—and then apart again, with the British car ahead.

Now for the bend! A stab on the foot-brake, a skitter of tyres on the road, and then into the curve!

It was a desperate piece of driving. The green car was travelling much too fast for normal cornering, but the Britisher knew the risk had to be taken if he was to hold his lead.

The green car shuddered. And then the straining tyres struck a pool of oil on the road and, with a screech, the car shot sideways into the sand-bags!

It was the Italian's chance, and he took it! As the green racer reared up, he pulled his car to the inside of the bend. Fragments flew from the sand-bags as the green car hurtled back on to the road. Then, neck and neck, the rival racers shot from the bend.

On full throttle, they stormed for the finishing line; but it was the Britisher who gained, and the green car was a clear length ahead as the finish was reached. He had taken the risk—and he had won through!



Facing page 224

TAKING THE RISK!

Specially painted by H. Radcliffe Wilson

224 An Alfa-Romeo racer cuts inside a British car on the bend, in the Grand Prix de l'Ouest.



PERFECT HARMONY!

By
TOM MERRY
(of the Shell Form)

When Gussy, the tenor, and Herries, the cornet player, get going, it's time for their chums to do the same. But it was the rival musicians' discord that eventually brought perfect harmony.

THE FIRST CHAPTER DISCORD!

"I'll sing thee songs of Awaby
An' tales of fair Cashmeeah——"

"**C**HUCK it, Gus!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth at St. Jim's paused in his solo to bestow on Herries a frigid glare through his celebrated monocle.

"I fancy I heard a diswespectful wemark fwom you, Hewwies, but I twust I was mistaken," he said, with deadly calm. "What I thought you said was——"

"Chuck it!" finished Herries, with a nod. "That's exactly what I said, and exactly what I mean. Chuck it!"

Two bright pink spots gathered on D'Arcy's cheeks as he looked across the table of Study No. 6 at George Herries.

"Do I gathah that you object to my singin'?"

"Well, who wouldn't?" asked Herries. "But apart from that, I'm

just going to start practising on my cornet, and I can't possibly do it while you're kicking up that awful row. Chuck it, there's a good chap!"

"Well, of all the fwightful nerve——"

The remainder of D'Arcy's speech was not heard, for at that moment Herries put his cornet to his lips and blew—hard!

Arthur Augustus took a step forward, but something happened to make him take a quick step backward a moment later.

That "something" was a deep and menacing growl from Towser, Herries' bulldog.

"Ware Towser, Gus!" called out Blake, who, having finished his prep., was preparing to go down to the Junior Common-room with Digby. "He won't improve your bags if he gets his teeth in them."

"I uttably wefuse to allow that beastlay bulldog to get his teeth in my bags——"

Herries put down the cornet for a moment.

"If you start calling Towser a 'beastly bulldog,' I'm not going to be responsible for what happens," he said darkly. "Towser's rather proud; you ought to know that by this time, Gus."

"Towsah's a wotten nuisance, if you want my opinion of him," said Arthur Augustus candidly. "But I don't pwopose to waste my time talkin' about Towsah. I want to spend the time fwom now until bedtime in pwactisin' singin', an' I must wequest you to stop blowin' that feahful instwument to enable me to do so."

"You can request till you're black in the face, old bean, but there's nothing doing!"

"Well, we're off," grinned Blake. "Why don't you two harmonise? You can play the cornet, Herries, and Gus can sing to it!"

"If you think I would sing to that fwightful din——"

"If you think I'd play an accompaniment to that fathead's awful voice——"

"Come on, Blake!" groaned Digby. "Let's take a stroll down to the pneumatic drills they're using to dig up the Wayland High Street, and get a bit of comparative peace!"

"Coming!" chuckled Blake, and the two left together.

Arthur Augustus, with a frown, struck the tuning fork he carried against the study table, and took his note.

"La, la, la, la!" he warbled, going up the scale; then he started again:

"I'll sing thee songs of Awaby
An' tales of——"

Toot toot tootle toot!

Herries had started again—and against the strident notes of Herries' cornet, D'Arcy's light tenor voice stood no earthly chance.

For the second time, Arthur Augustus stopped.

"Hewwies, you feahful wottah, if you continue makin' that din——"

Tootle toot toot!

"I shall have no alternative but to administah a feahful thwashin'——"

Toot tootle toot!

"An' you will have nobody else but yourself to blame. Now, you boundah, are you goin' to leave off or not?"

Tootle tootle toot!

"Vewy well. I am weluctant to punish an old fwriend, but there is nothin' else for it, I am afwaid. Put up your hands!"

Tootle toot tootle!

Arthur Augustus made a rush at the exasperating cornet player.

The next moment, Towser was making a rush at Arthur Augustus!

The swell of the Fourth uttered a yell.

"Hewwies, you wank outsiders, if you don't keep that feahful dog away I'll—— Whooop! Keep off, Towsah, you w'etch!"

Arthur Augustus dodged and Towser made another rush.

An instant later, a startling thing happened.

Backing in frantic haste to escape Herries' ferocious pet, the swell of the Fourth reached the study window.

It was a warm evening and the window was open at the bottom. Arthur Augustus collided with the bottom of the window-frame, then staggered backwards through the opening.

Immediately after, with a wild yell, he vanished from sight!

THE SECOND CHAPTER

PEACE!

CRASH!

The cornet, unheeded now, dropped from Herries' hands to the floor. Herries stared at the open window for an instant in petrified horror.

"Gussy!" he said huskily. "Gus, old man——"

Then Herries jumped to his feet and fairly flung himself across the room to the window. His heart seemed to stop beating altogether as he looked out.

What he saw, however, brought a sobbing cry of relief to his lips.

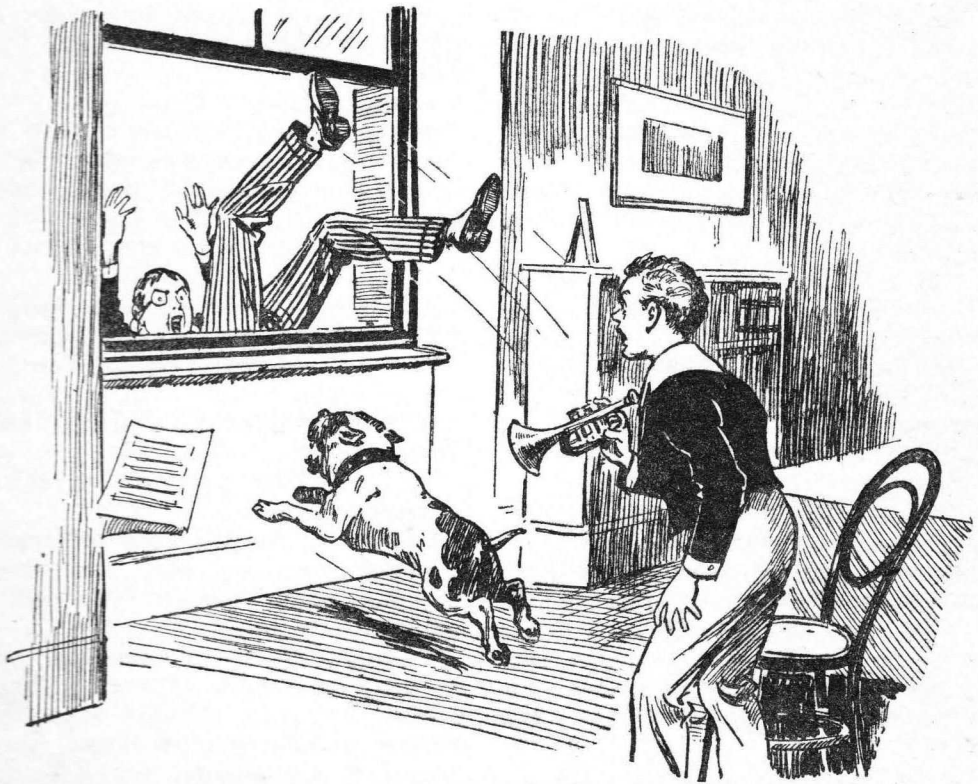
By a miracle, the swell of the Fourth

had been stopped in his downward flight by a protruding nail in the wall just below the window-sill, and was hanging by the back of his jacket a few feet below the level of the window!

"Gus, old chap! Thank goodness!" breathed Herries. "Keep still—don't move a fraction! I'll be down to help you in a brace of shakes!"

There was an answering murmur from Arthur Augustus.

Herries swung himself over the window-sill, tested the strength of the old ivy beneath him, then lowered himself below the window. In a few seconds he was beside the



Backing in frantic haste from Herries' ferocious pet, Arthur Augustus bumped into the bottom of the window-frame. Next moment the swell of St. Jim's overbalanced through the opening and, with a wild yell, vanished from sight!

precariously hanging swell of the Fourth.

Far below him in the twilit quad he heard excited shouts as the few strollers noticed the amazing scene. They sounded very distant, and Herries shivered for an instant as he realised what a distance lay between himself and the ground. But with an effort he overcame the momentary fear and concentrated on the task of saving D'Arcy.

"Feel all right, Gus?" he asked. "If I lift you round, think you'll be able to hold on to the ivy without help from me?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Thank goodness for that!"

