


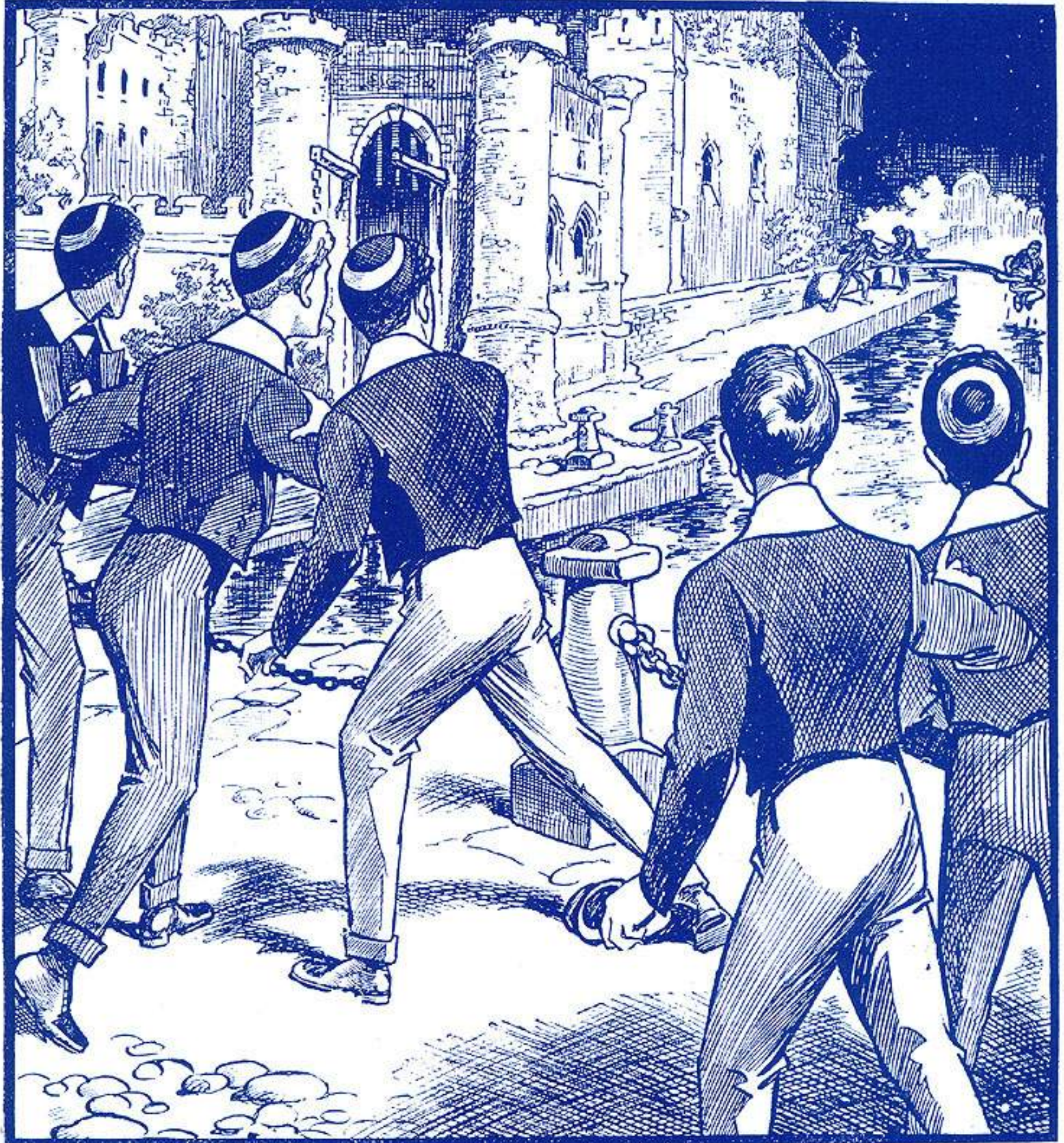

THE SCHOOLBOY INVENTOR!



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BUNTER IN THE DUCKING-STOOL!

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THE SCHOOLBOY INVENTOR!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

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

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter Goes Back Hungry!

LET'S get to work, Bob." It was Harry Wharton who made this remark. The Famous Five were all present, and they had just come to a halt in the depths of Friardale Woods.

Bob set down the weighty parcel which he had been carrying.

"Yes; we might as well," he said. "We're all alone."

There was a rustle in the thicket as he spoke, and the next moment Billy Bunter, the fat boy of the Remove, rolled on to the scene.

"Hallo, you fellows!" he said. "I've just come in time."

The Famous Five exchanged ominous looks.

"Just in time," Bob repeated drily. "for a good send-off."

Bunter blinked through his round glasses.

"I saw you chaps start off with the tuck-basket," he explained. "So I knew you'd like to have my company, and, of course, I followed. I say, let's begin. I'm jolly hungry, you know!"

"We'll begin all right," said Bob. "Bump him, you chaps!"

The Removites made a rush, and the fat junior was whirled into the air.

"Yarooop! Oo-er! You're hurting, you beasts!"

Bump! Bump!

"That's for being a spying, fat beast!" said Bob, as the Owl landed on the earth with a final crash. "Now you can clear as fast as you like!"

Bunter rose to his feet, blinking.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Bump him!" roared Bob Cherry.

Bunter waited no longer. He rolled hastily away among the trees.

"Just like Bunter!" said Wharton, with a grin. "He would be sure to fancy we'd come here to have a secret gorge. But I don't think he'll come back any more."

Bob grinned.

"No; I don't think he will," he said. "We can get on with the bizney."

He pulled the wrapping off the parcel he carried, revealing a black box. This he opened, and pulled out the contents. What the chums saw was a medley of wires, two or three telephone-receivers, and a large electric accumulator.

"Hallo!" said Johnny Bull. "Where on earth did you get that?"

"It's an invention," said Bob proudly. "I've been thinking about it for a long time. It's to improve the telephone-system that they have at the Front. It's quite a simple thing, but I don't believe that they have anything up to it out there."

"And did you make all that lot?" asked Nugent.

"No," said Bob. "I tried to, but it was a dismal failure. I sent my ideas to my cousin, who is making munitions, and has got a small workshop of his

own. He thought the idea was good, so he put this together, and sent it down here for me to try."

"Good man!" said Wharton enthusiastically. "Well, if we can help you, Bob, we'll only be too jolly glad!"

"I knew you would," said Bob. "I'll explain as quickly as I can what it's all about."

The chums gathered round the school-boy inventor, and for a few minutes they were so engrossed that they did not notice the rustling in the bushes, which might have suggested to them that Bunter was making a cautious return.

The Owl was very curious. The way in which the Removites had pounced upon him showed that there was something other than tuck in the parcel, and Bunter had determined to find out what it was.

When Bob had explained the vital parts in the working of his instrument, he set the accumulator on the ground, and spread out the wires. Then he pressed a small switch, and took up a couple of the receivers.

"Yaroooh!" he roared.

The chums looked on in amazement as Bob suddenly started twisting about, and then dropped the receivers as though they had been red-hot.

"Gave myself a shock," he said briefly.

The chums of the Remove could not help laughing at the unhappy result of Bob's first demonstration. It was clear that, although Bob's invention might be good, the inventor had not completely mastered all its possibilities.

"You haven't got a proper grasp of your subject!" said Nugent, making a bad pun.

"He, he, he!"

The cackle did not come from one of the group, but from the hedge. Bunter had been so carried away by the humour of the situation that he had been forced to laugh, and so give himself away.

The next minute he was hauled out of the bushes by the angry juniors.

"What are you doing here, you spying fat toad?" demanded Wharton.

"I—I didn't mean to come back," said Bunter. "And I haven't heard anything about the invention, you chaps—"

"Oh, bump him again!" said Nugent.

"Really, you fellows," began Bunter. "I was only—"

The Owl was whirled off his feet, and the next second he landed, with a tremendous thud, on the hard ground. He let out an ear-splitting yell.

"Chuck it, you rotters!" he howled.

"I only heard you— Groooh!"

"You never heard that," said Bob.

"But we'll chuck it, all the same, you chaps!"

"It" was Bunter. The fat junior wished, a moment later, that he had not made the suggestion. But he received scant mercy at the hands of the Removites; and when he was finally allowed to escape he did not stop

running until he put a considerable distance between himself and the juniors.

"Well, we'll start again now," said Bob, as the sounds of the retreating Owl died away in the distance.

"Half a jiff, Bob!" said Harry. "I've a suggestion to make. A sort of a kind of a great-aunt of mine has taken a house a few miles from here for the summer. Let's all run across to her show tomorrow afternoon. She's a jolly good sort. She'll be awfully pleased to see us, and all that; and she's got a very clever old chap who works in the house. He's a rare dab at anything in the electrical way. Just the chap to give you a helping hand."

"Good egg!" said Bob. "I'm on!"

"Right-ho! We'll run over on our bikes."

Bunter returned a little later. But the Famous Five had gone, and so had the black box. Bunter rolled back hungry and disconsolate.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

In Quarantine!

BILLY BUNTER peered cautiously into Study No. 13.

There was no one inside, but a letter lay on the table, and the sight of it whetted the Owl's curiosity. He glanced down the passage to see that the coast was clear, and then entered.

He looked at the name on the envelope. It was addressed to Bob Cherry, and bore the stamp of the Inventions Board. Bunter opened it.

Inside was a large sheet of white paper, with a simple black heading and a few lines of typewriting. Bunter scanned them eagerly.

"I am directed to thank you for your letter," he read, "and to say that the details of your invention have been read with interest. The Committee will be pleased if you will forward a model of your invention for their inspection."

"My aunt!" gasped Bunter. "Then it's a real invention, after all. I say!"

He stopped suddenly, as footsteps sounded in the passage, and thrust the letter out of sight into his pocket. The next moment Bob entered the study.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" he said. "What are you doing in here, Bunt?"

"I just dropped in to see you, Bob, old chap," explained the Owl.

"There's no need to put yourself to that trouble," said Bob Cherry. "I'll come along to your study when I want to see you."

"E.—I came to talk to you about your invention, Bob," pursued the Owl, unheeding. "You know, I'm jolly good at doing things."

"Well, let's see how quickly you can get out of here, then!" said Bob tartly.

"That's one thing you can do, anyway!"

"If you don't want my help," Bunter said with dignity, "I'll jolly well leave you to struggle by yourself!"

"I wish you would," returned Bob. "Don't slam the door!"

Bunter retreated towards the door, the letter still in his pocket. He had not had an opportunity of putting it back on the table, and apparently Bob had not missed it yet.

"Oh, really, Bob," went on Bunter, "I'm jolly good at anything electrical. I've invented all sorts of things myself. I'm quite willing to help you now with your invention if you like. I'm just the man you've been looking for."

"You are!" said Bob sweetly. "Just the one," he added, picking up a cricket-stump out of the corner.

"Er—what are you going to do with that stump?" asked the Owl, in alarm.

"Are you going to get out of this study, you fat spy?"

"I've just come for— Look out, you lunatic! Help! Yaroooh!"

Bunter sprang through the doorway as though a red-hot poker had touched him.

"All right, you beast!" he roared, as the door slammed. "I'll be even with you yet!"

Bob Cherry did not trouble to reply.

As a matter of fact, Bob was getting busy for the trial of his invention, which was really an idea for magnifying the "voice" in a telephone. It was quite a simple idea, but it promised to prove very useful at the Front, and his cousin's aid had been quite enough to make up for Bob's lack of technical knowledge.

His first thought when he saw Bunter in the room was that he had come after the black box, but, to his relief, Bob saw that it was untouched. He picked it up, and then put on his cap again. His chums were waiting for him downstairs, and in his hurry he forgot all about the letter which he had left on the table.

Wharton & Co. were waiting for the inventor at the gates.

"Come along!" said Johnny Bull, cheerily. "I don't see any Press photographers waiting outside, but they've probably missed the train!"

"Coming!" sang out Bob, with a grin.

A few minutes later they were speeding away on their bikes.

It was not a very long run. Mr. Quelch had readily given them permission to make the trip. The miles were quickly eaten up by the energetic Removites.

Wharton's great-aunt gave them a hearty welcome, and at once put her man at their disposal.

He was a small, oldish fellow, with a thoughtful face. He showed his interest as soon as Bob explained his difficulties.

It was tea-time almost before the juniors knew it. They had a splendid spread. Then they adjourned to rejoin Jelks, the handyman.

To their dismay they found that he had been taken ill, and that a slight rash had appeared on his face. His mistress insisted that the local doctor should be called in immediately.

The chums waited in some alarm.

"I hope it's nothing serious," Nugent said. "He's a ripping old chap, and he's been awfully good to us this afternoon."

Wharton looked grave.

"Yes," he said, "he's one of the best. I—I wonder if there's any chance of its being infectious?"

That possibility had not occurred to the chums. They had been with the man all the afternoon, and it would mean quarantine for them if there was anything serious the matter. Bob voiced their thoughts.

"Supposing we get stuck here to incubate for measles or something?" he said.

No one spoke, but they were glad when the doctor arrived.

When he came out of the house after seeing Jelks his face was grave.

"You boys must not go away from here," he said. "It is a case of measles."

"My hat!"

"You will have to stay here at least a fortnight, in quarantine," pursued the doctor. "I'm sorry, but you were with the man all the afternoon."

The Removites exchanged glum looks.

"A fortnight in quarantine!" Harry muttered.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Trouble Brewing!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

Bunter sailed into the Rag, the news which he had just gathered nearly bursting him.

"Postal-order come!" grinned Tom Brown.

"Not yet," Bunter said. "But Wharton & Co. are all in quarantine!"

"Rot!"

"You're spoofing!"

"It's true!" Bunter protested. "I happened to be tying up my bootlace outside Quelch's door—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I heard him say to Wingate that he'd just heard that they're all in quarantine at Wharton's great-aunt's place."

"My hat!"

"Gee-whiz!"

"What's going to happen to the cricket team?"

The Owl found himself surrounded by eager questioners.

"It's a fact," Bunter said excitedly. "I heard him say that Wharton wouldn't be back for about six months, and he's going to make me Form captain and footer captain next term."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter blinked indignantly.

"I'm perfectly willing to rise to the occasion," he said. "It's about time that Wharton was given the go-by. I'll buck things up when I'm captain!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't believe it!" said Squiff flatly. "You're telling 'em!"

"Then why haven't those rotters come back?" demanded Bunter.

No one answered the question. The Famous Five had been missing since the previous afternoon, and no one knew why or wherefore.

"I suppose there's something in this," said Bolsover major. "Well, all I can say is that it's a jolly good job!"

"Hear, hear!" said Skinner; and several others echoed him.

"It's just the sort of thing you would say," said Mark Linley quietly. "You don't care anything about the Form!"

"The Form's better off without Wharton and his goody-goodies!" sneered Bolsover.

"Sure, an' it would be a jolly sight better without a baste like yourself, Bolsover!" returned Micky Desmond.

"You're right, Micky," said Ogilvy.

"You dry up!" said Bolsover roughly. "You haven't got your pet angels to fight for you now!"

"You'll have to mind your p's and q's now the Mighty Five are away!" added Skinner vindictively.

