



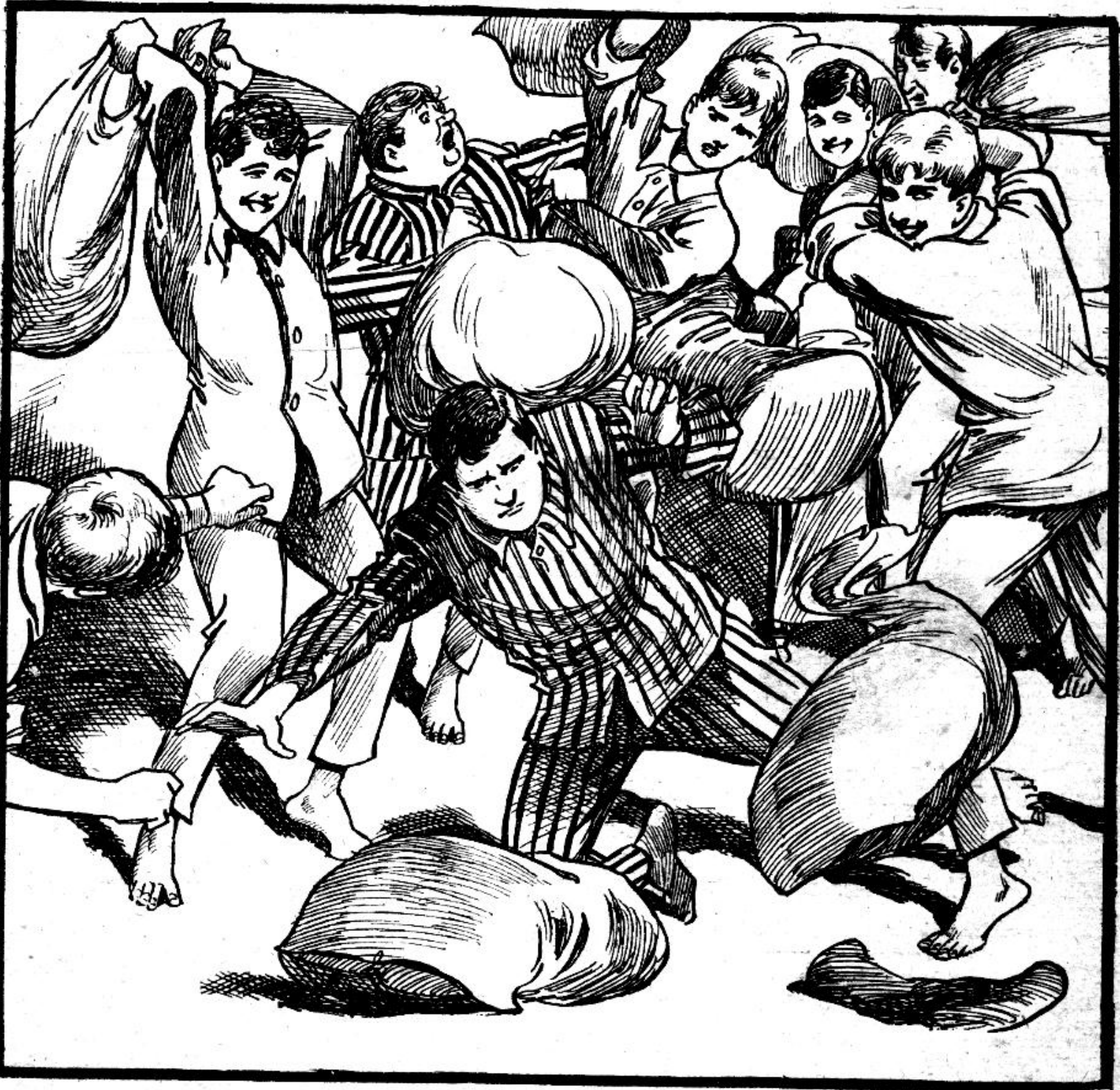
The Magnet 1^{2/10} Library

No. 587. Vol. XIII.

May 10th, 1919.



MISSING FROM SCHOOL!



A GREAT ATTACK ON THE DORMITORY FRONT!