Herries lowered himself a further couple of feet, found a firm place for a hold with his left hand, then gripped Arthur Augustus round the waist with his right. Slowly but surely, he turned the swell of the Fourth. He felt D'Arcy's jacket move away from the nail that had supported him, and for an instant held him up entirely unaided.

Then Arthur Augustus put out his hands and gripped the strong branches of ivy that were now in front of him, and the weight was shifted.

"All—wight—now, deah boy!" panted Arthur Augustus.

"Fine! Climb back, then, and I'll follow!"

The swell of the Fourth hoisted himself up and climbed back through the open window, and immediately afterwards Herries was following suit.

Blake and Digby were back in the study to help them in, together with a crowd of others, and there was quite a cheer as rescuer and rescued stood safe and sound once more on the firm floor of Study No. 6.

"And now that it's all over, just how did it happen?" asked Blake.

Herries and Arthur Augustus looked at each other.

"Well, it was my fault, really," said Herries.

Arthur Augustus polished his monocle with a silk handkerchief.

"Not at all, deah boy," he said. "The fault was entirely mine."

"I insisted on playing my blessed cornet——"

"I'm afwaid I insisted on my singin' takin' pwecedence——"

"Towser went for Gussy——"

"Vewy natuwally, Towsah wasn't goin' to see his mastah assaulted——"

"And Gussy fell out. My fault all through."

"Weally, deah boy, I insist that the fault was mine!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The interested crowd yelled. In view of the strained relationship that had existed between the rival musicians immediately before the accident, the sudden regard of Herries and D'Arcy for each other was rather funny.

"Well, it's jolly lucky it's ended up in such a way that we can get a laugh out of it, anyway!" Blake remarked.

"I suggest you close the window now. Then you can start arguing for the rest of the evening about whether Herries' cornet or Gussy's tenor voice takes priority!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Herries looked thoughtful.

"Well, I was just thinking about that practice. Perhaps my cornet can wait for a while. You'd better do your singing practice first."

"Weally, Hewwies, I am surprisid at your makin' such a widiculous suggestion. I wecognise now that your cornet pwactice is a fah more important mattah. I give way to you with pleasuah!"

But Herries shook his head.

"You're too good, Gus, but I wouldn't dream of taking advantage of your generosity. I insist on your going first."

"Bai Jove! I shall do nothin' of the kind. It would make me too uncomfortable for words, deah boy. Pway pick up your cornet and begin at once!"

"Here's your tuning fork, old man. Take your note and get going!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why not toss up for it?" suggested Dig.

"I uttably wefuse to toss up for it! I have already decided that Hewwies shall pwactise first."

"I'm jolly well determined that you shall practise first, Gus, old man."

"My hat! Far as I can see, there's only one thing for it now," grinned Blake. "As you're both too polite to start first, you'd better abandon practice altogether and finish up the evening with us in the Common-room."

"Well, I'm quite willing to stay in the Common-room till Gus has finished——"

"I am perfectly willin' to spend half-an-hour in the Common-woom till Hewwies has finished——"

"In other words you're both calling it a day and packing up!" grinned Blake.

"Weally, Blake——"

"With you singing, and Herries cornet blowing, there's been nothing but discord around here lately. Now that you're both going to give music a rest, we may get a little harmony!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

For a moment the two musicians seemed inclined to register a protest. Then they too grinned, and a few moments later they went down to the Common-room, arm-in-arm.

THE END

Songs of the Seasons



THE grand old season dawns with chill
And frosty melancholy,
The snow is thick on vale and hill,
The red is on the holly,
The cold has gripped in iron bonds
The bridleways and hedges,
The solid ice is on the ponds,
And snow is on the edges.

The trees stand bare against the sky,
Their branches black and mournful,
The rooks greet winter with a cry
Which sounds a trifle scornful;
But we ourselves enjoy the days
That bring such signs of sadness;
To us the chilly winter ways
Are full of joy and gladness.

And Christmastide is on the way,
The season glad and hearty,
When hearts are young and smiles are gay
At every Christmas party;
What healthy fun the snow betides!
In plenty it's awaiting,
With snowmen, snowballing and slides,
Tobogganing and skating.

When apples, oranges and dates
Are stacked away in barrels,
When late at night the village waits
Awaken us with carols,
When frost is on the window pane,
When days are dark and murky,
We know it's time to greet again
That king of birds, the Turkey!

We spend our evenings by the fire,
And what is more delightful?
For after football we desire
No better rest at nightfall;
Then bring out bishops, pawns and rooks,
And stage the mimic warfare,
Unless a choice of thrilling books
You'd rather have as your fare.

Let winter months be hard and rough,
The fun is all the keener;
We're growing sturdy, brave and tough
In football's gay arena;
For giving us the Christmas joys,
And many other reasons,
We'll hail the brave old Winter, boys,
As king of all the seasons.

A PUZZLE PICTURE—FIND THE HIDDEN FACES



Billy Bunter caught in the act of raiding the School pantry by Mr. Quelch, his Form-master ! Sammy Bunter was there, too, with Dicky Nugent and Myers. See if you can spot their faces.

Nothing Suxceeds Like Suxcess



In this amazing article HORACE JAMES COKER, of Greyfriars, tells "Holiday Annual" readers how he achieved success. We think it only fair to add that his hints to success, like his spelling, are not altogether reliable or to be recommended!

"How did you acheeve your amazing suxcess?" is a question often addressed to me by admiring yungsters.

To a fellow like myself, who has been suxcessful in so many direcshuns, it's a question with a duzzen answers. So, for the benefit of ambitious lads who would fain follow in my foot-steps, here are a few tips.

First, if you want to rise to the dignified ranx of a senior Form, hard work and dilligent study alone will take you there. A chap with my varied interests, of corse, duzzent get much time for skool work, and I don't mind admitting that my Aunt Judy, by wacking the Head with her um-

brella till he agreed to put me in the Fifth, helped my skool career considerably. For you ordinary chaps, however, I recommend hard work and dilligent study only!

Suxcess in the grate game of footer is the next consideration. This is a very difficult thing to acheeve; the footer kaptin is usually fearfully jellus of your outstanding abillity on the footer field and tries to keep you out of the team as much as he can. My own method of dealing with the problem is to pour withering sarkasm over the jellus kaptin till he admits that I'm a grate player and puts me in the team. If this fails, I give him a "sock" on the jaw. This is one

way of achieving success as a football player.

Naturally, it doesn't stop at that. When you get your place in the team, it's up to you to show them your real worth. The first time I got into the Form team, I took good care to see that I was in the limelight from the kick-off to the finish. I was here, there and everywhere. The fact that I was outside-left didn't imply that I was left outside, I can tell you!

When the centre-forward looked as if he couldn't manage the ball on his own, I rushed in and took it from him. When the goalie was in difficulties, I rushed back and helped him. The jellusy shown by the rest of my side was trooly amazing. They yelled and shouted at me so much that the opposing team were dumbled up with laughter most of the time! Owing to mistakes on the part of others, I scored 3 goals against my own side and we lost 3-nil. I came



The fact that I was outside-left didn't mean that I was left outside! When the centre-forward looked as if he couldn't manage the ball I rushed in and took it from him.

off the field feeling well satisfied with myself, and that fact enabled me to put up with the cheap sneers and gibes of the rest. A grate man gets used to that sort of thing!

Then there's the problem of achieving success in the social life of the school. My tip is: take the deepest possible interest in everything, whether it's anything to do with you or not. Above all, remember to take command. If it's a party, be the life and sole of it—do all the singing and tell all the funny stories. You'll get plenty of fun out of it yourself, and if the rest pretend to be fed up to the teeth with you, you'll know it's only their jellusy. There's always someone about ready to akkuse you of being an interfering bizzbody, but a really grate man can afford to ignore such taunts.

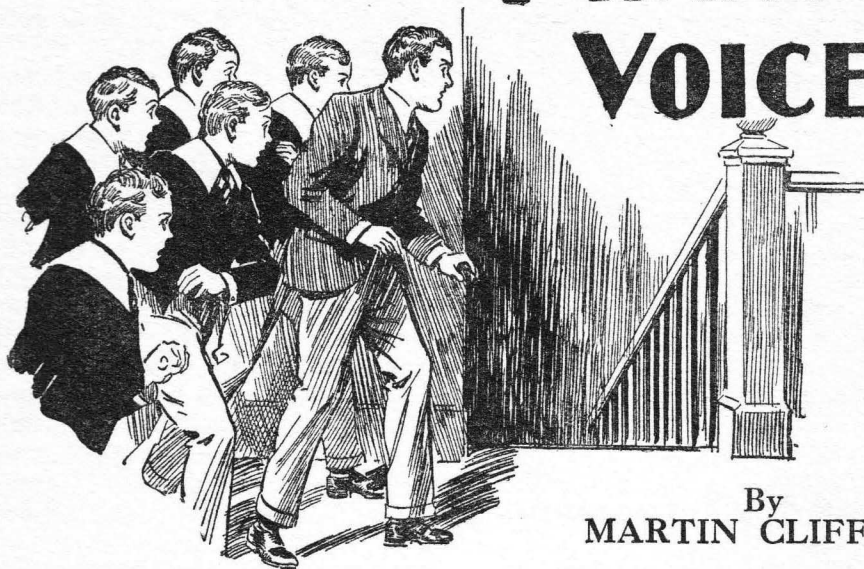
I need hardly tell you to preserve your dignity. Fags and other small fry can be kept in their places by clipping their ears or tweaking their noses. With seniors, it's just as well to tell them now and again what a dignified fellow you are. In time, if you tell them often enuff, they'll appreciate it.

