

# BILLY BUNTER'S UNCLE!

Grand Long Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. in This Issue.



## AN UNWELCOME VISITOR FOR BUNTER!

(An amazing incident in our magnificent new long complete school tale in this issue.)





A SPECIAL WAR SERIAL!

START TO-DAY!

## A WORLD AT STAKE!

A Stirring Story of the Supreme Struggle between the  
British Empire and its Hated Foe.

In the above picture our artist conveys to us a good impression of the heavy and formidable siege guns of the German Army, which wrought such havoc at Liege and Namur. Some of the most modern of these guns are said to have a range extending over twenty-one miles!

## READ THIS FIRST.

Thorpe and Dick Thornhill, brothers, and joint owners of the wonderful airship named the Falcon, play a prominent part in the great war with Germany on land and sea. A hero attack is made by the enemy upon the airship's works at Chepperton, where Dick gallantly holds his own against overwhelming numbers. Tom Evans, a great friend of Dick's, is entrusted to convey despatches to Lord Roberts, and is captured by Germans and sentenced to be shot. Thorpe Thornhill effects a timely rescue in the Night Hawk. In the battle of Colchester, the British, though opposed by four times their number, are gone to the last. Lord Roberts, who has supreme command of the British forces, is desperate, and sends an urgent message to the Guards' Brigade, bidding them fight to the last man. Suddenly a gleam comes into his dimmed eyes, his bowed head is raised, and his whole form quivers in an intensity of excitement.

## A Veteran's Valour.

"Have my eyes deceived me?—they're not so good as they were, Hillier—but has not the German advance ceased?" he demanded, with a sudden huskiness which no disaster could have produced.

The officer addressed did not immediately reply, but through his glasses watched the black, cloudlike mass which proclaimed the German Army.

"By heavens, sir, it is true! And listen, what is that?"

"Some gun caisson—or, perhaps, ammunition-wagon—exploded, that is all!" returned Lord Roberts.

"Then there's another, and another! And look! The Germans are wavering! What miracle has happened?"

Lord Roberts put his glasses to his eyes once more. This time it was not the earth he swept, but the heavens.

"There's our miracle—there! See, on our left front!

It is Thornhill's Night Hawk. He is bombarding the German rear. Gentlemen, follow me!"

It seemed to those who followed close behind their brave old commander that he had taken a fresh lease of life. A minute before he was a bent, world-weary old man; now he appeared endowed with renewed youth.

Reining up his horse, he issued a series of quick, swift orders, which sent his aides-de-camp and gallopers flying in all directions. Then, followed only by a bugler and a Lanceer orderly—bearing a small Union Jack at the point of his weapon to betoken the presence of the commander-in-chief—he galloped up to the position the Guards had held throughout the whole eventful day.

"Masterton, hold your men in readiness. I have ordered a general advance."

Coopted up in the park and the ruin, Lord Percival Masterton had been unable to see what was taking place around him. All he knew was that the battle had been going terribly against the British. He looked at the old warrior as though he deemed him mad. But if so, it was a madness that appealed to his gallant heart. The next moment, as a single cannon-shot rang out on the British right, answered by another on the left, Lord Roberts turned to his bugler.

"Sound the charge!"

Loud and clear in the smoke-fouled air rang out the welcome sound, taken up by a thousand bugles, as each regiment answered in like tones the stirring appeal.

Then was seen the grandest sight ever witnessed on any battlefield, when the whole ten-mile stretch of country broke into a long line of glistening bayonets, as the earth shaking with the strident shouts of the war-stained heroes, the attacked became the attackers, and the whole mass of the British Army, rising from entrenchment, ditch, and bank, flung themselves with irresistible fury upon the invaders.

Here and there the attackers went down in swathes beneath the German fire; but nothing could resist that advance, and, already demoralised by whispered tales of regiments destroyed, batteries ruined, squadrons decimated by the fearful airship that had appeared so unexpectedly in their rear, the Germans offered but a brief resistance ere they turned and fled.

Then above the bugles of the charging infantry arose the longer, deeper notes of the cavalry trumpets, as their swords flashing brightly in the smoke-dimmed sunlight, Britain's gallant cavalry pierced, with vengeful shouts, the already broken ranks of the German Army, and completed the work of ruin Lord Roberts's final charge had begun.

It must not be thought that all this took place as quickly as it appears from this imperfect description. It was ten minutes past three when Thorpe Thornhill's airship first appeared upon the scene—it was five o'clock ere the British at last stood on the spot which had been the German position at the commencement of the battle.

But although the battle had been fought and won, the work of slaughter continued. Regiment after regiment of Germans, it is true, flung down their arms and surrendered; but a large number still held some semblance of military order, and surrounded the mysterious leader of the invasion.

Suddenly a rocket shot into the twilight air, in response to which the Night Hawk ceased her work of death, and flew towards where Lord Roberts, the momentary joy of victory banished from his face, was perusing with furrowed brow a telegram that had just been placed in his hands.

"You signalled me, sir," said Thornhill, alighting by aid of a parachute close to the general's side.

"I did, Thornhill. I have received terrible news. Edinburgh has fallen into the hands of the Germans, after having been bombarded by airships, which then flew in the direction of Glasgow."

"Then it is your wish, my lord, that I should hunt up these bloodthirsty devastators?" asked Thorpe.

"If the three will not be more than a match for you, Thornhill," was the answer. "Remember, the Night Hawk is too valuable to be uselessly thrown away."

"Six airships left Kiel," returned Thorpe grimly. "I have already accounted for three, and, with Heaven's blessing, the others shall not long escape me!"

"Well, my lad, do your best. But before you go let me tell you that if you get your deserts your name shall be written in letters of gold in every city of Britain, for you have saved your country this day!" cried Earl Roberts, his voice shaking with emotion.

Thorpe Thornhill flushed with pride at these stirring words of praise from such a man; then, saluting, signalled for the Night Hawk to approach, and, clambering up a rope-ladder, waved his hat from her deck as she flew swiftly northward.

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Every Wednesday. Every Friday.

Every Saturday, 2

### Peril by Fire and Steel.

In the meantime, Dick Thornhill and his willing band of helpers had been hard at work on Falcon II.

They needed employment, for they were racked with anxiety. The roar of battle was constantly in their ears, and they knew not what luck fickle Fortune would bestow upon their country.

About six o'clock that evening Dick Thornhill clambered on to the roof, and, with his feet dangling through the skylight, surveyed the scene.

As he did so he felt convinced that something out of the common had happened, for intermixed with the wounded being carried to the rear were many unarmed men—panic-stricken fugitives from the field of battle.

At first these latter came past by twos and threes, then companies, then regiments—all rushed toward, with pale, blackened faces.

"Murrah! The danger is over! The Germans are beaten!" he shouted to his comrades below.

But it is ill whistling before you are out of the wood. Wild with rage at their unexpected defeat, the fugitives turned savage glances towards the works as Dick's cheer fell upon their ears; then, as though moving at the word of command, rushed at the battered building.

Fortunately, most of the attackers were unarmed, so the assault was easily repulsed; but the incident warned Dick how unlikely it was that the vengeful Germans would allow him to enjoy the comparative immunity from harm that had hitherto been his.

As the daylight decreased, Dick was astonished to see the beaten soldiers rushing to the sea, met by frightened crowds of their comrades.

What could it mean? Was it possible that the Mediterranean Fleet had already reached the scene of action, and had driven the Germans out of Harwich? It must be so. And yet he dare scarcely hope that Britain's hour of deadly peril was passed.

However, he had little time for conjecture. From that moment he and his gallant fellows had to fight for their lives if they would keep out the exasperated bands—they could no longer be called disciplined troops—of Germans who assailed the works in blind fury.

For several hours they fought as men only fight when fighting for their lives, or, what is dearer, the well-being of their country, until it gradually dawned upon Dick that he would not be able to hold out much longer; for first one defender, and then another stepped back from the loophole through which he had been firing, his bandolier empty, his last charge fired, and, without an increasing mob of German soldiery clamoured madly for their blood.

Fortunately for Dick Thornhill, all the German artillery had been captured, or destroyed by his brother's bombs, or the defence must have come to a speedy and tragic end.

Reduced to less than two hundred men, with only their bayonets between themselves and death, it is small wonder that the little band of heroes looked at each other with pale, stern faces.

Unable to prevent them, Dick watched the Germans bringing faggots, loads of straw, and dried wood to pile against the doors of the building.

Had he but realised what they were about earlier, he would have led forth his little party, and died fighting in the open; but now it was too late, and despair filled every heart. They had been ready to lay down their lives for their country, but to die by fire, caged like rats in a trap, was indeed a terrible death!

"Lads, I have no business to sacrifice you all. What say you—shall it be surrender?" asked Dick gloomily, at last.

For a moment the men hesitated. Many had wives and families dependent upon them.

Then a stalwart Scotsman—an electrician—stepped forward.

"They say that one death is as good as another, sir, but I bar fire. The works are mined, and to be blown up is a quicker end than being burned."

A shudder swept over the listeners as these ominous words fell upon their ears; but, dauntless to the last, they cried:

"Well spoken, Mac! If we could live and save the airships we'd live; but it is the only way."

"Bless you, my brave lads! You have decided like Britons!" cried Dick. "We will stand the racket to the very last; then, when the flames become unbearable, I have but to touch the switch of this electric battery, and death will leap out to meet us."

A low murmur of approval greeted Dick's little speech—murmurs which swelled gradually into a dull, heavy threatening cheer, which caused the German attackers, as they piled faggot upon faggot, log upon log, round the door, to draw back wonderingly.

Carrying the switch—one touch of which would hurl them



to destruction—in his hand, Dick clambered through the skylight and looked around him.

A howl of fury greeted his appearance, and a German, hurling coarse insults at the doomed Britons, stopped forward, and after applying the torch to the western door, hurried round to the back.

Like a small volcano, the firewood, which the Germans had previously saturated with petroleum, burst into flame.

Dick's finger moved to the little ivory knob. He gave one more glance around, then the wire dropped clattering to the floor beneath, as he scrambled on to the roof of the building, waving his hand and shouting:

"Hurrah! We're saved! Charge, men—charge! Give it to the beggars! Drive the invaders into the sea!" For suddenly from out the darkness had crashed a heavy volley. Then, lit by the constantly increasing flame at the doors, the Germans had turned their white faces to where a large body of British Bluejackets, marines, and soldiers were sweeping—an irresistible flood—upon them.

There was little firing, for the Germans offered but little resistance, and those who fell during the next hour were slain for the most part by the bayonet.

But the danger to Dick Thornhill and his devoted band was not yet over. The fire the Germans had started had got too good a hold to be easily extinguished, and at any moment a chance spark might light upon the explosives with which the place was mined and hurl them all to destruction.

It was a terrible task, and well was it for Dick that his men were true and tried British workmen, whose daring was only equalled by their trust in their young leader, for surely, if ever men had an excuse for leaving the post of duty it was the blue-jacketed, smoke-begrimed workmen who had defended the works so long.

It is always a fearful task to fight fire. How much more so must it have been in the present instance, when at any moment a blinding flash, a terrific roar, and every man might be hurled into eternity.

But no thoughts of danger could daunt them, and they worked like the gallant heroes they were, throwing bucket upon bucket of water on the flames, snatching burning brands in their bare hands and hurling them afar, until at last a cheer arose from their parched lips. Their devotion had not been wasted, the flames were rapidly dying out.

Still the danger was great, and it was not until the last spark had been trodden out that Dick breathed freely. Then he hastened to the smoke-stained hull of his almost completed airship, and a cheer burst from his lips when a brief examination disclosed that he had escaped injury.

"Well done, lad!" he cried, turning to his panting followers. "We have saved more than our own lives in protecting these works. But now, a hasty wash, a mouthful of food, and we will get to work on Falcon II, at once. A few hours hence should see her fit to take the air."

So saying, he stooped over a bucket of water, and rinsed his face. He was wiping the moisture from his brow and cheeks when a mounted officer galloped up.

"What news from the front?" he demanded of Dick.

"I cannot say, sir," returned the young inventor. "We have been besieged in these works since the commencement of the invasion; but I fancy the Germans have been defeated. At any rate, throughout the whole afternoon a number of unarmed soldiers, evidently fugitives from the field of battle, have been passing in a constant stream."

"We guessed as much, for we have already captured some twenty thousand men, the majority of whom are unarmed; but they seem to have little idea of what has happened."

"Bardon me, sir, who are 'we'?" asked Dick curiously.

"A scratch division of Territorials from the East Coast, and every sailor and marine the British Admiral could spare after having destroyed the German Fleet and captured their transports at Harswich."

"The German Fleet destroyed?" cried Dick eagerly.

"Yes; the Mediterranean Squadron arrived in the nick of time. Even had the Germans been victorious against Lord Roberts, it would have availed them little. Their transports destroyed, the narrow seas held by a British Fleet, they must sooner or later, have surrendered at discretion."

"Well, they will have to do so now," returned Dick. "But I am glad Lord Roberts beat them first. Let us hope they will have learned their lesson well," said Dick, as the officer, waving his hand, galloped off, and he re-entered his works.

### A Stern Chase.

War-worn and weary though they were, the mechanics worked unceasingly, until at last Dick with his own hands drove home the final rivet into Falcon II's hull.

Accumulators, batteries, armaments, ammunition, guns, ballast, gas, everything required for the airships had been in place for some time, and consequently ere another hour passed the Thornhills' third airship was ready to be launched.

Choosing a crew from amongst his mechanics, Dick ordered the roof to be stripped from off the works; then, entering the

conning-tower, moved the lever which set the fans at work, and Falcon II, rose majestically into the air, amidst the cheers of those left behind—cheers taken up by battalion after battalion of khaki-coated soldiers hastening to the front.

Morning had once more dawned upon the scene, and as Dick looked round him, the sight which met his gaze alternately thrilled his heart with pride, and brought tears of sorrow to his eyes.

Sorrow because the fair, smiling country he had known so well was turned into a charnel-house. On every side bodies littered the ground, showing how stubbornly every inch of England's soil had been contested by her devoted defenders. Pride, that those heroes had not died in vain. The fields and meadows were dotted with dark, closely-packed masses, each body surrounded by a beiga of glittering bayonet points.

It was a wondrous sight. Since Sedan so many soldiers had never been taken prisoners at one time. Then the Germans outnumbered their gallant French foe two to one, now their conquerors were numerically the inferior.

But all had not surrendered. From a wooded hill on the banks of the Stour came the sound of firing, and, glancing in the direction from which the sounds of strife came, Dick saw a rocket soar heavenwards from the German centre, and, bursting, fall in a shower of black and golden stars.

In a moment he turned his airship's head in the direction of the fight, wondering as he did so why the Germans were firing rockets in broad daylight. It could not be to summon assistance from the sea, for doubtless they must have heard of the destruction of their fleet.

Could it be—  
Even so the question arose in his mind it was answered, for far away eastwards appeared a speck of light, growing each moment nearer and nearer, and he knew that the rocket had not been fired in vain, for it had summoned one of their airships to the Germans' assistance.

That he would be able to reach the body of Germans, and keep the foe's airship at bay until the British troops were able to conquer their foe, he did not for a moment doubt; but even as he gave the order "Full speed ahead!" there was a sudden jar, and the Falcon II's propellers ceased working.

With an exclamation of anger, Dick hastened below. A brief examination disclosed that a bolt, improperly secured in their haste to take flight, had given way in the shaft-bearing.

It was fortunate the propeller had ceased working. Had it been one of the horizontal fans, it might have had fatal consequences to all on board.

Almost as soon as the accident happened, men were busily at work replacing the faulty bolt, and Dick, unable to remain below, paced the deck, biting his nails in anger and disappointment, when he saw the strange airship draw closer, dash by, then drop to within twenty feet of the German centre.

Fuming with impatience, Dick kept his binoculars fastened upon the strange airship. He saw a ladder let down from its hull, and a sailor clamber nimbly to the earth, to return a minute later assisting up the difficult steps a tall form clad in a long grey military overcoat, and huge motor goggles, which could not hide the distinguished air of the unknown.

Where had he seen that form before?

Suddenly the truth flashed upon him. The last time he had seen that man, for whom the Emperor's Guard were waging hopeless battle, had been in Kiel Fortress, and he saw his glasses, so with an exclamation of disappointment and rage, the German Emperor was within his grasp, and now, through a carelessly fastened bolt, he would escape—probably to organise another army for the invasion of Britain.

At that moment a voice hailed him from the engine-room, and never had more welcome sound fallen upon his ears, than the words:

"Shaft repaired, sir; you can go on when you please."

Dick cast one quick glance at the foe's flying ship, and saw that the German Emperor had just reached its deck, then he issued an order, and swift as an arrow from the bow, Falcon II, flew at its prey.

But evidently sharp eyes on board the German vessel had been watching their every movement, for the next moment a puff of smoke burst from the other's side, and a shell hurtled beneath the British ship.

"Turn the forward gun on her!" Dick quickly ordered.

"Ay, ay, sir!" came from the bows, and a moment later the airship's gun spoke a hoarse, deep, loud, defiant response to the challenge, as, steered by her young commander's own hand, she sped towards the British vessel.

But the German airship carried too precious a burden to risk all upon a chance shell, and, finding her way eastward

blocked by Dick's airship, she made off in a north-easterly direction, closely pursued by Falcon II.

A stern chase is proverbially a long one. Eager, if possible, to capture the man who was responsible for the invasion of England, Dick ordered his gunners to cease firing, and by means of various levers close to his hand in the conning-tower, kept his airship rising and falling in a series of graceful dips, which, whilst not reducing her speed in any way, baffled all attempts of the foe to hit her.

By long it became evident that he could not hope to overtake his foe ere night, and once more he ordered his men to open fire.

Again the bow-chaser of Falcon II. roared forth its message of death, and the fleeing Germans redoubled their attempts to destroy their ruthless pursuer. Shells whistled over, under, and all round the British craft, bursting in the air, and sending their splinters on the airship's aluminium hull like hail, until presently a loud hurrah arose from the deck of Falcon II. as the fleeing ship, in response to a better-aimed or luckier shot from her pursuer, was seen to shiver, then stagger like a wounded bird stricken by the sportsman's gun, and for a moment Dick expected to see her fall to the earth; but in some miraculous manner she recovered a level keel, and continued her flight, but at a greatly reduced speed.

Rapidly the British vessel overhauled her quarry, her guns now silent, for Dick was anxious to disable rather than totally destroy his foe.

Presently but a few hundred yards intervened between the rival airships.

"Now, lads, aim carefully! Clip her starboard wing!" cried Dick.

"Ay, ay, sir!" replied the gunner, as he pressed his shoulder against the breech-piece of a quick-firer, looked through the sights, then pulled the trigger.

A moment later a "Well done, lads!" from Dick, who, careless of the flying splinters hurtling around, was standing near the railings, told that the well-aimed shell had swept along the side of the German airship, shattering her starboard wing as it flew.

The next moment his exultation was damped, when, with a fearful hissing shriek a shell swept by, hurling him to the deck, closely followed by a loud explosion close at hand, and when he staggered to his feet a shudder shook his frame, for the foe's shell had struck the quick-firer's gun, blowing its entire crew to pieces, and doubtless doing other injury, for Falcon II. was slowly sinking to the earth.

#### A Ruthless Crime.

A quick glance in the direction of the German airship revealed her glistering hull rushing swiftly towards the earth, and a thrill of exultation coursed through Dick's frame.

It is true his own airship had been put for the time being out of action. But what of that? He had prevented the escape of Britain's arch-enemy, whose capture must now be but the question of a few days.

However, he had set his heart upon capturing the German Emperor with his own hands, and barely had Falcon II. touched the earth ere he sprang to the ground, and, calling to his men to follow him, led the way from the fields amongst which he had fallen to the wide stretch of open moorland over which the German vessel was flying when Falcon II.'s last shot brought her to earth.