(An Amusing Scene in the Magnificent Long Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars.)



Missing from School!

A Magnificent Long Complete School Story of
HARRY WHARTON & CO. AT GREYFRIARS.

BY FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Trouble for Bolsover!

"BOLSOVER major!" Wingate of the Sixth looked in at the doorway of the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars and rapped out the name.

Bolsover major was seated on the edge of his bed, beginning to take his boots off, when his name was called. There was a cloud upon Bolsover's rugged face, and his look was much less lofty than usual.

The bully of the Remove was in a very subdued mood for once.

"Yes, Wingate?" he said quietly. "You're wanted in the Head's study, Bolsover. Go down at once."

"Oh!" Bolsover major rose very slowly. It was clear that he was not looking forward with pleasure to the interview with his headmaster.

He glanced round at the other Remove fellows, but he met with no sympathy in their looks. All the Removites were looking rather grim. There was a place vacant in the dormitory—that of Napoleon Dupont, the French junior. And it was due to the bully of the Remove that the trouble had arisen which had resulted in the excitable foreigner running away from school.

"I say, you fellows, Bolsover's going to catch it!" remarked Billy Bunter. "I wonder if it's going to be a flogging?"

"Shut up!" murmured Bob Cherry. "I shouldn't wonder if it's a flogging," said Bunter, unheeding.

"The Head's been looking jolly waxy since Dupont bolted. He was going to flog the Froggy, you know, so perhaps now he'll take it out of Bolsover instead. Do you think so, Bolsover?"

Bolsover major did not reply to that interesting question. He left the dormitory without a word.

"You kids can turn in," said Wingate, as Bolsover went slowly and reluctantly down the corridor.

The Remove fellows turned in, and Wingate extinguished the light and left the dormitory. But the juniors were not thinking of sleep. As soon as the door had closed behind the prefect there was a buzz of voices.

"I wonder where poor old Nap is now?" remarked Bob Cherry. "It's raining, too."

"The rainfulness is great!" murmured

Hurrec Singh, as there came a dash of rain on the dormitory windows. "The unfortunate and idiotic Dupont will probably catch a terrific cold."

"Bolsover's going to catch something, anyhow," remarked Nugent.

"He would catch it from us, if not from the Head!" said Harry Wharton grimly. "It was his beastly bullying caused all the trouble."

The Remove fellows waited in some curiosity for Bolsover major's return. It was about ten minutes later that the dormitory door opened, and Bolsover came in and switched on the light.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's happened?" inquired Bob Cherry.

Bolsover's heavy face was angry and sullen as he kicked off his boots.

"I've been jawed!" he said savagely.

"Is that all?"

"That was enough, wasn't it?"

"Not nearly enough," said Harry Wharton. "You're going to get more than a jawing, Bolsover."

"Much more!" growled Johnny Bull.

"The morefulness will be terrific, my esteemed bullying Bolsover!"

Bolsover major's dark face grew darker as he listened to those remarks. He was accustomed to carrying matters with a high hand; but there were times when he was brought up sharply, and this was one of them. He glanced at Wingate, as the captain of Greyfriars appeared in the doorway. Wingate had come to see the light out.

"Buck up!" he said sharply.

Bolsover's lips opened, but he closed them again. He knew that a ragging awaited him when the prefect was gone, but he would not make an appeal to Wingate. Bolsover was a good deal of a bully, but he had plenty of courage, and he was prepared to "face the music" without asking for protection.

He turned in slowly and sullenly, and Wingate put off the light again, and the door closed behind him. Then Harry Wharton, as captain of the Remove, was called upon to take the lead in the proceedings.

"We'll give Wingate a few minutes to get clear," he said.

"You'd better," sneered Bolsover major. "I've a jolly good mind to call him back, anyhow."

"It wouldn't make any difference."

"It would only put it off," growled

Johnny Bull. "You've got to answer for what you've done, Bolsover."

"I've done nothing, hang you!"

"You've made poor old Dupont run away from school," said Harry Wharton. "He's out of doors somewhere now, in the rain."

"He was going to be sacked, anyway!" snorted Bolsover. "I'm sorry, if you come to that; but it served him right."