"We sha'n't stand any of your rotting, anyway," said Tom Brown stoutly.

"The Remove isn't going to blue ruin while Wharton's away just to suit you!"

"Are you going to put up for Form captain?" Bolsover sneered.

"I tell you Quelch's going to make me Form captain!" shouted Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll tell you this," Bolsover said. "You'd better sing jolly small if you want to keep a sound hide!"

"I'm not going to row with you," said Tom Brown; "but I'm not going to stand by and see any fellow act the

cad, and take advantage of Wharton's absence!"

"Hear, hear!" added Squiff.

"That's right, look you!" seconded Morgan.

"Faith, me bhoy, I'm with you all the way!" said Micky Desmond.

"Well, we'll see!" said Bolsover darkly. The bully of the Remove did not intend to let an opportunity like this slip.

"And who's going to take over the cricket?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"I tell you I'm cricket captain!" howled Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter blinked round indignantly.

"I say I'm captain!" he roared. "Old Quelch said I was! I heard him myself!"

There was a whisper of "Cave!" But Bunter was too excited to pay any heed to it.

"Old Quelch's an awful idiot in most things, but he's right sometimes," he burred on. "He's made me Wharton's deputy. You needn't make faces at me, Bolsover, you silly ass!"

Bunter stopped, and there was an ominous silence. Bunter, still failing to observe the figure of Mr. Quelch in the doorway, took up his parable again.

"Old Quelch ain't usually got any more sense than a Hun," he said; "but—"

"Bunter!"

"Y-y-y, yessir?"

"Were you referring to me in that impertinent manner?"

"N-n-n-no, sir!"

"Explain yourself, then!" snapped the Form-master.

"I—I was s-speaking of a ch-chap I've read about," said the Owl feebly.

"Very well!" snapped the Form-master. "We will have another talk about him in my room in a minute!"

Bunter subsided. Mr. Quelch noted that the majority of his Form were present.

"Boys," he started, "I am sorry to tell you that I have just heard that Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, Singh, and Bull are in quarantine, and will not be able to return to the school for at least a fortnight."

He looked round the room.

"In the brief absence of Wharton I do not think it necessary to appoint another Form captain," he proceeded.

"The senior member of the cricket team will captain that until the boys return, I suppose."

"Please, sir, Bunter told us that he was to be Form captain!" said Skinner, with a smirk.

"I—I—" stammered the Owl.

"Silence!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "I do not think that another captain will be necessary at present. Bunter, you will come with me now!"

Bunter went.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Invention!

BUNTER'S hands were smarting as he left the Form-master's study ten minutes later. He had not impressed the fellows as he had hoped. But he put that down to their jealousy.

The absence of the Famous Five, however, was too good an opportunity for Bunter to miss, and an idea which had suggested itself to him before returned now.

Supposing he brought out Bob's invention during his absence?

The Owl was quite ignorant of the reason why the chums had gone over to the home of Wharton's aunt.

He went along to Study No. 13, and

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knocked at the door. There was no reply, and Bunter entered.

He found at first no sign of the black box, although he hunted diligently.

For several minutes he drew blank, but in a corner of the cupboard he came eventually upon a small metal apparatus, an electric battery, and a mass of wires.

The Owl's eyes shone with triumph. He did not know that what he had discovered was Bob's early failure, and quite useless. In Bunter's eyes it was the invention itself.

He picked it up and carted it out of the study. Study No. 7 was empty. Peter and Alonzo Todd were in the Rag endeavouring to explain to Tom Dutton, the deaf junior, that Wharton & Co. were in quarantine, and not, as Dutton had gathered, in Palestine. Dutton had been terribly puzzled.

Bunter planked down the invention. He still had another card up his sleeve, and that was Bob's letter from the Inventions Board.

Beyond the direction there was nothing in the letter to indicate that it had been sent to Bob Cherry, except his name at the bottom of the page, and this Bunter quickly tore off.

He had now got what he considered proof conclusive, and, with the letter in his hand, he sallied forth again to the Rag.

A howl of laughter greeted him as he entered.

"Had a nice chat with Quelch about that merchant in the book?" grinned Skinner.

Bunter ignored the remark.

"I say, you fellows," he said, waving the paper, "I want to let you all into a dead secret!"

"Thanks!"

"Gentlemen," said Tom Brown, "I have the pleasure to inform you that the postal-order has come at last!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It ain't you ass!" howled Bunter, thinking of the many debts to be discharged when it did come. "But I've just got a letter from the Inventions Board saying that my invention has been accepted."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The idea of Bunter inventing anything except lies seemed too funny for words.

"Which whopper is that they've taken?" asked Skinner.

"It ain't a whopper!" said Bunter indignantly. "I've brought out a new telephone for use at the Front."

"My aunt!"

"Make it an aeroplane, and we'll believe you," said Stott.

"I—I'm working on an aeroplane now," Bunter said, with a sudden inspiration.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, look at my letter, then, if you don't believe me!" shouted the Owl.

Bolsover snatched the letter and read it. He gave a little whistle of surprise.

"Read it out, Bolsover!" said Skinner.

Bolsover did so. There was a gasp of amazement from the Removites. Bunter welled with pride to such an extent that he looked as though he would explode, like the frog in the story.

"But you've never done a thing in the study for weeks!" said Peter Todd.

"I shouldn't give a lot of rotters like you the chance of pinching my idea," Bunter explained. "I've—I've been working in secret on it."

There were cries of wonder from everyone. The idea of Bunter bringing out an invention was altogether too staggering.

"I've told you chaps," Bunter pro-

ceeded, "because it's such an honour for the Form to have an inventor in it."

"Ahem!"

"Of course, I ought really to be at some special school, where I could develop my talent," pursued the Owl.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I can't see anything to laugh at," growled Bunter. "You chaps don't have the chance of meeting an inventor every day of your lives!"

"We have you, Buntie," said Peter Todd. "Isn't that enough?"

"Exactly," said Bunter. "Well, as I've decided to remain at the school, I've thought things over, and I shall be willing to act as Form captain in place of that ignorant beast Wharton!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"There may be some opposition from"—Bunter looked apprehensively towards the door—"from old Quelch, but with you fellows behind me I can soon make him give in!"

"Yes?" said Skinner innocently.

"And if old Quelch won't give in I will threaten to stop all my inventing," Bunter continued impressively, "so that the prospects of our gallant Allies are blighted, and there is no help for us on land or sea!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I mean it!" Bunter said indignantly. "You chaps, as patriotic British fellows, have it in your power to end the war—one way or the other. I don't care a snap of the fingers which you do," added the Owl carelessly.

"Bunter the Patriot!" murmured Peter Todd.

"If old Quelch won't come to reason," said Bunter, "he will have the blood of all Europe on his head! He will be soaked in innocent men's gore!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I know it is in my power," continued Bunter, with growing excitement, "to ruin the prospects of our Allies!"

"Naughty, naughty!"

"So if you will all go in a body to Quelch now, and demand my election, the situation will be saved!" he concluded.

But there was no general rush for the door.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Vote for Bunter!

THE Remove Form was not taken by storm, as Bunter had hoped. Nevertheless, the belief that he had at last done something besides gorging and lying did work like a leaven in the Owl's favour.

It was a fortunate thing for his schemes that Bob Cherry had told no one outside the Famous Five of his invention.

In consequence, there was no one to dispute the authorship of the invention; and as no claimant appeared to declare that Bunter had stolen the letter, it seemed tolerably certain that Bunter must, for once, be telling the truth.

When the fat junior consented to show his "invention" there was a mild stir. No one was very well informed on the subject of field telephones, and, in view of the letter that Bunter held, the mass of wire looked quite a possible affair.

To demands for a demonstration, however, Bunter replied with an emphatic negative. He did not intend, he said, to let them know too much about it, in case there were any German spies present.

To Bunter's disgust, there was no great patriotic demonstration to Mr. Quelch demanding his appointment as captain of the Remove, to the end that he might set to and win the war. No one minded Bunter as an amateur inventor, but

Bunter as Form captain was a trifle too steep!

Support, however, came at last from an unexpected quarter. On the afternoon following the Owl's first announcement of the result of his prodigious brain, Bolsover approached Mr. Quelch at the end of afternoon school.

"I want to stand for acting Form captain, sir," he said.

The Remove Form-master frowned.

"I said, Bolsover," he replied, "that I did not consider it necessary for a new captain to be appointed in Wharton's absence."

"I only said temporary, sir," persisted the bully of the Remove. "Wharton may be away for a long while, sir, if any of the fellows gets the measles, and I shouldn't like to see the Form go to ruin."

"Nor should I!" observed Mr. Quelch drily. "That is why I do not propose to appoint another captain."

"I think the fellows want another captain, sir," Bolsover said. "They have asked me to put up."

"Who has asked this? I have not heard anything."

"Several fellows, sir," Bolsover said. "Skinner, Stott, Snoop, and a lot of the others."

Mr. Quelch smiled grimly.

"I do not think they constitute a majority," he observed. "If I find that there is a general wish for a captain I will meet it. At the same time, with five boys away, it can only be a temporary appointment."

"Thank you, sir!" said Bolsover.

The same evening canvassing was started. Bolsover was determined to get a majority in order to secure the captaincy, and, once he held it, he did not mean to let Wharton get it back in a hurry.

Tom Brown dropped into Study No. 7 to see Peter Todd.

"Bolsover been in here for votes?" he asked.

"Yes," grinned Peter. "Dutton thought he wanted oats."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He hasn't got mine," said Peter Todd. "Poor old Bolsover! I don't think he's had much luck yet."

"Well, I don't know," said Tom Brown. "There are a good many chaps Bolsover may be able to influence. I don't think it would be bad to put up a rival captain, just to stop his little game!"

"How do you mean?" asked Peter Todd, with some interest.

"Well, I don't propose a serious attempt to elect a new Form captain in Wharton's absence—I think it's a caddish trick. But there is a little danger that Quelch may have to give in if Bolsover gets enough fellows behind him."

"Yes?"

"Well, why not get a fellow of his own kidney to put up as well, and then their camp is going to be divided—see?"

Peter Todd laughed. The idea was just the step to take in view of the underhand election which Bolsover was trying to force.

"Whom do you suggest?"

"Bunter!" said Tom Brown promptly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He'll put up quickly enough," laughed Tom Brown. "We'll boom him for all we're worth!"

"Jolly good idea!" said Peter Todd.

"Hallo, here he comes!"

The study door opened as he spoke, and Bunter rolled in. He was looking sulky and disappointed.

"I say, Buntie," said Todd, "are you still willing to put up for Form captain?"

A grin of grateful vanity overspread the fat junior's face.

"Yes, rather!" he said.

"Well, we're going to back you," said Peter Todd. "You'll find staunch supporters in your own study, Bunty. I'm going to back you, for one. How about you, Lonzy?"

Alonzo Todd looked up from his preparation.

"I should be exceedingly pained to think that I did not carry out any obvious duty," he said mildly.

"Good!" observed Peter. "I know Dutton will, and probably Squiff, the Bounder, Mark Linley, and Tom Brown here. Well, toddle off, Bunty, and tell the fellows you're putting up, at once, and we're supporting you!"

Bunter grinned.

"I say, Toddy," he grinned, "what about election expenses?"

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, the usual things!" said Bunter. "Drinks for the voters, and all that, you know."

"I suppose you mean drinks and tarts for the candidate," grinned Peter. "Right-ho!" he added, thrusting his hand into his pocket. "Here you are, Bunty!"

"Thanks, Toddy!" said Bunter, pocketing the half-crown. "I shall start work on my many inventions again now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You needn't laugh," said Bunter. "It will be partly through your influence that Europe is saved from ruin. When my inventions are taken up the war will end!"

"It will have been over a few thousand years by then!" grinned Tom Brown.

Bunter snorted.

"I haven't got time to waste on your rotten jokes, you chaps!" he said. "Good-bye!"

Bunter went down the passage, but not to address the voters. He made a beeline for the tuckshop, to start the election expenses going!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Wun Lung—Strategist!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

It was William George Bunter who made the remark to the assembled crowd in the Rag. The Removites had gathered round the stage upon which Bunter stood.

"What's up now, Bunty?"

"Got that postal order?"

"This ain't anything to do with the postal-order!" shouted Bunter. "I am addressing you, gentlemen—"

"I say," interposed Squiff, "Bolsover's here; mention him as well as the gentlemen!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I am addressing you," went on Bunter, unheeding, "to tell you why you should vote for me as Form captain."

"My hat!" gasped Skinner. "Still on that tack? I thought you were going to back Bolsover?"

"I'm putting up as an independent candidate," said Bunter, "at the request of a considerable portion of the Remove. I might mention that I have been begged to do this."

"Rats!"

"Dry up, Bunter!" roared Bolsover.

"Who are your supporters?"

Bunter gave his rival a malicious grin. "I'll give you the names of some of them," he said. "There's Toddy, Linley, the Bounder, Dutton, Squiffy, and hundreds of others!"

Bolsover suddenly saw daylight.

"It's a conspiracy, you fat toad!" he roared. "No one wants you for Form captain! It's a conspiracy against me!"

"Yah!" retorted Bunter. "You go and eat coke! I suppose I'm at liberty



Wun Lung's War Schemes! (See Chapter 6.)

to put up if I like? Quelchy chose me long before you ever thought of it, only he wouldn't say so, because he heard me —"

"I tell you it's a conspiracy!" roared Bolsover, springing on to the platform. "Who put you up to it?"

He seized one of the Owl's large ears, and tweaked it violently.

"Yooop!"

"Who put you up to it?" demanded Bolsover.

"No one!" said Bunter defiantly.

"Here, leggo, you beast! Grooh!"

Bolsover twisted the ear the other way, and Bunter gave a howl of anguish.

"Tell me who it was!" Bolsover hooted.

"I ain't goin' to!" said the Owl.

"Stoppit! I ain't— Help!"

Bunter had started struggling, and in the excitement of forcing the Owl to speak Bolsover had not noticed how near to the edge of the stage they had got.

The next moment, however, one of Bunter's retreating feet suddenly flew into space, and the two rivals staggered over the edge of the stage, and fell to the floor with a resounding thud.

"Murder!" yelled Bunter, who was underneath. "Help! Fire! Thieves! I'm killed!"

"No such luck!" retorted Bolsover, his temper not at all improved by the shaking-up. "You've got to tell me who put you up to this before I let you get up!"

"Gerrouit!" Bunter growled.

"Who was it?" Bolsover repeated.

The two juniors were too much engrossed in their argument to notice a small figure that slipped out from the crowd and approached the platform. The next moment, however, they were arrested by the sound of a fresh voice, and, looking up, they saw that little Wun Lung, the Chinese junior, was on the platform.

"Gentlemen," he said, "it givce me velly great pleasurc to sayce few wolds on how to wince bigce walee."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The little Chinese junior did not seem to notice the laughter.

"Me havee gloat ideas," he went on. "Me comce from countly where we killee plenty mance velly quick. Me tinkce me sendee ideas to gloat Blitish genelal to help him win walee quick."

Bunter and Bolsover sat up on the floor and gasped. They had a presentiment of what was coming.