Save for Thompson and three men, who were left behind to overhaul the airship, and, if possible, repair her, the remainder of his crew, armed with rifle and bayonet, followed Dick, who was determined to secure the German Emperor, even though he had to follow him the length and breadth of England.

As soon as the cultivated fields were left behind, Dick clambered on to a gate and scanned the moor. At first he could see nothing of the airship, but, grasping the branches of a tree that grew overhead, he swung himself up, and saw her, lying on her side, in a slight hollow some distance away.

Five hundred yards from the hollow two dark figures were creeping through the gorse; but there were several sheep about, and, believing them to be dogs, he paid no further attention to them.

"Forward, lads! She is ours! Her present position is such that she cannot use her guns!" he cried; and, ordering his men to advance in skirmishing order, led the way at the double towards the dip.

But if Dick had thought to have an easy conquest, he was speedily undeceived, for when but two hundred yards from his foe a spurt of flame shot from the bank of the hollow gully in which the airship lay, and the man next him—a young riveter—flung his arms above his head, and fell dead to the ground.

"Take cover, lads! The hearse men fighting! Let them THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 358.

have it!" cried Dick; and, crouching low on the ground, stretched his rifle in front of him, and waited for a foe's head to appear.

Presently above the edge of the gully arose a flat-capped head. In a moment Dick pulled the trigger of his rifle. Barely had the sharp crack of the explosion sounded in his ears ere the head disappeared, and Dick knew that his first bullet had found its billet.

Then, in obedience to a whispered command from their young leader, the British surrounded the airship, firing as they did so, until they got within point-blank range of the glistering hull, to find the Germans clustered round her, evidently determined to fight to the bitter end.

"Throw up your hands! You are surrounded, and cannot escape!"

"Never! We will die at our post! It is the Emperor's order!" came back in harsh, guttural tones.

"Then your blood be on your own heads! Up, men, and at them!"

A stirring British cheer echoed and re-echoed over the level moor as, regardless of the bullets whistling about their ears, the gallant workmen closed with their foes.

The fight was fierce while it lasted. But what soldiers can stand against British steel, even when wielded by civilian hands? Four Germans had already fallen beneath the Britishers' bayonets ere the survivors flung down their arms and surrendered.

"Where is your Emperor?" demanded Dick of the officer in command of the small German force.

"How should I know?" returned the other surlily.

Leaving the prisoners closely guarded, Dick called four men to his side, and, discarding his rifle for a revolver, led the way to the airship, his heart beating quickly with elation, for it would be indeed a feather in his cap if he could but take the German Emperor prisoner.

Lying on her side as she did, Dick wondered why his Majesty had elected to remain in such uncomfortable quarters, as, revolver in hand, he entered the main cabin.

There was no one there, but on the floor lay a magnificently jewelled sword, evidently the Emperor's property. This Dick secured, then passed on from cabin to cabin.

As he did so a terrible fear assailed him. Could he have been mistaken, or had the German Emperor fled as soon as the airship had touched the ground?

But whither? Suddenly he remembered the two dark objects he had seen sinking away through the gorse, and, ordering his men to hasten back to Falcon II. with their prisoners, accompanied only by a workman, he rushed off in the direction the fugitives had taken.

But half an hour had elapsed since the attack upon the airship.

For a moment he hesitated and looked thoughtfully around. As he did so he noticed that the sheep with which the moor was dotted were running away from a certain spot, and his country training told him that they were fleeing from some stranger.

"This way! Yonder sheep are not frightened at nothing!" he cried, leading the way at a good sprinting pace over the level moorland.

For ten minutes the two men ran side by side in silence. Presently they saw, stretched before them, like a sluggishly-flowing river, a long white road.

Panting and breathless, Dick came to an abrupt halt. Snatching his glasses from their case, he put them to his eyes. At first he could see nothing; but presently, far away in the distance, he saw a rapidly-approaching cloud of dust. The next moment two tiny specks charged from the heather, and stood in the middle of the road.

As they did so, from out the cloud of dust emerged a motor-car, which slowed down as it approached the two figures.

Wondering what would happen next, Dick watched the motor-car come to a halt near the two dark specks. Suddenly a tiny flash shone pale for a second in the morning sun, and a distant report reached their ears. Then the two men dragged something from the car, which they flung carelessly to the side of the road.

So quickly had all this taken place that it was not until Dick saw the fugitives enter the car, turn it round, and dash off northwards at full speed, that he realised what had happened.

A few minutes later he was kneeling by the side of the motorist. It was too late, however, to render the unfortunate man assistance, for a German bullet had found its billet in his heart.

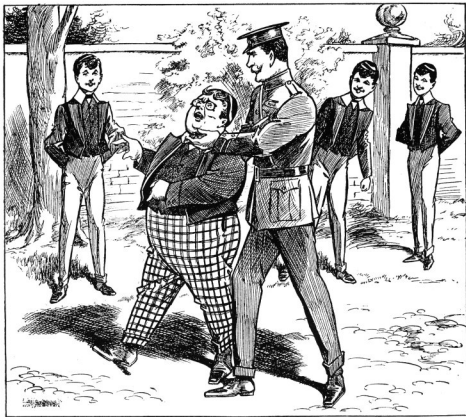
Reverently removing the body to the side of the road, Dick covered it with furze, and made his way back whence he had come.

(An extra long instalment of this grand serial next Monday. Order your copy now.)

# BILLY BUNTER'S UNCLE

A Magnificent, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co., at Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.



Captain Bunter was evidently down on slackers. He suddenly gave the Owl of the Remove a smite under the chin which jarred every tooth in his head. "Chin up!" he rapped out. "Ooooooh!" gasped Bunter. (See Chapter 10.)

## THE FIRST CHAPTER. Bunter's Latest!

"DONNERWETTER!"

Billy Bunter jumped, and his little round eyes grew bigger and rounder behind his spectacles, as he heard that startling exclamation from No. 1 Study in the Remove passage.

"Ach! Donner und blitzen und sauerkraut!"

"M-m-my hat!" gasped Bunter. "It—it's a blessed German!"

And Bunter, who was about to enter No. 1 Study in search of Harry Wharton & Co., paused in alarm.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 353.

NEXT  
MONDAY—

"THE PATRIOTIC SCHOOLMASTER!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

The study door was ajar, and Billy Bunter cautiously peered in.

The sight that met his eyes caused the hair to rise upon his head.

Standing before the glass in the study was a short, stout person in German military uniform, with a spiked helmet on his head and a tremendous sword trailing by his side. Bunter had a back view of him, but he could see the reflection in the glass. It was that of a red face with huge moustaches curled up at the ends in German military style.

Bunter stood rooted to the floor. His jaw dropped, and he blinked at that extraordinary apparition in amazement and terror, his mouth wide open.

In his alarm, it did not occur to him that if he could see the face in the glass, his own fat face must be reflected there also in full view of the alarming individual with the blonde moustache.

The figure in the spiked helmet swung suddenly round, and made a rush to the door. Billy Bunter started back, but he had no time to escape. His fat knees were knocking together, and before he could run a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder, and he was dragged into the study.

Plum!

The fat junior was hurled into the armchair, and he lay there gasping, with wide-open mouth, like a newly-landed and very fat fish.

"Ow! Oh! Ah! Help!"

"Ach! Ein spy!" hissed the German, drawing his sword and flourishing it within a couple of inches of Bunter's fat little nose. "Ach! Ich will you carven into tausend little bitzen."

"Yow!" roared Bunter. "Mercy! Yah! Don't! Yow! Help!"

"Shutten sie your silly mouth! Donner und wetter und —und ach himmel! Go down on your kneesen und beggen for your life!"

If Billy Bunter had not been so terrified he might have suspected, from that extraordinary language, that that particular German had not been "made in Germany." But Billy Bunter was too scared to think of that, or of anything but the spiked helmet and the spiked moustache and the tremendous sword.

"To your kneesen!" roared the German. Bunter slid down on his fat knees.

"Ow! Mercy! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A sudden roar of laughter in the doorway made Bunter blink round. Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent of the Remove had just arrived there, and at the sight of the fat junior on his knees they seemed to be seized with a fit of hysterics.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And, to Bunter's further astonishment, the German in the spiked helmet joined in the roar of laughter and sheathed his sword. He laughed so merrily, in fact, that his formidable spiked moustache came off. Then, in spite of the red complexion, Billy Bunter recognised the face of Bob Cherry of the Remove.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob, the big spiked helmet rocking on his head. "Ha, ha, ha! You can get up, Bunter. Ich will spare your life!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "You—you beast! What are you got up like that for, you rotter? I—I thought—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter scrambled to his feet, blinking furiously at the chums of the Remove. He understood now that he had surprised Bob Cherry in the act of making-up for a part in some new departure of the Remove Dramatic Society.

"You—you rotter!" gasped Bunter. "I—I— Of course I—I knew it was you all the time! He, he, he!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What are you be-be-bering about?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"He, he, he! Of course I recognised you at once!" said Bunter. "I—I don't mind a little joke. He, he, he!"

"Why, you—you fat Ananias!" gasped Bob Cherry, his breath almost taken away by that cool assertion. "You—you fabricator! You—you ought to be a German journalist! What did you plump down on your knees for, if you know it was me?"

"He, he, he! I was just playing up, you know, to take you in," cackled Bunter. "I—I really made you believe I was frightened, didn't I? He, he, he!"

"Yes, you certainly made me believe you were frightened, you fat owl," growled Bob Cherry, "and you jolly well were frightened, too—scared out of your silly wits!"

"I—I was only putting it on, of course," said Bunter. "I'll bet you two fellows thought I was scared, too!"

"You can bet we did!" grinned Harry Wharton. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, that's because I'm such a jolly good actor," explained Bunter. "If you fellows are getting up a new play, you'd better give me a leading part—"

"So we will, when we have a part for a scared porpoise," said Frank Nugent. "I say, Bob, that get-up is simply topping! Blessed if I shouldn't take you for a real Deutschlandler!"

"I'm practising the lingo, too," said Bob, fixing on his moustache again before the glass. "Donnerwetter! Mein himmel! Ach! Sauerkraut und blitzen!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do Germans say those things?" asked Wharton.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 358.

"I dare say they do," said Bob. "Anyway, it sounds German. I really think I shall go down all right as Captain Flatfussen."

"I say, you fellows—"

"You'll do it all right," said Wharton approvingly. "As a Prussian captain, you only have to swagger about, and swank, and stamp, and shout, and order people to be shot. I really think the play will be a success."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, buzz off, Bunter! Travel! This is a meeting of the Dramatic Society, and outsiders aren't allowed. Clear!"

"Look here, I've got something to say to you chaps," persisted Bunter. "It's important—"

"Let it wait!"

"It can't wait. It's important. I've been disappointed about a postal-order."

The chums of the Remove glared at Bunter. They had heard of his postal-order before—often. But that Bunter should interrupt a meeting of the Dramatic Society with his ancient story of a delayed postal-order was a little too much.

"Buzz off!" roared Nugent.

"I say, you fellows, look here. It's really important," said Bunter, backing round the table, and blinking warily at the juniors. "My uncle—"

"Blow your uncle!"

"Oh, really, Wharton, I think you might speak a little more respectfully of a man who's been wounded at the front!"

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at Bunter. In their surprise they stopped—just in time to save Bunter from being ejected from the study on his neck.

"Wounded!" said Wharton.

"At the front?" repeated Nugent.

"My hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Just so," said Bunter, pleased with the impression his statement had made. "My uncle in the Army, you know. I don't believe you've got an uncle in the Army!" growled Bob Cherry. "I've never heard of him before. Your uncle keeps a public-house."

"Tain't that uncle—I mean, my uncle doesn't keep a public-house, you rotter. I mean my uncle in the—the Gordon Highlanders," said Bunter. "He was wounded in the battle at—at Mons, and he's been invalided home. And—"

And I want to send him something. They're sending all sorts of things to the wounded chaps, you know. And—and I've been disappointed about a postal-order owing to the war, and I happen to be short of money—"

"Quite a new experience for you, of course!" said Nugent sarcastically.

"Oh, really, you know, I think you might be serious on an occasion like this! My uncle stormed the trenches at— at Verdun, and put the Austrians to flight, and was shot in the leg. Now I want to send him something to cheer him up, and I really think you fellows might lend me ten bob for once."

The juniors regarded Bunter curiously. If he indeed had a wounded uncle come from the Army, they were ready to hand over all their spare cash for the sake of sending a little comfort to the wounded warrior. But they knew Bunter, and they strongly suspected that the wounded uncle was only a fresh variety of his endless dodges for extracting loans from his Form-fellows.

"You might make it a quid," said Bunter. "I'll hand you the postal-order immediately it comes, of course—"

"Oh, ring off!" said Wharton. "Never mind the postal-order. But if you've really got an uncle among the wounded, we'll stand you a quid between us. Only—"

"Honest Injun!" said Bunter. "You must have read in the—the papers about General Bunter storming the trenches at—at Paris—"

"Where?" roared the three juniors.

"I—I mean, at Liege," said Bunter hastily. "He pushed on gallantly at the head of the Dublin Fusiliers, and sent the Russians—I mean, the Austrians—to flight. He killed nine Belgians—"

"Belgians?"

"I—I mean, Germans, with his own hands, before he was bayoneted. Now he's come home among the wounded," said Bunter. "And I want—"

"You fearful Ananias!" said Bob Cherry, in measured tones.

"Oh, really, Cherry! I really think you fellows might be decent for once, as my uncle has been wounded at the front—"

"If he's anything like his nephew, he's more likely to have been wounded at the back!" growled Nugent.

"He, ha, ha!"

"Ahem!" I'll show it to you in the paper if you like," said Bunter. "I've mislaid the paper now, but I—I'll get



Flatfussen and his Uhlans take possession of it and carry on—mucking things up, you know, in the Prussian style, and behaving like pigs generally! Lots of fun in that—what?"

"Well, that depends," said Coker. "With a really good actor to take the Prussian captain's role, something might be made of it."

"Oh, that's all right; we've got a really good actor for that role!" said Wharton affably. "Then there's a scene with a captured English prisoner—"

"British prisoner," said Ogilvy.

"Sure," it means, a British prisoner," said Wharton. "The Germans line him against the wall to shoot him. Chap gets his hands loose, and goes for 'em, and knocks 'em all sky-high with his fists—good old British style. Germans tumble over one another to get out of the way. Lots of fun in that."

"What next?" said Coker.

"Next, Germans awfully ratty at prisoner getting away, and they scoop in some Belgians, to shoot 'em. Just in the nick of time the bagpipes are heard outside, playing 'The Campbells Are Coming.' The bagpipes will be represented by a mouth-organ, the orchestra being rather limited."

"My hat!"

"Then in come the Gordon Highlanders, and they knock the Uhlans to smithereens. Captain Flatfussen tries to bolt out of the window, but gets stuck there because he is so fat. Tremendous lot of fun in that."

"And that's the play!" said Coker, with a sniff.

"That's it."

"You call it a celebrated comedy in your notice."

"Well, that's only anticipating events a little," explained Wharton. "It will be celebrated after we've played it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And to make sure of having a really good play, we're writing it ourselves," said Bob Cherry. "If you want a thing well done, you must always do it yourself, you know."

"And you call that a play?" asked Coker.

"Yes," assented Wharton cheerfully; "we call that a play. Will you take a half-crown seat now, Coker?"

"No jolly fear."

"Will you take a shilling seat?"

"Rats! No."

"Will you take your hook, then?"

"Look here," said Coker. "I approve of the object of this play."

"Thanks!"

"And I'm willing to help you kids make it a success. I came here to make you what I call a generous offer. I'll go over the play for you, and knock it into shape—"

"Great Scott!"

"Then I'll play the leading role, and coach you kids, and show you how the thing should be done. You can't act, you know."

"Well, my hat!"

"That's where you've got it wrong, Coker," said Squiff, with a wink to the other two Gordon Highlanders. "You should see us do our little bit. We charge as Highlanders, you know, and carry everything before us. We'll show you how we do it, and then you'll admit we can do our little bit—"

"Rot!" said Coker.

"Well, just you see how we do it," said Squiff.

"Charge!"

The Gordon Highlanders charged—at Coker.

"Hold on!" roared Coker. "Wharrer you at? I—you—ah—oh—yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The charge of the Highlanders was an eminent success. They bumped into Coker, and sent him flying. Coker went through the study doorway as if he had been shot out of a catapult. He landed against the opposite wall of the passage, gasping.

"You—you young rotters!" he gasped. "I'll—I'll—"

"Do you believe we can do it now?" demanded Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll—I'll—I'll—" gurgled Coker.

"My hat!" ejaculated the Australian junior. "He isn't convinced yet. Give him another sample. Charge!"

"You—you! Yah! Oh—oh, crumbs!"

Horace Coker fairly fled, but he could not escape that charge. He was bowled over in the passage, and went rolling towards the stairs. Then the Gordon Highlanders returned into No. 1 Study, chuckling, and quite satisfied with their success.

"Ow!" gasped Coker, as he picked himself up. "You—ow! My hat! I'll—I'll— Oh, crumbs!"

He strode back towards the study, and then paused. He had had enough of the Gordon Highlanders. And instead of carrying out a frontal attack on No. 1 Study, Coker

THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 358

decided to execute a masterly retreat. Which he did; and the meeting of the Remove Dramatic Society was not further interrupted by Coker of the Fifth.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Proof Positive!

"BILLY, old man!"

It was the next day, and the Remove were coming out of their Form-room after morning lessons. Billy Bunter found his minor, Sammy Bunter of the Second Form, waiting for him in the passage.

Bunter major looked upon his minor with a morose eye. Sammy Bunter seldom sought his major, excepting when he was in need of financial assistance, though the extraction of a loan from Billy was a forlorn hope indeed.

"Oh, buzz off!" said Billy Bunter crossly. "I'm stony!"

"Tain't that," said Sammy.

Bunter's face brightened up a little, and he looked more brotherly.

"You've had a remittance, Sammy?" he inquired eagerly. "Good kid! That's right, to come and whack it out. I'd do the same for you. Come over to the tuck-shop."

"I haven't had a remittance," said Sammy.

"Then what the dickens are you bothering me for?" said Billy Bunter peevishly. "Buzz off, and don't worry!"

"I've seen something in the paper," said Sammy, holding up a newspaper for his major's inspection.

"Oh, blow the paper!"

"It's in the war news!"

"Blow the war news!"

"But look here!" persisted Sammy. "It's jolly interesting for us. Lots of the fellows have been swanking about having relations at the front—Bob Cherry's pater has joined again, and Coker's got a cousin or something somewhere. Look here, there's a Bunter in the fighting!"

"What?"

"Look at it!"

Billy Bunter took the paper eagerly. He blinked at the paragraph through his big spectacles. And he grinned with satisfaction when he read:

"We are informed that Captain Bunter is among the wounded invalided home."

"My only aunt!" murmured Bunter.

"I came across it by accident," said Sammy. "Might be a relation of ours, Billy—though we're never heard of him."

"Shush, you young ass!"

Sammy blinked at him in surprise.

"What is there to shush about?" he demanded.

"You young ass! If anybody heard you, they might suppose that we didn't know for certain," whispered Bunter. Sammy's eyes grew rounder behind his spectacles.

"Well, we don't, do we?" he asked.

"Fathead! That's our uncle!"

"Our—our uncle!" ejaculated Sammy.

"Certainly. I was telling the chaps yesterday about my uncle being wounded," said Billy Bunter. "Now, p'raps they'll believe me."

"But but we haven't got—"

"Shush!"

"Better make it a great-uncle, or something," grinned Sammy.