Wharton stepped out of bed, and lighted a candle-end. Some more of the Removites turned out, Bolsover major sitting up in bed and regarding them with a sullen scowl. As a matter of fact, Bolsover's conscience was not quite easy, and he wished from the bottom of his heart that he had not been so rough upon his French study-mate. But the prospect of punishment at the hands of his form-fellows only roused his sullen obstinacy, and he was not in the least inclined to admit that he had been in the wrong.

The glimmer of two or three candles lighted the dormitory. The juniors did not venture to turn on the electric light. The judicial proceedings of the Remove had to be conducted without interference from masters or prefects.

"Turn out, Bolsover!" said Harry Wharton quietly.

"I won't!"

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"Turn him out!" he said.

Five or six juniors started for Bolsover's bed.

The bully of the Remove gripped his pillow, his eyes gleaming.

"Hands off, you rotters!" he said savagely. "I'll fight any one of you, if you like! I'm not going to be ragged!"

"Your mistake, old bean—you are!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "If you want a fight to-morrow, I'm your man; at present, you are going to be jolly well ragged! Out you come!"

"Turn out, you rotten bully!" grunted Johnny Bull.

Bolsover major gripped the pillow and brandished it as the juniors closed in on his bed. Squiff caught the first blow, with his nose, and sat on the floor, and Peter Todd caught the second, and fell across Squiff, with a gasp. Bolsover major was a hard hitter. But he had no time for more. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull, Nugent and Tom Brown and Vernon-Smith, were grasping him, and he came out of bed with a bump.

Crash!

Bolsover major gave a howl as he landed on the floor.

"Let go! Ow! Oh! You rotters! Oh!"

"Hold him!" gasped Bob.

"The holdfulness is terrific!"

Bolsover major was struggling savagely. But his struggles were of no avail. He was grasped in many hands, and reduced to helplessness. And the captain of the Remove proceeded to deliver judgment.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Going Through It!

"**S**TAND up, Bolsover!"

"Yah!" gasped Bolsover.

Five or six pairs of hands held Bolsover before the captain of the Form. The rest of the Remove gathered round—with the exception of Billy Bunter, who sat up in bed to look on.

The bully of the Remove gritted his teeth in helpless wrath.

"You know what you've done, Bolsover," began the captain of the Remove.

"I've done nothing, hang you!"

"You bullied Dupont till he—"

"I whacked him with a fives-bat for refusing to do my French for me!" growled Bolsover major. "I'd do it again. As for licking him afterwards, I had to lick him when he challenged me to have the gloves on. And I didn't hurt him—only made him look a fool."

"You hurt his feelings—"

"Bother his feelings! A chap shouldn't bring feelings into the Lower Fourth at Greyfriars."

"Something in that!" grinned Skinner.

"Shut up, Skinner! Go it, Wharton!"

"Yes, let him go it!" sneered Bolsover major. "You're making this an excuse to be down on me, Wharton. I know that!"

"All the Form will vote whether you're punished or not," answered Wharton calmly. "It's not a personal matter. You bullied Napoleon Dupont, and hurt his feelings, and worried him generally—though he was the only chap in the Remove who was ever really friendly to you. He put up with you as nobody else would, and that's how you treated him. I don't say he wasn't over-sensitive—he certainly was. But we ought to make allowances for a foreign chap who hasn't got English common-sense—"

"Right on the wicket!" said Bob Cherry.

"Rot!" answered Bolsover.

"Then he did wrong—I know that!" went on Wharton. "As he couldn't fight you with fists, he got a potty French idea into his head of fighting a duel with you—which I dare say seemed reasonable enough to him. He trotted out a pair of fencing-rapiers, and wanted you to fight him with them—"

"And Bolsover declined with thanks!" grinned Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course I did!" snorted Bolsover.

"If he was mad, I wasn't!"

"Quite so!" assented Wharton. "But as you didn't care to fight the French chap with his own weapons, you shouldn't have bullied him just because you could lick him easily in the English way. Dupont was a bit cracked—but it was your fault for licking him and humiliating him. When it came out about the swords, of course, the Head decided to expel him—but it was your fault in the first place."