"Me havee velly good ideas," continued Wun Lung, shamelessly blowing his own trumpet. "Me endce walee at once if me sendee plans to gloat Blitish genelal."

He twisted his face into an inscrutable smile, and his small, almond-shaped eyes glistened.

"Pellaps you likee makee me Folg captain if me sendee ideas to gloat Blitish genelal?" he suggested.

"My hat!" laughed Squiff. "Another candidate! Poor old Bolsover! Ha, ha!"

Wun Lung's suggestion was met with a howl of laughter. As a rule, the little Chinese junior said very little; but there was deep craft in his Oriental brain.

"Me makee velly good captain," he pursued. "Me playce football velly well. Me velly handsome. And me endce walee for you all."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get down, you little yellow heathen!" stormed Bunter, scrambling to his feet as Bolsover rolled off him. "You ain't got an earthly! I'm going to be Form captain!"

"You goce away, Bunter!" said Wun Lung. "You velly ugly boy; no one wantee you to be captain."

"I tell you—"

"Shut up, Bunter!" said Tom Brown. "Give Wun Lung a hearing, anyway."

"B-but you're one of my supporters!" howled Bunter.

"So I am!" exclaimed the other cheerfully. "Never mind! As I'm going to vote for you, I don't want to hear your arguments. Let's hear how Wun Lung is going to end the war."

"Me tel'ee you a few ideas," Wun Lung purred, as Bunter subsided. "Me tinkce velly good thing get plenty big aeoplane,

filee with led peppel, and dlopee on Gelmans, and makee all sneeze so much that we catchee all while they not lookee."

The Removites roared.

Bunter had been funny, but Wun Lung threatened to pass all records. Red pepper on the Germans was certainly an idea which Sir Douglas Haig had failed to think of.

"Me tellee you nothel thingee," continued Wun Lung imperturbably. "Me gettee wicked old Kaisel, choppee off headee, and playee football in Bellin with headee."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wun Lung was funny even in his bloodthirstiness.

"But how are you going to get hold of the Kaiser?" asked Squiff.

"Me adveltisee for him," said Wun Lung simply.

There was another burst of laughter. People might say the Kaiser was mad, but it scarcely seemed likely that he was mad enough to respond to an advertisement to come and have his head chopped off.

"Oh, my giddy aunt!" murmured Squiff. "Why didn't they call in Wun Lung to join the Government?"

Wun Lung smiled on his audience. He rather fancied that they were laughing at the coming discomfiture of the German hordes.

"Me tinkee digee big long tunnel good ting," pursued the Chinese junior. "Big long tunnel to Bellinee, and sendee down special policemen to allest wicked Gelmans."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Then me sendee," he continued impressively, "big almy labbits to lavage allee clopees, and then wicked Gelmans tahn loud and sayee, 'We havee feedee,' they find labbits eaten allee glubbee!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter joined in with a shrill cackle, and even Bolsover had to smile, though the election was developing into a farce. The only serious person was Wun Lung, and Wun Lung apparently meant every word that he said. But no one could ever see through Wun Lung.

"Then I sayee," he continued, "that we suilendel, and allee Gelman genelals come ovel, and we choppee off alms and legs, and wait till the last comee ovel and choppee upee also!"

"Ugh! You little heathen!" grunted Tom Brown.

"I tellee you, if you likee makee me captain I let gleet Blitish genelal havee allee ideas," Wun Lung concluded. "I win waicee jolliee quick!"

"I say, Wun Lung," Skinner said, winking at Stott, "suppose the Germans started chucking red pepper at our troops. What should we do?"

"Takee no notice," said Wun Lung calmly.

"But suppose the Germans didn't take any notice of it?"

"Gelmans no tinkee of that," said the Chinese junior confidently.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner gasped. His questions had been answered, and in the way he might have expected. He gave up the unequal battle with the Oriental brain.

"Look here, Wun Lung," said Bunter. "Supposing the Germans were to send that lot of silly rabbits here instead of us sending them. What should we do?"

"Eatee labbits!" said Wun Lung.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, but wouldn't the Germans do that?" persisted Bunter, with a knowing wink at the juniors. "I suppose you're going to say they wouldn't think of that!"

"Me sendee big, fielce labbits," said Wun Lung simply. "Big fielce labbits bitee wicked Gelmans, makee wicked Gelmans sayee, 'Oh, dat velly hollible labbit!' and no eatee."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wun Lung was ready for any difficulty. If only the right sort of red pepper, rabbits, tunnels, and special policemen could be found, and the Germans did all that Wun Lung said they would, the war would soon be won.

Wun Lung watched the hilarious Removites impassively. His face did not convey anything of what he was thinking. If it had, the grinning Bunter might have felt rather uneasy—for Bunter, being an inventor, also impressed Wun Lung as his greatest rival.

"You makee me captain?" Wun Lung asked sweetly, after a pause.

There was a derisive laugh from Bolsover and his cronies.

"Pelhaps you not satisfied ideas velly good?" suggested Wun Lung softly.

"Me plovee they velly good, soon!"

And he got down quietly off the platform, to the huge amusement of William George Bunter.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Demonstration!

WHEN Bolsover major approached Mr. Quelch on the day following the entry of the two new candidates into the field, he found that his worst fears were realised.

"It has caused me some surprise, Bolsover," the Form-master said, "to discover that there is, after all, a strong feeling that a new captain should be appointed in Wharton's absence. I am still more surprised to hear, moreover, that Bunter seems the favourite. If a new captain is appointed, Bolsover, it will have to be by election."

The bully of the Remove bit his lip.

He wanted to say that it was a plant to keep him from the coveted position. He knew that the fellows who were backing Bunter would not tolerate that fat specimen for a day as actual captain of the Remove. But such a thing could not be explained to Mr. Quelch.

The bully went away with malice in his heart and a frown on his face.

Tom Brown's scheme had worked excellently. Bunter's candidature might seem a farce; but in view of Mr. Quelch's attitude it was not a thing to be so treated. Bolsover must count the Owl as a serious rival.

And then there was Wun Lung!

Wun Lung was not to be thought of without a laugh; but still, he was also definitely putting up for the captaincy, and he had to be reckoned with.

Bolsover saw that, and his feelings towards the Celestial were anything but friendly. His anger against Bunter was hotter still. But fiercest was his rage against the conspirators who were backing Bunter.

Bunter quite thought that his "invention" would carry him through with flying colours. He considered that Bolsover was already out of the running. As for Wun Lung—Bunter sniffed scornfully, and then giggled.

But the mind of the Oriental junior had been very busy since he had allowed the Remove to have a glimpse of his plans for ending the war. The Removites did not seem convinced that the plans were practicable. Wun Lung had decided to give them a demonstration.

He was going to show them how to put an enemy completely out of the running by his methods, and the enemy that he chose for the experiment was Bunter.

Several juniors clustered round the

Chinese junior as soon as he entered the junior Common-room. They were hoping that Wun Lung had some more ideas. Wun Lung's ideas struck them as being very funny.

"Any more whcezes, Wun Lung?" Snoop asked, with a grin.

The Celestial shook his head gravely.

"Me plovee value of ideas fist," he said. "You watchee me. Soon show you how to beatee wicked Gelmans."

"Why, what's in the wind now?" asked Skinner.

"You waitee," purred Wun Lung. "Me showee soon."

About five minutes later Bunter entered the room. Wun Lung sidled quietly up to him.

"Hallo, Bunter!" he said.

"Buzz off, you heathen!" replied the Owl disdainfully.

"You no speakee me?" asked the Chinese boy softly.

"No!" snapped the Owl.

"You my enemy?"

"Yes, if you like," said Bunter, staring at him.

"Then you fightee me?" went on Wun Lung.

"Knock you into a cocked hat if you're asking for it," Bunter said carelessly.

Wun Lung turned to his audience.

"Me givee exhibition," he said. "Bunter is likee big gleedy Gelman pig. Me likee fine Blitish genelal. You watchee!"

He slipped his hand into a pocket, and suddenly brought it out and flung something at the Owl. The fat junior took a hurried pace back.

"Here, what are you doing?" he roared. "What are you—Aitish-cooh!"

"Led peppel!" cried Wun Lung triumphantly, as he followed the Owl up. "Me showee how usee led peppel!"

He threw another handful at the Owl. Bunter emitted a wild shout, and bolted across the room, with the Chinese junior close on his heels.

"Here, stop that little savage someone!" shouted Squiff springing forward. "He'll murder Bunter!"

Bunter seemed to think the same, and he didn't fail to let other people know. A succession of howls and roars proceeded from his throat.

Wun Lung did not allow the grass to grow under his feet. Before anyone could stop him he had thrown several more handfuls of red pepper at the fleeing Owl, and the Common-room was full of the reek of the stuff.

Bunter was sneezing horribly when someone eventually collared the demonstrator. Wun Lung wriggled wildly.

"Let me showee how me fightee Huns!" he gasped. "Me showee how me finish off enemy!"

"No, you—rashoo!—don't," muttered Tom Brown. "This beastly stuff is all up my—aitchoo!—nose."

"I tell you killee enemy!" Wun Lung panted, beside himself with excitement. "Led peppel good for—Tashoooh!"

The Chinese junior felt a victim to his own device at last, and, all the fight knocked out of him, retired into a corner and started to sneeze violently. Squiff threw open the windows, and after a little the pepper either blew out or settled down.

"Oo-er!" Bunter groaned, as he flashed a venomous look at his rival. "You little heathen, I'll kill you for this!"

"Tishoo!" sneezed Wun Lung.

"You tried to murder me!" Bunter stormed. "I wish you'd jolly well killed yourself!"

Bunter's sentiments were not on a very much higher plane than those of the

Chinese junior, and the juniors had to laugh.

"Blessed if I can see anything to laugh about!" Bunter growled. "It wouldn't have been funny if that little savage had killed me, and the world had lost the benefit of my invention."

"Aitchoo!" from Wun Lung.

"Serves you right!" said Bunter savagely.

"Why don't you do what the great British general was going to do?" asked Skinner. "You said he wasn't going to take any notice of it."

"Rashoo!"

"You said that only the Germans would think of sneezing!"

"Aitchoooh!"

There was a link loose somewhere. Wun Lung must have been a German—which he certainly was not—or else his theory was wrong. He did not stop sneezing.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Another Demonstration!

BILLY BUNTER rolled up to Fisher T. Fish in the Close.

"Hallo, Fishy!" he said condescendingly. "I want to have a word with you. We can talk under the elms."

"I calculate we can talk better in the tuckshop," said Fish pointedly.

"I haven't any money," replied Bunter pathetically.

"Then I guess you can have your word with yourself," Fish returned.

"All right!" growled Bunter. "Come along!"

Fish nodded briskly, and his attitude changed. There was evidently something in the wind, or Bunter would not have agreed to stand treat from the "election expenses," which he was still managing to squeeze out of Peter Todd.

Bunter came to the point over a plate of war cakes.

"I say, Fishy," he said, "I want you to help me with my invention."

Fish nodded.

"As a matter of fact," Bunter said glibly, "a very necessary part which was to have come down from London hasn't arrived yet. And I want to give the chaps a demonstration of what the telephone can do."

Bunter paused, and winked.

"I guess I don't see what you're driving at," Fisher T. Fish answered.

"Well—er—it's like this," said Bunter.

"I want to give the chaps a show of what the telephone can do, but it won't really work until I get the new part from London, and I'm afraid that the election will be over by then."

"Then I guess you can't exhibit the contraption," observed Fish.

Bunter winked again.

"That is where I want your help," he said.

"I calculate I'm a dab at most things," the American junior observed; "but I can't make missing parts."

"I don't want you to," said Bunter.

"I want you to help me with the demonstration."

"I guess you mean you want to work a spoof?" Fish asked.

"Well, not really that," said Bunter grudgingly. "But you can call it that if you'll help me."

"I guess it's a right-down low trick you're proposing," said the American junior, with conviction. "It's a skunk's job, I reckon!"

"It'll be business for you," said Bunter. "I'll let you have five per cent. of the money I get for the invention if you bring this off."

"I kinder reckon you want me to do a dirty trick," said Fish, adopting a

George Washington attitude. "Do you want me to help you work a rotten spoof like that?"

"Yes!" growled Bunter.

"Then I guess you'll have to make it worth my while," said Fish, with a sudden ignominious descent from the pinnacle of honour to the level of Bunter. "We'll go halves in the invention, for one thing. And how much will you pony up now?"

Bunter thought hard. Now that he had gone so far, he could not withdraw and try to get someone else to help with the demonstration. Fish's price must be paid.

"I'll give you ten bob when it's over," he said; "and you can have a quarter of the money for the invention."

"I guess we'll say thirty-three an' a third per cent., then," said Fish; "and I'll have the money now!"

"You won't!" said Bunter, with decision.

But Fisher T. Fish was adamant; and in the end Bunter managed to borrow five shillings to pay on account and start preparations for the spoof.

He fixed the day following for the invention's exhibition, and quite a crowd of fellows accompanied him to Friardale Woods to see how the telephone worked. It had been arranged that Fisher T. Fish should repeat some message over the wire to Bunter, and the Owl would pick it up in his instrument.

Neither Bunter nor Fish had been able to make head or tail of what the apparatus was really intended for, and the Owl's ignorance seemed rather evident to the Removites who had gathered round to watch the exhibition.

Fisher T. Fish went to a good distance, and then wrote on a piece of paper what he intended sending. Then he took up his end of the wire and prepared to "send" the message.

"Now I'm going to show you chaps how it's done," Bunter said proudly. "This is the invention which will end the war!"

Peter Todd grinned. He could not understand what on earth the Inventions Bureau had seen in Bunter's contraption.

"Get on with the bizney, Bunter!" he said.

"Don't try to hustle me," warned the Owl of the Remove. "I'm giving a demonstration, not having a race. Now this," he added, turning to his apparatus, "is the receiving thing. I listen through this receiver."

The fellows crowded round eagerly. Bunter was shining in an altogether new light.

"What's the electric battery for, Bunty?" asked Tom Brown.

"That's to work the telephone," said Bunter loftily.

"And what's all the wire for?" asked the Bounder, with a grin.

"That's—that's part of the apparatus," Bunter explained vaguely.

"Marvellous, my dear Jotson!" Squiff muttered. "You have an excellent grasp of the case."

Bunter growled something, then bent down and pretended to adjust the arrangement.

"Now I'm going to take the message," he said. "Listen!"

He picked up the little receiver, and put it to his ear. As he did so the two wires attached to it fell off, leaving the receiver alone in his hand.

Bunter did not notice this. He appeared to be straining to catch the voice in the telephone.

"I can hear him now," he said. "He is starting to speak. 'We are expecting enemy reinforcements, and the Germans may attack at any moment, and—'"

He was interrupted by a scream of laughter from the Removites.

"I can't see anything to laugh at!" roared Bunter indignantly.

"Did you hear all that through the receiver?" asked Squiff.

"Of course!" said Bunter.

"Well, you're a marvel!" the Australian junior said. "There ain't any wires on it!"

Bunter looked at the receiver.

"Mum-mum-my hat!" he gasped. "They must have just fallen off!"

"The wires have been off all the time," said Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter bent hastily to the instrument and grasped a couple of the wires. The next moment he leapt to his feet with a shrill yell. He was still grasping the wires, and writhing as though in considerable pain.