"Don't you be a young ass!" said William George severely. "I was telling them about my uncle, and here it is in the paper. I'll keep this paper—"

"That paper cost a ha'penny," said Sammy rebelliously.

"I'll owe you the ha'penny—"

"No you jolly well won't!" said Sammy. "Gimme my paper!"

"Look here, Sammy—"

"Look here, Billy—"

Billy Bunter snorted, and extracted a halfpenny from his pocket, and bestowed it upon his minor. Sammy relinquished the newspaper cheerfully and rolled away in the direction of the School shop, to bargain with Mrs. Mumble for the best possible value for a halfpenny.

Billy Bunter read the paragraph again, and chuckled gleefully, and hurried away in search of Harry Wharton & Co. He found them in the Close, talking theatricals.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is your uncle recovered yet?" grinned Bob Cherry.

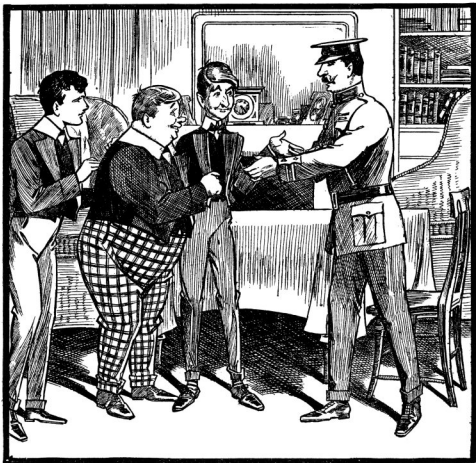
"I'm sorry to say he hasn't," said Bunter, with dignity.

"Is he still lying?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What if he isn't, his nephew?" grinned Squiff.

"I say, you fellows, my postal-order hasn't come. It's really rather hard on a chap not to be able to send his



"Pah! You're soft, Billy!" said the military uncle sharply. "That isn't like a Bunter! The Bunters are a fighting race—as hard as nails, sir! Begad, if I had you in my regiment, I'd make you tough!" "Ye-e-es," mumbled Bunter. (See Chapter 9.)

wounded uncle a few little comforts," said Bunter plaintively. "At a time like this, you might back up—you might, really. Considering that my heroic uncle has been wounded at the front—"

"My hat! You know we don't swallow that yarn!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Chuck it, for goodness' sake, and try something else."

"It's in the newspapers!" roared Bunter.

"Scat!"

"My wounded uncle has been invalided home—"

"Rats!"

"And I want you chaps to lend me—"

"I'll lend you a thick ear, if you don't buzz off and stop talking whoppers," said Bob Cherry. "When you can show it to us in the paper, we'll raise a quid for you. Not till then. Now clear!" demanded Bunter eagerly.

"Yes, father!" I know you haven't got an uncle in the Army, and if you had, he'd be hiding in a coal-cellar somewhere, if he's anything like his nephew! Scat!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 358.

"Look at that, then!"

"Eh?"

Bob Cherry looked at the paper, and jumped. He looked again, and read out aloud, in tones of the greatest astonishment:

"We are informed that Captain Bunter is among the wounded invalided home."

"My hat!" ejaculated Nugent, in wonder.

"Captain Bunter!"

"Wounded!"

"Well, some ass said the age of miracles was past!" said Bob Cherry daudily. "But it can't be—Bunter's started telling the truth!"

"Perhaps you'll believe me now," said Bunter loftily. "My heroic uncle has been wounded, and as I'm rather short of money, I can't send him anything. He's very fond of—of pastries and things, and I could get 'em here at the school

shop, only my postal-order has been delayed. I really think—

"Blessed if I'd have thought it!" said Bob Cherry, still greatly astonished. "Still, a promise is a promise. Gentlemen, it's up to us to raise a quid for Bunter to send some nice things to his uncle."

"I don't mind, for one," said Squiff at once. "Whack it out all round."

"Hear, hear!"

Wharton & Co. happened to be in funds, and they were more than willing to "shell out" to ease the convalescence of a wounded warrior. Billy Bunter held out a fat hand, and coins dropped into it liberally. Half-crowns and shillings soon made up the required "quid," and Billy Bunter's fat face shone like a full moon.

"I say, you fellows, this is jolly decent of you!" he said. "My uncle will be awfully pleased!"

"That's all right!" said Wharton. "And—and I'll say I'm sorry I doubted your word, Bunter. But you're such an awful whooper-merchant, you know—"

"Perhaps you'll believe me another time!" said Bunter loftily. "I'll buzz off and get the things now, and pack 'em up!"

And he buzzed off, in the direction of the tuckshop.

Harry Wharton & Co. resumed their important discussion of the forthcoming play. Billy Bunter had something else to discuss. He rolled into the tuckshop, and gave orders with a liberality that caused Mrs. Mimble to open her eyes very wide. And as he slapped money down on the counter, so his orders were promptly fulfilled.

Sammy Bunter, who was negotiating a very stale tart, blinked at his major in astonishment. But it did not take him long to guess the cause of Billy Bunter's sudden prosperity.

"So that's what you wanted the paper for, you spoofer!" he exclaimed.

"Shurrup!" said Bunter, with his mouth full of jam-tart.

"I say, those things are for uncle!" grinned Sammy.

"Shurrup!"

"All right," said Sammy. "I'll shut up, but—halves!"

"What!"

"Halves!" said Sammy. "He's my uncle if he's yours, you know! Halves!"

"Look here, you greedy young rotter—"

"Halves!"

"Go and eat cake!"

"All serene!" said Sammy wrathfully. "I'll just buzz along and mention to the fellows that I haven't got an uncle in the Army—"

"Hold on! You can have some of the tarts, and—and some ginger-pop!"

"Halves!" said Sammy firmly. "Now then, is it halves or isn't it?"

And Bunter, with a glare at his minor, answered that it was. And both the Bunters piled into the good things at top speed, as if it were a race; but Bunter major had had a start, and he was an easy winner.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### A Shock for Sammy!

**B**ILLY BUNTER was the most important person in the Remove that afternoon.

A fellow who had had an uncle wounded at the front might be excused for putting on a little "swank" on the subject. Bunter did not put on a little; he put on a lot.

In an hour or so all Greyfriars knew about Bunter's uncle. Certainly, Bunter's accounts of the terrific fighting in which his uncle had been wounded did not all agree with one another in details. Bunter always forgot the good old rule that a certain class of persons should have good memories. Neither did he appear to be very clear about his uncle's regiment.

He related to an interested crowd of Remove fellows how his uncle had led the Gordon Highlanders in a terrific charge. He explained to Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth that his uncle had led the Dublin Fusiliers to victory. He told Coker of the Fifth that his uncle had captured the German trenches at the head of the South Wales Borderers. Those gallant regiments and many more seemed to have had the

honour of being led to victory by Bunter's uncle, in all sorts of places.

But though it was evident that William George Bunter was drawing upon his imagination as to details, there was the main fact attested by the paragraph in the paper. Even the doubting Thomases had to admit that.

Certainly, they did not believe, like the celebrated Captain Cuttle, that everything that appeared in print was necessarily true. But there could be no doubt about an item of news of that sort.

Vernon-Smith of the Remove, while admitting that undoubtedly Captain Bunter had been wounded, expressed doubts as to whether Captain Bunter was a relation of William George Bunter. But all the fellows thought that was very suspicious of Smithy. Billy Bunter blinked reproachfully at the Bounder when he hinted that doubt in the junior common-room that evening.

"Oh, really, Smithy," said Bunter, in a tone more of sorrow than of anger. "If you don't believe that a fellow knows his own uncle—"

"Bunter ain't a common name," remarked Bob Cherry. "You don't meet Bunters every day."

"Like you do Smiths!" said Bunter triumphantly.

"Oh, rats!" said Vernon-Smith. "I know it isn't a common name, still there are lots of Bunters—must be dozens."

"Quite an uncommon name," said Billy. "The family is descended from Sir Fulke Bunter de Bunter, who came over with the Conqueror."

"And he was first cousin to Sir Valet de Chambre," remarked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I can't imagine any Bunter playing the giddy hero!" said Vernon-Smith obstinately.

"Oh, draw it mild, Smithy! Whether he's Bunter's uncle or not, there he is in the paper, and he's been wounded!"

"Yes, rather!" said Bunter. "I trust you will apologise, Smithy!"

"Oh, rats! By Jove, though," exclaimed the Bounder, "we'll ask Sammy! Sammy Bunter will know whether this chap is his giddy uncle or not!"

"Good idea!" said Skinner. "I'll go and fetch Sammy."

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"Bunter objects!" grinned the Bounder.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What do you object for, Bunter?" demanded Bob Cherry suspiciously.

"I—I don't object!" stammered Bunter. "But—but it looks as if you don't believe my word, you know. That—that hurts my feelings!"

"Rats! You haven't any!" said the Bounder. "Let's have Sammy up, and ask him!"

"I—I'll go and fetch my minor, Skinner!" said Bunter hastily.

There was a loud laugh. All the juniors were beginning to get suspicious now.

"No, you jolly well won't!" chuckled Skinner. "You're not going to prime Sammy with a yarn all ready to back up your whoopers!"

"Oh, really, Skinner! I—I want to break it to him gently, you know! He's awfully fond of my uncle!" explained Bunter.

"I'll break it to him gently," said Skinner. "I'll tell him first that his uncle has been arrested for breaking into the canteen, and then I'll let out that he's wounded."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Skinner departed in search of Sammy of the Second. Billy Bunter made a movement as if to follow him, but the juniors closed up in the way.

"You'll stay here!" said Bob Cherry grimly. "If you've been spoofing us, we'll get it out of Sammy, and then we'll bump you bald-headed!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The rutherfordness is terrific!"

Billy Bunter was feeling very uneasy. After going "halves" with Sammy, it was certainly up to Sammy to stand by him; but Sammy was not wholly reliable. And if he were taken by surprise, there was no telling what he might blurt out. And Billy Bunter had been planning a regular levy on his Form-fellows, on the strength of his wounded uncle. As a dodge for raising money, it beat his old postal-order scheme hollow. Indeed, Bunter had talked so much about his wounded uncle, that by this time he had come to more than half believe in him, as he did in his apocryphal postal-order, which was always expected but never arriving.

"Wherefore that worried look, my fat tulip!" asked Squiff, with a chuckle.

"I—I'm thinking of the shock to Sammy, when he—he—he learns that my poor uncle is wounded!" stammered Bunter.

"Oh, Sammy can stand those things!" said Squiff. "If

# ANSWERS

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he's awfully cut up, we'll stand him a feed, and then he'll be as right as rain!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney of the Fourth. "Mind that fat bouncer doesn't speak to him first, though, and put him up to the game! I wonder he hasn't done it already!"

As a matter of fact, Bunter had done it already; but Sammy was not quite to be trusted. Only a prospect of future "halves" was likely to keep him faithful.

Skinner came back into the common-room with Bunter minor. Sammy blinked round at the juniors through his big glasses. Skinner had not yet told him what he was wanted for.

"Here he is," said Skinner.

"Sammy, old chap!" began Billy affectionately.

"Shut up, Bunter!" shouted half a dozen voices.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Wallop him if he doesn't shut up!" exclaimed the Bouncer. "We're going to get at the truth!"

Bob Cherry inserted his knuckles into Bunter's collar.

"Cheese it!" he said.

"Oh, really, Cherry— I-I—"

"Dry up!"

Billy Bunter had to dry up. He blinked nervously at his minor.

"What's the row?" asked Sammy. "Skinner asked me to come here. I understood that there was toffee, or something. Where is it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tain't toffee," said Vernon-Smith. "We want to ask you something, Sammy. Look at that!"

Vernon-Smith had taken the paper from Bunter, and he held it out to Sammy, showing him the paragraph relating to Captain Bunter. All eyes were fixed upon Sammy's face, to see the effect of the paragraph upon him. If Bunter had been fabricating, as usual, they expected to see Sammy give the show away at once.

But he didn't. He blinked at the paragraph, and then suddenly burst into a howl.

"Boo-hoo!"

"My hat! What the—"

"Boo-hoo!"

"Great Scott!"

Sammy Bunter dropped into a chair, and covered his fat face with his fat hands, and howled dismally. And the juniors stared at him blankly.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### Consolation Needed!

"BOO-HOO! Boo-hoo!"

Sammy's mournful howl rang through the common-room.

Vernon-Smith stared at him sharply. Sammy's grief was painful to witness. Some of the fellows looked uneasy, and a little ashamed. To prove the truth, or otherwise, of Billy Bunter's story, they had "sprung" this on Sammy Bunter, and the shock of the news seemed to have knocked him over. Billy blinked at his minor in wonder and admiration. He had not been sure that his minor would back him up at all, now that the feed was over. But Sammy evidently had an eye to more feeds to come.

"Boo-hoo! My p-p-poor uncle! Oh, boo!"

"Your uncle, Sammy?" said Sybil.

"Yes, my p-p-poor uncle! Wounded! Oh, dear! Boo-hoo!" wailed Sammy. "You—you might have broken it a bit more gently to me, Smithy. Boo-hoo!"

Vernon-Smith coloured with vexation. He had not only been proved to be in the wrong, but to have acted in a somewhat unfeeling manner. All the fellows looked at him with expressions of condemnation. Most of them had been equally curious to ascertain the facts from Sammy; but beholding the unexpected result, they were very much down on Smithy. Really, he was a hard-hearted beast. Skinner remarked in an audible whisper that it was just like the Bouncer, always doubting or suspecting somebody—which was really rather cool of Skinner. But the fellows all nodded assent.

Bob Cherry released the Owl of the Remove, quite apologetically. He was thoroughly ashamed of his momentary doubts.

"I told you so, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, blinking reproachfully at them. "I knew poor old Sammy would be knocked over. He was awfully fond of uncle."

"I—I say, we're sorry, kid," said Harry Wharton. "Don't klub like that. Your uncle isn't killed, you know—only wounded, and he can't be in a very bad way, or they wouldn't have sent him home."

"Boo-hoo!"

"Very likely only a scratch or two, Sammy," said Nugent comfortingly. "He's well enough to travel home, you see."

"M-m-my p-p-poor uncle! Oh—oh—oh! Ooooh!"

"Cheer up, Sammy!"

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ONE  
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"You ought to be proud of him, you know, kid," said Squiff, at a loss what to say to comfort the unhappy fag.

"He's a giddy here, you know."

"Ow—Ow! Boo!"

"I told you so," said Bunter crushingly. "Poor old Sammy is quite knocked over. I call it brutal."

"So it is—brutal," said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess Smithy ought to apologise."

"So you ought, Smithy."

"Say you're sorry, you bouncer!"

Vernon-Smith blushed more deeply. His position was not a pleasant one.

"Hold on," said Wibley of the Remove. "There's been a lot of talk about Bunter's uncle, and it's jolly queer that Sammy hasn't heard of it before now, isn't it? I suppose he isn't spoofing us—what?"

"Shut up, Wibley!"

"Don't be a rotter!"

"Cheese it!"

There was a regular howl of condemnation at Wibley's suggestion. Wibley, who was the leading light of the junior dramatic society, was perhaps over-suspicious. But he had noted that though Sammy was howling with great vigour, there was no sign of tears on his fat face, and the thought had crossed his mind that the fat fag was acting.

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Wibley, taken somewhat aback.

"I—I only suggested—"

"Apologise to the kid, or we'll jolly well bump you!"

"Look here—"

"Apologise to the kid, or we'll jolly well bump you!"

"Well, I—I'm sorry, if you like," said Wibley much abashed. "All the same, I—"

"Shut up!"

"Ring off!"

"Oh, I—I d-d-don't mind!" sobbed Sammy. "It doesn't matter to me what anybody says. My p-p-poor uncle is wounded. That's all I can think of now."

"Poor old chap!"

"Buck up!"

"Boo-hoo!"

"Really, it was very unfeeling of Smithy," said Alonzo Todd, with a shake of the head. "My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked at you, Smithy; nay, disgusted."

"Oh, for goodness' sake, don't let's have your Uncle Benjamin!" snapped the Bouncer irritably. "Bunter's uncle is enough, without yours."

"Shame!"

"Look here, Smithy, you might speak decently to Sammy," said Bob Cherry. "You ought to tell him you're sorry for giving him a sudden shock like that."

The Bouncer bit his lip.

"Well, I'm sorry!" he said ungraciously.

"Boo-hoo!"

"Cheer up, Sammy," said Harry Wharton, clapping the howling fag on the shoulder. "I'll tell you what—the tack-shop isn't closed yet—"

Sammy Bunter looked up, his grief abating at once.

"Come along and have a feed, Sammy."

"I'm on!" said Sammy promptly. Then, remembering himself, he groaned dismally. "I—I don't think I could eat anything now, thanks! I—I feel rather rotten. My p-p-poor uncle—"

"What about some jam-tarts?" said Bob Cherry temptingly.

Sammy brightened visibly.

"And a rabbit-pie!" said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, good!"

"And as much ginger-pop as you can get down," said Nugent.

Sammy jumped up.

"Seems to be better now," said Vernon-Smith, with a slight sneer. And Wibley chuckled. But the juniors frowned them down at once.

"Don't be a cad, Smithy."

"Don't be a beast, Wib!"

"Look here," said Bob Cherry. "It's up to Smithy to stand the feed. It's the least he can do after what he's done."

"Hear, hear!"

"Oh, rats!" growled the Bouncer. "I don't half believe yet—"

"Shame!"

"Shut up!"

The Bouncer was silent. Public opinion was against him, and condemned him thoroughly. And all the juniors regarded it as quite fair that the Bouncer should stand the feed of consolation.

"It's up to you, Smithy," said Wharton.

"My hat! If you don't do it, we'll send you to Coventry!" exclaimed Bulstrode.

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, I'll do it!" he said. "If that's all genuine, I'm sorry—really sorry! And in case I'm in the wrong, I'll feed him up to the chin. Come on, Sammy! Let's see what you can do in the tuckshop!"

Sammy was nothing loth. Quite a little army of juniors marched off with him to the school shop, offering him all sorts of consolation and comfort on the way. Sammy gave a deep groan every now and then as they crossed the Close; but by the time they reached the tuckshop, he had finished groaning. Consolation in a more solid form awaited him there, and he had no time for groaning. He ensconced himself on a high stool at the counter, and blinked with an eye of avidity over Mrs. Mumble's array of good things.

Billy Bunter helped him, and took the opportunity of whispering in his ear: "Halves!" It was fit for fat. Sammy nodded assent.

"Pile in, kid!" said Harry Wharton.

Sammy piled in, and his major followed his example. "Here, hold on!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "If this is up to me, that fat owl, can keep out of it. I'm not provisioning the whole family for a giddy siege."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Smithy! After the way you've insulted me and doubted my word—"

"Shame!"

"Play up, Smithy; don't be mean!"

The Bounder flushed again with annoyance, and threw a currency bill for a pound on the counter. The millionaire's son had plenty of money, and he could be free with it when he liked.

"There you are," he said sulkily. "That's enough for the two fat bouncers to burst their crops on!"

And the Bounder strode out of the tuck-shop with a frowning brow. Wibley followed him, also frowning. The two juniors were drawn together by the fact that they were both in disgrace with their Form. All they Remove were down on them. But the effect of condemnation on the Bounder was to make him more obstinate, and Wibley, too, was feeling very irritated.

"I don't believe it's genuine, even now," Wibley growled.

"That fat young rotter was spoofing—I feel almost certain."

"I feel jolly certain of it!" snapped the Bounder.

"It's cost you a quid!" grinned Wibley.

"Oh, blow the quid!" said Vernon-Smith. "I'd like to show the fat rotters up, and show the fellows they're spoofing, that's all! Now they're down on us because we won't have the wool pulled over our eyes! Br-r-r-r!"