"Oh, rot!"

"Dupont's run away to save himself from being flogged and sacked, and goodness knows where he is now—out in the rain, very likely."

Bolsover grunted.

"I'm sorry for him," he said ungraciously. "All the same, he wasn't fit to stay here, after playing such a mad trick!"

"Very likely; but you worried and provoked him into acting as he did. I think I've stated the case fairly," said the captain of the Remove, looking round.

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

"Hear, hear!"

The verdict was almost unanimous. Bolsover major gave a sullen glare round at the Form.

"You hear that, Bolsover?"

"I'm not deaf!" snarled the Remove bully.

"You're going to take a Form punishment. I sentence you—"

"Oh, rats!"

"Subject to the approval of the Form," proceeded Wharton, unheeding, "to running the gauntlet of the dormitory—"

"Hear, hear!"

"And to be sent to Coventry for a week."

"Shut up, Bunter! Are you ready, Bolsover?"

"Hang you!"

"Start!" said Wharton.

The Removites were drawn up in a double row, ready, each fellow armed with a pillow or a bolster or a stuffed sock. Bolsover major glared at them, but did not start.

"Are you going to begin, Bolsover?"

"No, hang you!"

"Oh, start him!" exclaimed Ogilvy impatiently.

Five or six fellows advanced on Bolsover major to start him. The burly Removite put up his hands savagely; but he was promptly collared and pitched bodily between the waiting rows of juniors.

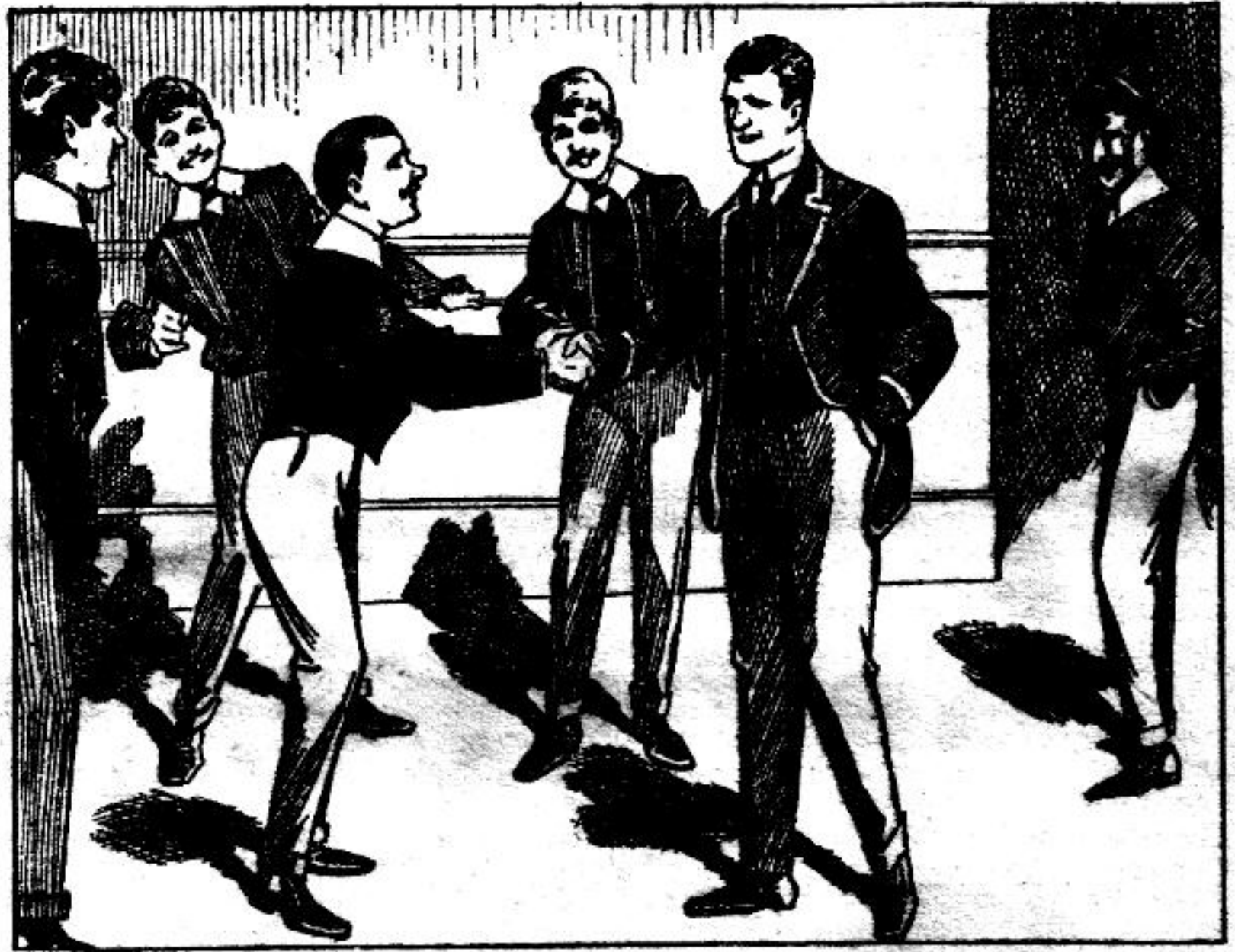
Then the blows began to fall, as the burly Bolsover scrambled along on his hands and knees, gasping.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Oh! Ah! Ow! Yah!" gasped Bolsover.