It was the first practical result of the invention!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Has a Shock—and Fish Another!

YOW-O-W-O-W!"

Bunter gave a long, piercing howl, and stood and writhed.

He continued to grip the wires, while the Removites roared with laughter.

"Oo-er! I'm being killed!" he gasped. "Cut it off, someone!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The sight of Bunter in the grip of his own invention was funny, and the Removites appreciated the situation. They were in no hurry to set Bunter free. He had tried to spoof them, and now he had met his punishment.

"What's the message now, Bunty?" asked Snoop.

"Grooh! Pull it off, someone!" howled Bunter. "Oo-er!"

"Any more reinforcements coming up?"

"Yow!"

"Think the Germans will attack at dawn?" asked Stott pleasantly.

"Dragitoff!"

"I wonder how much the Inventions Board will pay for that little lot now?" speculated Tom Brown. "It ought to be useful for paralysing Huns. It seems to paralyse Bunter!"

"How do you stop it, Bunty?" asked Squiff.

"Oo-er! Bust it up!"

"But that will spoil the invention, won't it?" asked Tom Brown innocently.

"Hang the invention!" howled Bunter. "I'm being killed!"

"But if you don't bring out the invention, aren't we going to lose the war?" Tom Brown went on.

"Hang the war! Bust it up! Wow-wow!"

"No, Bunty," said the New Zealand junior. "The invention's too precious to be bust up. I think you'd better hang on till the battery runs down."

"Boasts!" howled Bunter. "Ow! I'm being killed!"

Fisher T. Fish joined the group.

"Hallo, Bunter!" he said. "Anything the matter?"

"Rescue me!" howled the Owl. "I'm being killed by the rotten thing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess something's gone wrong," observed Fish. "I guess it ain't up to me to interfere with it."

"Grooh!"

"I kinder calculate we've proved its worth already. I reckon it's going to end the war."

There was a howl of derision from the juniors. Fish was so far blissfully ignorant of the failure of the spoof.

"I reckon it's going to end Bunter," Squiff remarked cheerfully. "It serves him right for telling whoppers. Pity it didn't half paralyse you as well, Fishy!"

A long groan from Bunter.

"I guess I don't know what you mean," Fish drawled.

"You soon will, you spoofer!" yelled Stott. "The demonstration was a put-up job between you and Bunt." "Rescue, Fishy!" moaned Bunter.

"Didn't Bunter get my message about the reinforcements?" demanded Fish.

"Yes," grinned Squiff.

"Then I guess the invention is all right," said Fish, with confidence.

"Yaroooh!" howled Bunter.

Fisher T. Fish did not see yet how the spoof had failed.

"The fact of the matter is, Bunter," Fish said severely, "that I guess you don't understand that amazin' contraption of your own invention. Gentlemen, without Bunter's help, I calculate I can prove the worth of the invention."

"Bust the rotten thing up, you chaps!" howled Bunter, beginning to dance like a Dervish. "Groooh!"

"I guess I'll proceed to stop it now," Fish observed.

"Smash it to bits!" howled Bunter frantically.

The American junior stooped to the box. Inside was a shocking coil, and it was, of course, the wires from this that Bunter had picked up. Fish caught a small knob in the end of it.

"I guess this is the gadget," he muttered, and started to pull on it.

The net result was to increase the current to twice its strength, and Bunter let out a yelp of terror, and sprang back about a couple of yards. As he did so the wires pulled free.

Fish looked up with a smile.

"I guess you're all right now," he observed.

The last shock had left Bunter tingling. He eyed the transatlantic junior with baleful eyes.

"I'll give you all right!" he howled, making a rush at his ally. "You did that on purpose!"

"I guess— Here, stoppit!" Fish roared. "What's the matter, you madman?"

Bunter had leapt at him like an infuriated elephant, and the Yankee junior went to earth with a crash, Bunter flying over him and landing a little further on. Fish scrambled up quickly, but Bunter was a good second, and his ally had hardly started to run before Bunter was after him.

"I'll give you an electric shock!" Bunter panted, as he rushed in pursuit.

The Removites stood and rocked with laughter at the sight.

Bunter seemed to have enough life in him for twenty. He rushed after the American junior like a human tornado. Fish scuttled wildly round in a circle, yelling for help.

But no one was disposed to help. Everyone wanted to see the Owl transfer some of the shock to his fellow-plotter. And Fish had not long to wait.

Bunter gave a spring, and landed on Fish's back, and the two went to the ground with a crash that knocked all the wind out of the American junior. Bunter sat on top, and started pommelling vigorously.

"Help!" howled Fish wildly. "I'm being murdered by this flannel-headed jackanapes! Let me up, madman, and I guess I'll knock you into potato scrap- ing! Yaroooh!"

Biff! Clump! Wallop!

"Groooh! Stoppit!"

Bunt Bunter paid no heed. He just went on pommelling.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Penalty of Fame!

FISHER T. FISH limped into Friardale looking like a wet rag.

His thoughts about inventions, electricity, and Bunter were of the most Hunnish kind.

The Owl of the Remove had never been in better form than a few minutes previously. The American junior felt that he was black-and-blue all over, and he was aching in every limb.

"I guess I'll have my own back on Bunter!" he muttered, as he trudged along.

There was no definite plan in his brain. But he meant to get his revenge as soon as he could.

The chance came sooner than he had expected.

Bunter had not confined the story of his invention to the school. He had talked far and wide of it, and everyone in the village knew Bunter for an inventor. They also knew that he had received a letter from the Inventions Board offering to buy his idea.

He had risen, in a few brief days, to quite a pinnacle of fame. People in Friardale looked at the Owl with a new interest. And that superlative spoofer did not fail to make the most of the new respect he had gained.

Uncle Clegg had supplied tarts to the value of quite a considerable sum on credit. It seemed certain that Bunter would soon be in funds now, and able to pay for them all.

The news had even drifted to a small, tumble-down cottage off the main road, where two personages had taken up their residence for a few days.

They were not desirable personages, and they did not intend to stay in Friardale after it became too hot for them. The police were looking for them, and had been for some weeks.

It was while one of them was in the Cross Keys that he heard the story of the "schoolboy inventor," and, although he had then imbibed too much liquor to think collectedly, he remembered the matter, and later on discussed it with his fellow-rough.

The upshot was that they decided to look into the subject more closely.

It was Sly Bill who first discovered Fisher T. Fish coming along the road. Sly was not the name which his doting parents had originally conferred upon him, but his pals thought that it was more true to life than Horatio.

"That there's one o' them young cards as we want," he observed to Nutty Nat, his companion. "E might be able to tell us abah't this fat bloke wot's invented the tellerphone."

"Yuss," said Nutty Nat, who was a man of few words.

"An' then, if there's anything in wot I 'eard," proceeded Bill, "we might pinch 'im an' make 'im split."

"Yuss," agreed Nat.

Fisher T. Fish approached, hands in pockets, and head sunk in thought. He started violently as a rough voice hailed him.

"Jest a minnit, young man!" said Bill.

Fish backed away apprehensively.

"I guess I don't know you hoboes," he said. "Vamoose the ranch!"

"We don't want to do you no 'arm," Sly Bill said quickly. "We wants to ask you a few questions abah't your collidge!"

"Goin' ter send our sons there," grinned Nutty Nat.

Bill reproved him with a glance.

"We're interested in a fat cove," Bill said. "We're inventers ourselves, and we'd like ter meet 'im!"

Fisher T. Fish snorted.

"I guess I know who you mean," he said. "It's a fat, rotten skunk named Bunter!"

"That's 'im!" said Bill.

"Well, what do you want to know?" asked Fish.

"Does 'e come inter the villidge orften?" asked Bill.

"Why?"

"I wants ter meet 'im!"

"I reckon you won't want to meet him twice!" said Fish.

The two criminals exchanged a glance. "You don't seem ter be pertikler fond of 'im," said Bill.

"I guess I ain't!" growled Fish.

"Well, then," said Bill, "why should we beat abah't the bush? We wants ter meet 'im—never mind why. P'raps it's because we're inventers, an' p'raps it's because we ain't. Can you 'elp us?"

A short struggle passed in Fisher T. Fish's breast.

He did not fancy the two leering specimens who asked these suspicious questions about Bunter. His instinct, if nothing else, warned him that they were up to no good.

And at any other time Fish would have left them to themselves and walked on. But to-day Fish was sore and smarting, and he had received his injuries at Bunter's hands.

His pride had been hurt, too—to be thrashed in public by Bunter was an indignity which would be cast up against him for many a day. And he wanted to have his revenge.

"I guess I could help you if I wanted to," he said.

"We'd make it worth your while," said Bill, with a grin.

Conscience struggled once more in Fish.

"Look here!" he said. "I guess I want to know what you're going to do with the galoot!"

Bill winked.

"We ain't goin' to 'urt him," he said. "That's true, ain't it, Augustus?"

"Yuss," assented Nutty Nat.

"Well, what is it, then?" Fish asked.

"We wants ter talk to 'im abah't the invention," Bill said bluntly. "That's straight. Now, if you splits, I'll slosh yer!"

Fisher T. Fish saw things in a trice, and he smiled.

These men were after Bunter with the object of discovering the details of his bogus "telephone." Fish saw no harm in letting them get hold of Bunter and try to extract some information.

It would do the Owl good, he thought. It would take down his swollen head. And as there was no value in Bunter's model the men would not be able to get hold of anything useful to them. Fish saw an easy and certain method of having his revenge on Bunter without personal risk.

"I guess I want ter know what it's worth," he said slowly.

"'Arf-a-dollar," suggested Bill.

Fish shook his head.

"I guess it ain't worth the risk!" he said quickly.

"Five bob!" Sly Bill suggested.

The American junior paused to think.

"Cash down?" he fenced.

"Is it a deal, then?" asked Bill.

"Yep," Fish said.

He had made his decision. He did not realise the danger he was letting Bunter in for. He was thinking of his revenge, and revenge, plus cash, naturally appealed to the commercial mind of the American junior.

Sly Bill's hand went into his pocket, but it did not come out at once.

"Whon are you goin' ter interduce me to this 'ere Bunter?" he asked.

"I guess I ain't goin' to introduce you," said Fish quickly.

Bill frowned.

"I thought it was a deal," he said harshly.

"Yep," said Fish. "But I guess I don't take that risk. I'll bring Bunter down one evening, and, if you like, you can attack us and capture him. I reckon that'll be best!"

"Yuss," said the monosyllabic Nat, rubbing his hands with relish. "One dark night."

Sly Bill agreed, and after a little argument full arrangements were made. Fish was to bring Bunter down as soon as he could, breaking bounds if necessary to do so.

The two coins came slowly out of Bill's pocket, and Fish fastened eagerly upon them.

"I guess you can depend upon me," he said.

"You can depend on secin' me agin if you let us dahn!" said Sly Bill, with deep meaning.

Fisher T. Fish grinned and walked off, the price of treachery chinking in his pocket.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Making It Up!

BOLSOVER MAJOR paced the Close with a moody brow.

More than a week had passed, and no election for Form captain had come off. The efforts of Wun Lung and Bunter, to impress the Remove of their ability to fill the vacant post had turned the election into a mere farce, and only Bolsover's special cronies had sought to force a poll.

Mr. Quelch was adamant. He had told Bolsover twice that he did not think that the Remove took the election seriously, and that the majority of them did not wish him to appoint another captain.

Bunter and Wun Lung were still going strong.

Some of the glamour had gone from the "telephone" after the exposure of Bunter in Friardale Woods. But Bunter persisted that it had all been due to an accident caused by Fisher T. Fish, and the fellows were sufficiently amused to listen to Bunter's efforts to explain it away.

Fisher T. Fish said little. He was waiting for his opportunity, but at present it had not offered itself. Bunter had been under doctor's orders for a bad cold, following upon his exertions in punishing the American junior.

Several times Sly Bill had poured bloodcurdling threats into Fish's ears; but as Bunter had not been seen by anyone in the village, he went no further.

Bolsover major continued to stride up and down the Close.

"Hang the fools!" he muttered. "Wun Lung alone wouldn't be so bad. But with three of us it's impossible to force Quelch to do anything. I wish Bunter was out of it! There might be time yet. It's not certain when Wharton's coming back."

He made a mental calculation.

"If any of them are going to have measles they won't show it till this week," he told himself. "And if one of them does go down with it, I shall have lots more time. I wish Bunter was out of the way!"

Fisher T. Fish came across the Close. Bolsover frowned at him, but the junior came on.

"I say, Bolsover," he said, "I guess I want a word with you."

"Buzz off!" said Bolsover crossly.

"I've got a suggestion," Fish persisted. "I want to say something about Bunter."

"Oh!" said Bolsover.

Fisher T. Fish dropped into step beside him.

"Supposing Bunter was to draw out of the election bizney," Fish started craftily, "what would you do?"

"Get the job, I suppose," said Bolsover.

"Well, would it be worth my while to get him to retire?" asked Fisher T. Fish.

Bolsover laughed scornfully.

"You've had a row with Bunter," he said. "You've got no influence with him now. Bunter won't draw out!"

"Suppose I make him?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bolsover laughed aloud. He remembered the thrashing that Fish had received at Bunter's hands.

"Going to fight him, then?" he asked. "Let's know when it's coming off. I'd like to see it this time."

"I guess you're a silly mugwump, Bolsover!" snorted Fish.

the village who'd look after that jay for a few days," he said.

"Yes," said Bolsover sarcastically. "And what would happen when Bunter got back again?"

"I reckon that's goin' to be all right," Fish replied confidently. "Bunter's goin' to be set on and captured while he's out for a walk with me, and that's all I guess we know."

"Can it be done?" asked Bolsover.

"I guess I shouldn't make the offer if it couldn't," replied Fish.

"You seem to have planned this all out jolly craftily," Bolsover observed. "What are you getting out of it?"

"I guess I get a little commission," Fish said, rubbing his thin hands. "And I reckon there's no love lost between Bunter and me."

"No," said Bolsover slowly. He was thinking. The scheme seemed good to him, and Bolsover had heard of such things before. If Bunter were out of the



Bunter is shocked! (See Chapter 6.)

"Well, what's your plan?"

"How much is it worth to get rid of Bunter?" Fish asked darkly.

"Eh?"

Something in the crafty junior's tones caused Bolsover major to turn round and stare at his companion.

"Say that again!" he said sharply.

Fish said it again.

"Look here," said Bolsover, in a low voice. "I don't know what's in your mind, but you'd better let me have it straight. Bunter's a rotten nuisance! I'd like to see him safely away for a few days!"

Fish grinned.

"Then I guess I'm your man!" he said. "I calculate I can do the stunt slick an' sharp!"

"Out with it, man!" snapped Bolsover. "I'm mum!"

The American junior paused to see that he was not overheard.

"I guess I know a couple of fellows in

way for a couple of days it might be possible to rush the election.

There would, of course, be a hue and cry for the fat junior, but there was no reason why Bolsover should be suspected of knowing anything about him, and Fish must look out for himself.

Fish finally left Bolsover, with a grin on his face and more cash in his pocket.