But when all is said and done, nothing succeeds like success. The fact that I've succeeded again and again makes it easy for me to climb higher and higher on the Ladder of Life. Fellows often larf when I tell them this—one of the things I can never understand is why fellows larf so much when I talk—but you can't get away from the facts!

Well, I've told you how to achieve success. But I don't suppose for a moment that you'll do it.

Your name's not Horace Coker, you see!

THE PHANTOM VOICES!



By
MARTIN CLIFFORD

The voices and sounds that came from nowhere! That's the weird mystery which puzzles St. Jim's, until Tom Merry & Co. get on the track of it.

THE FIRST CHAPTER INEXPLICABLE!

CLANG! Clang! Clang!
"What the dickens——"

Tom Merry of the Shell at St. Jim's looked up from his prep. in Study No. 10 with a start. Manners and Lowther, from the other side of the study table, stared across at their leader rather blankly.

"The school bell!" remarked Manners.

"At this hour!" ejaculated Tom Merry. "What on earth does it mean?"

"Must be a fire, my infants," Lowther said, getting up from the table. "Needs looking into, anyway."

"Let's look into it, then," said Tom briskly. "Come on!"

The Terrible Three abandoned prep. and went out into the passage. Other study doors were opening as they emerged from No. 10, and startled voices were asking what was "on." In a few seconds the entire Shell, with the exception of Skimpole, whose prep. time was spent mostly devouring the learned volumes of Professor Balmcrumpet, and Glyn, who took advantage of every spare minute to pursue his scientific experiments, had joined the buzzing throng.

"Must be something jolly serious," Gore opined.

"They wouldn't ring the bell at this time of the night if it weren't," Kangaroo remarked. "Yet there doesn't seem to be much excitement downstairs."

"Just what I was thinking," nod-

ed Tom Merry. "Still, we'll go down and see. We don't want to be caught in a fire or anything like that."

"No jolly fear!"

And the Shell marched en masse down the stairs at the end of the passage.

The clanging ceased as they reached the floor below, and at the same moment Kildare of the Sixth came into sight. The Shell fairly rushed to meet Kildare—to the quickly evidenced surprise of that senior.

"Is it a fire, Kildare?"

"Not a public swishing at this hour, is it, Kildare?"

"Where do we have to go, Kildare?"

"Quiet, you young idiots!" hooted Kildare, above the din. "Are you all crazy? There's no fire, no public swishing, and nothing else. Why aren't you all doing your prep?"

"Because the school bell was ringing."

"We thought it was ringing for a fire."

"Or a swishing——"

"For goodness' sake don't all speak at the same time!" Kildare roared. "I don't know what the thump you're talking about! To begin with the school bell hasn't been ringing at all!"

"Eh?"

"The school bell hasn't been ringing, I tell you!" yelled Kildare. "Is this some weird jape, or are all you kids potty? Which is it? You can tell me, Merry—you've usually some pretensions to sanity!"

"It's neither, Kildare," Tom answered, scratching his curly head in bewilderment. "It was the school bell, as plain as a pikestaff, and we concluded it meant the House was on fire or something. How you failed to hear it beats me!"

"Well, I did, anyway, and I'm

perfectly certain nobody else on this floor heard it, either," said Kildare. "Strikes me someone has been playing a lark with you up there. You'd better all get back to your prep. before Mr. Railton comes along, anyway. And if you come out again before your due time, there'll be trouble."

"Right-ho, Kildare!"

"Keep your wool on, old sport!"

The juniors returned to their studies, most of them considerably puzzled. There was no doubt in their minds as to their having heard the school bell, and it was surprising and disconcerting to find Kildare denying that it had rung.

Within a few minutes peace and quietude reigned over the Shell passage once more.

But the reign of peace and quietude was not a lengthy one. Scarcely had the juniors settled down to their prep. again before sounds of intense human activity smote on their ears. To their utter amazement, they heard the scudding of footsteps, the thudding of a ball and the shouting of many voices, just as if a football match was in progress at their very doors.

Thud! Plonk!

"On the ball!"

"Play up, St. Jim's!"

"It's some fearful asses playing footer outside!" gasped Tom Merry, in Study No. 10. "Who the dickens can it be?"

As if in answer to his question, the strident voices outside called out the names of some of the players, just then—and the Terrible Three fairly blinked at each other as they heard the names shouted.

"Go it, Kildare!"

"Follow up, Darrell!"

"Goal!"

"Kildare and Darrell!" breathed Tom Merry. "Kildare and Darrell,

playing footer in the Shell passage! What, in the name of goodness —”

The Terrible Three, as if moved by a single impulse, rushed to the study door to see the incredible thing.

They fairly jumped at what met their eyes. Instead of a passage crowded with enthusiastic indoor footballers, they saw a passage absolutely deserted!

Other fellows who were peering out of their doorways, drawn out by the same noises as had attracted Tom Merry and his chums, looked equally startled.

“Did you hear it?” Kangaroo called out.

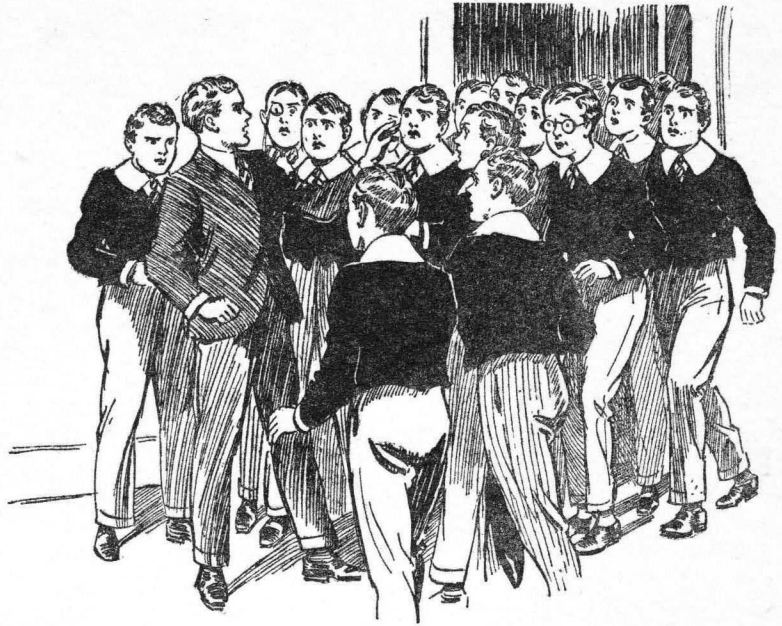
“Couldn’t miss it!” Tom answered. “But where have they all gone?”

“I thought I told you kids to get back to your prep!” came Kildare’s voice from the stairs at that moment, and the Captain of St. Jim’s himself came sauntering down the passage. “What’s the idea this time?”

“Oh, so you are there!” exclaimed Tom Merry, quite relieved. “If you hadn’t shown yourself, Kildare, I should have begun to think we were all suffering from delusions. But what’s the idea of you and Darrell playing footer in a junior passage?”

“Wha-a-at?”

“I—I suppose you’re not going to



The Shell juniors crowded round Kildare excitedly. “Is it a fire?” they exclaimed. “Not a public swishing, is it, Kildare? Where do we have to go?” “Quiet, you young idiots!” hooted the St. Jim’s captain. “Are you all crazy?”

deny you were playing footer here a minute ago, are you?”

“Playing footer?” gasped Kildare blankly. “Are you completely off your rocker, Merry?”

“But we heard you!” roared Gore. “You and Darrell! What’s the good of denying the truth?”

Before Kildare had time to reply to that question, a fresh interruption came, in the shape of a terrific din reminiscent of the falling of a particularly heavy booby-trap.

Crash! Bang! Crash!

“Yaroooogh!” came a strangled howl from somebody, and, then the juniors heard a stern voice which they all recognised.

“Boys! What is the meaning of this?”

“The Head!” murmured Tom Merry, and he and the rest of the Shell and Kildare, too, turned towards

the stairs. And then came a fresh shock which Kildare experienced with the rest, this time.

There was no sign of the Head—nor, indeed, of the booby-trap or the “boys” to whom they had quite clearly heard the Head speaking!

Now, it was Kildare’s turn to look startled.

“That’s funny,” he remarked. “I distinctly heard the Head then.”

“Just as we heard the school bell, and you and Darrell playing footer,” said Tom Merry. “As you say, Kildare, it’s funny—very funny!”

“Can’t make it out at all,” confessed Kildare. “I suppose there must be some explanation of it, but what it is, I’m dashed if I can see just now. Anyway, get back to your prep. now, and if you hear any more school bells ringing and footer matches being played and booby-traps crashing, just see if you can’t ignore ’em till you’ve finished your work!”