Wibley nodded, with a very thoughtful expression on his face.

"I wonder?" he murmured. "Suppose—suppose Bunter's uncle were to come here?"

"That would prove it, of course," said the Bounder. "I'd apologise to Bunter then. But until I see his uncle, I'm not taking any."

"He might come," said Wibley, still more thoughtfully.

The Bounder looked at him sharply.

"What have you got in your noodle now, Wib?"

"Only an idea. It came into my head—"

Wibley lowered his voice and whispered to his companion.

The Bounder stared at him for a moment or two, and then burst into a laugh.

"My hat, what an idea!" he ejaculated.

"What do you think of it?"

"Ripping! It's a half-holiday to-morrow!"

"Is it a go?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Not a word, then!" grinned Wibley.

"Not a giddy whisper!" said Vernon-Smith. And the two juniors went into the School House, grinning, evidently very well pleased with Wibley's whispered suggestion, whatever it may have been.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER. A Very Useful Uncle!

**B**ILLY BUNTER was thoroughly enjoying his new consequence.

In the dormitory that night he talked at a great length on the subject of his heroic uncle, and he was listened to with unusual respect.

As Bob Cherry observed, Bunter might be a fat bouncer, and a spoofer, and a slacker, but the fact that his uncle had been wounded in the war entitled him to a certain amount of respect. Any fellow who had a relation at the front had a right to be proud of it, whether the said relation was a field-marshal or a drummer. Bunter shone in the reflected glory from his historic relation. And though Bunter imagined a good many vain things concerning the exploits of his now celebrated uncle, still there was the fact that his uncle had been wounded, fighting for the old flag—and William George Bunter in consequence, was "somebody."

So the juniors forgave him the swank he assumed, and listened to his outrageous yarns without expressing their opinion of his veracity with the usual directness.

But Billy Bunter was not "out" simply for kudos. As usual, he was on the make; and his wounded uncle seemed likely to prove a regular horn of plenty to him. The next morning, when he was slacking as usual, instead of turning out at the clang of the rising-bell, Bob Cherry came towards him with a wet sponge, and Bunter blinked at him with reproach.

"Up with you, slacker!" said Bob.

"Oh, rebilly, Cherry! I was just thinking of my uncle in the hospital," said Bunter.

And Bob Cherry put down the sponge.

At breakfast, Bunter's conversation for his uncle did not seem to have impaired his appetite. Perhaps he was seeking strength to bear his grief. At all events, he made an excellent meal.

In the Form-room, his uncle copped up again. Having neglected his preparation, he was called over the coals by Mr. Quelch, the Remove-master. Bunter assumed a pathetic expression.

"I—I can't construe this morning, sir," he quavered.

Mr. Quelch stared at him, as well he might.

"What, you cannot construe! What do you mean, Bunter? Do you mean that you are more stupid than usual? I fear that is impossible."

"I—I—I—"

"It's his uncle, sir," said Bob Cherry, coming good-naturally to the rescue.

"His uncle, Cherry!" said the puzzled Form-master.

"What do you mean?"

"Bunter's a bit cut up, sir, because his uncle's wounded."

Mr. Quelch's expression changed at once.

"Wounded! Where was your uncle wounded?"

"In the log, sir."

"Ahen! I did not mean that," said Mr. Quelch hastily.

"I mean in what place?"

"Mong, sir."

"Where?"

"Mong!"

"Oh, Mong!" said Mr. Quelch. "Indeed I did not know you had a relation in the army, Bunter. You are sure the news is true?"

"It's in the papers, sir," said Bunter meekly.

Mr. Quelch regarded him somewhat doubtfully. He had had a long experience of Billy Bunter, and his experience had led him to suspect that Bunter was a lineal descendant of Ananias and Sapphira. But Bob Cherry chipped in again.

"We've all seen it in the papers, sir."

"Oh, very well!" said Mr. Quelch. "I hope that your uncle is not badly injured, Bunter?"

"He may have to have his leg amputated, sir," said Bunter.

"I sincerely hope not. This is very sad. I am very, very sorry, Bunter. I quite understand that you feel not quite yourself this morning. You are excused from lessons to-day, Bunter, if you wish."

Bunter wished! There was no doubt about that. He jumped up as if moved by a spring.

"Oh, thank you, sir! I—I do feel rather cut up, sir. You see, I'm awfully fond of my uncle; he's a splendid chap, and to think of him having his arm amputated—"

"His leg, you mean."

"I—I meant to say his leg, sir, only I'm so cut up, I—I—"

"I understand, Bunter. You may go."

"Thank you, sir!"

And Billy Bunter went, with a very pathetic expression on his face. The pathetic expression vanished as soon as he was outside the Form-room, and he seemed quite comforted. It was a great enjoy-

FOR NEXT WEEK:

## 'The Patriotic Schoolmaster!'

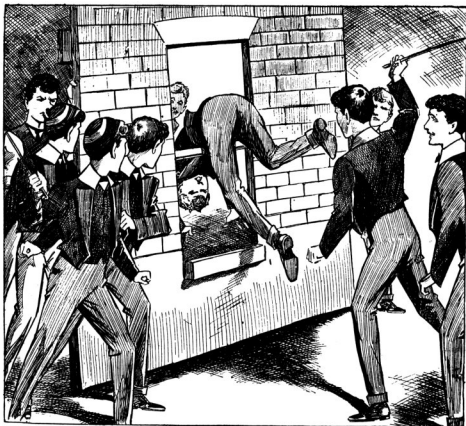
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"Donnerwetter!" roared Bob Cherry. "Here vos come the Highlanders! Vorwärts!" And he made a rush for the window in the "scene," and scrambled through half way. Promptly the juniors rushed after him, and began to pound. Thump! thump! thump! thump! (See Chapter 7.)

ment to Billy Bunter to slack about all the morning, instead of doing his work.

He rolled out into the Close, and made at once for the tuckshop. He had extracted a half-crown from Lord Maulverer just before lessons, and he proceeded to enjoy his liberty and the half-crown in the form of tuck. Mrs. Mimble served him very graciously until the half-crown was expended, and then her graciousness vanished. She knew Bunter too well to allow any "tick."

But Bunter was not satisfied yet. As a rule, he also knew Mrs. Mimble too well to attempt to obtain credit in the school shop. Mrs. Mimble was deaf to all his arguments on the subject. He had tried many times to demonstrate to the good lady that all big businesses were built up on a system of credit; but perhaps Mrs. Mimble did not want to build up a big business. At all events, she allowed no credit to Bunter. But now—as the nephew of a wounded warrior—Bunter considered that even Mrs. Mimble's hard heart might be softened towards him. Even the keeper of a tuckshop could be quite impervious to patriotic considerations.

"I think I'll have some more jam-tarts, Mrs. Mimble," said Bunter. "You can let them stand over till—"

"Master Bunter, I have already told you many times—"

"Yes; but just now—"

"You owe me eleven shillings already—"

"That's an old account, Mrs. Mimble," said Bunter, in an aggrieved tone. "Now, I suppose you've heard about my

nurse. He's been wounded, you know, storming the trenches at—at Sedan, and he's lying in hospital now, with three bullets and a bayonet in him. I want to send him something nice to cheer him up, Mrs. Mimble."

"I'm sure that's very kind of you," said Mrs. Mimble. "Only you see I'm rather short of money owing to a disappointment about a postal order," explained Bunter. "I suppose you could let me have a few things to send to him—under the circumstances?"

"Really, Master Bunter—"

"Think of him lying in hospital, with three bayonets and a bullet in his inside," said Bunter pathetically. "The doctor has ordered him light food—such as pastry; but there's a shortage of pastry at the War Office. I want to make up a little package to send him. Really, you know—"

Mrs. Mimble looked at him fixedly.

"Very well, Master Bunter. Goodness knows that, though I'm a poor woman, I'd be willing to send anything to a soldier in hospital. Tell me what he ought to have—"

"Oh, good—"

"And give me the address of the hospital—"

"Eh?"

"And I'll send it, and pay the postage myself."

"Ahem! I—I couldn't think of troubling you to that extent, Mrs. Mimble. It's altogether too much. You had

over the things, and I'll take them to my study and wrap them up—"

"I can wrap them up much better than you can, Master Bunter," said Mrs. Mumble firmly.

"Oh, all right! Then I'll take the package down to the post-office, and post it," suggested Bunter.

"Not at all. I will send my little boy with it."

"Ahem!"

"What is the address of the hospital, Master Bunter?"

"I—I've forgotten, for the moment," murmured Bunter. "I—I've got it in my study. I'd really rather save you the trouble of sending to the post-office, you know!"

"No trouble at all! Get me the address, and I will send the parcel."

"I—I'll go and look for it," groaned Bunter.

And he rolled disconsolately out of the tuck-shop. He did not come back with the address of the hospital, and that parcel was never sent.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. Realistic Rehearsals!

TAP, tap, tap!

It was a busy sound of hammers. Coker of the Fifth frowned as he strolled towards the wood-shed, where a dozen amateur carpenters were busy. Harry Wharton & Co., in their shirt-sleeves, were working hard. Wibley, who was stage-manager for the Remove Dramatic Society, directed operations. Wibley, though comparatively a new fellow at Greyfriars, was admitted to be the leading light of that famous histrionic association, and he had been elected stage-manager almost unanimously. His part in the play was that of the British prisoner; a very telling part, the way Wibley did it. In khaki, with a bandaged head and a brick-red complexion, Wibley made a first-class Tommy. Coker of the Fifth looked on morosely at the busy juniors. The amateur carpenters were making a wooden window-frame, through which the Prussian captain was to escape in the great final scene—and where he was to get jammed owing to his excessive girth. Funds being not over-plentiful with the junior dramatic society, they had to make these things for themselves.

"Try that, Cherry," said Wibley. "Of course, you'll be padded out in your part as Captain Plattfussen. We'll have a mattress on the other side of the window for you to fall on, too!"

"Don't I get stuck in the window?" asked Bob.

"Yes, and then we pound you till you squeeze through, and you disappear, leaving your heels sticking up," explained Wibley.

"Oh, do I?" said Bob rather dubiously.

"Yes. It will be a regular shriek, that scene. The audience will simply yell when we begin to pound you," said Wibley confidently.

"Seems to me I shall do the yelling," said Bob. "What are you jolly well going to pound me with?"

"Oh, butts of guns, and chairs, and things!"

"No doubt it will be funny, intirely," said Micky Desmond. "And, of course, the Prussian captain will have to yell, to make it look loife-like. We'll give him something to yell for!"

"Will you?" said Bob, not seeming at all enthusiastic about that great scene. "Blessed if I like the idea of being pounded with butts of guns, and chairs, and things. Chap can have too much of a good thing!"

"Well, you'll be pretty thickly padded, to make you into a fat German," said Wibley. "We won't hurt you more than we can help, of course. But you mustn't mind a rap or two! It's all in the day's work. Besides, you'll have to yell, and the louder you yell, the better! Must make it lifelike!"

"Um!" said Bob.

"Now, try the window," said Wibley. "You fellows hold up the wall, and let's see Cherry dive through the window. Lend a hand, Coker, as you're doing nothing."

Coker of the Fifth obligingly lent a hand to hold up the wooden frame, upon which canvas was stretched to represent the wall. Planks had been nailed across the square frame to support the window, which was an upright, oblong opening. The "scene" was held by Coker and half a dozen juniors, and Bob Cherry made his essay.

"Lemme see, what do I say?" asked Bob, whose memory for lines was not perfect.

"Donnerwetter! Here come the Highlanders! Vorwärts!" said Wibley.

"Oh, good! Lemme see; I rush for the window, and get stuck in the frame, and then—"

"Then we pound you," said Wibley. "Some of you

fellows get ready to pound him. Then he rolls through—bump!"

"Look here, not too hard, you know," said Bob. "I'm not padded now!"

"Oh, pile in," said the stage-manager. "You ain't made of glass, I suppose!"

"Yes, pile in, Bob," said Harry Wharton. "It's getting near time for the footer."

Bob Cherry piled in.

"Donnerwetter!" he roared. "Here come the Highlanders! Vorwärts!"

And he made a rush for the window in the scene, and scrambled through half-way.

Promptly the juniors rushed after him and began to pound.

Thump, thump, thump, thump!

"Not so hard!" yelled Bob.

"You don't say that, aa!" howled Wibley. "You say: 'Mein Gott! Donner und Blitzen!'"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Fathead! You have to say 'Ach, ach, ach!'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Thump, thump, thump!

"Yaroh!" roared Micky Desmond, staggering back as Bob Cherry's boot caught him on the chest. "You omadhaun! You don't have to kick out! Yow-ow!"

Thump, thump, thump!

"Yaroh!" yelled Bob, and he scrambled right through the window, and came down with a terrific bump on the other side. "Oh, crumba! You silly asses! Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That ain't what you say," shouted the exasperated stage-manager. "You say 'Ach! Vich is der shortest way to Berlin!'"

"I think I shall want the shortest way to the hospital," groaned Bob.

"Oh, try it again!"

Bob Cherry came round the scene, which was swaying to and fro in the grasp of the juniors, as they howled with laughter. There was no doubt that it was a very comic bit to judge by its effect upon the amateur actors themselves. But much of the humour seemed to be lost on Bob Cherry.

"Go it, Bob! You'll do it better next time," said Nugent encouragingly.

"The betterfulness will be terrific, my esteemed Bob!"

"Well, remember I'm not padded, you duffers," said Bob;

"and remember you're not hammering in nails, you silly fatheads!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker. "You can't do it for toffee, Cherry! I'll tell you what—I'll take the part for you!"

"Oh, you run away and play," said Bob crossly. "Hold that thing steady, you fellows. I don't want it to tumble over on me. Now, then! Donnerwetter, here come the Highlanders! Vorwärts!"

And Bob dived through the window again, in great style.

Thump, thump, thump!

In their enthusiasm, the juniors seemed to forget that it was only a rehearsal. The thumps, at least, were quite the real thing.

Bob Cherry yelled, and twisted through the window, and the scene swayed as he grabbed hold of the window-frame to lower himself down. He did not fancy another fall on the hard, unempathetic earth.

"Look out!" roared Wibley. "It's going over!"

"Hold on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Coker, and either by chance or design, Coker let go.

The tall, unsteady erection swayed over, and there was a yell of alarm from the juniors as it fell.

"Look out, Bob!"

Bob had no time to look out. He sat up as the scene fell on him.

"Groo-o-gh!"

There was a rending sound, and Bob Cherry's head came up through the burst canvas.

"Oh, my hat!"

Bob sat there, with his dazed head sticking up through the burst scene, blinking at the juniors.

"Oh, crumba! Oh, my aunt! That ain't in the play, you duffers!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, you asses!" howled Wibley. "Now we shall have to stretch that blessed canvas all over again! What did you let go for?"

"Sure, it was Coker!"

"Kick that Fifth Form boulder out——"

But Horace Coker was already departing, clucking. Bob Cherry crawled out from under the scene.

"Now, try again, before we mend the canvas," said Wibley.

"Thanks, I'm fed up," said Bob promptly. "I've had enough rehearsals of that bit. I'll try it again when I've padded, and when there's a mattress to fall on. I've got about fifteen bumps now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the juniors set to work to repair the burst canvas, while Bob Cherry rubbed his injuries. Two o'clock rang out from the clock-tower, and Harry Wharton jumped up.

"Time we were on the ground," he said. "The Fourth will be waiting for us! Come on, you chaps. You can shove these things away, Wib., as you're not playing footer."

"I'll help," said Vernon-Smith.

"You're playing, Smitty," said Harry.

The Bouncer shook his head.

"No; put young Penfold in in my place—you'll beat the Fourth, anyway!"

"All serene!"

Harry Wharton & Co. departed, leaving Vernon-Smith and Wibley to put away the scenes, and the tools, and clear up the litter generally. By the time they had finished, the match between the Remove and the Upper Fourth was going strong. But the Bouncer and Wibley had something else on that afternoon. They proceeded to Wibley's study, where a large bag was packed; and if Harry Wharton & Co. had not been so busy on the footer field, they might have observed Wibley and Vernon-Smith strolling out of the school gates with that bag. Only one fellow observed them, and he bore down on them promptly.

"I say, you fellows—"

Vernon-Smith and Wibley quickened their pace. They did not want Billy Bunter's company at that special moment.

But Bunter quickened his pace, too.

"I say, you fellows, what is it—a picnic?" he asked blinking inquisitively at the big bag in the Bouncer's hand.

"No, it isn't," said the Bouncer curtly. "Cut off!"

"I say, Smitty, I want to send a telegram to my uncle to ask him how he is," said Bunter. "I suppose you can lend me a couple of bob—"

"I'll lend you a dot in the eye."

"Wibley, old chap, you might lend me—"

"Bow-wow!" said Wibley.

"Beasts!" growled Bunter, as the two juniors strode away down the lane, and he turned back discomfitedly into the gates. But his fat face brightened up as the sight of Coker and Potter and Greener in the Close, and he bestowed his attention upon them.

Coker had plenty of money, and Bunter didn't see why Coker shouldn't stand something for his unfortunate uncle.

"I say, Coker, old chap," said Bunter. "You've heard about my uncle, of course—"

"I've heard," assented Coker.

"I want to send him a telegram to ask him how his leg is," said Bunter. "You know, he had it smashed by a cannon-ball in storming the trenches at Rheims."

"Then he hasn't a leg to stand on?" said Coker sympathetically. "A good deal like your yarn about him, Bunter."

Potter and Greene cackled. They always cackled at Coker's little jokes when Coker was in funds.

"Oh, really, Coker! I really think you might stand me—"

"That's just what I can't do," said Coker, with a shake of the head.

"Ahem! Considering that my poor uncle is lying at death's door, Coker—"

"I should think he would give up lying if he's so bad as that," said Coker, who appeared to be in a very humorous vein that afternoon.

"Ha, ha, ha!" chorused Potter and Greene, with one eye on the tuckshop.

"I'll tell you what," said Coker. "I've been thinking about your uncle, Bunter, and I should like to do the handsome thing."

"Oh, good!" said Bunter, his eyes glistening.

"I was thinking of a really topping spread—the very best the money can buy," said Coker. "I'm in funds, you know, and I'm willing to stand any amount for the sake of a wounded warrior."

"Good! Make it a quid—"

"I'll make it three or four quids if necessary," said Coker liberally.

"I—I say, you are a brick, Coker," said Bunter. "Four quids would do my uncle splendidly. Hand it out."

"I wouldn't mind going as far as five," said Coker.

"Good egg! Hand—"

"And as soon as your uncle comes to see you, don't fail to remind me," added Coker.

"Eh!"

"We'll have him in my study, and feed him up to the chin," said Coker.

"But—but—but—"

"So let me know immediately your uncle comes," said THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 358.

Coker, and he walked away with Potter and Greene, laughing, leaving Bunter rooted to the ground, with feelings too deep to be expressed in mere words.

### THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. Captain Bunter!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"Who is it?"

"Not Bunter's uncle, surely?"

The football match was over, and Harry Wharton & Co., having beaten the Fourth Form by a comfortable margin of three goals to one, had changed, and were proceeding to the tuckshop to celebrate their victory with flowing ginger-pop. It was at that moment that they caught sight of a striking figure entering the school gates. The station back from Friardale had stopped there, and a gentleman in khaki had alighted. And naturally the sight of a man in khaki drew all eyes at once to the spot.

Harry Wharton & Co. changed their direction at once, from the tuckshop to the gates. Gossiping the porter had come out of his lodge, also impressed by the sight of the stranger. The back driver touched his hat very respectfully, and drove away. All eyes were upon the man in khaki, who stood in the gateway looking about him.