It was a little later that Bunter, passing Study No. 14 door, observed an opened letter lying on the mat. He stooped and picked it up, and found that it was addressed to Fisher T. Fish.

There was no one in sight, and Bunter had no qualms of conscience—no conscience to suffer qualms, indeed.

He opened the envelope and drew out the single sheet of paper inside. He found a short note, written in a straggling hand.

"My dear Fish," it ran.—"I hope you will be able to come to see me to-morrow

evening. We are having a good spread, and you can bring a chum if you care to. Don't fail."

Bunter smiled a fat smile, and replaced the letter in the envelope. Then he dropped it on the mat and knocked at the door. Fish's voice called out to him to come in.

"I say, Fishy," Bunter said genially, "there's a letter of yours on the mat. I haven't opened it!"

"Thanks!" said Fish. "Bring it in!"

Bunter smiled amiably, and entered. "There you are, old man," he said. "And, I say, Fish, I'm sorry I thrashed you the other evening. I assure you I don't bear any malice. I hope you don't?"

Fish looked up. "I guess I'm real pleased," he said. "Shake!"

Bunter shook, smirking at his own cleverness.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Kidnapping of Bunter!

BUNTER'S feud with Fisher T. Fish seemed quite at an end.

That, anyway, was how it appeared to the fat junior. He was too dense to see the trap which had been laid for him.

Fisher T. Fish was in a fair way to have his revenge now. Bunter was going to accompany him to his friend's house in the village "just to show there was no ill will."

Bunter went like a lamb to the slaughter.

It was getting dusk as the pair approached Friardale. Sly Bill and Nutty Nat, his accomplice, were sure to be hiding somewhere near, and Fish began to peer about for some sign of them.

Bunter walked on unsuspectingly.

"I know your friends will be very pleased to meet me," he remarked complacently. "Of course, when a fellow's a handsome chap like I am, a fellow's naturally sought after a lot."

"I guess that's so," agreed Fish, with a glance towards the hedge.

"I expect they will always be wanting to meet me when they've seen me once," pursued the Owl. "Did you say they had seen me about the village?"

"Yep," said Fish.

"Ah, that accounts for it!" said Bunter.

They trudged on. There was no one in sight in either direction, but Fish thought he caught a movement in the bushes ahead.

His eyes had not deceived him. The next moment, as they drew abreast of the place, two dark figures suddenly rose up and dashed into the road.

Bunter drew back, while Fish leaped to one side.

"Coliar 'em!" hissed Sly Bill.

"Yuss!" responded the loquacious Nutty.

Bunter let out a wild yell.

"Here, you keep off!" he roared. "I'll knock you both down if you don't—Grooh!"

Sly Bill laid violent hands upon the figure of the Owl, and the fat junior was as helpless as a kitten in his grasp.

"Help!" Bunter roared. "Murder! Thieves! Fire!"

"You shut up!" Sly Bill growled. "I'll down yer!"

Bunter made gurgling noises behind the hand that was held over his mouth.

"Someone coming!" Nutty said in his comrade's ear.

Sly Bill turned his head, and saw the figure of a man just coming round the

corner three or four hundred yards back. Fisher T. Fish saw him, too, and he recognised the figure. It was Mr. Quelch.

To be found a witness to the kidnapping would be awkward for the American junior. He gave a shrill yell, and dashed forward to the attack.

Nutty saw him coming, and realised that things were growing warmer. He was a man of few words and decisive action.

As Fish flew at him he let drive with his fist, and his bony knuckles landed with a thud on the American junior's long nose.

"Yaroooh!" roared Fish.

It was a terrific blow, and it was enough for Fish. It lifted him clean off the ground, and sent him staggering back across the road, where he fell with a crash into the ditch.

As he scrambled out again, muddy and bruised, he saw Mr. Quelch dash up. Bill and Nat had disappeared with the Owl, and in the dusk it had been hard to see where they went.

"Tell me what has happened!" Mr. Quelch demanded, as Fish appeared.

"Grooh!" Fish groaned, fondling his injured nose. "I guess we were set on by a couple of hoboos, and they knocked me out and ran away with Bunter."

"Then follow me," said the Form-master briskly. "We must catch them."

He set off at a run, and Fish, wet and bedraggled, followed at a distance.

He was not satisfied with the way the affair had been carried out. The appearance of the Form-master had not entered into the plan.

The aid of the darkness, however, was sufficient to enable such old hands as Bill and Nat to make good their escape. Although Mr. Quelch pelted on, he did not overtake them. They had taken to the fields, and, at the very moment that Mr. Quelch was pouring out his story to the local arm of the law—P.-c. Tozer—Bunter was making a very forced march across the fields, and the prospects of rescue for the Owl were growing fainter and fainter.

Within an hour or two, however, search-parties started. As the time went on it became increasingly evident that Bunter had been kidnapped—why, no one could understand.

Little parties of seniors left the gates of Greyfriars. Fish was questioned closely by Mr. Quelch and the Head, but he could only give a very vague account of what had happened. His description of the men concerned was so unlike the real criminals that it was of very little use. In fact, as intended, it was a hindrance.

The search-parties were quite unsuccessful.

They scoured the country far and wide by moonlight. But there was no trace of Bunter, and presently they began to drift back to the school again.

The last searchers came back well after midnight, and soon after that the masters began to come in. Mr. Prout had taken his gun; but, fortunately for those near him, he had not seen anything to shoot at.

The mystery was no nearer its solution. Everyone wondered where Bunter was—everyone, that is, save two.

Bolsover lay in bed feeling rather pleased. Fish's scheme had worked, and he would now have his shot at the captaincy. It was not likely that Bunter had come to any real harm, and Bolsover's heart was not a tender one.

Fisher T. Fish tossed restlessly, beset by troubled thoughts.

The path of the transgressor is apt to be hard!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Still Tongue!

"I SAY, what do you want me for?" Bunter looked up into the face of Sly Bill.

He had spent an uncomfortable night in a deserted house, and the bonds that held him were tight and galling.

"I'll bloomin' soon tell you," Bill said. "You've brought out a big invention, 'aven't you?"

"Yes," said Bunter, plucking up courage a little. "And if you don't release me, the War Office will probably execute you!"

Sly Bill chuckled. He was not afraid of that.

"An' your invention is going ter be used by the War Office, ain't it?" he pursued.

"Yes," said Bunter, with growing heat. "You'd better release me at once!"

"You're sure you're the bloke wot's invented the tellerphone?" pursued Sly Bill.

Bunter snorted indignantly. He did not see the drift of the questioning. He committed himself still further.

"Of course I am," he said. "It's a wonderful thing."

Bill turned to his accomplice.

"I guess 'e's the right bloke, eh?" he said.

"Yuss," said Nutty Nat.

Bunter looked up.

"Are you going to release me?" he demanded.

"In a minnit," said Bill. "But you gotter tell us orl abaht the invention first."

"Oh, crumbs!" muttered the Owl.

He saw it now, and was dismayed. It had not dawned on his obtuse brain before that the men had kidnapped him with the object of finding out the secret he was supposed to possess.

"You better write it on a bit o' paper," Bill said. "Do some drawings, an' orl that, and then we'll let you know w'en you can go agin'."

"Yuss, that's right," said Nutty Nat.

Bunter said nothing.

"An' don't you make any mistakes abaht it," Bill warned him. "You ain't going until we've sold your tellerphone to our grateful country. Ho, ho, ho!"

Bunter looked round in wild alarm.

"I don't know anything about the telephone," he said desperately.

Bill laughed again.

"You can't start that gime!" he said. "You've told us all abaht the tellerphone, and we knows as you're the bloke wot's done it."

Bunter glared, but said nothing.

"And you ain't going ter get any grub until you dross the plans," Sly Bill said.

"I won't draw them!" Bunter said defiantly.

Nutty Nat slipped from the room, and returned a minute later with a few sheets of dirty paper, a pen, and a small ink bottle.

"Now write it orl aht there!" said Bill.

"I sha'n't!" said Bunter.

"Well, you ain't going to 'ave no grub till you do," warned Bill. "E'll soon come to reason, won't 'e, Nutty?"

"Yuss," said the loquacious one.

Bunter heard the door slam, and a bolt creak on the other side. He looked round desperately.

There was a small window in the wall; but for the fat junior to have squeezed through that would have been a greater feat than that of the proverbial camel getting through the eye of a needle.

Bunter sat sulkily in a corner; but after what seemed to him like an age,

he got very tired of that. He was very hungry, too.

He sat down to try and put something on the paper. For many minutes the Owl sat biting the end of the pen, but no ideas came to him.

He began to realise that it was not all beer and skittles to be an impostor. The two ruffians were convinced that it was in Bunter's power to give them what they wanted.

Unfortunately for Bunter, it wasn't! Finally he flung the pen down and got up. He was getting horribly hungry.

After what seemed to the Owl a very long period of waiting, Bill looked in at the door. He frowned as he saw that Bunter had made only dirty finger-marks on the paper.

"Ow's the tellerphone getting on?" he demanded.

"I tell you I don't know anything about the beastly thing!" the Owl growled.

"Huh!"

"I ain't going to put anything down, because I don't know anything," Bunter explained.

The other sniffed.

"Nutty!" he called along the passage. There was a shuffle of feet, and his accomplice joined him.

"This bloke ain't going ter write nothin'," Bill explained.

"I tell you I don't know anything about the telephone," the Owl said desperately.

Bill favoured him with a glance in which there was little admiration.

"Same old breed!" he said. "You can't force even such a fat bloke ter split without a little trouble."

"I tell you——" Bunter began.

"I didn't think a fat cove like you 'ad it in 'im ter 'old out agin starvation," Bill replied. "I don't mind sayin' yer've got some grit in yer, an' I shouldn't have thought it. But we're goin' ter make you speak."

"We are so!" seconded Nat.

"We ain't goin' ter give you any food," Bill explained. "And if you don't speak by this arnternoon we're goin' ter take yer to see the old castle!"

"Haw, haw, haw!"

Something in the malice of Nutty Nat's laugh sent a cold shiver through the fat junior.

"I tell you I don't know anything about it," he groaned.

"Ever 'eard of a dipping-stool?" Bill asked, with apparent irrelevance.

Bunter shuddered with vague fright.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

On the Dipping-Stool!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! What's the news, Harry?"

Bob Cherry was the speaker. He was standing in the garden at Wharton's great-aunt's place when the captain of the Remove came out of the house, with a cheery grin.

"We're out of quarantine!" he said. "The doctor says we can go back to Greyfriars to-morrow!"

"Furrah!" yelled Bob.

A fortnight's inactivity had been quite enough for the Famous Five. They had had a very good time, and Wharton's great-aunt had done all she could to make life enjoyable. But the chums would be very pleased to get back to the old school again.

"Are we free to go out this afternoon?" asked Bob.

"Oh, yes!" said Frank. "Let's take a walk along the river and stretch our legs a bit."

"I think you chaps would find a visit to the old castle rather interesting," Wharton suggested. "It's a decent

walk along the river-bank, and it's a rare tumble-down old place. There's all sorts of old things there, and they keep them in working order for the local fair. There's a moat and drawbridge and a dipping-stool, and all sorts of things."

The chums lost no time in setting out for the walk. They were in high spirits, and they stepped out at a good round pace.

They could see the castle ahead long before they drew near. Its mediæval towers rose in sombre gauntness above the cluster of ancient oaks.

"Hoity old place!" remarked Bob Cherry presently.

"Yes," said Harry, as they tramped along. "You'll get a full view of it in a minute."

As they rounded the next bend the castle came right into view.

The ruin stood on the edge of the river, towering above the surrounding tress. A moat had been cut round it from the river, to make it impregnable in the days of knights and archers.

The chums could see the old draw-bridge which had formerly been lowered across the moat. They could also see another structure—looking, in the distance, like a primitive crane—which hung from the castle wall.

"What's that thing?" asked Bob, as he spotted it.

"That's the old dipping-stool," Harry explained. "They used to put witches on it, and duck them in the river to cure them."

"There's someone there now!" Johnny Bull said suddenly.

"Three people!" said Bob Cherry excitedly. "And it looks as though one of them is being put into the stool!"

The chums stopped and stared. They could see three figures at the dipping-stool. Those three were Bunter, Sly Bill, and his crony Nutty Nat.

Bunter had been brought, in spite of his entreaties, threats, and pleadings, to undergo the ordeal of the dipping-stool.

His captors were not sober. They had been imbibing very freely.

Once the idea of putting Bunter on the stool to make him speak had got fixed in their heads, nothing but putting him there would satisfy them.

The Famous Five watched for several seconds, and then Bob suddenly turned sharply to his chums.

"It's a couple of roughs!" he cried. "And they are forcing some fellow on to that contraption who doesn't want to go! It's a fat chap—like Bunter!"

"Why, it is Bunter!" roared Johnny Bull. "Rescue!"

The chums broke into a run. It was evident that Bunter was the victim of foul play, and as they pelted along the river-path they heard a shrill, agonised scream from the Owl.

The next moment the dipping-stool swung out over the river, and then, with a hollow splash, Bunter disappeared beneath the cold waters.

The Famous Five raced on, with set

teeth. Bob Cherry was leading, but his chums were not far behind.

As they ran they saw the dripping figure of the Owl rise slowly out of the water, and a series of despairing screams rent the air. Then the dipping-stool began to descend again, and once more the fat junior's cries were smothered by the waters of the river.

"Brutes!" roared Bob.

They were very near now, and they could see the two drunken ruffians, still unaware of their presence, holding the mechanism for raising the stool. The chums saw them start to turn the handle, and then suddenly stop.

For a few moments they wrestled furiously, but the stool did not reappear. The machinery had stuck, and Bunter was held beneath the water!

As the truth dawned upon Bob he put on an extra spurt, and, dashing to the spot, poised for a second on the edge, and then took to the water.

He cleft the surface neatly, and slipped deep into the green depths. His plunge had been good, for almost immediately he saw a dark shape loom ahead, and the next moment he had reached the sunken dipping-stool.

He did not venture to look at the goggling face that peered through the waters. He was desperately afraid that he might be too late. The stool did not start to rise—it was stuck—and Bob knew that the issue depended upon him.

With desperate fingers he gripped the straps which bound Bunter. They were stiff and hard to undo, but Bob worked like a fury. His own breath was getting short.

One strap came loose. Bob worked at the next with feverish energy.

Another strap free! Bob turned his attention to the last, which he could see faintly in the green gloom. A fierce struggle, and then it yielded!

Rescuer and rescued rose to the surface!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Good Luck to the Invention!

BOB CHERRY towed Bunter to the bank.

There was no life visible in the fat junior. His stay under the water had taxed his unhealthy system to its utmost. Wharton and Johnny Bull caught him, and hauled him out of the water, and Bob followed quickly after.

Inky and Frank Nugent were each engaged in sitting on a prisoner. The two scoundrels had yielded at the first attack of the quartette. Too drunk to put up much of a fight, they had been easily floored.

Wharton, Bull, and Bob Cherry set to work to revive the Owl. Their first fears subsided when Bunter gave vent to a long groan. A little later he opened his eyes.

"Feeling better?" asked Wharton kindly.

"Grooh!" shuddered Bunter.