Whack! Thud! Biff!

Bolsover major jumped up desperately



Bolsover, with a flush in his face, held out his hand. "I'm sorry, Nap! I was rather a beast." "Say no more, mon ami!" said Napoleon, beaming. And he shook hands heartily with the fellow who had formerly persecuted him. (See Chapter 12.)

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"Is that passed?" asked Wharton, with another glance round.

"Hear, hear!"

"Get ready, then!"

Bolsover major was released; and the Removites prepared for the infliction of the punishment. Even Billy Bunter rolled out of bed then, and grasped a pillow, anxious not to miss the chance of having a "out" at the bully of the Form. Billy Bunter had felt Bolsover's heavy hand more than once, and this was a rare opportunity of "getting his own back."

"Line up!"

"I say, Wharton, can I use a cricket-stump?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No, you fat idiot; use your pillow!"

"I'd rather use a cricket-stump," said Bunter, blinking at the sullen Bolsover. "The beast shook me to-day! Look here, Bob Cherry can cut downstairs for some stumps—"

and ran for it. He had to go through it now, and he ran his hardest between the smiting rows of pillows.

Whack, whack, whack!

Every fellow was anxious to get his blow in—some got in two or three—and some were so anxious that they landed the swipes on the wrong persons. Billy Bunter missed the running junior by about a yard, and his pillow crashed into the face of Sidney James Snoop on the opposite row. Snoop gave a muffled howl and went over.

"Got him!" gasped the Owl of the Remove. "He, he, he! Fairly landed him that time!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Snoop leaped up and rushed on the fat junior. Bunter yelled as he received Snoop's bolster on the head.

"Yarook! I say, you fellows—who's that? Stop it!"

Biff, biff, biff!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter bolted back to bed, with

Snoop in hot pursuit. The fat junior dived into his bedclothes, howling, and Bob Cherry dragged back the infuriated Snoop.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lemme get at him!" gasped Snoop.

"'Nuff's as good as a feast, old scout!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "He meant it for Bolsover, you know!"

"He landed it on my nose!" howled Snoop. "I'll—I'll—"

"I say, you fellows, keep him off! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Sidney James Snoop was persuaded off. The proceedings, which had begun so solemnly, had degenerated into general merriment. The juniors were laughing as they blew out the candles and turned in.

But Bolsover major was not feeling merry. He was breathless and sore as he crawled into bed, and he was furious. He had run the gauntlet, and there was a week in the cold shades of "Coventry" before him—a most humiliating position for the lordly Bolsover. Bolsover major was growling and grunting savagely quite a long time after the rest of the Remove had fallen asleep.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter is Wanted!

THERE was considerable excitement the following day at Greyfriars on the subject of Dupont of the Remove.

No news had been received of the missing junior.