“We’ll do our best, Kildare,” grinned Tom Merry. “But you can’t get away from it, it’s very mysterious!”

THE SECOND CHAPTER

TOM MERRY’S DEDUCTIONS

“**V**EWY extwaordinawy!”

“Rats!”

“Weally, Blake——”

“Piffle!” said Blake cheerfully. “It’s mass illusion. Feeble-minded people like you Shellfish are liable to it.”

“Look here, you fat-headed Fourth frump——”

“Peace, you idiots!” laughed Tom Merry. “This is a matter for serious discussion, not Form fights.”

It was half-an-hour later. Prep. was over and in the Junior Common-room the Shell had just been telling the Fourth all about the mysterious

outbreak of Voices and Sounds in the Shell passage. They had expected the Fourth to be greatly impressed, but they were completely disappointed in that expectation. The Fourth, far from being impressed, were incredulous and even derisive.

With the exception of Arthur Augustus D’Arcy. Arthur Augustus was very much impressed, and somewhat annoyed with the rest of the Fourth for not being equally impressed.

“I wegard the whole thing as vewy extwaordinawy,” he repeated, having given Jack Blake a withering glare through his celebrated monocle. “It stwikes me, deah boys, that you have expewienced a manifestation of Unseen Forces.”

“Whatter?”

“I am not, I twust, superstitious or simple ovah these mattahs,” said the swell of the Fourth. “But there are many things which scientists, now-adays, wecognise cannot be explained by the ordinary laws of science—ghosts, for instance, and spectahs. Haunted houses, in the opinion of many gweat men, are an actual fact; houses which, in some mannah, have got into the gwip of evil spiwits!”

“Oh, crikey!”

“In my opinion, it is more than poss. that the Shell passage has become the happy huntin’ gwound of some fiendish Force which has started playin’ devilish twicks with the occupants,” said Arthur Augustus seriously. “It sounds wathah fah-fetched, I know——”

“My hat! Just a bit!”

“But it is a sewious possibility,” the swell of the Fourth said, with a serious shake of his head. “Pwo-bably we shall soon find out. If some of you youngstahs are stwuck down in the dark by invisible hands——”

“Ye gods!”

"Or if one or two of you die suddenly of fright, then we can be pretty certain that some demoniacal spirit possesses the place!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, deah boys——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fourth, at any rate, shrieked, though it was noticeable that not all the Shell men present joined in the laugh. Not many of them entertained D'Arcy's suggestion that an evil spirit had taken up its abode in the Shell passage. The thought, however, that great men did sometimes believe in haunted houses was not comforting after the peculiar things that had happened in the Shell passage half an hour before.

It was as the laugh died away and Jack Blake opened his mouth to express his blunt opinion of D'Arcy's amazing solution to the problem that the voice of Darrell was heard.

"Now, then, kids!" said Darrell, to the shocked surprise of the juniors, who had scarcely had five minutes in the Common-room. "Bed-time! Up you go!"

There was a yell.

"What's the idea, Darrell?"

"It's only half-past eight, old bean! You've made a mistake!"

"Hurry up,

there!" came Darrell's voice again.

"You're five minutes late already!"

"Why, you awful fibber——"

"Half-a-mo!" said Tom Merry, suddenly. "Where is Darrell?"

"Eh?"

"He's not in the doorway. Where is he?"

"Outside, I suppose," said Jack Blake, staring. "You're—you're not thinking——"

"That it's the Voices again?" asked Tom Merry. "Matter of fact, that's just what I am thinking!"

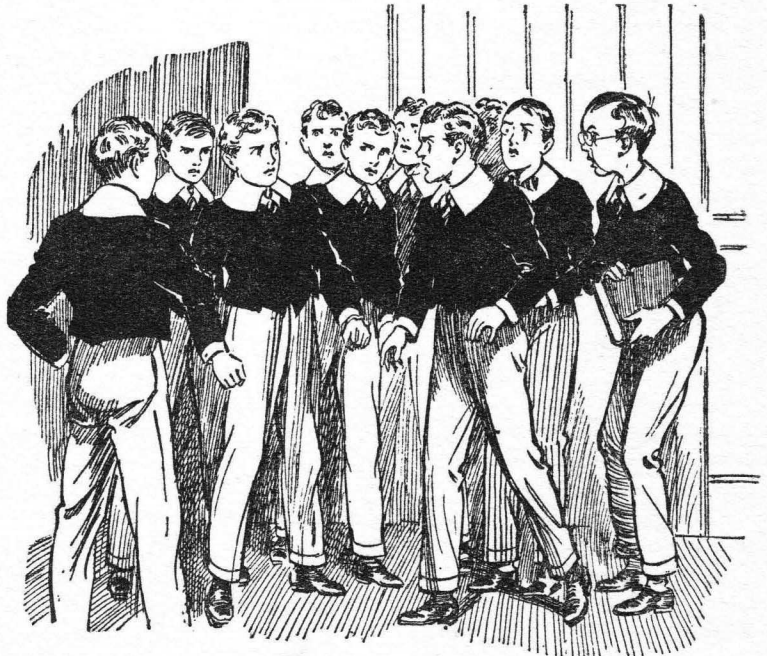
"Oh, my hat!"

There was a rush to the door.

Not a sign of Darrell was to be found!

"Must have gone," said Blake wonderingly.

"Just japing us, I suppose?"



"Can't you choose a better time than this to discuss the footer club finances, Tom Merry?" said Jack Blake. "Footer can wait till we've cleared up the mystery of the Voices!" Tom Merry stared. "Who are you talking to? I didn't say a word!"

suggested Monty Lowther sarcastically. "The sort of thing any prefect might be expected to do, of course!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Digby. "Rather funny if there's something in Gussy's crack-brained idea after all!"

"If you wefer to my ideah as cwack-bwained, Digbay, I'll——"

"Supernatural forces are indubitably at work, my good youths," broke in Skimpole, struggling to the front with a massive volume clasped affectionately in his arms. "Professor Balmycrumpet says that the appearance of material phenomena emanating from the Unseen World must be accepted as an occasional, if not frequent, occurrence. If some of you juveniles would care to glance at this book——"

"Buzz off, Skimmy!"

"But Professor Balmycrumpet says——"

"Blow Professor Balmycrumpet!"

"Gentlemen, chaps and fellows!" broke in Tom Merry's voice at that moment, to the surprise of the crowd. "This meeting has been called to discuss the finances of the footer club."

All eyes were turned on the leader of the School House juniors.

"Can't you choose a better time than this to discuss the footer club finances, Tom Merry?" Blake asked. "One thing at a time, you know—and besides, we discussed it all last week, I thought!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Footer can wait till we've cleared this bizney up, Merry!"

Tom Merry stared.

"Who are you talking to, fatheads? I didn't say a word!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"Bai Jove! It must be the Voices again, deah boys!"

"The giddy spooks!" grinned Kangaroo. "There's no doubt about it now, kids. We're bewitched!"

"Ye gods!"

The Common-room fairly buzzed. It was ridiculous, of course. Witchcraft had long since ceased to be believed in. And yet—if it wasn't witchcraft, what other strange power was it that brought the voices of fellows they knew into their midst with such lifelike fidelity as to deceive the sharpest ears?

For the rest of the evening the juniors could talk of nothing else but the Voices, and after lights out in the dormitories, tongues still wagged freely on the subject.

In the Shell dorm., discussing them with Manners and Lowther, Tom Merry subjected them to quite an analysis.

"There are several things that stand out about them, my infants," he said. "The first is that they have a limited radius. Kildare didn't hear the tolling of the school bell, despite the fact that we all heard it quite clearly. The second is that they're not relays of sounds from other parts of the school—the mere fact that my voice was heard while I was present proves that. The third is that they're all sounds of things that might well have happened at one time or another. I could almost swear that I used the actual words used by the Voice to-night when we held that footer meeting last week. The fourth is—are you chaps listening?"

The only answer was the sound of deep and regular breathing—and Tom Merry, with a snort of disgust at his chums' inability to remain awake to hear his chain of deductions, settled down on the pillow himself and was soon in the arms of Morpheus

—despite the puzzling events of the evening!

THE THIRD CHAPTER

THE UNHONOURED PROPHET!

THERE was a thoughtful frown on Tom Merry's face as he came out of the Shell Form-room on the following morning. He shook his head when Monty Lowther suggested punting a football about in the quad.

"Don't let me stop you, old bean. But I'm anxious to clear up this Voice biz-ney, and I have an idea there'll be some more examples of it in the Shell passage before dinner."

"We'll stay with you then, Tommy," said Lowther, "though if it really is a case of the House being haunted, it won't happen in the light of day—not according to the rules of the very best spooks, anyway!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Terrible Three accordingly went up to No. 10 and waited to see what would happen.

Their vigil was soon rewarded. They had hardly been in the study five minutes before quite a pandemonium of noise broke out and they heard, to their astonishment, the familiar sounds associated with the school tuckshop during a rush-hour.