But he was getting better, for all that, and a quarter of an hour later he was able to rise unsteadily to his feet. The two ruffians were bound and left there. Bunter needed attention before them.

Alternately carrying him and forcing him to trot, the Removites hurried their patient to the house, where he was put into a hot bed, and a doctor was summoned.

The doctor said that Bunter would be better in a day or two. And it was no more than a couple of days before he returned to Greyfriars—the same Bunter as of old.

Meanwhile, the chums went back for their prisoners, and the precious pair—

*Eat less
Bread*

who had dodged arrest for some time—found themselves once more within the familiar stone walls with one more crime to answer for.

The next day the chums returned to Greyfriars, where they received a rousing reception.

Bolsover had not been appointed captain. Mr. Quelch had refused to take any steps until Bunter was found, and the sudden return of the Removites settled the matter.

"Awfully glad you've come back!" said Peter Todd. "We've been holding the fort against fearful odds!" he grinned.

The Removites roared over the details of the postponed election; but when Bob was told of Bunter's supposed invention a look of wonder crossed his face.

"Bunter invented a telephone?" he asked.

"Yes," grinned Peter Todd. "The most weird and wonderful thing you ever saw. He gave himself a shock with it that nearly killed him, and rigged up a spoof display to try and make us demand his appointment as Form captain."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And he managed to get a letter from the invention people saying they wanted to see a finished model of it," Todd finished. "He must have pinched it from someone."

"Yes," said Bob quietly, "he did. He pinched it from me!"

"What?"

"I've invented a telephone," Bob said modestly. "It's an awfully simple idea; but the Inventions Board have taken it up since I've been in quarantine, and

they're going to send me a fat cheque for it some time."

"Congrats, old man!" exclaimed Peter enthusiastically.

"It's nothing much," said Bob, blushing. "I've been thinking about it for some time, and my cousin helped me to make the necessary model, and supply the technique I hadn't got. I started making a model myself, but it was a rotten failure."

"It must have been that that Bunt collar," grinned Peter Todd. "The spoofer said he'd been working on it in secret. I can see it all now! He didn't seem to know much about it."

The story of Bob's invention soon spread over the school, and for a couple of days Bob was a popular hero. And when the details of his rescue of Bunter came out Bob's popularity passed all bounds.

"It wasn't anything," Bob said modestly. "I only did what anyone else would have done."

Bolsover did not worry further about putting up for Form captain, as he saw that he did not stand an earthly chance. Wun Lung, too, subsided, evidently to think out more schemes to send to the "greatest British general."

And Bunter, of course, found on his return that everyone knew the history of his so-called "invention," and any further fiction on the subject would be wasted. He kept a discreet silence.

He went and saw Fisher T. Fish, however. Bunter had been thinking of several things, and he had suspicions.

The American junior met Bunter nervously.

"I guess I'm real glad to see you back, Bunt!" he said.

The Owl sniffed.

"I believe it was you, you rotter, who got me captured by those blackguards!" he said. "I was going to give you a thundering good licking, but on second thoughts I'll go to Quelch. I expect you'll be expelled to-morrow!"

But the Owl's threat put the finishing touch to Fish's fears. He made straight for Mr. Quelch's study, and before Bunter arrived had told the whole miserable story.

Fortunately for Fish, Mr. Quelch could not fully realise the actual depth of his villainy. As it was, Fish got the caning of his life, and the matter ended there.

The same night a merry party met in Study No. 1 to celebrate the return of the chums, and the success of Bob's invention. Bunter was a member of the party, and, in spite of the bad cold which he had contracted in the icy waters of the river, he did justice to the feed.

"I say, you fellows," he said when he had finished, "I ain't going to do any more inventing."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I can't see anything to laugh at!" Bunter said angrily. "It's a dangerous game. I'm sick of it!"

"We're sick of you," said Peter Todd. "But here's luck to the real invention—and your good health, Bob, old chap!"

(Don't miss "JUDGE JEFFREYS!")

—next Monday's grand story of Harry Wharton & Co., by Frank Richards.)

EDITORIAL CHAT.

For Next Monday:

"JUDGE JEFFREYS!"

By Frank Richards.

You have all read in the histories about the infamous Judge Jeffreys, who was perhaps the worst man who ever disgraced the English Bench, and who will never be forgotten because of the terrible cruelties he practised after the unhappy Monmouth Rebellion. Our Judge Jeffreys is not that one. He is an acting headmaster who takes the place for a time of Dr. Locke, and by his unfairness and tyranny disgusts practically the whole school. His name is Jeffreys, and it is only natural that the Removites should nickname him "Judge Jeffreys"—especially after a scene about which you will read in next week's story.

This is the first of a short series that I am quite sure will appeal to you all. They are as fine yarns as Mr. Richards ever wrote; and more than that one does not need to say. The situation is one full to the brim with drama—on the one side a tyrannous master, no better than a slave-driver; on the other a crowd of high-spirited boys with very definite notions as to fair play, with some natural awe of the Head on account of his august position, but not prepared to take everything lying down, even from the Head.

You will read how Loder wormed himself into Wingate's place; how Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry and the Bounder and others stood up for the rights of their Form; how Mr. Quelch and Mr. Prout regarded the tyrannical locum tenens. And later on—not in next week's story—you will learn how resentment hardened into open opposition, and how— But I must not tell too much in advance. Did anyone whisper "barring-out," though?

I prophesy that you won't know how to wait until next Monday for the second story of the series.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 500.

A RARE TREAT IN THE "GEM."

Meanwhile, are you all reading the "Gem"? If not, you ought to be! I told you last week something about the new serial,

"THE TWINS FROM TASMANIA!"

But I had better tell you that Highcliffe and Cliff House come very prominently into the story, and that your old friends of Greyfriars also play parts.

For instance, you will find the Famous Five at the fight between Philip—known as "Flip"—Derwent, the boy twin, and Gadsby of Highcliffe; and you will meet Marjorie Hazeldene and Phyllis Howell and Clara Trevlyn with Philippa—"Flap"—Derwent, the girl twin; and Billy Bunter will roll across the stage; and Peter Hazeldene will play his wayward part. Is that enough to give you some idea of the treat the story will be to you? There is Cocky, too. He is a cockatoo, brought over the seas by the twins—a bird with great powers of speech, and a way of saying things that fit in; and his part in the story is no small one.

There is a good, long instalment every week, and the best thing you can do is to order the "Gem" at once, and

SEE THAT YOU GET IT!

"DISGUSTED'S" LETTER.

The last few days have brought me letters in shoals from readers who are very angry indeed with the writer of the letter I printed a few weeks ago in the issue dated August 11th. More will come, no doubt, for I write this on August 10th, only five days after the number was out. I have not space this week to refer to the letters, but I must just thank the hundreds of loyal readers who have been moved to write to me, and next week I hope to be able to quote a few lines from some of them.

SIX OF THE BEST!

There are now on sale four issues of the "Boys' Friend" 3d. Library and two of the "Sexton Blake Library," and anybody who cares for good, sound, lively reading, with plenty of incident and no dull pages, and who happens to have eightpence to spare could hardly do better than buy the lot. There are two school stories included. One is "The Fourth Form at Frankingham," which a good many of you already know, and about which I am not going to say much, being no end modest, you know! The other is "The Drudge of Scruby Hall," by Andrew Gray, whom I last saw in khaki, with tabs and things on it. Most of you know his name, and if you don't know his work, just try this excellent yarn.

Our good old friend S. Clarke Hook is responsible for another—"Tracked through the Jungle." With a title like that, and the immortal Pete playing his part, need more be said? Henry St. John, the author of "King of the Road," a first-rate motoring yarn, is one of the old brigade, who was famous before most of you were born, and is as able and as interesting as ever when he turns his attention to boys' stories—which is not often enough in these days. Sexton Blake numbers his admirers by the million, and "A Legacy of Shame" and "The Secret of the Past" are well up to the level of the yarns which have made him famous.

The "Boys' Friend" 3d. Library is going great guns now, as are the two monthly Sexton Blake volumes.

Your Editor

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 36.—Mr. PROUT.

WAS Mr. Prout ever in the Rocky Mountains? Did he shoot bears and buffaloes? Or is it all brag?

These are questions which readers sometimes ask.

One sees no sufficient reason to doubt that Mr. Prout travelled in the Rockies in his younger days. He says so; that should be enough. After all, given the possession of cash for travelling, it is quite easy to visit the Rockies now, and was not specially difficult in the '80's—the period in which Mr. Prout places his visit.

If he did not shoot bears and buffaloes, he shot at them. And if he shot at them often enough the chances are that he registered a hit now and then. But there is fair reason to doubt whether he was ever the marksman he maintains he was.

That is not to say that he tells untruths. He believes what he says.

As for his pluck, that is beyond argument or dispute. He has offered proof of it again and again. He is always willing to take risks. A man who had the courage Paul Prout has, and was the crack shot Paul Prout imagines himself, would be quite an excellent fellow as a companion in a tight place.

It is very unkind and improper for certain members of the Fifth to say that it was Mr. Prout's face that frightened over the precipice the bear whose skin adorns the floor of Mr. Prout's study, and not that gentleman's unerring rifle which bowled it over. They have no proof. And the bearskin is there. They have no such thing in their studies, though the bath-room is another matter. But one must not grow frivolous.

On the whole, the Fifth like Mr. Prout, though they may gibe at him. He has faults; but he is a capable master, and a very kindly man.

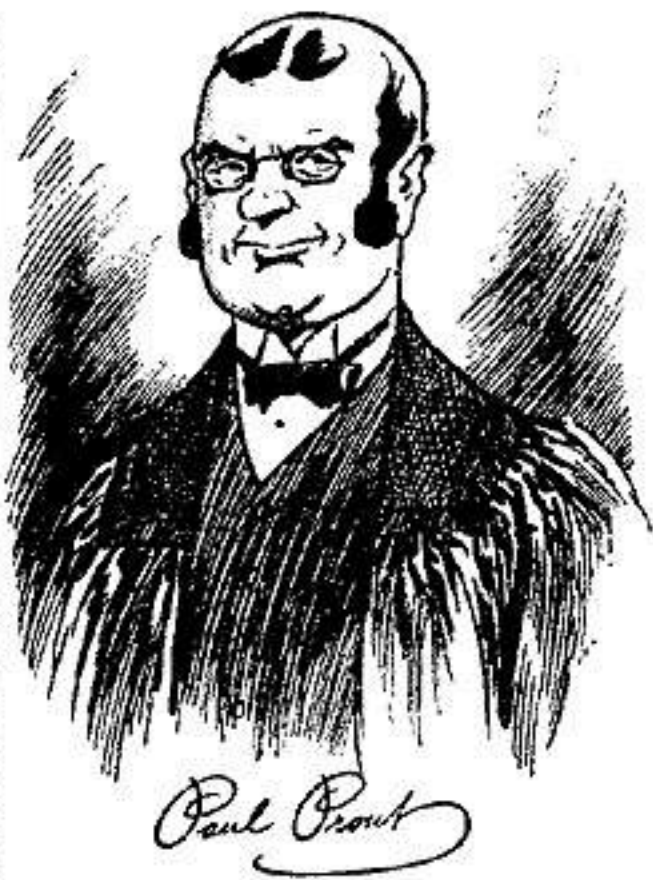
Pompous he is, and quick of temper. But quickness of temper seldom makes a man unpopular if kindness of heart goes with it. And pomposity is not a sin. One laughs at the pompous person; and it is hardly possible to dislike heartily what one can laugh at.

Mr. Prout was delighted with the chance to deal with Mr. Quelch's burglar—who was really only Nugent minor, though neither master guessed that. Mr. Prout is always pleased when there is any excuse for fetching a gun. Others are not so pleased, because Mr. Prout with a gun constitutes a danger to the community!

Coker is often at odds with his Form-master. Coker must be a sore trial to Mr. Prout, and nothing can be more certain than that the magnificent Horace resents the failure of Mr. Prout to realise his essential greatness. But it is very unlikely that either really fails to see the other's good points. There is between them a strong likeness. Paul Prout at seventeen or so was something of a Coker, one fancies; not so burly and heavy-handed, perhaps, but just as sure of himself. And Coker at fifty-odd will not be greatly unlike Mr. Prout. Can't you imagine him telling the youngsters how he used to win cricket and footer matches for his side—and believing it, too?

Do you remember Bob Cherry's First of April trick, and Mr. Prout's finding his Form playing footer when they should have been in the Form-room? They were innocent of intended truancy; Bob had posted up a notice on the door which led them to believe that Mr. Prout was too ill to take his classes. Do you remember Alonzo, hobbled by Temple, falling into Mr. Prout's study, and accidentally slamming the door when ordered out, and how the master came after him fuming, and how they embraced one another in the corridor, without design, and how Lonzy thought Mr. Prout ought to apologise when matters were explained?

And do you remember Lonzy's request to the master of the Fifth for a gun, that he might be ready for the burglar, and Mr. Prout's most emphatic refusal? And Mr. Prout's plain speaking to the tyrant



Lothrop? And how Mr. Prout was the victim of the booby-trap which the Famous Five had prepared for Coker? And Mr. Prout as Cook-Director at the time of the domestic strike—not a howling success in that role? And Mr. Prout's horror when the supposed Mr. Knutt—who was really Lord Charles Lovelace—was caught playing leapfrog with the Remove? And Mr. Prout attacked by four most horrible ruffians—who were really Peter and Alonzo Todd, Tom Dutton, and Tom Brown in masks? And Mr. Prout, finding the Remove under the beds in the Fifth dormitory, whither they had gone to rag Coker? And Mr. Prout in agonies, believing himself poisoned by Wun Lung? Indeed, there seemed good reason to believe, for the little Chinese admitted the crime. He was not guilty, though; Alonzo's marvellous mixture it was which had caused the Fifth master such acute internal discomfort.

Coker never annoyed Mr. Prout more—and he has annoyed him all too often—than when, in an excess of zeal, he employed his fire-brigade to put out a fire in that gentleman's study—the only fire there being at the end of Mr. Prout's cigar!

Of course, Mr. Prout never was a good cricketer. Just about Coker's form at his best, one fancies. But he believes that he was; and he was no end keen on getting up an eleven to play the Old Boys before their match with the School. Other people were not keen to play for him; the leading members of Form teams had no relish for appearing in a clown match; and the masters, for the most part, made excuse. But Mr. Prout did not give up his scheme. He got Messrs. Twigg and Capper; and he offered places to the first eight boys who applied for them. The eight were: Coker (5th), Fish, Bunter major, and Alonzo Todd (Remove), Tubb and Paget (3rd), and Gatty and Bunter minor (2nd). No need to say more!

Do you remember Mr. Prout's great oration on the occasion of the visit of Coker's Canadian cousin? It was unlucky that those pearls of speech should have been wasted upon the broken-down actor whom Skinner had suborned to play the part; but, after all, the Fifth Form master meant well, and his pompous speech was no worse than hundreds of speeches made by the nation's legislators!

One had almost forgotten to note what Mr. Prout said about Coker when the question of his being allowed to take over the captaincy arose. Coker, said Coker's Form-master, was not the brightest boy at Greyfriars—but, of course, Coker knows that to be wrong—but he would make a better captain than Loder.