It was known that the Head had communicated with the police, and Napoleon Dupont was being inquired for on all sides; but he seemed to have vanished, without leaving a trace.

Harry Wharton & Co. were feeling anxious about him. They liked Napoleon of the Remove in a way; he had queer foreign manners and customs, but he was a really good fellow after his own fashion. It was uncomfortable to think that he might have been without shelter during the rainy night. It was possible that the consequences would be serious to his health.

Where he had headed for was rather a puzzler. His uncle was in his own country, and, so far as the fellows knew, Dupont had no relations in England. It was difficult to surmise where he would find a shelter, or with what plan in his excited brain he had quitted Greyfriars. It was probable that he had had no plan at all, but had merely bolted to escape the flogging and sack without thinking of what would follow.

"The awful duffer!" Bob Cherry remarked. "The Head was going to give him the order of the boot; but he would have arranged for him to be taken back to his people. Now, goodness knows what will become of him!"

"He'll be found and sent back here sooner or later," said Harry Wharton.

"It's to be hoped so. But they haven't found him yet."

There was no news of the missing junior during the day, at all events. The Famous Five went into Study No. 1 to tea after lessons in a thoughtful and troubled mood. They could not dismiss the hapless Napoleon from their minds.

But Napoleon was forgotten for the moment when Frank Nugent looked into the study cupboard for the supplies for tea. He uttered a wrathful exclamation.

"That fat rotter!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the row?"

"Bunter!" roared Nugent.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 567.

"Bunter in the cupboard?" ejaculated Bob, in surprise.

"No, ass—not in the cupboard!" growled Nugent. "Nothing else in the cupboard, either! We've been raided!"

"Oh, my hat!"

The Famous Five gathered round the cupboard. Like that of the celebrated Mrs. Hubbard, it was bare. In fact, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh justly remarked that the barefulness was terrific.

There had been quite an ample supply for tea, including a handsome cake. But it was gone from the gaze of the juniors like a beautiful dream.

Naturally, their thoughts turned to Billy Bunter at once. In such circumstances Bunter was always thought of first.

"The cake!" said Nugent.

"The pilchards!"

"The butter!"

"Even the bread!" exclaimed Wharton. "Bunter generally lets that alone. But that's gone, too, this time!"

"And the pineapple!"

"And the cheese!"

"Bunter's going to be slaughtered!" exclaimed Frank Nugent wrathfully. "I'm fed up. We had a rest from this sort of thing while he was away at St. Jim's and now he's come back, he's as bad as ever."

"Or worse!" growled Johnny Bull.

"The worsefulness is—"

"Terrific!" howled Bob Cherry. "And the whackfulness with the esteemed stump is going to be terrific, too!"

"Let's look for the fat beast!"

"He's going to be slain!"

Five enraged juniors rushed out of Study No. 1 on the war-path in search of William George Bunter. Even the fate of the missing Napoleon was gone from their thoughts now. They wanted vengeance, and they wanted it badly.

"You fellows, hold on. Have you seen Bunter?"

Vernon-Smith met them in the passage, with a cricket-stump in his hand. He was followed by Tom Redwing, who also had a stump. The two chums of Study No. 4 seemed excited.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Has he been in your study, too?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Bunter has—he has fairly raided the place!" said the Bounder wrathfully.

"Not a crumb left! Even the loaf—and Bunter usually spares the loaf!"

"Same in our study," said Nugent.

"Where is the fat villain?" asked Redwing.

"Gone into his lair to devour his prey, I suppose," said Bob. "We'll jolly well find him and scalp him!"

Seven juniors now were searching for Billy Bunter. They looked into Study No. 7, and found Peter Todd and Tom Dutton there; but their fat study-mate was not present. Peter Todd was brandishing a pair of fists in the air in a warlike way.

"You fellows seen Bunter?" he inquired, before the new arrivals could speak.

"We're looking for him!"

"We're going to slaughter him!"

"I'll help you," said Peter Todd.

"He's got my tin of salmon, and the sardines, and the loaf, and the margarine—every blessed crumb in the study!"

"My only hat!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Is the fat idiot laying in supplies for a siege?"