He was a man of somewhat short stature, but extremely soldierly in appearance. His khaki garments showed signs of wear, and his puttees were evidently not new. His right sleeve hung empty at his side. He carried a light cane in his left hand. He was somewhat stout in build, and walked heavily.

His face was clean-shaven—at all events there was neither beard nor moustache. It looked as if it had been exposed to sun and wind for a long time, for it was a brick-red in colour. His eyebrows were thick and dark, but the hair that showed under his flat cap was tipped with grey.

Across one cheek was a scar, extending from the temple to the jaw, giving his brown face a very unique appearance. There were dark wrinkles on his brow, and lines about his face, and a smaller scar on the other cheek, close to his mouth, seemed to elongate his mouth strangely. The juniors all "capped" him in the most respectful manner. The sight of that war-worn veteran with an empty sleeve touched their hearts at once.

"This is Greyfriars, what?" said the man in khaki, in a deep voice.

"Yes, sir," said Harry Wharton.

"Thank you. Is my nephew here?"

"Must be Bunter's uncle," whispered Frank Nugent. "My hat! I wonder what Smitty would say now!"

"The esteemed Smitty will have to hide his ridiculous and diminished head," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "Likewise the ludicrous Wibley."

"Yes, rather!"

"What's his name, sir?" asked Wharton.

"Bunter—William George Bunter!" said the gentleman in khaki. "My nephew! In the Lower Fourth Form, I think, begad."

"You are Bunter's uncle, sir!" exclaimed half a dozen voices.

"Yaas; if he's my nephew, I must be his uncle—what?" said the gentleman in khaki, with a smile. The smile showed four black spaces among his teeth, which could not be considered beautiful, from an ordinary point of view; but considering that a Prussian bullet was probably responsible, those black patches impressed the admiring juniors still more deeply. Evidently the one-armed gentleman had "been through it."

"Yes, he's here somewhere, sir," said Harry. "We'll find him! Come in, sir! We're in the Remove—Bunter's Form, you know. This way to the School House. Some of you fellows cut off and find Bunter. Anybody see him?"

"Faith, I saw him a few minutes ago—he was trying to squeeze a loan out of Brown—"

"Shut up!" whispered Harry.

"Look in the tuckshop," said Bob Cherry.

Captain Bunter walked across the Close in the midst of an admiring crowd of fellows, all proud to be walking with him. Nobody in the Remove had ever envied Bunter before, but many were inclined to envy him now. To have a relation who had lost an arm and four teeth in the war was something to be desired. There wasn't a fellow in the crowd who would not have been proud to call that war-worn warrior his uncle.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Smitty!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, catching sight of the Bouncer in the Close. "Smitty, old man, Bunter's uncle's come."

"Bunter's uncle!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith.

"Yes, he's here."

"My hat!"

"What do you say now?" snorted Bolsover major. "Do

you believe in him now or not, Smithy, or do you think he's a ghost, what?"

"Well, he looks real enough," assented Vernon-Smith, staring at the gentleman in khaki. "That looks a fearful scar on his face."

"Prussian Mhro, I suppose," said Bob. "He's been through it. My hah! He'll be able to tell us something about the fighting."

"So this is Greysfriars!" said Captain Bunter; and the juniors hung upon his words. "First time I've had a chance to come and see my nephew. I've been very busy lately—what?"

"You've been in the fighting line, sir?" said Nugent diffidently.

"Begad! You should have seen them coming on at Compiegne," said Captain Bunter. "But we cut them to pieces—what! Begad!" His hand went to the scar on his cheek. "They left me a souvenir, the cads! Begad."

"Was it a sabre, sir?" asked Marley Desmond eagerly.

"No, a bullet ploughed through my cheek, my lad, and knocked out some of my teeth," said Captain Bunter. "That's not noticeable, though, thank goodness."

"The juniors felt their hearts warm towards the veteran, at his simplicity in believing that the loss of four front teeth was not noticeable. But they would not have undeceived him for worlds.

They marched the gallant captain in triumph into the School House. Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, met them in the hall, and he passed at the sight of the gentleman in khaki. The gentleman in khaki paused too, rather suddenly.

"It's Bunter's uncle, sir, Captain Bunter," said Wharton proudly. "He's come to see Bunter, sir."

"Indeed," said Mr. Quelch, shaking hands cordially with the captain. "I have heard about you, Captain Bunter. I am delighted to make your acquaintance. I congratulate you upon getting out of hospital so soon."

"We're rather tough, we Bunters, sir," said the captain genially. "You are the headmaster, I take it?"

"Mr. Quelch, our Form-master," said Harry.

"Very happy to meet you, Mr. Quelch," said the captain, apparently not quite catching the name. "I hope my nephew has always given you satisfaction. I am sure you can give me a good account of him—what! Always fighting, I suppose; but boys will be boys."

"No, not at all," said Mr. Quelch, glad that he was able to say something, at least, in favour of Bunter. "Bunter never gives any trouble in that way. The Head will be delighted to welcome you to Greysfriars, Captain Bunter."

"Ahem! I—I must defer the pleasure of seeing the Head," said the captain, a little hurriedly. "I—I am on leave, you know—the dashed doctors insist upon my going back early. I have just time to see my nephew and have a chat with him. Another time I shall be delighted, begad! Perhaps one of the boys will show me to Bunter's study—I suppose he has a study—what?"

"Certainly," said Mr. Quelch. "Pray show Captain Bunter to his nephew's study, my boys, and tell Bunter that he is here."

"Yes, rather, sir! This way, sir!"

And the juniors, in a sort of triumphal procession, marched Captain Bunter to No. 7 Study in the Remove passage.

### THE NINTH CHAPTER. Bunter Meets His Uncle!

"BUNTER! Bunter! Bunter!"  
"Bunter here!"  
"Come on, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter blinked round from the counter in the tuckshop. Lord Mangleverer, the dandy of the Remove, had been his last victim, and Bunter was expending the contribution in refreshments, solid and liquid. But he looked round eagerly as four or five juniors burst into the shop calling him.

"Here I am," said Bunter. "If you follows—"

"Come on," said Ogilvy. "Your uncle's come."

"Wh-a-a-ut!"

"Your uncle," said Tom Brown. "Come on, fatty!"

"Oh, rot!" said Bunter. "My uncle's at Repton, and he can't get away in the term. What rot!"

"I can't mean your schoolmaster uncle, fathead. Your giddy military uncle—Captain Bunter!"

Billy Bunter turned back to his tarts.

"Ain't you coming?" roared the juniors.

"Oh, don't be funny!" said Bunter peevishly. "You can't pull my leg like that, you know. Ginger-beer, please, Mrs. Mumble."

"But he's come!" roared Skinner. "He's here!"

"He's just gone into the School House!" shouted Tom

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Brown, excitedly seizing the fat junior by the arm. "If you hadn't had your nose in your jam-tarts, you'd have seen him!"

Bunter jerked his arm away from the New Zealand junior.

"Oh, chuck it, Brown!"

"What's the matter with the fat duffer?" exclaimed Ogilvy in astonishment. "Your uncle, Captain Bunter, has arrived, and he wants to see you, Billy."

"Come on, Bunter."

"Look here, chuck it!" roared Bunter. "You can't take me in. My—my uncle the captain is in hospital with a bayonet in his leg."

"His leg's all right," said Tom Brown. "It's his arm that's missing. His left arm is gone, Bunter—amputated, I suppose."

"Oh, keep it up!" said Bunter sarcastically. "I suppose you think this sort of thing is funny!"

"You ass! You duffer! I tell you—"

Harry Wharton came striding into the tuckshop.

"Hallo, here he is! Haven't you fellows told him? His uncle's waiting to see him," the captain of the Remove exclaimed.

"We've told him, and he won't believe it!" growled Ogilvy.

"Bunter, old man, it's true," said Wharton. "Your uncle's in your study now. Here's Toddy come to fetch you, too."

"Come on, Bunter!" shouted Peter Todd, Bunter's study-mate, coming into the tuckshop. "The captain's waiting in the study."

Billy Bunter blinked at the juniors in amazement. His eyes grew very round behind his spectacles. If there was one fellow at Greysfriars who had never expected to see Captain Bunter there, it was William George Bunter himself. It seemed as if he could not possibly swallow the news.

But the juniors did not waste any more time convincing him. Peter Todd seized him by one arm, and Harry Wharton, leaving tarts and buns still undevoured upon the counter. It was the first time the Owl of the Remove had ever been known to leave a feed unfinished.

"I—I say, you fellows, hold on—"

"Come on, Billy, your uncle's waiting."

"My tarts—"

"Blow your tarts! You can't keep your uncle waiting for tarts."

"My ginger-beer—"

"Bless your ginger-beer! Buck up!"

Besides, we'll have a big feed in the Rag, if you can get your uncle to come!" exclaimed Tom Brown. "We'll all club together and do him well."

"Hear, hear!"

Bunter felt as if his head were turning round. It seemed certain that a Captain Bunter, calling himself Bunter's uncle, had arrived at the school. He could not doubt the assurances he received on all sides. Was it possible that the wounded Captain Bunter mentioned in the newspaper was really his uncle after all? It really seemed like it, or else all the fellows were dreaming. Hardly knowing whether he was on his head or his heels, Billy Bunter was marched into the School House. A cheer greeted him as he came up into the Remove passage in the midst of a crowd of juniors.

"Hooray! Here he is, sir!"

"Billy, my boy!" came a deep voice from No. 7 Study.

Bunter jumped. Certainly that sounded like a man's voice. Had he an uncle in the Army after all? Or what did it mean? It was scarcely possible that an uncle could have been misled by the family, so to speak, so that Bunter didn't know anything about him. And so far as he knew, he knew all his uncles; but he didn't know Captain Bunter. Yet here he was!

Bunter's eyes were like saucers, and his mouth was open, as he was walked into the study between Wharton and Todd.

A figure in khaki, with a black-red face and a terrible scar, rose to meet him. Two sharp eyes gleamed at Bunter from under bushy brows.

"Hallo! Billy, begad! The image of your father, Billy!"

"Ye-es-es," stammered Bunter.

"And how's Sammy—as fat as ever?"

"Ye-es-es."

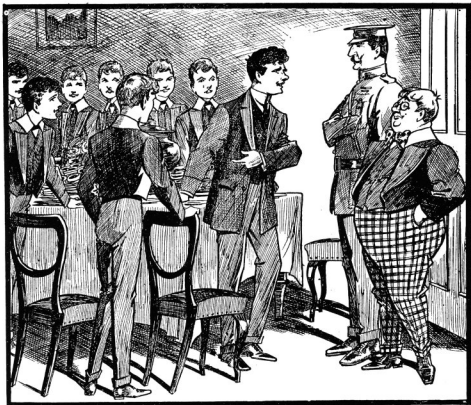
"Good! Give us your fin, my boy."

Bunter, still in a dazed state, extended a fat hand, and the captain grasped it, and gave it a grip that nearly curled Bunter up.

"Ow, ow, ow," howled Bunter.

"Pah! You're soft, Billy," said the military uncle sharply. "That isn't like a Bunter. The Bunters are a fighting race, as hard as nails, sir. Begad, if I had you in my regiment, I'd make you tough!"

"Ye-es-es," mumbled Bunter.



"I'm Coker, sir—Coker of the Fifth!" said Coker impressively, willing that the returned hero should understand the tremendous honour that was done him. "This is—is a great privilege to me, sir. I seldom find myself at the same table with fags—" "Bow-wow!" came from some of the fags. (See Chapter 10.)

"You didn't expect to see me here—what?" asked his uncle.

"Nunno."

"Thought I was still in the hospital—eh?"

"Ye-es."

"Well, I'm on sick leave," said the captain. "I've been hard hit. You see, I've lost a fin." He nodded towards the empty sleeve.

"Ye-es," stammered Bunter.

"And glad I am to be out of hospital, too," said Captain Bunter. "Pretty short commons sometimes—what?"

"Didn't you get the things Bunter has been sending you, sir?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Oh! Billy's been sending me things, has he? That's very good of you, Billy."

"I—I thought you'd like 'em," mumbled Bunter. "They—they wouldn't get there before—before to-day, though, so—so you must have missed them—ahem?"

"Never mind, I'll find them there when I get back," said the captain. "Now, how are you getting on here, Billy?"

The Remove fellows withdrew from the study, leaving Captain Bunter to chat with his nephew. Billy Bunter sank helplessly into a chair. The captain regarded him.

"You're too fat, Billy!" he said abruptly.

"Am I?" murmured Bunter.

"Yes, you are. You don't take enough exercise."

"Oh, really—"

"And you eat too much," continued the captain, shaking THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 258.

his head. "I can see in your face that you're an over-feeder."

"I—I—I—"

"You don't seem very glad to see me, I must say," said Captain Bunter.

"No—yes—I mean, yes," murmured Bunter dazedly. "I—I didn't expect you, sir—I mean, captain—that is to say, uncle."

"How long since you knew I was wounded?" asked the captain.

"Only yesterday. It was in—in the paper."

"Pooh, that was late! Didn't your father write and tell you?"

"Nunno."

"That's very odd. What are you staring at me like a fish for, Billy?"

"I—I—I—"

"Begad, I think you hardly know me, though I'm your old uncle!" exclaimed the gentleman in khaki. "Don't you remember me at home, Billy—how I used to play with you kids, what?"

"Ye-es—"

"I was afraid you'd forgotten!" said his uncle severely.

"I've been thinking a lot about you lately. If I thought you'd forgotten your old uncle, I shouldn't have taken the trouble to bring a ten-pound note along with me for you, begad!"

Bunter jumped. If Captain Bunter had a ten-pound note

for him, that banished Bunter's last doubt. Certainly the gentleman in khaki was his uncle. Bunter meant to have that ten-pound note!

"I—I'm jolly glad to see you, uncle," said Bunter. "It's jolly good of you to come here and see me. I'm jolly glad. It's very kind of you. I say, I could change the tender in the tuckshop, and—"

"All in good time," said his uncle. "Remind me before I go, Billy. Now, I should think you could stand your old uncle a feed in the study—what?"

"Of—of course—certainly," stammered Bunter. "I've got a tremendous appetite," said the old soldier—"all the Bunters have! And you get pretty sharp set in the trenches, I can tell you. Now, I don't mind telling you that I'm tremendously hungry now."

"Ahem!"

Bunter had raised quite a harvest of loans of late, but they had all gone the same way. After all his prosperity, he was in his old impecunious state. But, after all, surely the fellows would stand by him at a time like this, or— His fat face brightened up as he remembered Coker.

Coker of the Fifth! Of course! Coker had promised to stand a tremendous feed to any extent as soon as Bunter's uncle came to Greifryars. And now he had come! Coker had made that promise, certainly, under the influence of a temporary disability in the uncle. But here was the uncle! Coker was a fellow of his word. And, anyway, he wouldn't be able to get out of it.

"Right-ho, uncle!" exclaimed Bunter, his mouth watering at the anticipation of a feed upon a huge scale, in which he would take the lion's share as usual. "I—I'll just send word to a friend of mine in the Fifth Form. Just a tick!"

Bunter opened the study door. There were a dozen juniors in the passage, discussing a scheme for celebrating Uncle Bunter's arrival. Bunter called to them.

"I say, you fellows! Bob, old man, will you tell Coker my uncle's here?"

"Coker!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Yes, Coker's asked permission to stand a big feed when my uncle comes," said Bunter loftily. "Will you go and tell him?"

"Certainly!" said Bob, with alacrity. "It's all right, uncle," said Bunter. "We'll have a regular spread. All the fellows are jolly glad to see you."

"Have 'em all to the feed," said Captain Bunter generously. "Bogad! It makes me feel young again to be here with you boys! Have the whole crowd, Billy."

"Ahem!" murmured Bunter, wondering how Coker would stand it. "I—I—"

"The whole battalion!" said Captain Bunter jovially. "Bogad, you don't have your uncle to see you every day, Billy."

"R-right-ho, uncle! I—I'll tell 'em!" said Bunter. "Now come for a trot in the Close to get an appetite," said Captain Bunter.

"I—I've got a jolly good appetite now, u-uncle."

"Rubbish!" said Captain Bunter, who had evidently learned the manners of a martinet in the Army. "Do as you're told! March!"

"Oh, really—"

"March!" roared the captain, and Bunter unwillingly marched. There was a cheer from the Removites as they came down the passage.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER. A Great Occasion!

COKER of the Fifth was in his study, about to have tea with Potter and Greene, when Bob Cherry arrived with the news. He bestowed a frown upon the cheerful Bob as he rushed in.

"Now then, you fag—" announced Bob.

"Bunter's uncle's come!" announced Bob.

"Rats!" said Coker.

"Longest Injun!" said Bob. "And Bunter says—"

"Blot Bunter!" said Coker.

"Bunter says you asked leave to stand a big feed when his uncle came. We're going to have a celebration, anyway," added Bob. "We'll club together if you like. The more the merrier."

Coker & Co. stared at him.

"You don't mean to say that Bunter's really got a soldier uncle?" demanded Coker, in astonishment.

"Yes, rather—a splendid chap; lost an arm in the war."

"My only aunt! I thought it was all spool."

"Well, he's come," said Bob.

Coker looked suspicious. He wasn't of a suspicious nature, but he had been so often japed by the Removites that there was some excuse for his dubiousness.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 353.

"Look here, it's all square!" he demanded. "Most likely spool," said Potter. "The tea's getting cold, Coker."

"Oh, blow the tea!" said Coker. "If Bunter's really got an Army uncle, and he's lost an arm, and so on, I'm ready to keep my word. But—"

"Come and see him," said Bob. "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" he added, as he glanced out of the study window. "You can see him from here!"

The three Fifth-Formers jumped to the window. In the midst of a crowd of admiring juniors Bunter and his uncle were walking in the Close. Horace Coker stared hard at the gentleman in khaki.

"Well, my hat!" he exclaimed. "That's all right! Well, I'm a chap of my word. We'll have a big feed in the Rag—what!"

"What-ho!" said Bob Cherry.

Coker of the Fifth, with all his faults, was a good-hearted fellow, and he was more than willing to join in making a fuss of a disabled hero from the front. He hurried from the study with Bob Cherry. Potter and Greene stayed to finish their tea. They sagely reflected that they could join in the celebration afterwards.

Meanwhile, Billy Bunter was not enjoying his walk with his uncle. Bunter was not a great walker, and his uncle walked with a rapid military stride, so that though his legs were not much longer than Bunter's, Billy found it difficult to keep up with him. And Captain Bunter was evidently down on slackers. He suddenly gave the Owl of the Remove a smite under the chin which jarred every tooth in his head.

"Chin up!" he rapped out.

"Ooooooh!" gasped Bunter.

"Call yourself a soldier's nephew, and slouch along like that!" said his uncle severely. "I'm ashamed of you—bogad! Chin up!"

"Ow! Ye-o-o-o."

"I'll give you a rap on it whenever you put it down!" said the captain. "There you go again!"

Rap!

"Yaroooh!"

"And put the pace on a bit," said the captain, touching Bunter up with his cane. "You crawl like a snail! Get a move on, boy!"

"Oh, crumba!"

"Giddy martinet, ain't he?" murmured Squiff, as the unhappy Bunter trotted along beside his terrible uncle, his fat legs going like clockwork. "If Bunter has much of this he'll wish his uncle's head had gone off instead of his arm."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Buck up, Billy!" said the captain, giving Bunter's fat chin another rap. "Bogad, if I had you in camp for a few weeks, I'd make a man of you—what!"

"Ow! Yes. Ow!"

While Billy Bunter was suffering at the hands of his military uncle a great spread was preparing in the Rag. Horace Coker was the founder of the feast. Coker was doing the thing in great style. A recent remittance from his Aunt Judy was burning a hole in his pocket, and Coker made the money fly. A good many of the Remove fellows added to the purchases, and Mrs. Mumble's eyes opened wide at the extent of them.