That Coker is not the brightest boy at

Greyfriars must have been very evident to Mr. Prout after the energetic Horace had lured him into that wild-goose chase after the spy, who turned out not to be a spy after all, but a mere common petty offender against the law of the land.

One of Mr. Prout's most popular turns during recent times was undoubtedly his appearance as a motor-cyclist. He showed in that role all the fearlessness that has distinguished him in times of alarm; and one will not readily forget how he and Wharton chased the errant Bunter together!

A good sort, "Prouty," even when most pompous and absurd—a far better sort than many a serious man who has never in all his life been as ridiculous as Mr. Prout often is!

NOTICES.

CORRESPONDENCE WANTED BY:

A. Penney, Girvan, Edgeley Road, Stockport, would like to join another reader in the production of an amateur magazine.

Wm. Jones, 27, Crane Street, Cefn Mawr, near Ruabon, is forming a "Magnet" League, open to boys anywhere. Hopes to run magazine. Has a small press, and would like to correspond with anyone interested in printing.

W. A. Yeomans, 16, Southfield Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, would be much obliged to any readers who would send him postcard views of Carnarvon Castle and Conway Castle.

Would E. H. D., of Cardiff, whose photo recently appeared in the "Magnet," write to A. Hayward, care of Miss Tressler, 41, Upper Elms Road, Cargate Hill, Aldershot?

Wanted players of musical instruments to join a junior orchestra, 15-17.—E. Axtell, 86, New Holly Lane, Willesden, N.W.

BACK NUMBERS WANTED.

By Jack Woodmason, care of Mr. A. R. Thomas, solicitor, Meneage Street, Helston, Cornwall.—"Magnets" of 1913 or earlier.

By S. W. H. Jones, 15, Burton Street, Castlefields, Shrewsbury.—"Magnet" back numbers, 1-300.

By Miss Eva Wilson, care of Mrs. Boyd, 7 Shorter Row, Dundee.—Back numbers of "Magnet" containing "Mysteria."

By H. Gingell, 30, Parkham Street, Battersea, S.W.—Earliest issues of both "Gem" and "Magnet."

FOOTBALL.

Players wanted for club—14-17.—D. Eaves, 17, Park House, Park Road, Coventry.

Matches Wanted By:

ALL SAINTS—15.—3 mile radius of Chiswick. C. E. Rhodes, 77, Cranbrook Road, Chiswick, W. 4.

AMWELL ROVERS—17.—7 mile radius.—V. Playfair, Holford Villa, 23A, Holford Square, W.C. 1.

EMMFIELD—15.—3 mile radius.—W. A. Kirkbride, 55, Elmdale Road, Walton.

WARWICK ALBION—17.—3 mile radius Clapham Common.—Percy Smith, 52, Parkside Street, Battersea, S.W. 11.

ST. PETER'S—17.—5 mile radius.—H. Trigg, 9, Bounces Road, Lower Edmonton, N. 9.

CHRIST CHURCH—13-14.—3 mile radius.—F. Richards, 29, Southernhay Avenue, Clifton Wood, Bristol.

AVIE STREEY UNITED A.F.C.—15.—4 mile radius.—C. Illingworth, 9, Hebble Street, Ravensthorpe, Dewsbury.

ST. MARK'S UNITED—15.—7 mile radius.—H. Humphreys, 11, Nyddleton Square, London, E.C.

WEST HAMPTON—16.—4 mile radius of Hampstead.—H. Jones, 2, Glenbrook Road, N.W. 6.

EALING CELTIC JUNIORS.—15.—E. Sawyer, 25, Pope's Lane South Ealing, W. 5.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 500.

Extracts from "THE GREYFRIARS HERALD" and "TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY."

COKER THE SMOKER!

By HARRY WHARTON.

PROUT caused all the trouble.

Not that he meant to. Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars, is the kindest-hearted gentleman in the world. Of course, he has his weaknesses. All the fellows have heard of the yarns he spins in the masters' room about his adventures in the Rocky Mountains years and years ago, when he had a trusty rifle and a faithful nigger.

Nobody believes those yarns excepting Mr. Prout himself; but he believes every word he says. Of course, it's possible that he did kill a buffalo once; though, looking at Prout, you would be more inclined to back the buffalo in a real scrap.

He keeps old rifles and shot-guns on the walls of his study, and takes them down sometimes and cleans them, and any fellow who happens to come into his study has to listen to what he did with that blessed rifle or that blessed shot-gun, as the case may be, when he was in the Rockies in his youthful days.

Fellows are quite nervous about going in to see Prout. A chap has been known to have to stand half an hour, shifting from one leg to the other, listening to a story about Red Indians and buffaloes and things.

What makes it worse is that Prout smokes Mexican cheroots—big, black things he learned to smoke when he was in the Wild West—and the atmosphere of his study is sometimes simply awful. When Prout gets fairly going on a yarn his eyes glisten over his specs, and he smokes one cheroot after another without noticing what he is doing. My belief is that it must make him pretty tick sometimes.

It was all through those cheroots.

Mr. Prout had dropped into Coker's study. Coker is in the Fifth, and he often has rows with Loder of the Sixth, who is a prefect and a beast. Mr. Prout had dropped in to talk to him about it.

Now, Coker of the Fifth is every imaginable kind of an ass. But he has a certain amount of simple craft, and he knows how to turn Prout off. So when Prout began to lecture him Coker managed to say that he's been doing some rifle-practice lately, getting ready to kill Germans when he's grown up. The mention of a firearm was enough for Prout, as old Coker knew it would be.

Prout had intended to rag Coker for punching Loder's nose, Loder being a prefect. But he switched off at once to rifles and shooting and the Rocky Mountains.

So he forgot all about Loder's nose, and sat down in Coker's armchair, and fairly let himself go.

When he yarns he smokes all the time like a furnace. He lighted one of his big, black cheroots, and ran on. He got to the Rocky Mountains in no time, and began with buffaloes, and went on to Red Indians and Mexicans, and Coker grinned in his sleeve. He knew that telling a yarn put Prout into his best temper, and that he wasn't likely to slang him afterwards.

But Coker got rather more than he bargained for, all the same.

Mr. Prout seemed to have plenty of time on his hands, and, of course, Coker had to look interested, as he's in Prout's Form.

Prout ran on for a good three-quarters of an hour, and, according to Coker, he smoked six or seven cheroots in that time, till the study was as thick as a London fog. Coker dared not get up and open the window for fear of offending Prout, and he sat and blinked through the smoke, and tried not to cough and sneeze, and wondered when on earth Prout would get finished.

Prout did get finished at last. He looked at his watch, and said he was late, and really must go. And he went. And Coker almost fell on his knees in thankfulness, and made a jump to the window, and opened it

wide, and waved a newspaper about the room to clear off the fumes.

Potter and Greene, his study-mates, came in then, and they began to cough. They blinked at Coker, and blinked at the smoke, and blinked at the cheroot-ends in the grate. And they said together:

"Well, you silly ass!"

Coker coughed, too.

"Isn't it awful?" he said.

"Awful isn't the word!" gasped Potter.

"Have you taken to smoking, you silly ass? Why can't you go and smoke in the woodshed, if you must make a blithering idiot of yourself?"

"What the thunder do you mean by making the study in this filthy state?" howled Greene.

Coker stared at them. Potter and Greene didn't know that Prout had been there, and they fancied that old Coker had been doing all that smoking.

"You fathead!" said Coker.

"Fathead yourself!" said Potter. "It's disgusting! I always knew you were an idiot, Coker, but I never thought you were such an idiot as this. Don't you feel sick?"

"I jolly well do!" said Coker. "But it wasn't—"

"I'm not staying here," said Greene. "Suppose a master should look in, or a prefect, and find the study in this state? We should all be hauled up before the Head."

"I tell you—" roared Coker.

"No good telling me anything," said Coker. "I'm going. Suppose Loder should spot this, frinstance? He's simply longing to get a chance at you since you punched his nose. Why, he'd report you like a shot—and us, too, perhaps, though we hadn't anything to do with it."

"I tell you—"

"You're a senior, too!" said Potter. "Supposed to set an example to the juniors—that's how the Head would look at it. Nice example, I must say—turning the blessed study into a tap-room!"

"You blithering ass!" roared Coker. "I tell you—"

"Great Scott!"

It was Loder's voice.

Loder looked in at the door and sniffed.

He seemed struck all of a heap.

Everybody knows what an ass Coker is, but Loder had never thought he was that kind of an ass. But it was the chance of a lifetime for Loder. Here was Coker's study reeking with smoke, cheroot-ends all over the place, and his study-mates accusing him of turning the study into a tap-room!

Loder's eyes fairly gleamed.

"So I've caught you, Coker!" he said.

"Caught me?" roared Coker.

"Yes! You know the strict rule against smoking—a filthy, disgusting habit!" said Loder—which was pretty cool of Loder, for it's pretty generally known that he smokes cigarettes in his own study.

"Look here—" began Coker.

Coker's brain doesn't work very quickly, and he was feeling rather bewildered. He was jolly angry, too, at anybody accusing him of being a smoker. He is every other kind of a duffer, but not that kind, as it happens.

"Follow me!" said Loder, speaking to Coker just as if he were a fag in the Second Form.

"What?"

"I am going to take you to the Head."

"Take me to the Head!" repeated Coker, as if he could hardly believe his ears. "Take me! Do you know whom you're speaking to?"

"I'm speaking to you," said Loder. "You've been smoking in your study, and breaking all the rules. A senior is supposed to know how to behave himself. You'll come to the Head's study at once!"

Loder put on his most bullying look. He doesn't dare to bully a whacking big fellow

like Coker, as a rule, and he was simply enjoying this. He felt that he had Coker in a cleft stick, and he meant to show his power. It was really the first time he had ever had a chance of ordering Coker about like a fag.

Coker was nearly purple with rage.

"Are you giving me orders, Loder?" he bawled.

"I am!" said Loder. "As a prefect, I order you to follow me to the Head's study and account for your disgusting conduct!"

"Mum-mum-my disgusting conduct!" stutered Coker. "Why, you smoke yourself, you cheeky cad!"

Loder grinned.

"If you can prove that, Coker, you're entitled to report it to the Head, if you choose."

"I'm not a sneak!" said Coker.

"Are you coming?"

"Coming? I'll see you blowed first! Giving me orders!" said Coker, as if he could hardly believe it yet. "Me—by gad, me! Why, you cheeky, fat-headed monkey—"

"Cheese it, Coker!" said Greene nervously. "Loder's a prefect, you know. Look here, Loder, you might let this drop. Coker's never done it before."

"I haven't any proof of that," said Loder. "Besides, if it was a fag, I might cane him and let the matter drop. As it is a senior, it's a more serious matter. However, if Coker prefers to be caned by me, I will settle it that way instead of taking him to the Head."

The idea of being caned by Loder made Coker give a roar like a bull. He didn't say anything. He ran at Loder.

The prefect had just time to whip out of the study. But he wouldn't have got away if Potter and Greene hadn't grabbed Horace Coker and held him back.

"Stop, you ass!" yelled Greene.

"Stop, you fathead!" shouted Potter.

"Let me go!" bellowed Coker. "I'm going to smash him! I'm going to scrag him! Cane me—me! That crawling worm cane a Fifth-Former, by gum! Why, I'll smash him into little pieces! I'll—Leggo!"

He wrenched himself away and rushed into the passage. If he had found Loder of the Sixth there Loder would have been sorry for it. But the prefect had cleared off to the Head's study to make his report.

Coker came in again, growling.

"There'll be a pretty kettle of fish over this!" groaned Potter. "Loder's gone to the Head, of course."

"I'd have given him a thick ear to take to the Head if you silly idiots hadn't stopped me!" snorted Coker.

"He's going to report you."

"Fathead!"

"You silly ass! He'll bring the Head here to see the smoke!" shrieked Greene. "For goodness' sake let's try to clear some of it off before the Head comes!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!" Then the humour of the situation struck Coker all of a sudden, and he roared:

Potter and Greene stared at him.

"Don't you understand?" shouted Potter. "Dr. Locke may be here any minute—"

"You'll be flogged!" howled Greene.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker. "Do you really think he's gone for the Head?"

"I know he has, ass!"

"Of course he has, fathead!"

"Well, let him rip!" said Coker. "I don't mind!"

"Wave that paper about, Greene, and let's clear up these cigar-ends—"

"Let 'em alone!" said Coker.

"What! Do you want to let the Head see them?" hooted Potter.

"Yes. Why not?"

"Are you off your rocker?"

(Continued on page 15.)

"Bow-wow!" said Coker, with a tremendous chuckle. "Leave it as it is for the Head to see. Brainy old Loder! Ha, ha, ha!"

Potter and Greene were simply astounded. They couldn't help thinking that Coker must be off his rocker. Potter peeped out of the study and gave a yelp.

"Here comes Loder with the Head!"

"Let 'em come!" said Coker.

"Oh, my hat! There'll be a row now!"

"All serene!"

"Fathead!"

Coker chuckled.

The next minute Dr. Locke arrived in the doorway, with Loder at his heels. Loder was grinning behind the Head, though he was careful enough not to let the Head see him grin. He thought that he had fairly caught Coker now, and was going to make him sorry for himself.

Dr. Locke stared into the study, and sniffed. The smoke was still thick. The room fairly reeked with strong tobacco. The Head's eyes glittered as he spotted the cigar-ends in the fender.

"Coker!" he thundered.

"Yes, sir?" said Coker calmly and cheerfully; and Potter and Greene wondered at his nerve.

"What does this mean?"

"What does what mean, sir?" asked Coker.

"The—the disgusting state of your study! Loder has reported to me that there has been smoking in this study—"

"That is quite correct, sir."

"And that you refused to follow him to my presence, and, indeed, attempted to assault him!" said the Head, with a terrific look at Coker.

"I don't think you'll blame me, sir, when you know the facts," said Coker.

"Not blame you, Coker? Are you insane, boy? I find your study reeking—actually reeking—with smoke. I find traces of a large number of cigars having been consumed. Do you deny, Coker, that a number of cigars have been smoked in your study this afternoon?"

"No, sir."

"Do you deny that your study-mates were remonstrating with you for turning the study into a tap-room, as Loder has informed me?"

"No, sir."

"Coker, this effrontery is astounding!" The Head seemed almost at a loss for words. "You are perfectly aware of the strict rule which prohibits smoking?"

"Certainly, sir!"

"This matter shall be thoroughly sifted out," said the Head. "Have your study-mates had any share in these proceedings?"

"No, sir. Potter and Greene don't smoke."

"Oh, no, sir!" said Potter, looking as shocked as he could.

"Certainly not, sir!" said Greene.

"You did not find these boys smoking, Loder?" asked the Head.

Loder left off grinning, and looked as solemn as an owl, as the Head glanced round at him.

"No, sir," he said. "I believe it was only Coker. In fairness to Potter and Greene, I must say that they seemed as disgusted as I was myself. I certainly heard them remonstrating with Coker, and pointing out the probable consequences of his bad conduct."

"I am glad to hear this," said the Head.

"You are exonerated, by boys; and I may say that I compliment you on having attempted to exert a good influence upon this reckless and misguided boy."

"Thank you, sir!" muttered Potter and Greene.