"Hoarding for the next war, perhaps," grinned Vernon-Smith. "If he eats half the lot he's bagged he will burst!"

"We'll burst him, anyway! Where is he, Toddy?"

"Goodness knows! Let's hunt for him."

There were eight infuriated youths now in search of the Owl of the Remove, and

it really looked as if Bunter would have an uproarious time when he was discovered. Up and down the Remove passage they sought him, but they sought in vain. But they were joined by two more recruits—Squiff and Tom Brown had also missed good things from their studies. Apparently the raider had made a clean sweep on an unusually large scale.

"Let's look downstairs," said Bob Cherry at last.

And ten angry juniors poured down the staircase. Coker of the Fifth was at the foot of the stairs, laying down the law on the subject of cricket to Potter and Greene. Wharton interrupted Horace Coker's valuable disquisition on the summer game.

"Seen Billy Bunter, Coker?"

Coker of the Fifth gave him a lofty look.

"Did you speak, kid?"

"I asked you if you'd seen Bunter."

"I'm not in the habit of noticing fags," answered Coker. "Run away and be quiet! Now, Potter, I was going to say—Yarooooooh!"

Horace Coker hadn't meant to say that at all—it came out involuntarily, as the juniors collared him and sat him on the stairs with a bump. Then they streamed out into the quadrangle to look for Bunter, leaving Coker of the Fifth to sort himself out, as it were.

And as the ten angry juniors came out into the quad a fat figure loomed up before them, and a fat voice remarked:

"I say, you fellows—"

"Bunter!"

"Collar him!"

"Bump him!"

"Slaughter him!"

"Burst him!"

"Yaroooh! Help! Fire! Murder! Thieves! Burglars! Yooop! Oh! Oooooop!"

Bump!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Pardon is Granted!

BILLY BUNTER smote the quadrangle with his fat person, and roared. Round him ten furious juniors crowded, ready to bump him again.

"Yaroooh! Help! Wharrer you at? Help!"

"Bump him!"

"Where's our grub?"

"Where's my pilchards?"

"Where's the cake?"

"Up-end him, and shake them out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows," howled Bunter, sitting in a dazed state, and blinking up at the ring of angry faces—"I say, hold on—I mean, leggo! Wharrer marrer? I say, stoppit!"

"Hand over the plunder, then, you fat villain!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Wha-at plunder?"

"What you've raided from the studies."

"I—I haven't—"

"You've got our cake!" shouted Nugent.

"I—I didn't know you had a cake, Nugent. If I'd known, I'd have—I mean, I wouldn't have touched your cake, of course!"

"Where is it?"

"I don't know! I say, you fellows—"

"He can't have scoffed the lot already!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "Even Bunter couldn't do that. Bump him till he tells us where he's hidden the loot."

"Good egg!"

"Yaroooh! Leggo! I say—I tell you that— Help!"

"Hallo! Who's bullying now?" broke in an unpleasant voice, as Bolsover major lounged on the scene. "Let Bunter alone!"

"You cheeky ass!" exclaimed Bob Cherry wrathfully, forgetting that Percy Bolsover was "sent to Coventry." "Get out!"

Billy Bunter squirmed to his feet, and took refuge close to the burly Removite. Bolsover major was a very unexpected champion; but any champion was welcome to the fat junior at that moment.

"I say, Bolsover, keep 'em off!" he gasped.

"I'm going to!" said Bolsover major coolly and unpleasantly. "I was ragged last night for bullying. What do you call this, Wharton?"

The captain of the Remove gave him an angry look. Bolsover major had jumped at the opportunity of turning the tables in this way, quite regardless of the rights of the matter.

"Bunter's collared our grub!" snapped Wharton.

"I haven't!" yelled Bunter.

"Collar him, and make him disgorge!" exclaimed the Bounder impatiently. "I want my tea!"

"Same here!"

"Never mind Bolsover—he's in Coventry," said Nugent. "Shut up, Bolsover! And get out of the way, or you'll be put!"

Bolsover major did not move. He pushed back his cuffs, apparently preparing for a scrap with the angry ten.

"Let Bunter alone!" he said doggedly.

"He says he didn't touch the stuff."