The Rag soon presented a very festive appearance. Two tables were placed together, and cloths were borrowed from the housekeeper to cover them, and the good things were set out in enticing array.

The early dusk was setting in now, and the gas was lighted in the Rag, and the light gleamed upon the festive board and the spotless tablecloths and the array of all sorts and conditions of crockeryware.

Chairs were brought in from all quarters. Forms were dragged along the table to supply the places of chairs that were wanting. When all was ready the Famous Five rushed off to call in Captain Bunter.

Billy Bunter's downcast face brightened up again as he came into the Rag with his uncle. The big room was crowded, and every face was bright and cheerful.

Coker of the Fifth had constituted himself master of the ceremonies, and he greeted the gallant captain with much emphasis.

"We are glad to meet you, sir—glad and honoured!" said Coker nobly, as he shook hands with the captain. "We consider it an honour to Greifryars, sir, to greet a British soldier just returned from the front."

"Hurrah!" said the captain.

"Bogad!" said the captain.

"I'm Coker, sir—Coker of the Fifth!" said Coker impressively, willing that the returned hero should understand the tremendous honour that was done him. "This is—a great privilege to me, sir. I seldom find myself at the same table with fags—"



"Bow-wow!" came from some of the fags.  
"But," continued Coker, with a glare round at the fags—"but, sir, an occasion like this levels all distinctions. Greyfriars greets you as one man, sir! We are proud of the British Army, sir, from General French down to the youngest drummer, and—and—" Coker's flow of eloquence trailed off a little. "And the feed's ready!" he concluded.

Laughter and cheers.  
Captain Bunter was led to the head of the table. Coker seated himself on his right hand, Bunter on the left. The fellows soon filled up all the seats, and there were a great many left standing. Fellows of the Remove and the Fourth were there almost to a man, and a crowd of the Third and Second came in, and Hobson of the Shell led in an army of his Form, and Potter and Greene came along with some of the Fifth. It was indeed a representative gathering.

"Where's Sammy?" exclaimed Bob Cherry suddenly.  
"Sammy ought to be here! You haven't seen your other nephew yet, sir."

"Begad, yaas!" said the captain. "Fetch him in!"  
"He—he's gone out!" stammered Bunter.  
"Must be coming in now; it's getting dark," said Harry Wharton. "Cut off and fetch him, some of you fellows!"

Half a dozen obliging fellows went in search of Bunter minor, but the feed did not wait. That was already going strong. Billy Bunter was distinguishing himself as usual, but all the other fellows who were near the captain exerted themselves to help him, as he had only one arm for use.

Sammy Bunter appeared in the doorway, led in by Bob Cherry. There was an expression of dazed astonishment on Bunter minor's fat face.

Sammy's eyes looked like enlarged gooseberries behind his big glasses, as he blinked among the lighted table, and stared at his major and his uncle.

"It's all right, Sammy," said Bob, who had found it difficult to make Bunter minor believe that his uncle had arrived. "Here he is! Honest Injun!"

Sammy had been discovered in the Second Form-room, cooking herrings at the fire with the fags. But at news of the spread in the Rag, the fags had followed Bunter minor as a crowd.

"My word!" said Nugent minor. "What a spread! Your uncle's a brick, Sammy! Come on, you fellows!"

"What-ho!" said Gatty. "Make room, somebody. Don't take up all the room with your feet, Potter!"

"That—that's my uncle!" gasped Sammy.  
"Yes. Come up!"

Bob Cherry led the fat fag up the table to where the captain sat. Captain Bunter fixed his eyes upon him.  
"Begad! So you're Sammy?" he ejaculated.

"Ye-es!" gasped Sammy.  
"Give me your fin!"

"Ow! O-o-ow! O-o-och!"

"Make room for Sammy next to Billy," said the captain. Room was made, and Sammy sank dazedly into a chair. He seemed hardly able to believe his eyes. As soon as he recovered a little he whispered to his major:

"Billy, old man—"

"Shush!" murmured Bunter warningly.  
"But—but what does it mean?" murmured Sammy. "I know you're awfully deep, Billy, but how did you work this? Who is he?"

"Shush!"

"Is he going to tip you?"

"Shush! Shush!"

"He ought to, if he's our uncle," said Sammy. "I—I suppose he must be, if he says he is. Halves, you know, Billy!"

"Shut up!"

Sammy blinked threateningly at his major.  
"So there's going to be a tip? Is it going to be halves?"

He raised his voice a little, and Billy Bunter hastily whispered:

"Yes."

"All serene!" said Sammy.  
And, with that comfortable assurance in his mind, the fat fag tucked into the good things before him, and was soon rivaling the distinguished performances of his major.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

### "Uncle Wibley!"

CAPTAIN BUNTER did justice to the feed, but it was noticeable that he did not possess the appetite that might have been expected of Billy's and Sammy's uncle. Still, he did very well, and appeared to enjoy himself. He had only one hand to use, but he kept it pretty busy. It was observed that sometimes he made a motion as if to use his right, and then the empty sleeve swayed—evidently the captain was not yet accustomed to the loss of his right arm.

"Won't you tell us something about the fighting, sir?" said THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 358.

NEXT MONDAY—"THE PATRIOTIC SCHOOLMASTER!" A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

Coker of the Fifth, after a time. "I suppose you have been in the thick of it, captain?"

"Right in the middle of it," assented the captain, as he passed his coffee-cup to be filled a fourth time. "We were at—at Compiegne. You should have seen the beggars run—what? Chin up!" he rapped out suddenly, bringing his knuckles under his nephew's fat chin.

And Bunter's chin went up, and he gurgled wildly:  
"Gro-o-ogh!"

Bunter's mouth was full just then to its greatest capacity, which was extensive. He choked and gurgled, and gurgled and choked.

"Oh, crumbs! Ow! Grooh! I—I say— Yaroooh—"

"Pat him on the back!" said the captain.  
Bob Cherry obliged, but his patting on the back elicited a yell of protest from the Owl of the Remove. It was very vigorous.

"Ow! Leave off, you beast! Yaroooh!"

"Feel better?" asked Bob.  
"Ow! Ow! Yes. Chuck it!" Grooh!"

"You eat too much, Billy!" said the captain severely.  
"Same old Billy! I shall have to take you in hand, now I've come home!"

"Ow!" said Bunter.  
"You ought to wallop the rotters in Belgium, didn't you, sir?" asked Coker, who was very keen on news of the war, having a relation in the Army himself.

"Begad, I did!" said the captain. "Figurez-vous—excuse me, I've been so in the habit of talking French over there, I drop into it—I mean, just imagine, there they were, thousands of them, stacked in the trenches before—before Valenciennes. French sent for me—"

"Field-Marshal French, sir?" exclaimed Coker.  
"Certainly! French sent for me. He said, 'They've got to be shifted, Bunter, and you're the man to do it!'"

"By Jove! Did he?"

"He did! I said, 'French, old man, rely on me!' Then I called to my men, and we charged—full speed—right into them!" said the captain, while the Greyfriars fellows fairly hung on his words. "A shell burst under my horse, blew him into smithereens—"

"Great Scott!"

"I was blown into the air, and came down—extraordinary, but a fact—right astride of a German Uhlan's charger that had lost his rider. I rode on just as if nothing had happened. Pass the cake!"

Coker passed the cake. Potter of the Fifth whispered that somebody had better pass the salt. But Potter was frowned down. Wonderful as the captain's story was—smacking a little of the Bunter variety, in fact—the juniors were resolved to credit it.

"On we went," resumed the captain, "top speed, the earth trembling under our hoofs—I mean the horses' hoofs, of course! The Uhlan captain rode at me. I landed right out—like that!"

"Yaroooh!" roared Coker.  
"Sorry! I didn't mean to hit your nose, Coker. I landed out, and he rolled from his horse. There was a rotter on my left. I swung round—like that!"

"Yow!" howled Billy Bunter, as the captain bumped into the coffee-cup he was just raising to his lips, and sent the coffee swamping over his chest. "Oh, crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then we went right through them," said the captain, "cutting them down right and left. Then the cannon-ball came and took off my left arm. In the excitement, I didn't notice it. Afterwards, when we got back, French looked at me. 'Where's your arm, Bunter?' he said. Then I noticed it for the first time, and went to have it bound up!"

"Oh!"

"M-m-my hat!"

"M-m-must have been exciting!" murmured Vernon-Smith.

"I believe you!" said the captain. "Thanks, I will have another cup of coffee! Then I shall have to be getting along, as it will be near time for calling-over!"

"Calling-over!" said Wharton. "You—you don't have calling-over in the hospitals, do you, sir?"

"I mean calling-over for you kids," said the captain hastily. The captain drank his final cup of coffee, and rose. "Gentlemen, you have done me well! I thank you! May you never be in want of a good feed when you come home from the wars—ahem!—with only one arm. I shall remember this handsome spread for a long time. I hope that you will remember it, too; I think you will, in fact."

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Hear, hear!"

"I particularly recommend my nephew Billy to you," went on the captain. "Billy is given to being fat and lazy."

You would oblige me by looking after him a little and making him buck up. Give him plenty of exercise—he needs it—and when he slouches, knock his chin up—like that!"

"Yarooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lemme see, I've left my gloves in your study, Billy. Come along!"

Bunter left the feed reluctantly. He was not finished yet.

"And I've got something in an envelope for you, too, Billy," added the captain.

"Oh, good!" said Bunter, the vision of a ten-pound note dancing before his eyes. "This way, uncle!"

"We're all going to see you off, sir," said Coker.

"Yes, rather!"

"The rutherfordness is terrific!"

"Right-ho!" said the captain. "Come along, all of you!"

The crowd of fellows accompanied the captain from the Rag. Vernon-Smith managed to get close to him as they went up to the Remove passage, and whispered to him—a proceeding that the other fellows viewed with some astonishment. As they passed the door of the study belonging to Wibley, Morgan, and Micky Desmond, the captain paused, and put his hand on the door.

"Sure, that isn't the study, sir," said Micky; "the next one, s'ore!"

"I'm going in here," said the captain. "Take that, Billy!"

He slipped an envelope into Bunter's hand.

Then he entered No. 6 Study, closed the door behind him, and locked it. The fellows in the passage stared, as they heard the key turn in the lock. Why the captain should lock himself in an empty study was a mystery.

Billy Bunter opened the envelope with feverish fingers, in the full expectation of seeing a banknote inside. But there was no banknote.

"Good tip—what?" grinned the Bounder.

"Mean-my hat!"

"What's the matter?" asked Bob Cherry, surprised by the expression on Bunter's fat face.

"The rotter!" roared Bunter furiously.

"What! Who?"

"The—the spoofing beast! The—the rotter! I'll—I'll—

Oh, my hat! The beast!"

The juniors stared at the paper in Bunter's hand. It certainly wasn't a banknote. It was a single sheet of paper with a few lines on it, in the well-known handwriting of Wibley of the Remove. And the lines ran:

"What price Bunter's uncle now!—Signed, UNCLE

WIBLEY, alias Captain Bunter."

There was a general gasp.

"Wibley!"

"Impossible!"

"Wibley, the spoofer—"

"The rotter!"

"The cheeky young cad!" yelled Coker. "My hat! 'Taint a captain at all. It's—its young Wibley! My word! Have him out!"

Bang, bang, bang! resounded on the door of Wibley's study. From within came the sound of a chuckle. Wibley of the Remove was calmly changing his clothes there, and washing off his make-up; the part of "Captain Bunter" having been played out to the end.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### After the Feast the Reckoning!

"HAVE him out!" roared Coker.

Bang, bang, bang!

But the study door did not open. The juniors thumped and hammered on it in vain. All the fellows in the passage were furious. They had been "spoofed" in the most complete manner and the remembrance of how they had made much of the pretended wounded warrior exasperated them. They wanted vengeance, and they wanted it badly.

But Wibley did not open the door till he had finished changing.

Then he turned the key back, and the door swung open, and the crowd of exasperated fellows swarmed into the doorway.

Wibley was in Etons again, rubbing the last traces of the make-up from his grinning face. On the table lay his khaki clothes and putties and flat cap. He met the furious looks cast upon him with a cheerful grin.

"How do you like Bunter's uncle?" he demanded.

"You spoofer!"

"You cheeky rotter!"

"Rag him!"

"Bump him!"

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"Here, hold on!" exclaimed the Bounder, pushing his way through the angry juniors. "You've been done, and it serves you right. You were down on us because we didn't believe in Bunter's uncle, and we showed him up. I suppose you don't believe in his uncle now?"

"So you were in it, too?" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Certainly," said the Bounder coolly. "It was Wib's idea, but I helped him. We dressed him up in the old barn, and then he took the cab here. We meant to show you that Bunter was spoofing you about his giddy uncle, and we've done it."

"What-ho!" said Wibley. "My hat! My right arm feels quite stiff. It's no joke to have your arm fastened down inside your coat for two or three hours, I can tell you."

"So that's how you did it?" growled Wharton.

"Of course! You didn't think I could take my arm on and off like a hat, did you?"

Some of the juniors grinned. They could see now, too, that Wibley's teeth were intact. He had simply "blotted" out the teeth that were supposed to be missing, the black patches looking like empty spaces inside the mouth—the usual trick in making-up.

And the scars had been washed from his face now. Only a little of the brick-red complexion was left clinging to his ears and under his chin.

"I must say you did it well," said Nugent. "But we ought to have guessed. You've played these tricks on us before."

"You would have guessed if you hadn't believed that fat spoofer's yarn about his Army uncle," said Vernon-Smith. "We've shown that up, anyway."

"Yes, rather!" chuckled Wibley. "Bunter recognised me as his uncle— Ha, ha, ha! He doesn't know his own uncle by sight!"

"Let's hear what Bunter has to say about that!" grunted Coker; and he jerked the fat junior into the study. "Now, Bunter—"

"Loggo!"

"What did you mean by saying that painted idiot was your uncle?" roared Coker.

"I—I didn't—"

"What?"

"He said he was my uncle!" gasped Bunter. "I didn't say so, I—I didn't know he was spoofing, of course! Loggo! Of course, he ain't my uncle—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't you know your own uncle by sight?" roared Johnny Bull.

"Ye-es, of course I—I do—"

"Then, if you know your uncle by sight, how could you take Wibley for your uncle?" demanded Peter Todd.

"I—I— You—you see—" stammered Bunter. Bunter was generally rosy with a prompt "whopper," but for once he was at a loss. It was not easy to explain how he had taken the disguised junior for his uncle.

"You were spoofing!" roared Coker. "You haven't an uncle. You've done me out of a feed with a whopper. What?"

"Oh, really, Coker—"

"All the same, it was rotten to spoof us like that," said Squiff. "You shouldn't have made up as a soldier, Wibley. That's past the limit."

"Put it down to Bunter," said Wibley cheerfully. "It he hadn't said his uncle was a wounded captain, I shouldn't have had to show him up."

"M-m-my uncle is a wounded captain, you rotter!" howled Bunter, alarmed by the looks the juniors cast towards him. "He's—he's in hospital, just as I told you. I—I—"

"Then how was it you didn't know Wibley wasn't your uncle?" demanded Peter Todd.

"You—you see, he was in khaki, and—and wounded—I mean, he pretended to be wounded, and—and—and I haven't seen my uncle since I was a kid," burst out Bunter, seeing light, as it were. "I hardly know him by sight. I—I thought he was changed, you know; but then, that scar on his chivvy. I—I haven't seen him since I was four years old, you see, so I don't remember him very well. And when that rotter said he was my uncle, of course I—I thought he was."

"My only hat!" exclaimed the Bounder, in amazement. "You're not sticking to the yarn, after we've shown you up, Bunter?"

"It's true!" roared Bunter, feeling the ground safe under his feet now. "Suppose you chaps had an uncle you hadn't seen for ten years, and then a chap came along pretending to be him, you'd be taken in—"

"Something in that," said Bob Cherry.

"And you know it was in the paper," persisted Bunter. "So it was!" agreed Nugent.

"The—the rotter took me in! And I think he ought to

he jolly well ragged for passing himself off as my uncle who's lying in hospital this minute," said Bunter pathetically. "Think of him—lying in his cot, covered with bandages and things, and that beast making fun of him!"

"Shame!"  
"Oh, draw it mild!" said Wibley, beginning to be a little alarmed at the turn affairs were taking. "We know jolly well Bunter was spoofing about his uncle. He hasn't an uncle."

"Rats!"  
"I don't believe there's a Captain Bunter at all, really," said Wibley.

"It was in the paper, as I!"  
"Well, anyway, he's no relation of Bunter's, or Bunter would know him by sight," said Wibley.

"Not if he hasn't seen him for ten years."  
"Oh, that's only another whopper!"  
"Of course it is," said Vernon-Smith. "If you fellows let that fat bouncer spoon you again with his precious yarn, you're bigger asses than I took you for. We've taken all this trouble to open your eyes—"

"It's a rotten shame!" said Bunter. "My p-p-poor uncle is lying wounded in hospital, and that rotter makes fun of him! It's caddish!"

"Shame!"  
"Rag the bouncer!"  
"Bump him!"

"Here, hold on!" shouted Wibley, dodging round the table. "I tell you—"

"You've told us enough!" growled Coker. "Collar him! We'll teach him not to spoof us again. Collar the cheeky cad!"

Wibley was promptly collared. Vernon-Smith loyally rushed to his assistance, and he was collared with equal promptness. The Removites grew angry at the trick that had been played; and they credited Bunter's explanation, which certainly was plausible, enough—and, as a matter of fact, they were feeling decidedly sore at the way they had been spoofed.

They had cheered the wounded warrior; they had made much of him, they had embraced him, and all the time it was Wibley, pulling their leg. It was no wonder that they were exasperated.

Wibley and Vernon-Smith were "in for it." They resisted stoutly, but their resistance was not of much avail. The study was crammed with incensed juniors, and they ragged the two practical jokers without mercy.

By the time they had finished, they felt that they were fully avenged. As for the spoofers, they felt as if they had been through a threshing-machine.

When the raggers, satisfied at last, crowded out of the study, Wibley and Vernon-Smith sat upon the carpet, and blinked dazedly at one another.

They were tattered and torn, their collars and ties gone, their hair looked like mops, they had a separate ache in every separate bone, and they gasped for breath.

"Oh, crums!" gurgled Wibley at last. "What—what a brano! Oh!"

"Ow, ow, ow!" mumbled the Bouncer.  
"Lot of good it is trying to pull the wool from their eyes!" groaned Wibley. "They might have been decently grateful, considering all the trouble we've taken."

"Ow, ow, ow!"  
"What for, as if I'd been under a motor-car. Oh, dear!"  
"I feel as if I'd been under a steam-hammer!" groaned the Bouncer. "Ow, ow, ow!"

"Blessed if I'll take any trouble like that again!"  
"Same here! Groo-hoo!"

Billy Bunter blinked into the study at the two dilapidated and disconsolate spoofers.

"I say, you fellows—"  
They glared at him.  
"I say, under the circumstances, you know, I think you might do the decent thing," said Bunter. "I want to send something to my uncle in hospital."

"What!"  
"After what you've done, it would be only decent to lend me—"

Vernon-Smith and Wibley jumped up as if moved by the same spring, and bounded towards the Owl of the Remove. But Bunter did not wait. It was only too evident what they intended to lend him. The fat junior scudded away just in time. And Wibley and the Bouncer made their way dolefully to the Remove dormitory for a much-needed change.

### THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER. Coker's Little Game!

THAT noble attempt to open the eyes of the Remove on the subject of Bunter's uncle had been an egregious failure. The Bouncer had to acknowledge it, and after the terrific handling he had received he did not feel inclined for any more attempts in the same direction. Wibley was of the same opinion; and they gave Bunter his head, so to speak.