The customary crowd of patrons could be heard jostling each other at the counter, refreshment, both solid and liquid, was being ordered, paid for and consumed, Dame Taggles was bustling about attending to orders, and the juniors, several of whose voices could be recognised quite distinctly, were chipping her just as they did in reality. Judging by the sounds, Dame Taggles' little shop had been suddenly



As the study door swung back the crowd of offended juniors surged in. Rather surprisingly, Glyn was kneeling in front of his machine as though he hadn't heard the newcomers.

transferred to the Shell passage. Yet when the Terrible Three looked out, there was nothing visible to explain it.

The din stopped just as suddenly as it had started. Manners and Lowther looked at their leader with rather exasperated expressions on their faces.

"This'll make me wild if it goes on much longer," Manners remarked.

"It seems to come from nowhere. Did you hear it, Glyn?"—the last to Bernard Glyn, who had just come out of his study and was walking past them towards the stairs.

Bernard Glyn made no reply, and from the distant look in his eyes the Terrible Three judged that his thoughts were occupied with one of the numerous scientific problems that engaged his attention out of school hours.

"Glyn's up to something again," grinned Lowther. "He's been busy for weeks on some new stunt. Kangaroo and Dane have got so fed up with the crowds of junk he's been accumulating that they've been digging in other studies and leaving him on his own lately."

Tom Merry's eyes were fixed thoughtfully on the door of the study from which Bernard Glyn had just come.

"Yes, I'd noticed myself that he became a lone wolf again last week," he remarked. "He was in the Common-room last night, though, when the Voices were about."

Something in Tom Merry's tone made his chums look at him sharply.

"My hat!" exclaimed Manners. "You're not suggesting——"

"Tommy, old scout," said Lowther, "you don't think that Glyn——"

Tom Merry nodded slowly.

"I'm suggesting and I'm thinking that Bernard Glyn may be able to give us the solution to the mystery of the Voices!"

"Great pip! You think, then, that it's some invention——"

"Some crack-brained, idiotic machine——"

"I think that without wasting any more time we might profitably have a look round Glyn's study," smiled Tom. "This way, kids!"

And he led the way across to Study No. 5, and without any more ado walked into that apartment.

"Ye gods! Mind you don't lose yourselves!" gasped Tom, as they entered.

It was a facetious warning, but it was almost justified in all seriousness. Glyn's study was not a tidy place at the best of times, but on this occasion Glyn had out-Glynned himself, so to speak. The place was piled high with electrical and wireless equipment of every description, while plans and blueprints galore littered the desk and table and floor. It was very evident that Glyn had been working!

When they had got their bearings, the Terrible Three started examining the papers on the desk at which Glyn had been sitting before he left the study.

"'Sound Recording,'" said Tom Merry, reading the titles of the papers as he came to them; "'Sound as Electrical Energy'—'Storage of Sound in Form of Electricity'—'Re-transformation of Electrical Energy into Sound'—'Reproduction'—my hat, chaps, this looks like what we're wanting to find!"

"'Simplification of Process—Glyn Method,'" quoted Lowther, reading from another paper. "This is it right enough, Tommy! The secret of the Voices is a secret no longer! It's just another invention of that fat-head Glyn!"

"And if this isn't the invention itself, then I'm a Dutchman!" yelled Manners, who had been exploring the outer reaches of the inventor's study. "Look—it's all fixed in this cabinet, like a blessed wireless set!"

He knelt on the floor beside the cabinet, and pressed a knob belonging to the apparatus inside it—and proof that it was indeed the Voice

Machine was forthcoming immediately. With startling suddenness, a clamour of voices arose in the study, and the Terrible Three had the strange experience of listening to a perfect sound reproduction of a tea-party in Study No. 10, with their own voices supplying most of the dialogue!

"Well, that's the limit!" gasped Tom, as Manners switched off again. "You can see through it now?"

"What-ho!" grinned Manners. "That was the tea-party we threw last week when Glyn came along with that mysterious-looking box under his arm. We wondered what was in the box, then. Now we know!"

"It was the recording apparatus for this affair!" gasped Lowther. "The bouncer must have been going round collecting sounds for days—the rising-bell, the First Eleven footer match, that booby-trap incident, Tommy addressing the footer club meeting—"

"In brief, just everything we've heard and probably a lot more besides!" finished Tom Merry. "He's experimenting in a new method of collecting and recording sounds and turning 'em on like you turn on water at the tap!"

"And he's had the cheek to lead everyone to think the blessed House is haunted in the process!" remarked Manners disgustedly. "Of course, we recognise that he's a giddy genius, but——"

"We realise he's the Eighth Wonder of the World," grinned Tom Merry. "But——"

"But we think at the same time that he ought to be jolly well bumped for leading his old pals up the garden!" wound up Lowther. "Having agreed on that, we'll now find him and carry out the sentence!"

"What-ho!"

The Terrible Three quitted the

study. But before they could carry out their intention, the dinner-bell intervened—the real bell, and not a phantom one from Glyn's amazing Sound Machine! So the bumping of Glyn was postponed—and as Glyn vanished again soon after dinner, it had to be postponed until afternoon classes were over.

By that time the news of the solution to the mystery of the Voices had spread right through the Lower School, and when Tom Merry led his followers up to the Shell passage in search of the inventor, a formidable army fell in behind him.

The door of Glyn's study was locked. A dozen fellows promptly followed up that discovery by beating a wild tattoo on the panels.

"Open the door, Glyn!"

"Come out and be bumped, old bean!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Up to that moment the crowd had been quite cheery, if a little annoyed at the thought of having been made to look silly by the St. Jim's inventor. But the remarks in Glyn's voice that immediately followed their knockings on the door considerably altered their cheery demeanour.

"You're a crowd of blithering bandersnatches!" they heard yelled at them from within the study. "Of all the imbeciles I ever met, you chaps are the most imbecilic!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"On looks, you ought to be attending a school for congenital idiots! If they ever held a prize competition for nitwits, I'd advise you to go in for it—you'd all tie for first place!"

"Well, of all the nerve——"

"Break in and collar the cheeky ass!" hooted Gore. And the crowd hastened to respond. It was a case of insult added to injury now, and the

blood of the offended juniors was up!

There was a wild rush and a crash. An instant later, the lock was broken; the door swung back and the crowd surged in.

Rather surprisingly, Glyn was kneeling in front of his machine, hard at work as though he hadn't heard the newcomers. But the juniors were too excited to think of the implications of that fact. They swarmed round Glyn and lifted him off his feet. Glyn gave a yell.

"Look here, you idiots, what do you think you're——"

"Bump the cheeky rotter!"

Bump!

"Yaroooh!"

Bump!

"Yoooooop!"

"Ow wow! You howling lunatics——"

And then, the crowd became aware of a peculiar circumstance.

While Glyn was yelling fiendishly, another voice exactly like Glyn's was continuing to yell out uncomplimentary remarks of the kind that had annoyed them outside!

"Oh, my giddy aunt!" gasped Lowther. "Hold your horses, you men! It wasn't Glyn—it was only the machine!"

"What!"

"Ow! Of course it was the giddy machine!" hooted Glyn furiously. "I didn't know any of you knew about it, but since you do, that was what it was, anyway! I'm trying it out before I broadcast it in the New House. It's intended for Figgins and his pals—not for you!"

"M-m-my hat! He's right!"

"Sorry, Glyn!"

"Our mistake, old bean!"

"Consider yourself not bumped, after all!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cackling coons!" roared the St. Jim's inventor.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors shrieked.

"Well, there's a sort of poetic justice in it, anyway," grinned Tom Merry. "It serves you jolly well right for not confiding in your old and trusted pals!"

"You silly cuckoos!"

"Of course, deah boys, this doesn't dispose of the possibility of houses bein' bewitched sometimes," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, surveying Glyn's invention thoughtfully through his monocle. "On the question of supernatuwal phenomena——"

"Blow supernatural phenomena!" said Jack Blake cheerfully. "On the question of japing the New House, I vote we all pile in and help Glyn before Figgy and his pals hear about this. It'll be the jape of the term!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Kim on, Glyn!"

Glyn grinned.

"All right, you fatheads! You don't deserve it, but I'll go ahead with it, and I promise you I'll score over the New House more than they've ever been scored over before!"

And Glyn duly went ahead with it—and if he didn't score over the New House more than they had ever been scored over before, he at least scored in a way that proved distinctly a "new one" on their old rivals!

THE END

The BATTLE of the TUCKSHOP!



SCENE :

The Greyfriars tuckshop. A shop counter is on the right of the stage. Be careful that the audience cannot see behind it, for here you will conceal your Prompter, who must provide the "growls" supposed to be made by BILLY BUNTER. The fat boy is in the shop, arguing with MRS. MIMBLE, who stands behind the counter. On shelves and on the counter are cakes, sweets, ginger-pop, etc. A small table, with three chairs, stands in the shop.

A Play in Verse for Amateur Actors

By
THE GREYFRIARS RHYMESTER

CHARACTERS :

Billy Bunter ..	The famous fat boy of Greyfriars.
Mrs. Mimble ..	Proprietress of the tuckshop.
Temple	} Of the Upper Fourth Form.
Dabney	
Fry	
Harry Wharton ..	Captain of the Remove.
Bob Cherry	Wharton's chum.
Gosling	The Greyfriars Porter.
Loder	The bully of the Sixth Form.
Coker	The fathead of the Fifth Form.
Mr. Prout	Master of the Fifth Form.
Mr. Capper	Master of the Upper Fourth.