They were feeling sorry for Coker; but they were jolly glad to be out of it themselves. When the Head is called into anything, there's never any telling what may happen.

"The matter, then, concerns you alone, Coker," said the Head. "Now, answer me truthfully. Have you smoked before to-day?"

"No, sir," said Coker, quite cheerfully.

"You are not in the habit of smoking?"

"Certainly not, sir."

"Yet at least half a dozen cigars have been consumed in this study this afternoon. You cannot have consumed so many yourself, or you would now be in a state of sickness."

"I should jolly well say so!" ejaculated Coker. The mere idea of smoking half a dozen of old Prout's cheroots made him feel queer inside.

"Very well. I expect you to give me the names of the other boys who are addicted to this disgusting practice."

"I don't know any, sir."

"What? Take care what you say, Coker. Do you venture to tell me that you smoked all those cigars yourself?"

"Not at all, sir. I never smoke."

The Head nearly jumped at that statement.

"You never smoke, Coker?"

"Never, sir!"

"You deny that you have smoked here this afternoon?"

"I do, sir!"

"Then how comes your study in this disgusting state—whence came those cigar-ends?" thundered the Head. "Take care, Coker! Do you mean seriously to say that someone else has been smoking here, and that you had no part in it?"

"Exactly, sir!"

Loder grinned. He thought that a very weak yarn. It was easy enough to see that the Head thought so, too. He became grimmer and grimmer.

"If your statement is true, Coker, you are seriously to blame for allowing smoking in your study. You should have told the person concerned—whose name I demand to know, that I may question him—that you would not allow it, and you should have remonstrated with him for practising so unhealthy and disgusting a habit."

Coker couldn't help grinning at the idea of talking to old Prout like that.

"Coker, you will discover that this is no laughing matter!"

"I'm sorry, sir. But—but I couldn't talk to him as you suggest, sir, under the circumstances."

"Why not, Coker?"

"I didn't think it would be respectful, sir."

"Respectful?" thundered the Head.

"Yes, sir; we are always told to be respectful to our Form-masters," said Coker very meekly.

The Head did jump this time.

"Form-masters!" he gasped.

"Yes, sir."

"Coker, who has been smoking in this study?"

"Mr. Prout, sir."

"Mum-mum-Mr. P-P-Prout!" stuttered the Head.

"Yes, sir," said Coker quite cheerily; and Potter and Greene stared, and then they grinned. Loder's face was worth a guinea a box.

Dr. Locke turned to Loder, and fixed him with a look.

"You hear what Coker says, Loder?"

"I—I don't believe him, sir," stammered Loder. But he did really, for he knew Coker wouldn't risk it unless it was true, for it was easy enough for Prout to be asked.

"I will soon ascertain," said the Head, biting his lip. "Kindly ask Mr. Prout to step here for a moment."

Loder almost crawled away. He could see that he had put his foot in it. The idea of having let off all those fireworks about nothing made the Head frightfully waxy. Coker had really been pulling his leg all the time, for he could have let out the truth much sooner if he had liked. But he had let the Head run on, and Dr. Locke was feeling rather an ass.

There was an awful silence in the study till Mr. Prout arrived, looking very surprised.

"Pray excuse me for troubling you, Mr. Prout," said the Head. "May I ask whether you smoked cigars in this study a short time ago? Coker has been accused of smoking."

Mr. Prout started.

"Bless my soul!" he said. "I am sorry, Coker, that I have inadvertently placed you under such a suspicion. Yes, Dr. Locke, I was speaking to Coker for some time here, and I smoked several cigars—absent-mindedly. I am sorry it should have caused Coker trouble."

"Thank you, Mr. Prout! That is all!"

Prout walked off, feeling rather an ass, too. Coker was smiling in a very cheery way. He felt that he was even with Loder now.

The Head fixed his eyes on Loder. Loder looked as if he would like to sink through the floor.

"Loder!" The Head's voice rumbled like thunder. "Loder, you have brought a serious and unjust accusation against a perfectly innocent boy. You have acted with inexcusable haste and indiscretion. You have wasted my time, and caused me to address entirely undeserved observations to Coker. You should have inquired into the matter carefully, Loder, before troubling me with it. Prefects are appointed to save a headmaster trouble, not to increase it. If anything of this kind occurs again, I shall have to consider very seriously whether you can be allowed to retain the position of prefect in this school! I expect you to express your regret to Coker for the pain your unjust accusation has undoubtedly caused him."

Loder gasped.

"I am sorry, Coker," he managed to get out.

Coker gave him a nod.

"All serene," he said loftily. "Don't let it occur again, that's all!"

The Head swept away; and Loder, after giving old Coker a look that would have done credit to a Hun, followed. Then Coker and Potter and Greene fairly let themselves go, and their yells could be heard all along the Fifth Form passage. The Fifth Form fellows came crowding in to find out what was the matter; and when they heard, they all started yelling, too. Which was very nice for Loder.

THE END.

THE PIG AS THE FRIEND OF MAN!

By MONTAGUE LOWTHER.

There are signs and portents that the genial grunter is at last to come into his own, that the base slur on his porcine majesty—no reference here to the Kaiser—implied by the Swine Fever legislation and the mischievous domestic activities of Sanitary Boards is to be removed.

It is high time.

The pig, the most useful, the most modest, and the least valued quadruped, has suffered—except in good old Ireland—from base prejudice and gross neglect. He has been refused respectable habitation. His manorial hall was deemed good enough for him.

Hygiene, unless you spell it differently, has been given a miss; and although in certain isolated cases the intellect of the pig has received its due, and the noble animal has been allowed to figure on the stage as a performer of no mean talent, the general trend of treatment meted out to the provider of

bacon and sausages must be accounted paltry.

He has had no exercise.

To a sty-list like himself the severe limitations imposed on him have been pitiful.

Every day, as some poet said, is a fresh

pig-inning, just as every day belongs to some dog or another. But the mistake has been made to refuse the pig his innings. The pig has had no day—bar a day of all jeers! Ahem!

Of course, there are pigs and pigs. We can leave it at that.

To the most sensitive kind it must have been an affair of acute suffering, this incarceration in malodorous quarters, short of air, sans everything calculated to inspire the inhabitant to the higher life.

Small wonder if, under these depressing conditions, the pig in many instances has sunk to the level of his pignominous fate. His not to make reply.

Can there be any surprise that unthinking folks came to associate the proudest porker with a grunt? He has not been allowed to expand—except in the coarser sense. He has

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TO THE BOYS AT THE FRONT!

If you are unable to obtain this publication regularly, please tell any news-vendor to get it from

Messageries HACHETTE et Cie.,
111, Rue Reaumur,
PARIS.

THE FIG AS THE FRIEND OF MAN!

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been cribbed and cabined, and made to feel that he is the lowest of the low. Yet through all the debasing servitude the noble pig spirit has survived, and should now emerge triumphant to the brighter, fresher day.

Even in the immediate past the pig has responded quickly to kindness.

Stroll down any Sunday morning, when in the country, and chat with him; scratch him for all engagements with the ferrule of your cane. The pig rises, or sits down, to the occasion. He is as appreciative of kindness as the horse or the dog; but the evil is that he has never had his chance. We talk glibly of the under dog. What of the under pig?

He has a claim. His ancestors roamed the wilderness. Sometimes they fell into the

briny; but accidents will happen. He is worthy, as they know well in Hibernia—sometimes called Ireland—of taking his place at the British fireside, just as Napoleon wished to do. And no bad judge, the smart little Corsican, either.

Raise the pig from the slough of whatshisname in which he has been made to dwell and bring him into his proper sphere. Strike off the unworthy fetters of ignoble restraint and the job is done.

For the misleading spirit of suspicion has caused the pig to live under an eclipse. He has been represented as something different to what he is and was in the brave old days when pigs were bold and roamed the forests, causing Henry the Fowler and many another hunter plenty of trepidation.

It was the brother of a pig which nearly ended Charles the Ninth of France—says Dumas—on one of those merry little hunting trips with the Angry Cat, otherwise Henri Quatre.

The pig has been denied the right to live near human dwellings. This is most unjust.

Bring up a pig properly and he would be as good a neighbour as anybody.

And then he is the pig—the King of the Cupboard, the Lord of the Larder, the Baron of Bacon, the provider of viands which are always interesting. And this can hardly be said of the sheep which pass in the night, or the cattle which are called home.

The pig is a most lovable animal, and very human in his instincts. He could rise to anything.

He is quick at repartee, and would be a splendid companion on a mountaineering jaunt. Let us change present conditions entirely, and admit him to his long overshadowed rights. He is profitable, agile, cheery, fit for any company.

Is there no Samuel Peabody in the present day to reform the sty? We would have the pig housed in light and airy apartments. He is stigmatised as dirty and uncouth because he has never had a chance of a bath and a shave.

Let us be fair to him, and trust that the present movement towards enlightenment will sweep on to a glorious end.

BUSINESS AS USUAL!

By ERNEST LEVISON.

I.

Gussy sailed into the Common-room with a sheet of paper in his hand. His celebrated eyeglass was screwed a little more firmly into his eye than usual.

"Well, what's the news, Gustavus?" yawned Blake. "You look excited. Has the station cab-horse taken to wearing spectacles?"

"Pway don't be an ass, Blake! I want to ask a favour of one of you, deah boys."

"Fire away!"

"Ahem! You see, I have wesolved to undahtake a little business entahpwise—"

"A which?"

"Weally, deah boys, it is howwibly wude to stare at me in that mannah! A fellow with tact and judgment can scawceely fail to make a success in business. Fish himself says I have the makings of a cleah, cool, pweicise business man, and he ought to know. I suppose you chaps know Fish?"

"Fish—what Fish?" repeated Monty Lowther. "Is he a kipper or a sardine?"

"Fish of Gweyfwahs, you ass!"

"Has Fish written to you?" growled Blake.

"Yaas, deah boy. He wecognises what a shwewd chap I am, and has made a weally brilliant and patwiotic suggestion."

"He sees that nobody at Greyfriars will stand his rotten, money-grubbing wheezes, so he's trying them on over here, you mean," growled Blake.

Gussy stroked his sleek head.

"Well, I must admit that some of his twansactions have been wathah shadlay. But this is stwaight all along the line. You must admit that some people are makin' huge pwofits out of the wab—those contwolved firms, for instance."

"That's right enough," said Tom Merry.

"So I think that the wab should make just a little bit out of them, which is what Fish suggests."

"But how, ass?"

"I wefuse to be called an ass, Hewwies! The plan is very simple, deah boys, but wequiabs the business instinet. Fish has ofahed me a case of office matewials for ten pounds. All I have to do is to sell these awticles to the business men in Wayland for fifteen pounds, and I shall make—let me see!—five pounds pwofit, which will be devoted to buying books for the Tommies in the hospitals. In this mannah those who are pwofitting by this wotton wab will be made to disgorge some of their evil gains."

"But how—how are you going to sell them?" gasped Tom.

"I shall visit each firm in turn until my stock is exhausted—"

"Who do you think is going to buy office stuff from you?" roared Blake.

"Theah my tact and judgment will make themselves appawant," replied Gussy. "I shall begin by wehawkin' to my customah that the weathah is vewy nice, and the wab

will soon be ovah. 'What is suah to please him."

"Please him more if you said the war is likely to last another century," grinned Lowther.

"Pway don't intewwupt, Lowthah! Then I shall add that the cwops are comin' on finely, an' the wailway fares are goin' up, and so on, until I gwadually intwoduce the subject of business."

"By which time you'll jolly well be in the middle of the road with the office materials on top of you," said Blake.

"Weally, Blake, it is all vewy simple for one of my abilities. The only dwawback is, I haven't got the ten pounds."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If Fish were a weal business man, he would let me have the goods on account, and be satisfied with payment when I have sold ten pounds' worth."

"When?" grinned Digby.

"Unfortunately, Fish's ideahs of business are not on those lines. He wishes somebody to gwawantee payment. Heah is the gwawantee form. Who will sign it?"

There was silence. We were not on.

"Now, Blake," urged Gussy, "be a patwiot! Put your name down, deah boy!"

"Not likely," Blake said. "I know Fish."

"Will you, then, Tom Mewwy? You have gwewah discernment than Blake."

"Too much wint d'ye call it to risk paying ten quid for goods that mayn't be worth ten bob!" said Tom.

"Now, Gibbons, you are weally a sensible sort of a fellah—"

"Thanks, Gussy! I'm glad you hold such a good opinion of me," grinned Gibbons, walking away. "Let's hope I never do anything that may cause you to after it. Good-bye!"

II.

But somehow Gussy did it! Then began a remarkable correspondence between these two business men. Fish wrote:

"This is the receipt for your £10.0s.0d. (ten pounds) in payment of office materials."

Then Gussy, in a businesslike way, wrote:

"I hereby beg to acknowledge receipt of your receipt for my £10.0s.0d. (ten pounds) in payment of office materials."

And Fish replied:

"This is to acknowledge receipt of your acknowledgement of my receipt for your £10.0s.0d. (ten pounds) in payment of office materials."

In reply to which Gustavus wrote:

"I hereby beg to acknowledge receipt of your acknowledgement of receipt—"

Then he tore it up, finding himself in a knot. And Blake had suggested that the longer he went on acknowledging acknowledgments, the longer it would be before he had the chance to acknowledge anything else!

But one morning a letter which meant something arrived, and Gussy came into No. 6 with it.

"This is what Fish calls the invoice," he said. "The goods will gwewah heah this aftahnoon. Luckily, it's a half holiday, and I can begin—er—"

"Hawking!" suggested Herries.

"Wats! I can begin business wight away. Pway wead that, Blake. I think you will find it pwetly pweicise."

Blake took the invoice. Then he shouted: "Oh, you unutterable idiot! Oh, you unspeakable chump!"

"Whatevah is the mattah with you, Blake?"

"Matter!" shrieked Blake. "Look at these prices—cost prices at that! Ten-and-six for a gross of pen-nibs!"

"Well?"

"Well! You may well say well! You couldn't begin to sell them at half that price!"

"Blake, you fail to gwasp my abilities as a business man—"

"Business man be blowed! Stationers in Wayland are selling them retail at half the price you are buying them wholesale!"

"Not weally! Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus let fall his eyeglass in dismay.

"Listen to this little bit, you chaps!" exclaimed Blake. "Two quires of blotting paper, at five shillings a quire;—no stationer would have the nerve to offer it at more than two shillings a quire. A gross of pencils, two quid wholesale robbery, anyway, and if they're the kind of pencils I expect them to be—oh, crumbs! Twenty notebooks—"

"Bai Jove! It weally apperhs that I have been swindled, deah boys! The uffah wottah! I shall wite a vewy stern lettah to Fish— Hallo! Heah's the van at the gates, bai Jove!"

The case was soon brought in. And the contents were well, of all the job lots you ever saw, they were the jobbest!

Where Fish had picked them up is a mystery. I fancy somebody must have paid him to take them away. The rulers had crooked edges. The paper-fasteners wouldn't go through butter. The nibs looked as if they had been used for jabbing flies on a window-pane. My hat!

But Gussy got his £10 back. Wharton saw to that, and warned Fish off St. Jiv's as a swindling ground!