Bunter's uncle, in fact, was going stronger than ever. All the fellows were down on the two practical jokers who had made his wounded warrior uncle into a joke, and they showed it; by additional sympathy towards Bunter, Wibley and the Bouncer received reproachful looks and remarks. Alanzo Todd gave them quite a long lecture on the subject, pointing out at great length what his Uncle Benjamin would have thought of their conduct. All the Remove agreed that they had acted very badly, and were not slow in saying so.

Indeed, opinion was running so strongly in favour of Bunter that the Owl of the Remove went to the length of suggesting a general subscription for his uncle. Bunter believed in striking the iron while it was hot.

"I'll tell you what, you fellows," said Bunter, blinking into No. 1 Study the day after the visit of Uncle Wibley. "I've got a jolly good idea. My uncle's in a rather serious state. Now, you expect to take a good bit on Saturday for the matinee, don't you?"  
"We hope to," agreed Wharton.

"You're thinking of showing it all into the Courtfield Territorial Fund, I understand?"

"That's the idea."  
"Well, I suggest that it should be handed over to my uncle instead," said Bunter boldly.

"What?"  
"You see, charity begins at home," explained Bunter. "My uncle isn't—ahem!—rich, and he only has his pay. Well, he'll have to have a new wooden leg, and he ought to have the best wooden leg that money can buy, oughtn't he?"  
"Certainly," said Nugent.

"Well, then, never mind the Territorial Fund. Just raise the money for my uncle instead," said Bunter, his eyes glistening behind his spectacles. "Think of what a comfort it would be to him—lying in hospital with a Russian bayonet in his leg!"

"A what?"  
"I—I mean a German shell," said Bunter hastily—"that is to say, a bullet. You ought to back up Greyfriars fellows, you know—and my uncle's the uncle of a Greyfriars fellow—me! Charity begins at home, doesn't it? If you raise five or six pounds at the performance, you see—"

Harry Wharton shook his head.  
"That can't be done, Banty. That's for the Territorial Fund. But if your uncle's really in want of a wooden leg—"

"They've amputated his leg," said Bunter sorrowfully.  
"Well, we might allot a percentage of the takings," said Wharton, thoughtfully. "Say, about twenty-five per cent. That ought to make a good little sum."

"Well, that's better than nothing," said Bunter. "I—I'll write to my uncle at once and tell him. He—he'll be awfully grateful. And if you could make it fifty per cent. he'd be

I have recently received the following communication from one of my many Hampshire readers, and proceed to give it full publication:

"Dear Mr. Editor,—I am writing to you upon a matter in which my chums and I have long been interested—viz., the reproduction of those stories which dealt with Harry Wharton's earlier school days. Surely it would not be impossible for you to reprint these stories, my, in the form of a halfpenny book? I feel confident that very few of us do you would have a large and loyal following.

"I feel certain that I do not stand alone in this matter; and to those of us who never had the opportunity years ago of reading their grand yarns, a reproduction of these would be a tremendous boon. Kindly let me have a reply on your Chat page as early as possible.—Your sincere reader,

GERALD K."

I thank you for your letter, Gerald K. Such a step as you suggest, however, is too serious to adopt without due deliberation. I am very much afraid, therefore, your wish must remain ungratified; but should I receive many hundreds of letters backing up your idea, I would certainly do my best, as heretofore, to meet the wants of my clumps. In the event of your appeal being endorsed by readers all over the country, I will publish a definite announcement in THE MAGNET Library in a few weeks.

THE EDITOR.

more grateful still. By the way, suppose you were to advance the money to me now, and I could send it on to him at once."  
 "You'll have to wait till Saturday, father," said Nugent.  
 "We haven't the money till we've taken it at the doors. We shall count up the takings in the common-room afterwards, and then you can have your check."  
 "Oh, all right," said Bunter, considerably disappointed.  
 "I'll wait till Saturday."

And he rolled away disconsolately, and did not roll into the tuckshop.  
 All the members of the Remove Dramatic Society agreed at once to the suggestion of devoting twenty-five per cent. of the takings to Bunter's wounded uncle. They felt that it was the right thing to do; and, besides, it was a good reply to the insinuations of Wibley and the Bounder. It showed them what the Remove thought on the subject. Those two members of the society, of course, objected, but they were frowned down at once.

In fact, they were not allowed to object. At the first words they uttered on the subject their voices were drowned in a hail of condemnation.

"You chouse it, you rotters!" said Bob Cherry, in his direct way. "You've acted rottenly, anyway, and it's time for you to shut up!"

"But—"

"Ring off!"

"But, I say—"

"Shut up!" shouted the whole dramatic society with one voice; and the matter had to be dropped.

Vernon-Smith and Wibley were of their own opinion still, but that was regarded generally as mere obstinacy, and the Remorites were not slow to express their opinion of such obstinacy.

Meanwhile, the preparations for the performance of the celebrated comedy, "Give 'em Socks!" were going forward in great style.

The amateur carpenters had finished making the scenes, and the rehearsals had been almost incessant.

Nearly all the school had promised to come to the show. The object was a good one, and the masters approved of it. Several of the masters had taken half-crown reserved seats already, and the prefects were dunned into taking seats. It was explained to them that they weren't bound to come to the performance if they didn't care for it; but they ought to take seats for the good of the cause, and most of them yielded to the force of that argument.

Quite a little sum was raised for reserved seats; but the bulk of the takings, of course, would be at the doors. There was some discussion as to who the doorkeepers should be. Big fellows were required for the post, to make sure that everybody paid for admission. Bolsover major and Bob Wherry seemed both in the last, so they were not available—Squiff and Johnny Bull were performers—in fact, all the fighting-men of the Remove were to be on the stage. It was Squiff who made a valuable suggestion when the matter was discussed.

"Coker!" he suggested.

"Coker!" repeated the juniors.

"Why not?" said the Australian junior. "Coker wants to have a hand in the show, and there's no room for him on the stage. He can't act, but he's just built for a door-keeper."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good idea," said Harry Wharton. "We'll ask Coker."

And Wharton and Bob Cherry proceeded to the great Coker's study to ask him in their politest manner. It was Friday evening, the day before the performance. Coker and Potter and Greene were in their study, and they were laughing and talking when the juniors presented themselves. They left off talking quite suddenly as the tap came at the door, and Wharton and Bob Cherry looked in.

"Hallo, here they are!" murmured Potter.

"Just talking about you kids," said Coker blandly.

"How's the play going on?"

"Topping!" said Wharton, looking at the Fifth-Formers a little suspiciously. He could not quite understand the merry mood of Coker & Co.

"Glad to hear it," said Coker amicably. "I think it will be stunning myself, especially the last scene—what?"

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

"Yes, it will be a regular shriek," agreed Wharton, puzzled.

"I don't quite see what you are cackling at!"

"Oh, we're cackling in anticipation!" said Coker.

"You'll be there?" asked Bob.

"Of course. We wouldn't miss it for worlds."

"If you're thinking of playing the giddy goat," said Bob suspiciously, "just remember that the masters and the prefects will be there. They've nearly all taken reserved seats. If you're thinking of raiding the stage, or any fatheaded game like that, you'd better chuck up the idea at once, Coker."

"We want you to help us, Coker," said Wharton pacifically. Coker's expression changed.

"Oh! You've got a little common-sense after all! You want me to play the leading part? In that case—"  
 "Shorn!" Not exactly the leading part," said Wharton, with a cough. "Bob's doing the role of Captain Flatfussen."

"Well, I'd take the British Prisoner with pleasure!"

"That's Wibley's little bit."

"If you're thinking of putting me in as an Uhlan, you can go and eat coke."

"Ah! We weren't thinking of that!"

"Then what do you want me to do?"

"Take the money at the door," explained Wharton.

"What!" roared Coker.

"You see, you're a big chap, and you'd be able to keep the fags in order. I thought you'd like to make yourself useful."

"You cheeky young sweep!" said Coker.

"You'll do it!" asked Bob.

"Rata! No!"

"Now, look here, Coker, you'll have nothing to do, and you might be obliging," urged Harry.

"You can't act, of course, but you'd make a splendid door-keeper!"

"I'm afraid I should miss the fun in the last scene, if I did," said Coker, recovering his good-humour, and winking at his chums. "I don't want to miss that!"

"You wouldn't miss it. After all the audience are in, you could go to your seat, you know."

"Sorry—it can't be done. I'll play Captain Flatfussen if you like—"

"Oh, don't be funny!"

And the Remorites retired. Coker grinned at his companions as the door closed.

"I rather fancy that last scene will be funnier than they reckon on," he murmured.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You've got all the things!" asked Potter.

"Yes, rather!" Coker opened a large box. "Look here! Complete outfit for three. They came this afternoon from old Lazarus. I'm only hiring them, of course!"

Potter and Greene grinned as they looked at the contents of the box. It contained three uniforms and three huge spiked helmets. Coker closed the box again and locked it.

"Mum's the word!" he said. "I rather think the cheeky young bounders will be sorry they declined the services of the Fifth Form Stage Club in this show. But it's up to us to help, and the last scene will be as funny as anybody could want. But mum's the word!"

And Potter and Greene agreed that mum was the word.

## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Unrehearsed!

**A**FTER lessons the next morning, Harry Wharton & Co. were very busy.

The lecture-hall was at their disposal for the afternoon performance; and as soon as they were free, they started preparations for the matinee.

The dais at the upper end of the room was to be used for the stage; and the curtain was rigged up with great success, and, as Bob Cherry admiringly remarked, it really went up and down. By a skilful arrangement of scenes, the interior of a French chateau was depicted on the stage. At the back was the canvas wall, with the window, through which Captain Flatfussen was to make his comic escape. Bob Cherry was very careful to arrange a couple of mattresses there for him to fall on. The open space behind the screened-off stage was the green-room, and the door at the upper end of the lecture-hall gave access to it, the front of the hall being completely barred off by the screens and the curtain.

Very soon after dinner the preparations had been completed. Then the members of the cast proceeded to make up for their parts.

The matinee had been timed for three o'clock, and considerably before that hour the audience began to come in. Hobson of the Shell had kindly consented to act as door-keeper, as Coker was not available. Coker, indeed, was not visible among the audience that poured in. He had declared that he wouldn't miss the show for worlds, but he did not seem to be in a hurry to come.

Hobson of the Shell performed his duties as a door-keeper admirably, vigorously kicking out fags who tried to slip in on the nod. That matinee was certainly well supported; fellows of all Forms came marching in, paying their sixpences at the door. Hobson's money-box was soon clinking away merrily. Certainly more fellows came in for the performance

of "Give 'em Socks," than had ever turned up for a lecture in the hall.

The cheap seats were soon pretty well filled, and close on three o'clock, the distinguished part of the audience began to arrive for the reserved seats—Mr. Queck, and Mr. Prout, and Wingate, the captain of the school, and several of the prefects of the Sixth.

The actors regarded the filling hall, through chinks in the curtain and scores, with great satisfaction. The fact that Coker, Potter and Greene were not in the audience did not strike their attention. There were a good many of the Fifth, and it was hard to pick out individuals in the great crowd. As a matter of fact, they had forgotten all about Coker. They had more important matters to think of than Coker of the Fifth.

"Time!" said Harry Wharton, at last.

As a matter of fact, it was more than time, and some of the fags at the back of the hall were beginning to stamp on the floor. But the actors were ready at last. Bob Cherry, in the spiked helmet and spiked moustaches of Captain Flatfussen, looked really terrific. Nagent, in a tight-fitting black coat and a pointed beard, as the proprietor of the invaded chateau, looked convincingly French. Wibley was first-rate in khaki, with a bandaged head. And there were any number of Prussian soldiers and Tommy Atkinses. Morgan, the musical junior, was entrusted with the mouth organ for the thrilling scene when "The Campbells Are Coming" should be heard in the distance.

The curtain went up.

There was a buzz of applause as Captain Flatfussen strode across the stage, clinking his sword and his spurs, and twirling his huge moustache. Certainly he looked very like a Prussian captain—a sight for gods and men. And his German exclamations caused loud laughter—especially his "Donner und Blitzen und Sauerkraut!"

The play went with a bang, right from the beginning. Perhaps it was not art; but it was very lively.

The number of unhappy Belgians ordered to be shot by the Prussian captain was terrific. And in the scene where the British Prisoner appeared, there was prolonged applause. The man in khaki was lined up to be shot, and comic-looking German troopers levelled their rifles, when the prisoner broke loose, and sailed in with his fists, and there was terrific fighting. And the audience howled applause when the British trooper walked off, leaving Captain Flatfussen and his men all floored.

Then came the scene when the infuriated Prussian captain ordered the inhabitants of the chateau to be shot en masse, and the chateau to be set on fire. The fate of the wretched victims trembled in the balance, when behind the scenes came the strains of a mouth organ, playing: "The Campbells Are Coming!"

"Donnerwetter!" roared Captain Flatfussen. "Was ist das?"

"Die Engländer!" howled his terror-stricken followers.

Then a British cheer, and the Gordon Highlanders rushed in, and the ruffianly Uhlans rushed out. Captain Flatfussen made a bound for the window, and squeezed through. But his excessive girth impeded him, and he stuck half-way.

The sight of the Prussian captain stuck in the window, with his legs waving in the air, was the climax. He was smitten with all sorts of things, as he wriggled in the window, and the Gordon Highlanders, entering into the spirit of the thing, smote hard, and the yells of the unhappy Prussian were not all feigned.

"Ach! Donnerwetter! Go easy, you chumps!" roared Captain Flatfussen, and the audience yelled with laughter.

Under a shower of smites, the fat captain wriggled out through the window, and disappeared.

Then the British troops lined up to sing "God Save the King," which was to be the thrilling close. According to the play, the Germans were defeated, and were not expected back. But at the finish, the play did not go according to programme.

For just as the rescuers were about to begin the Anthem, three terrific-looking Germans in spiked helmets, bigger than any who had previously appeared on the stage, rushed in from the wings.

Evidently reinforcements had arrived—unexpectedly.

The attack took the British entirely by surprise. The charge of the spiked helmets simply routed them. They were not looking for anything of the kind, and the lot of Germans smote them right and left, and Gordon Highlanders and Dublin Fusiliers rolled over one another in wild confusion.

"Give 'em socks!" roared the leader of the German reinforcements, and the voice of Horace Coker of the Fifth was recognised.

"Oh! Oh! Ah!"

"Stoppit!"

"What the dickens—"

"Yaroch!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 352.

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the audience, in great delight. It was real fighting at last. And the Germans appeared to be having it all their own way; the surprise was complete.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Squiff. "It's that beast Coker?"

"Go for him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go for 'em!" yelled Harry Wharton, scrambling up furiously. "It's Coker! Down with the Fifth!"

"Hurrah!"

The sudden eruption of the three Germans had completely spoiled the scene. Instead of the dramatic close that had been planned, all was confusion, and the audience were shrieking with laughter. But the Removites were not thinking about the play now. They were thinking about vengeance on Horace Coker.

Coker & Co. in that surprise attack, had floored them—but as the enemy retreated chuckling, the Removites scrambled up and piled on them.

Coker had intended to execute a masterly retreat after the surprise attack; but he did not have time. Bob Cherry took the Fifth-Formers in the rear, and the Gordon Highlanders and Dublin Fusiliers piled on them, and there was a struggle which was really the real thing, and not acting at all. The audience were all on their feet now, the masters looking grave—as grave as they could—but the boys all yelling to the actors to "Go for 'em!" Coker, Potter, and Greene were dragged across the stage, bumped, and rolled over, and ragged till they roared.

"Hurrah!" roared the audience. "Give 'em socks! Hurrah!"

It was not part of the programme, but it was a very telling scene! The three Germans were handled as if they had been real Germans, and they felt as if they had encountered real British troops by the time they were done with. Bumped and bruised, and breathless, they were hurled one after another through the window at the back of the stage, and rolled over one another with loud yells—not in German.

They did not come back!

Harry Wharton & Co., looking considerably dishevelled, and very breathless, lined up, and gave the National Anthem after all; what time three gasping and dilapidated Fifth-Formers crawled away from behind the scenes, feeling as if life were not worth living.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Coker, when he got out into the passage, with his helmet gone, his moustaches in his mouth, and his uniform in rags and tatters. "I—I say; we—we didn't make much of a success of it, after all."

"Grooooh!" groaned Potter. "I've got a bump to every square inch! Ow—ow!"

"These blessed uniforms will have to be paid for!" stuttered Coker. "They ain't worth much now! Oh, crumbs!"

"And you can pay for 'em, you thundering ass!" howled Greene. "Nice thing you've let us in for, haven't you, you thumping chump?"

"I—I intended to retreat after bowling them over, of course."

"Fathood!"

"Ass!"

"Catch us backing you up any more, you thumping idiot!" groaned Potter. "Ow! My head! Yew! My leg! Oh, krickey!"

And they crawled away disconsolately, while from the lecture-hall rang the last strains of the National Anthem, and loud cheers.

## THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Halves!

"QUITE a success!" said Bob Cherry.

"Yes, rather!"

"The successfulness was terrific!"

"In spite of Coker!" chuckled Harry Wharton.

"He came jolly near mucking it up; but as it turned out, it really provided a thrilling scene for the finish!"

"Very thrilling for Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The members of the Remove Dramatic Society had met in the junior common-room after the matinee. Helson of the Sixth had brought in the money box, and the juniors counted up the takings. Billy Bunter looked on with his eyes gleaming behind his spectacles.

A quarter of the takings were for Bunter's uncle—through the medium of Bunter—and the Owl of the Remove was quite dazzled by the vision of unlimited funds that floated before his eyes.

Vernon-Smith was looking on, too, with a peculiar smile upon his face as he glanced at Bunter. He had a folded newspaper under his arm.

"How much?" asked a dozen voices, as Harry Wharton finished counting the sixpences in Hobson's box.

"A hundred sixpences," said Harry. "Then there's ten shillings in coppers. That makes three quid!"

"Good!"

"Then the reserved seats have fetched in two pounds," said Harry. "Grand total, five quid!"

"Hoora!"

"The hoorayfulness is terrific," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "Five esteemed quids for the august Territorials of Courtfield!"

"Jolly good!" said the Bounder. "More than I expected! 'Tain't every junior Form that can send a fiver to the Territorial!"

"Oh, rooily, Smithy," said Bunter, "that ain't all going, you know! Fifty per cent. is for my uncle!"

"Twenty-five!" said Wharton.

"Well, you see, twenty-five per cent. will only be twenty-five bob," said the Owl of the Remove. "You can't get a wooden leg for twenty-five bob!"

"Bogad!" said Lord Maslovecere. "Let's have a whip round, and make it up to something solid for Bunter's uncle!"

"Good egg!"

"I say, you fellows, that's a jolly good idea!" said Billy Bunter. "My uncle will be awfully pleased!"

"Well, there's the twenty-five per cent.," said Harry Wharton, pushing twenty-five shillings in sixpences towards the fat junior. "That settles that—"

"Hold on!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Eh?"

The Bounder reached out, and knocked back Billy Bunter's fat hand as it was about to close on the twenty-five per cent. Bunter blinked at him furiously.

"Look here, Smithy—"

"Cheese it, Smithy!"

"Hold on!" repeated the Bounder. "Before you hand over the cash to Bunter, there's something for you to see in this newspaper!"

"Blow the newspaper!"

"Something about Bunter's uncle," added the Bounder grimly.

Billy Bunter looked a little alarmed.

"I—I say, you fellows, gimme that cash, and I'll go and send it off now!" he exclaimed. "I—I—"

"No, you won't," said the Bounder. "Not till the fellows have seen this paragraph in the paper, my fat tulip!"