(Other Remove Juniors, in non-speaking parts, may be included if desired.)

NOTE.—This play may be performed by readers of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL without fee or licence on condition that the words "By permission of the Editor of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL" appear on every programme.

MRS. MIMBLE :

You cannot have a single tart !
There, Master Bunter ; now I've said it !

BUNTER :

Oh, really, ma'am, you ought to start
A system of extended credit.

MRS. MIMBLE :

Nonsense !

BUNTER :

If you don't, you know,
You'll find your business cannot
grow !

MRS. MIMBLE :

And if it does not do so—well,
At least I'm paid for what I sell.

BUNTER :

But don't you see, ma'am——?

MRS. MIMBLE :

Yes, indeed,
I see quite well. You want a feed,
But do not want to pay the cost !
On business lines like that I'm lost.
If no one paid for what they eat,
I soon should be upon the street.

BUNTER :

But I'm as hungry as a hunter,
And yet you've got a heart of stone !
Just one small doughnut——

MRS. MIMBLE (*sharply*) :

Master Bunter,
Kindly leave those cakes alone !

BUNTER (*turning away sadly*) :

I shan't convince her, that is
clear ;

I wish she'd hop outside a tick !
(*He ponders.*)

But stay ! I've got a great idea !
Ventriloquism ! That's the trick !
(*He gives a fat cough, and immediately
the growling of a savage dog comes
from behind the counter.* MRS.

MIMBLE *jumps away in fright.*)

MRS. MIMBLE (*wildly*) :

Oh, help ! A savage dog is here !
He'll bite, I'm sure. Oh, help me,
quick !

(*She slaps wildly about her with a
teacloth.*)

Shush ! Br-r-r ! Begone ! Oh, oh !
He'll bite my feet, I know !

(*The dog growls savagely.*)

Oh, kick it, hold it, scratch it !

Bring Gosling here to catch it !

Oh, someone drive it out !

Call Gosling ! Call him ! Shout !

(*The dog gives a terrible snarl. She*

*utters a shriek and rushes out of
the shop.*)

BUNTER :

He, he ! She's unaware, no doubt,
That I can throw my voice about.
Now while she's absent from the
shop,

I'll treat myself to ginger-pop !

(*He rolls behind the counter.*)

I'm fond of doughnuts. Here's
some candy——

Ventriloquism comes in handy——
And currant buns—a tasty snack !
And then—oh, lor' ! She's coming
back !

(*Footsteps are heard outside. BUNTER
ducks out of sight behind the
counter. TEMPLE, DABNEY and
FRY come in.*)

TEMPLE :

There's no one here, it's quite all
right !

FRY :

Where's Mrs. Mimble ? Not in sight ?

TEMPLE :

No matter, we can help ourselves.

DABNEY :

Oh, rather ! Plenty on the shelves !
(*They help themselves to cake and
lemonade and sit down at the table.*)

TEMPLE :

Now tell me how the job has fared.
I hope that everything's prepared ?

DABNEY :

Oh, rather ! Tons of flour and soot !

FRY :

Red ink and gum as well, to boot !

DABNEY :

They're in the woodshed, on the
floor ;

All ready, just behind the door.

TEMPLE :

That's good ! We'll try to shorten
The smiles of Harry Wharton
And those Removite fags.

They say they're fond of rags
And never want to miss one——

We'll see how they like this one.

FRY :

They pillowed
us last night
in dorm
Until we gasped
for breath.

DABNEY :

Oh, rather! All
the blessed
form
Is cackling us
to death.

TEMPLE :

Let them cackle,
let them grin;
We'll show 'em
where the fun
comes in.
Well, let's get
going on the
lark;
You fellows go
and stand

Inside the wood-
shed in the
dark,

The soot and
stuff to hand;

And then, when either of you hears
A chap approach the shed,
The very second he appears
You'll swamp it on his head!
I'll go and find Removite men
And send them one by one
On some pretence to see you, then
We'll see a bit of fun!

FRY :

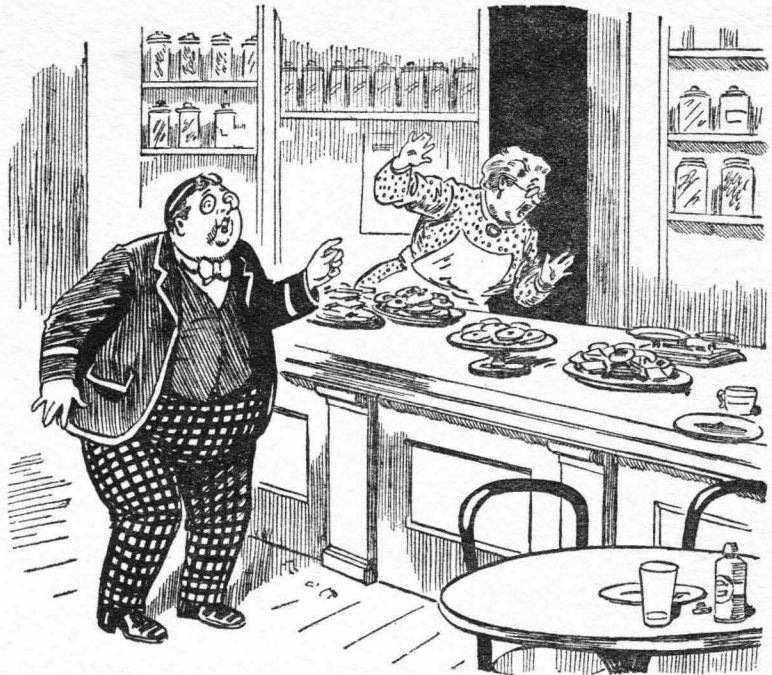
They're bound to get a fearful
fright!
We'll turn them red and black and
white!

TEMPLE :

That sounds all right! It's good
enough!
Let's start upon the job.

DABNEY :

We'll have to pay for all this stuff.
I've only got a bob!



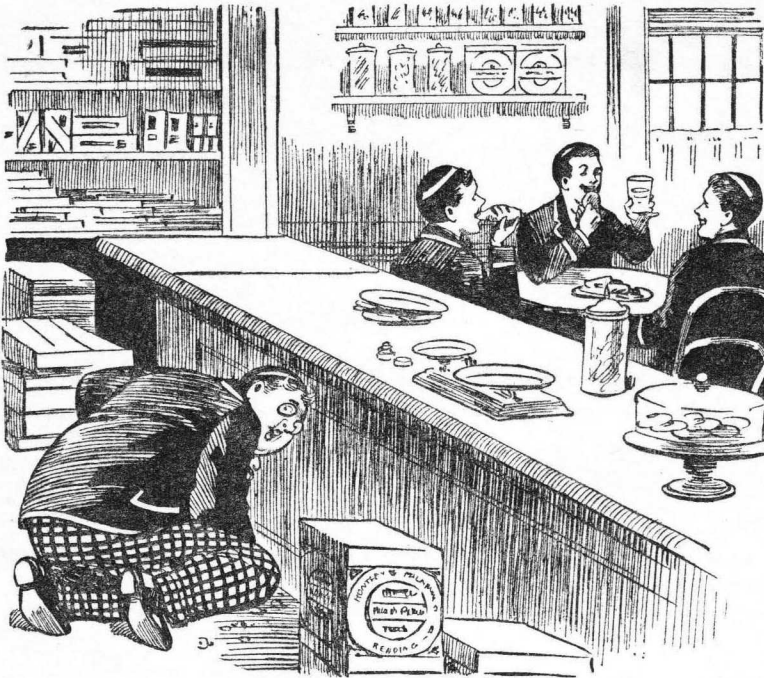
BUNTER : "But stay! I've got a great idea. Ventriloquism! That's the trick."
(He gives a fat cough, and immediately the growling of a savage dog is heard from
behind the counter.) Mrs. MIMBLE (wildly): "Oh, help! A savage dog is here.
He'll bite, I'm sure. Oh, help me, quick!"

TEMPLE :

I'll see to that in half a minute.
The rag comes first, so let's begin it.
(They go out. BILLY BUNTER rolls out
from behind the counter, grinning
and munching.)

BUNTER :

So that's their little game!
Of all the artful tricks!
He, he! It seems a shame
To plan all that for nix!
It's quite a topping joke,
And yet I somehow feel
I'll have to put a spoke
In poor old Temple's wheel.
He'll send us one by one,
He says, to Gosling's shed;
They think it jolly fun
To turn us black and red;
Well, let them try! He, he!
If they get by with that



TEMPLE (little knowing Bunter is hiding behind the counter): "I'll go and find Removite men and send them one by one On some pretence to see you, then we'll see a bit of fun." FRY: "They're bound to get a fearful fright! We'll turn them red and black and white!"

And swamp that stuff on me,
I'll eat my Sunday hat!

(TEMPLE comes in and starts on seeing
BUNTER.)