"Blessed if I can see what you're driving at, Smithy!" said Bob Cherry, puzzled. "What is the giddy paragraph, anyway?"

"Look at it! Read it out!"

Vernon-Smith handed the paper to Bob Cherry, indicating a marked paragraph. Bob glanced at it, and gave a shout.

"Great Scott!"

"Read it out!" said the Bounder.

And Bob Cherry, after a glare at Billy Bunter, read out:

"(Owing to a printer's error, the name of Captain Hunter, wounded in the fighting at Mons, was printed as Captain Bunter. We are glad to learn that Captain Hunter is progressing favourably.)"

"Ce-captain Hunter!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Hunter! My hat!"

"Not Hunter!"

"Where's that fat spoofer?"

Billy Bunter was making for the door. In his haste to escape he had even forgotten the twenty-five per cent.

"Stop him!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Ow! I say, you fellows— Leggo! Oh! Yah!"

"Yank him back!"

"Collar him!"

A dozen hands were laid upon the Owl of the Remove— not gently. He was yanked back into the common-room.

The juniors gathered round him in a threatening circle.

They knew now that they had been "done." Evidently Captain Bunter was not Billy Bunter's uncle, since he did not exist at all.

"Now, you fat oyster, what have you got to say?" demanded Wibley.

"I—I—I—"

"What price your uncle now?" grinned the Bounder.

"Oh, really, you know—"

"You're spoofed us!" shouted Bob Cherry. "Where have you been sending the things for your precious uncle— what?"

"I—I—I—"

"Down his neck, I fancy!" grinned the Bounder.

"Bump him!"

"I—I say, you fellows— Leggo!" roared Bunter. "I haven't—I didn't—I wasn't— Yaroo!"

"Confess!" roared Johnny Bull. "Make the rotter own up! Pour the ink down his neck! Now, you fat load, have you got an uncle or haven't you got an uncle?"

"Ow! Yes! No! I—I—"

"Bump him till he owns up!"

"You—ow!" yelled Bunter, as he came into violent contact with the floor. "Yoo—hooh! Leggo! I—I was mistaken—"

"Mistaken!"

"You—yes! He ain't my uncle!" wailed Bunter. "I—I thought he was, you know! Leggo!"

"And all the stuff you've been pretending to send him!" howled Squiff. "You've been scoffing it all—what?"

"Yow! No! Oh!"

"Then what have you done with it?"

"I—I—I only had half!" groaned Bunter. "I—I only—"

"Then where's the other half?"

"Sammy had it!" spluttered Bunter. "He made me go halves! Ow!"

"My hat!"

"What did we tell you?" chortled Wibley.

"I—I say, you fellows, it—it was only a joke! I—I—I— Yaroooh! Help! Fire! Murder! Oh crumbs!"

Billy Bunter's experiences for the next five minutes could only be described—as Hurree Janset Ram Singh described them—as terrific. If he had never reflected before that honesty was the best policy, that well-known fact was borne in upon his mind now.

By the time the indignant Removites had finished with him Bunter was not quite certain whether he was all in one piece. As the fat junior lay gasping on the floor, a fat face and a large pair of spectacles glimmered in at the door.

"I say, is Billy here?"

It was Sammy Bunter. The Removites made a rush for him, and he was yanked headlong into the common-room.

"Here, leggo! Wharrer you at?" yelled Sammy.

"Bunter's here!" panted Bob Cherry. "He's had his wack, and you're going halves with him, as usual!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, leggo! Shut up! Chuck it! Oh, crickey!"

Bump! Bump! Bump!

Sammy had claimed halves, and Sammy was given halves. Indeed, he felt as if he were in halves himself, or quarters, by the time his punishment was over. When the indignant juniors left them, two wretched and dragged fat youths limped to their feet, and blinked at one another through dusty spectacles.

"Oh, crumbs!" said Sammy.

"It's all up, then! I always said you were a silly fool, Billy!"

But Billy Bunter only replied with a groan. He did not feel equal to making any other reply.

Billy Bunter did not touch that twenty-five per cent., after all. The takings for the Remove dramatic performance went wholly to their original destination—the Courtfield Territorials. And nothing more was heard at Greyfriars of Bunter's uncle!



## Our Grand Fellers Lord Serial Story.



## THE UNCONQUERABLE.

A Magnificent Story of Thrilling Adventure  
By SIDNEY DREW.

### Monsters of the Deep.

The smaller boat had too long a start. The lights grew brighter. "Ching-Lung had a very shrewd idea of what they were.

"Hush!" he said. "Let her drift, Rupert. Is it not too beautiful?"

Thurston smothered his laughter. They had found their lost Gan-Waga. He was floating there, sound asleep, with Schwartz the dog reposing on his chest. Behind him trailed a piece of board with four candle-ends burning on it. Gan did not mean to be run down if he could help it. The other boat came up.

"Lead me a please, and O'll kill at afore ut has toime to escape," said Barry. "Did ye ever see the loike in all yer natural? Ugh! Phwat an ugly monsther of the dape, dape say! And fancy ut carryin' electric lights about wid ut! Let me hit ut wance—only wance—wid this stretcher, and I'll let ye off all the munny ye don't owe me!"

"Hold hard! By honey," said Prout, "what's hangin' on to the end of that other string?"

He leaned over the side, and hauled gently at a cord tied to the end of the board.

"Anything on it, Tom?" asked Ching-Lung.

"It feels like it, sir," said Prout. "Yes, it's a box, sir! I wonder what the little yaller thief has pinched now?" The sleeper did not awaken, and Schwartz the dog only blinked his sharp black eyes. It was a square, wooden box, with a hinged lid. Prout lifted it out.

"Souise me, if that's his purvisious for a long cruise, don't rob him of 'em!" said the boy'sun.

"Oh, have a look!" said Ching-Lung. "I'm rather curious."

They were all curious. The moon had dipped behind a cloud, and Gan-Waga's illuminations did not do much to dispel the gloom.

"If it's grub," said Prout, "he's got it wet and salty. I should think it must be diamond tararas, by the way he's fastened it up w' wire!"

"Has he robbed the strong-box and eloped with the spoons? Now I've got her, by honey! Open, Sesame! Now for the awful secret of the mysterious trunk!"

They were all standing up. Prout threw back the lid. The box held some sea-water, and as he could not see what else it contained, Prout put in his hand. He yelled; and so did Barry, Maddock, and Herr Schwartz. A dozen jets of ink-black fluid spouted upwards, and scores of writhing tentacles squirmed like a nest of adders. Gan-Waga awoke, tossed the dog into Ching-Lung's arms, uttered one fierce laugh of triumph, and dived, taking his illuminations with him.

"Hoo, hoo, hoo!" roared Hendrik and Hans. "Hoo, hoo, hoo! Hev ya cuttiewishes in dot box! Hoo, hoo, hoo!"

How Gan-Waga captured the curious creatures without making them shed their ink was his own secret. They had shed it now with a vengeance! Prout had greedily taken more than his full share, but Barry, Maddock, and Herr Schwartz had not been forgotten. Prout's face was as black as coal; the others were artistically spotted.

"Anybody accept do loans of some blotting-papers?" called the voice of Gan-Waga. "Oh, do percipets do loans of some blotting-papers!"

Then the placid surface of the water boiled up like a cauldron, and the moon shone out bright and clear. A great, dark shape rose into sight, and a column of vapour and water rose in the air, not twenty yards from the boats.

"Whales—whales!" shouted the Eskimo. "I tickles her, Chingy!"

### Among the Prawns and Lobsters—A Seal Hunt—Why Barry O'Rooney Favored—The Silent Tenant of the Cavern.

The leviathan did not await his puny foe, but promptly sounded. Gan-Waga soared up on the crest of the wave and slid down its glassy side. As the boats tossed and rocked Gan spluttered out his indignation. He said it was all the fault of Prout and Maddock, whose beautiful faces had scared away the creature. Ching-Lung hauled him aboard.

"I gets blubber to last fo' years, Chingy, if they note show de ole whaler their upflin counting-houses," sighed the Eskimo. "Dat whaler he never stop news till he hang him head against de Noef Poles. Oh, had 'naff drosdiful! I likes to kills them boths."

"You'd manage that more easily than you'd have managed to corpse the whale," said Ching-Lung. "Going to be good now—eh?"

"Goods, hunk?" snorted Gan-Waga. "Ooh, those awful faces! Why, I just have slice a yards of blubber offs him and he never feels it. I tireds and heart-broked, Chingy. Take homes yo' butterfals, tired boy. Takes me backs and patten me in my little cots."

"Are yo chaps staying out all night?" shouted the prince. "Yes, sir," answered Maddock. "There'd be murder afore mornin' if we was to go 'ome w' that object, souise me!"

"Ear, ear!" growled Prout viciously. "Them are true words, Ben, always providin' that it's murder to kill a hunsel, by honey."

So Ching-Lung pulled for the yacht, and the second boat with its inky-visaged occupants headed for Scarran Island. Gan-Waga chuckled softly to himself as he climbed the ladder.

"I glads dey nots coming homes, Chingy," he said. "When dey do comes I tink I wear a suits of armours. He, ho, ho! I nots mean to waster those butterfals sniffy eggs on yo', neithers, so why yo lose yo' tempers? Nevvers minds, I forgives yo' dis time, but when yo' do it twice, and repeats it, Chingy, dey'll want another prince in Kwai-hal. Ohni, ohni! What a pity dat whales see oles Tom and Benjamin."

Gan slept in the refrigerator safe and unmolested, with no haunting vision of Herr Schwartz to disturb his slumbers. It was another glorious morning. Kennedy had steered the Fatality into a rock-bound bay, where she lay mirrored in the placid water. Far below they could see great fish roaming over the woody bottom, while shoals of smaller ones swam nearer the surface, chased by the hungry gulls.

"Now, what we do to-days, Chingy, hunk? We go and see if dey washed de black offs, hunk?" asked the Eskimo.

"Not this child," said Ching-Lung. "I'm going to take it easy, and you can take it just how you like."

"Yo' nots go ashore, Chingy? Yo' nots mean dat, ole laizfals, surely?"

"But I do. I intend to lounge and read a book. Don't get into mischief, and don't be late for tea. That reminds me, I have a fancy for prawns."

"Hoo! I getses yo' some prawnes," grinned Gan-Waga. "I attacks de furious prawnes in their dens, and wrestles wid dem. Hi! Where yo' wases, Schwartz? We offs to ferret outs de prawnes. Waits while I finds a net and a bag, dogges!"

Gan knew that the prawns would be lurking in the rocky pool at the ebb of the tide. With a parcel of something to eat on his head, and the net and bag on his back, he lowered himself into the water. The dog leapt in after him, and they swam across the bay side by side.

Ching-Lung found the novel very dry and prosy, and finally he grew disgusted, and kicked it overboard.

"What a show of temper!" said Thurston. "Wasn't the book amusing?"

"It wasn't, and if I had the author here I'd pitch him after it!" said his Highness. "Are yo game for a swim, Ra?"

"Not at present. I may take a stroll ashore in an hour or so, for I promised to take Hendrick's portrait."

"I'll see you up at the cave, then, later on, most likely. Until then I'll say farewell, old stick-in-the-mud."

Taking the dingy, Ching-Lung pulled to the little landing-stage, and made his way up the winding path to the head of the cliffs. Then he lay down on the heather to take a sun-bath. Hearing a dog barking, he looked over, and saw a figure standing knee-deep in a pool. Gan-Waga and Schwartz were having rare fun with the prawns and rock-fish, and an occasional exciting chase after a stray conger.

Gan threw the wet bag over his shoulder, and began to wade up a shallow creek. Every plunge of the net under the hanging seaweeds brought some kind of a reward. He sat down on a rock with three lobsters flapping their tails in the net, to recover his breath.

"Now yo' be carefuls, Shortsey," he said to the dog. "Cos if a big butterfals lobster gets hold ob yo' noses, he makes yo' hollows. It deepens furthers in, and I tink ye catches a big lobsters. Hoo! What ho, hunk? S-sh! Yo' nots bark silly. Know what dat was, hunk?"

(Continued on page iv of cover.)

A long swirl on the water made Gan grow suddenly alert. Naturally enough the dog made no reply, so the Eskimo explained.

"Oh! Dats a seal, Shorty, and an ole lady seal. Ifs she catches yo she bites a lump out ob yo ribs. Verry lifekeful she gots a baby seals about. How yo likes a baby seals fo' a pots, hunk? Sits ever so still on dat rocks, and I go and 'vestigates."

The creek narrowed and deepened as it approached the cliffs, but the water was like crystal.

"Now, where yo' goned, hunk—where yo' goned and hides yo'self, hunk?"

The creature could not possibly have passed him unseen, and Gan knew all their tricks by heart.

"Oh!" So that, he guessed, he muttered. "Yo' jests go in der out of de wits, hunk!"

The Eskimo stopped and peered into a gloomy hollow. He did not want to kill the seal, for its skin would be mangy and worthless, in all probability. He wanted the flapper, if one existed; but a female seal with a young one is an animal to be treated with caution. He poked under the shelving rock with the handle of the net, and encountered no resistance. Then he dived, and sat up to nurse his nose.

"Dat was had 'nuff foolishness, Gan, yo' silly boys!" he sighed. "Why yo' no' borrow a spades, hunk, and den yo' not have to uses yo' poor nose to dig holes in de ground wid. Ohm! Now where's I gotted to?"

He was in a spacious cave, but the light did not penetrate far enough to reveal its full extent. He whistled, and very soon the dog swam in.

"Now yo' go backs, said Gan-Waga; "and yo' barks likes billy-o ifs dat seals come out. I not tink he able to get over de rocks. Offs yo' go, Shorty!"

Gan-Waga waded forward, listening keenly and making little or no noise. The water was scarcely up to his knees. Suddenly he heard a grunt, and then a violent splashing. Something struck his legs and sent him sprawling backwards, and the water smothered his yell.

"Bedad, phwat's that chune ye're afther singin'?" belowered a voice. "Are ye in pain, or are ye only— Oehl Murther! Hllp! Ow!"

Barry O'Rooney had taken advantage of the low tide to make a short cut. Barry had a quick brain, and having seen Schwartz swim out of the hole, his quick brain suggested that the dog's master was somewhere about. The inquisitive Irishman put in his head. A second later the seal put his head out, but not gently, for the seal was travelling like a motorist. It carried Barry with it the length of a short stroke. He got up at last, he was strangled, and leaped against a weedy rock, holding himself and groaning piteously. Schwartz, obeying orders, barked his best.

"Phwat was ut—phwat was ut," gasped Barry. "Was ut an avalanche that hit me? Bedad, every rib O'f've got is punctured twice, Hllp! Hllp, Oi say! Arrah, ye baste, so ut was ya? It was you, was ut, ye only atrothidy? Let me get at ye!"

Gan-Waga's puzzled face had appeared at the opening. Barry pulled himself together, and was about to plunge boldly forward to wreak his vengeance, when his bare legs and booted feet waved wildly in the air, and his head and arms vanished under water. The dog had turned the seal, and the seal, too much alarmed to look where it was going, had turned Barry upside down. Gan-Waga made room for it.

"Yo' most 'markable chaps, Barry!" he grinned. "Why yo' dives like dat, hunk? Ho, ho, hoo! Yo' bump yo' heads, hunk?"

O'Rooney had swallowed too much brine to speak at once. He glared at Gan with cod-like eyes, and removed a small crab that was clinging to his hair. Then he said:

"Ough, ough, ough! Bedad, O'm— Ough, ough! Get the—ough, ough!—ambulance! Murther! O'm pizened, run over, and killt dead!"

"If yo' not rings yo' bell, how yo' 'spects de poor seal not bang into yo', hunk!" inquired Gan Waga.

"A sale, was ut? Troth, Oi thought ut was an impress-train or whale at last!" pointed the boy from Bally-bunton.

"Oh, murr, murr, murr! Scud for a chemist's shop and a surgery, as ye can't find a hospital. Where's the baste nose, Eskimo, for Oi maine to have his luife for this intolt!"

"Let the poor thing alone," said a voice. "I'll teach you to hunt a harmless seal if I come down to you!"

"Troth, as ye don't watch ur, sir, ye'll be afther coming down wid a rush." marked Barry. "Shall Oi run for a feather bed to fall on?"

Ching-Lung had climbed to within forty feet of the shore, and his position looked like one of extreme peril from below. He laughed.

"I'm not going to break my neck to amuse you," he said. "Excuse me turning my back on you, and I'll be with you shortly."

(Another splendid instalment of this grand serial next Monday. Order in advance.)

## The EDITOR'S WEEKLY CHAT WITH HIS READERS.

FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"THE PATRIOTIC SCHOOLMASTER!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.

In next Monday's grand, long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co., the interest centres around Mr. Lascelles, the popular mathematics master, who, before coming to Greyfriars, earned a great reputation in boxing circles. Mr. Lascelles generously agrees to take part in a colossal encounter with a renowned prize-fighter, in order that a large sum may be raised in aid of the Belgian Refugees. Harold Skinner, and other cards of his kidney, get wind of the coming contest, and hope to make a great deal of capital out of the affair. Their intention is to "show up" Mr. Lascelles, but the position is reversed, and it is

"THE PATRIOTIC SCHOOLMASTER"

who ultimately comes off smiling.

FUN FOR THE CHRISTMAS FIRESIDE.

Thursday, December 24th, is a day that should be borne in mind by every Magnetite, for the Grand Christmas Number of our cheery little companion paper, "Chuckles," will then make its appearance. The publication on this occasion is two days earlier than usual, in order that the Prince of Coloured Comics may play a prominent part in the Christmas festivities.

"Chuckles" completes its anniversary in a week's time, and in the course of a year it has not only permanently established itself, but has reached the flood-tide of success. I have received a large complement of congratulatory letters of late, and have every reason to feel proud of the achievements of the latest addition to our companion papers.

I make no secret of the fact, however, that I want new readers, and it is "up to" my old friends to see that this end is attained. "I am full of hope for the future, and provided I receive the whole-hearted support of all Magnetites, I feel sure that in the coming year "Chuckles" will stand supreme among comic papers. It has already won its way into the front rank, and, if it continues to flourish in such a splendid manner, will soon stand head and shoulders above all others. The Christmas Number is one perpetual roar of laughter. Festive jokes are the order of the day, and there is much entertaining reading matter. In fact, the boy who supplements his "Magnet" story by reading "Chuckles" will make his Christmas thoroughly enjoyable. He can't help it. Even that hapless monarch who "never smiled again" would be moved to mirth by the comical adventures of Breccy Ben and Dismal Dutchey. A finer tonic for the blues never existed.

The price, too, is well within the range of the most limited purse—one halfpenny. Truly, the quality and quantity of good, genuine humour provided at such a small outlay is astounding!

Tell your boy and girl chums of our ripping Christmas Number, and on no account let it be absent from your own fireside.

A "MAGNET" LEAGUE IN NORWOOD.

"Magnet" Leagues are still flourishing, and I have just received an intimation from one of my enthusiastic suburban chums to the effect that he wishes to form one in his district. Now that the long winter evenings have set in, this should prove a splendid attraction, and I have much pleasure in giving publicity to my chum's enterprise. His full name and address is: Mr. William Pike, 127, Knight's Hill, West Norwood, S.W., and intending members, when writing him for particulars, should enclose a stamped addressed envelope for a reply.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

W. Deveaux.—Thanks for pointing out error; you are quite correct. Glad you like Sidney's Drem's serial.

G. Evans (Birmingham).—You will have read by now of what happened to Talbot.

Ernest Gilpin (Dublin).—Your suggestion may be realised shortly, but I can make no definite promise.

Mrs. L. Carleton (Dublin).—I am very grateful to you for your letter and suggestions.

*The Editor*