TEMPLE:

How long have you been here?

BUNTER (grinning):

I've just come in!

TEMPLE (suspiciously):

Oh, have you? Well, it's queer,
For I've been standing near
And you did not appear.
And why that grin?

BUNTER:

Oh, nothing much! Just thoughts,
you know!

Have you seen Mrs. Mimble?

TEMPLE:

No!

I'd better leave the money on
The counter!

(He puts a half-crown on the counter, but it rolls off and drops behind. He goes round behind the counter.)

Bother, where's it gone?

(He drops out of sight behind the counter and starts groping for the coin.)

BUNTER:

If you've dropped half-a-crown there,
You'd better leave it down there.

(MRS. MIMBLE and GOSLING rush in. The

former is armed with a mop, the latter with a broom. They flourish these wildly, knocking cakes off the counter and nearly hitting each other.)

MRS. MIMBLE (shrieking):

Hoosh! Woosh! Get out, you brute!

Get out of here, you rascal! Scoot!
(She bangs her mop on the counter.)

GOSLING:

Now what's the good o' screaming?
There's no dorg 'ere, I'm thinking.
I fancy you've been dreaming—

MRS. MIMBLE (indignantly):

I fancy you've been drinking!

GOSLING:

Ho! Wot I ses is this—

MRS. MIMBLE:

Hit him! Please don't miss!

(BUNTER cackles as the porter raises

his broom and brings it down with a terrific thump on the hidden
TEMPLE.)

TEMPLE (*fiendishly*):

Ow-ow! What's that? Yaroooooh!

MRS. MIMBLE (*faintly*):

There! Can't you hear it shriek?

GOSLING:

Yes, mum! I never knoo

That savage dorgs could speak!

MRS. MIMBLE (*hysterically*):

Oh, kill it, kill it, kill it!

(TEMPLE rises into view caressing his head.)

GOSLING:

No, that won't do, mum, will it?

TEMPLE:

Ow-wow! You madman! Stoppit!

You nearly broke my crown!

You put that broom down! Drop it!

You hear me? Put it down!

GOSLING:

Well, there's your dorg, mum—yes!

I knoo as you was wrong.

It's just a trick, I guess;

I thought so all along!

MRS. MIMBLE:

Oh, Master Temple, it's too bad

To give me such a scare!

GOSLING:

And now you'll come with me, my lad, To settle this affair!

TEMPLE:

You're scatty, Gosling! Oh, my napper!

GOSLING:

You'll come with me to Mr. Capper.

MRS. MIMBLE:

No doubt you think it clever To make this dreadful scene!

TEMPLE:

I didn't do it—never!

I don't know what you mean!

GOSLING:

Hindeed? You tell such things as these

To Mr. Capper, if you please!

So come with me. We'll see him now! (*Goes out.*)

TEMPLE (*following him out*):

I've not done anything! Ow-wow!

BUNTER:

Oh, what a horrid trick!



TEMPLE (*fiendishly, as the broom thumps down on his head*): "Ow-ow! What's that? Yaroooooh!"
MRS. MIMBLE: "There! Can't you hear it shriek?"
GOSLING: "Yes, mum. I never knoo that savage dorgs could speak!"

It's very much too thick !
I hope he gets the stick !
MRS. MIMBLE (*severely*) :
You, I think, will be the next
To get the cane. I'm very vexed !
Some goods, if I am not mistaken,
From off my counter you have
taken ?

BUNTER :
Oh, really, ma'am, it's quite all
right ;
My postal-order's due to-night !

MRS. MIMBLE :
Yes, yes ; I think I've heard of it,
And don't believe a word of it.
I cannot let you owe for it ;
To Mr. Quelch I'll go for it.

BUNTER :
I've paid for it. It's dropped behind
The counter, I am sure.
And if you look, you're sure to find
A half-crown on the floor.
(MRS. MIMBLE *puts on her glasses*
and searches for it. HARRY
WHARTON *comes in cheerily.*)

WHARTON :
Hallo ! Look out, old Owl,
For Loder's on the prowl !
I think there's trouble brewing ;
Now what have you been doing ?

BUNTER :
Oh, lor' ! I haven't done the lines
He gave me yesterday.

WHARTON :
Is that it ? Well, by all the signs
There's trouble on the way.

MRS. MIMBLE (*bobbing up*) :
The coin is here ! It's very strange !

BUNTER :
I'll have some cakes by way of
change.

WHARTON :
A ginger-pop for me, ma'am, please.
(*Enter CHERRY exuberantly.*)

CHERRY :
I'll have a cup of tea, ma'am, please.
Here, Bunter, Coker's on your track ;
He wants his pie and seed-cake back !

BUNTER (*groaning*) :
Oh, dear ! Oh, lor' !
How many more ?

WHARTON :
Be sure your sins will find you out.
You'd better scoot—don't hang
about.

BUNTER :
That pie I didn't touch,
Upon my davy !
It wasn't very much,
And had no gravy.
(MRS. MIMBLE *is serving them with*
food as LODER enters, complete with
cane.)

LODER :
Bunter !
BUNTER (*in alarm*) :
I'm not here !
I'm really not—no fear !

LODER :
The lines I gave you yesterday—
Have you done them ?

BUNTER :
Yes, no, of course ! I mean to
say,
I've just begun them.

LODER :
We'll see if " six " will help you ;
If that's no good, I'll scalp you !
Bend over !

BUNTER :
Just a tick——

LODER :
I said bend over—quick !
(BUNTER *bends over dismally.*)
Because your lines aren't done,
Take that ! (*Whack.*)

CHERRY :
That's number one.

LODER :
Because I'm tired of you,
Take that ! (*Whack.*)

WHARTON :
And that makes two.

BUNTER (*roaring*) :
Ow ! Stoppit, Loder, and perhaps
I'll tell you—I'm not joking—

Where you can go and find some chaps
Who're playing cards and smoking.

LODER (*starting*):

What? Where are they? Speak!

BUNTER:

They're in the woodshed.

WHARTON and CHERRY:

Sneak!

LODER:

Be quiet! Oh, the woodshed, eh?

Right-ho! I'll take a walk that way!

I'll put a stopper to their bliss,

And just because you've troubled

To tell me that, I'll tell you this:

Your hundred lines are doubled!

(*Exit LODER.*

WHARTON and CHERRY look grimly at the groaning BUNTER.)

WHARTON:

How dare you sneak to Loder?

CHERRY (*picking up a siphon of soda-water*):

Let's treat him to a soda!

(*He squirts it at BUNTER, who dodges wildly.*)

BUNTER:

Keep off! No matter what I said, There's no chap smoking in the shed!

WHARTON:

Then why send Loder there?

BUNTER:

Oh, rats! That's my affair.

(*COKER rushes in, wielding a cricket stump.*)

COKER:

Oh, here you are, you bloated tub! I'll teach you—collaring my grub!

(*He lays into BUNTER with the stump.*)



BUNTER (*roaring as Loder swipes him with the cane*): "Ow! Stop it, Loder, and perhaps I'll tell you—I'm not joking—where you can find some chaps who're playing cards and smoking."

BUNTER (*yelling*):

It wasn't me, I say!

What's happened, anyway?

COKER:

You know what's happened well enough—

You've pinched my pie and other stuff.

BUNTER:

Leave off! It wasn't me, I vow!

I'll tell you where your grub is now.

COKER :

Oh, will you? Well, where is it, then?

BUNTER :

Pinched by a gang of Fourth Form men.

A rabbit pie, a hefty cake,
And other things. I saw them take
The tuck into the woodshed, so
I dare say it's still there, you know.

COKER :

The woodshed, eh? Is that the truth?

CHERRY :

Oh, Bunter's such a blameless youth

That he could never tell a lie,
Not even for a rabbit pie.

BUNTER :

You'll find it there, that's flat!

COKER :

It better be, mind that!
(COKER *exits.*)

WHARTON :

Now, Bunter, what's the little game?

Come, out with it! Give it a name!
(*Before BUNTER can answer, TEMPLE rushes in furiously and collars him.*)

TEMPLE (*punching furiously*):

I know it now! You caused that row!

When Gosling told old Capper
What happened here, I soon knew how

I got this aching napper!

BUNTER :

Ow! Take this beast away!

MRS. MIMBLE :

Stop, young gentlemen, pray!
(WHARTON *and* CHERRY *pull* TEMPLE *away.*)

CHERRY :

I think you must be off your dot!

TEMPLE :

Perhaps! But Bunter knows I'm not.

Mysterious voices calling out

When Bunter's anywhere about
Are easily explained, no doubt!

WHARTON :

I still can't make out what's the matter.

BUNTER :

Oh, he's as mad as any hatter!
But, I say, Temple, just a word:
Fry's looking for you, so I've heard.
He asked me if I'd tell you so,
And says that you know where to go.

TEMPLE :

All right, then, I will hop along,
But how I'll smash you if you're wrong!

(*Exit* TEMPLE.)

WHARTON (*curiously*):

And what's the place that Temple knows?

BUNTER :

Oh, well—the woodshed, I suppose.
(*He goes over towards door, but*
CHERRY stops him.)

CHERRY :

You can't go yet, old pippin! Stop!
We'll treat you to a ginger-pop.

BUNTER :

I simply can't remain;
I'll have to go without it.

WHARTON :

You'll stop till you explain
This business—all about it.

CHERRY :

Speak up, now, Bunty; make it clear.

BUNTER :

All right. I chanced to overhear
Those bounders Temple, Dab and Fry

Arranging here upon the sly
To send you and the other men
To Gosling's woodshed.

WHARTON :

Well, what then?

BUNTER :

They've got some soot and flour
and ink,
So you can guess the rest, I think.

CHERRY (*wrathfully*):

The cheeky chumps! Great pip!
Thanks, Porpoise, for the tip!

(BUNTER gives a wild yell as LODER dashes in. The prefect is as black as the ace of spades, clothed in soot as with a garment. BUNTER hops behind the counter. MRS. MIMBLE shrieks. WHARTON and CHERRY roar with laughter.)

LODER:

I'll thrash him, I'll smash him,
I'll bang and I'll bash him

Until he is pretty well dead!
I'll clump him, I'll thump him,
I'll rag and I'll bump him

For chucking this soot at my head.

(COKER dashes in. He is brilliant red, like an unearthly sunset. WHARTON and CHERRY, roaring with laughter, endeavour to keep them away from BUNTER.)

COKER (*wildly*):

Where is he, eh?
Where is he?
I'm aching to
get busy!

MRS. MIMBLE
(*faintly*):

I'm going mad,
I fear!
Red Indians
and negroes
here!

COKER:

I'll slaughter
him, I'll slay
him!

LODER:

I'll burst him
and I'll flay
him!

COKER:

I'll fearfully
chastise him!

LODER:

I'll thrash and
pulverise him!

(TEMPLE rushes in as white as snow. Flour covers him entirely. He waves his fists.)

TEMPLE:

Lemme gerrat him, lemme gerrat
him!

I'll rag him and scrag him and bash
him and bat him!

BUNTER (*yelling*):

Oh, keep them off, you chaps!

CHERRY (*to WHARTON*):

Line up! Here come some scraps!

COKER:

I'll massacre and mangle him!

LODER:

I'll scarify and strangle him!

(The three of them rush on BUNTER.

WHARTON and CHERRY meet them
shoulder to shoulder. There is a
terrific battle. BUNTER catches up
cakes, tarts, etc., and throws them.
The air is full of flying pastry.)



WHARTON: "How dare you sneak to Loder?" CHERRY (picking up siphon of soda-water and squirting it at Bunter): "Let's treat him to a soda." BUNTER: "Keep off! No matter what I said, there's no chap smoking in the shed."

MRS. MIMBLE screams for help and rushes out of the shop. The battle wages until MRS. MIMBLE returns with PROUT and CAPPER. Order is restored after a lot of shouting.)

MR. PROUT :

How dare you thus create
This most unseemly noise ?
Of course, I need not state
You're Mr. Quelch's boys !
No other Form, I'm sure,
Would tolerate such scenes ;
Get up from off the floor
And tell me what this means !

MR. CAPPER :

I had no doubt that it would prove
Entirely due to the Remove.

MR. PROUT :

A most unruly Form, sir, quite !
No Fifth Form boy would take
delight
In scenes like this.

MR. CAPPER :

And I may say
No Fourth Form boy would act this
way,
And give such reason for complaint !
I think they've daubed themselves
with paint——

MR. PROUT :

Those boys are, no doubt,
The leaders of this rout.
(To LODER) : Now, rascal, who are
you ?

LODER (*sullenly*) :

I'm Loder, sir—that's who !

MR. PROUT :

A Sixth Form boy ! My word !
Such things I've never heard !
To paint your features black
And mix in this attack——

LODER :

It's one of Bunter's stunts !

MR. PROUT :

Be silent, sir, at once !
(To COKER) : Now, boy, reveal your
shame,
And let us know your name.

COKER :

I'm Coker—don't you recognise
me ?

MR. PROUT (*taken aback*) :

A Fifth Form boy ! This does sur-
prise me !

A boy of my Form in this riot !

COKER :

But, sir, I——

MR. PROUT :

Wretched boy, be quiet !

MR. CAPPER (*smoothly*) :

I'm sorry, Prout, to see
A boy of your Form here ;
I have no doubt that he
Did not know you were near.
In my Form, happily,
I have no cause for fear.

MR. PROUT (*choking*) :

And what's your name ? Speak
out !

TEMPLE :

I'm Temple, Mr. Prout.

MR. PROUT (*with joy*) :

A Fourth Form boy, in fact ! Dear
me !
Well, Capper, this is most un-
pleasant !

It must be hard for you to see
A Fourth Form boy among those
present.

MR. CAPPER (*with fury*) :

Temple, follow me directly !
I'll deal with your offence correctly.
(*Exeunt CAPPER and TEMPLE.*)

MR. PROUT :

Loder, go to Doctor Locke—
I hope he sternly rates you ;
And Coker, come ; 'tis five o'clock !
Your punishment awaits you !
(*Exeunt PROUT, LODER and COKER.*)

CHERRY :

Well, Bunter's luck is always good ;
He wasn't even pasted !

MRS. MIMBLE :

But who's to pay for all this food
You've thrown about and wasted ?

WHARTON :
Well, Bunter's
saved us by
his works
From soot
and gum
and ink,
So on the
whole, and
in the circs,
We'll pay for
it, I think.

CHERRY :
Old Loder
looked quite
Hunnish
Because he
could not
punish
Our twenty-
stone dis-
grace.

We'll do it in
his place!
Bump him!

WHARTON :
That's the
thing to do!

BUNTER :
I say, you fellows—— Ow!
Yaroooh!

(BUNTER is being bumped as the
curtain comes down.)

NOTE TO PERFORMERS.

Do not use soot or ink for Loder or Coker, as these are difficult to get off and might spoil the clothes. For soot use burnt cork, and for red ink use ordinary rouge, which you may obtain for a few pence at the chemist's. A black "eyebrow pencil" will be useful



LODER (as he rushes into the tuckshop and Bunter hops behind the counter):
"I'll thrash him, I'll smash him, I'll bang and I'll bash him until he is pretty well dead. I'll clump him, I'll thump him, I'll rag and I'll bump him for chucking this soot at my head!"

to add to the effect of the burnt cork, and the rouge should be light carmine, as this is the nearest colour to red ink. Flour may be used in Temple's case, as this does not harm the clothes. First lay a coat of No. 20 white greasepaint on the face, and finish off with flour or starch. This may also be used to give Gosling grey hair if you are not in possession of a "bald" wig. If you have no lady's hair wig for the performer who plays Mrs. Mimble, and wish to avoid the expense of hiring one, you should let him wear a "mob cap," which will no doubt be readily supplied by an affectionate aunt or friend.





Au Revoir.

YOU'VE reached the only dismal stage,
Which is, of course, my final page.
We've had enjoyment, you and I,
And now it's time to say Good-bye!

But let's be cheerful while we may;
We'll meet again some other day.
Next year you'll find me on the stall
All ready when you pay your call.

Yes, I'll be waiting for you, chum,
And hoping you'll be sure to come;
You would not purposely desert me,
For that would disappoint and hurt me!

Meanwhile, the lads of whom I speak
Are waiting for you every week
In rattling yarns of school and sport,
All stories of the finest sort.

If you have twopence you can pay,
The MAGNET every Saturday
Will give you all the Greyfriars news.
What finer value could you choose?

St. Jim's, of course, I could not miss!
The GEM, each Wednesday, sees to this.
The price of this is twopence, too!
My chums delight in it—do you?

And if you'd purchase (for a song)
A host of stories, extra long,
Then buy each month the SCHOOLBOYS'
OWN
For fourpence—well, it stands alone!

So, as you see, if you're about
When all these ripping books come out,
And buy them at your nearest stall,
We need not say Good-bye at all!



THE EDITOR

INDEX—(continued)

	PAGE
Old Mauly's Almanack for 1936	65
Outlaw Kid, The <i>Story by Ralph Redway</i>	67
Perfect Harmony! <i>Story by Tom Merry</i>	225
Phantom Voices, The <i>Story by Martin Clifford</i>	233
Plates in Colour :	
Billy Bunter, the Waiter!	<i>Frontispiece</i>
No Sympathy for Baggy!	<i>Facing p. 161</i>
Taking the Risk!	<i>Facing p. 224</i>
The Rio Kid's Good Turn!	<i>Facing p. 80</i>
Puzzle Picture	230
Rookwood Down the Ages! <i>Full-page Drawing</i>	108
Sir Fatted and His Fair Lady. <i>Poem by Frank Richards</i>	143
Songs of the Seasons :	
Spring	29
Summer.. .. .	61
Autumn	121
Winter	229
Spooper, The <i>Story by Martin Clifford</i>	147
St. Jim's Down the Ages! <i>Full-page Drawing</i>	146
St. Jim's Points of View	109
Taking the Risk!	224
Twink, the Tail Wagger! <i>Nature Story by Clive R. Fenn</i>	179
Why Not Film Greyfriars? <i>By Bob Cherry</i>	183