"I didn't! I wasn't! I never—"

"He's lying!" said Johny Bull angrily. "Doesn't he always tell whoppers when he's caught?"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"You cheeky rotter, you licked him yesterday for bagging your tarts!" exclaimed Squiff warmly.

"Perhaps I did," said Bolsover major.

"And you fellows call me a bully. Well, I'm not going to see Bunter bullied—see? Hands off!"

"Stand aside!" rapped out Wharton.

"I won't, then!"

"Shove him away."

Bolsover major, in the role of champion of the oppressed, was a little too much for the patience of the juniors. They closed in on him, and the bully of the Remove hit out at once. Bolsover had plenty of bulldog pluck, and he never counted odds.

But the odds were rather too many for him, all the same. He was hurled away sprawling by the rush of the angry juniors.

Billy Bunter yelled as he was caught by the collar.

"Yaroooh! Help! Fire! I didn't—I never—Yaroooh!"

"Wharton!"

It was Mr. Quelch's cold, quiet voice, and it fell upon the tumult like oil upon troubled waters. The uproar ceased instantly.

"Ye-e-es, sir?" stammered Wharton.

The excited juniors had forgotten that they were close by the School House, and in view of their Form-master's study windows. The Remove-master had stepped out upon the scene, with a frowning brow.

"What does this mean, Wharton?"

"Ahem!"

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter.

"I didn't, sir! I wasn't! I never—"

"What has Bunter done, Wharton?"

"Ahem!"

"Is this a rough joke—what you call, I believe, a rag?" asked the Remove-master, very sternly.

"Nunno, sir!"

"Then why were you using Bunter so roughly?"

"Ahem!"

None of the juniors wanted to explain. Billy Bunter's free-and-easy ideas on the subject of property would have earned him condign punishment if reported to his Form-master. Nobody wanted to "land" Bunter for a causing from Mr. Quelch.

Tongue-tied, as it were, the juniors blinked at their Form-master in great confusion, and Mr. Quelch's brow grew darker.

"Bolsover!" he said.

The Remove bully had picked himself up, breathlessly.

"Yes, sir?" he gasped.

"You seem to have interfered to protect Bunter?"

"Yes, sir," said Bolsover major, with a defiant look at the discomfited Removites. "I thought I ought to, sir. I've been accused of bullying Dupont, and making him run away from school. They've sent me to Coventry, so I thought I'd chip in when they were bullying Bunter—"

"We weren't bullying him, and you know it, you cad!" exclaimed Bob Cherry fiercely.

"Silence, Cherry!"

"Ye-e-es, sir!" stammered Bob.

"Bunter!"

"Ow-wow-wow-wow!"

"What have you done, Bunter?"

"Nothing, sir! I never even knew they had a cake. I know it wasn't there when I looked into the cupboard after dinner—"

"What! Whose cupboard did you look into after dinner, Bunter?"

"Oh! Ah! N-n-nobody's, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I mean, I didn't look into their cupboard after dinner, sir.

They can't say I did. I ask Wharton plainly—did he see me? I know jolly well he was in the quad at the time. I watched him before I went up to the study. I—I mean—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence, please! Bunter, you ridiculous boy, you admit looking into Wharton's study cupboard."

"Not at all, sir!"

"You have just said so!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch sternly.

"Oh, no, sir! I didn't say so. I—I simply said that Wharton was in the quad at the time," stammered Billy Bunter.

The juniors grinned. It was really impossible to be angry with the obtuse Owl of the Remove for very long.

"It appears, Wharton, that you have been—ahem!—handling Bunter because you have missed food from your study."

"Ahem!"

"Is that the case or not?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

"Ye-es, sir!"

"Very good. Now, Bunter, what have you taken from the studies of these boys?"

"Nothing at all, sir!" wailed Bunter.

"I haven't been in the studies. I've been talking to Mrs. Mumble at the tuck-shop ever since lessons. She's a most unreasonable woman, sir, and I've been trying to explain to her that big businesses are always built on a system of credit—"

"Never mind that now. When were these things missed from your studies?"

"After—after lessons, sir," stammered Wharton. "The—the cake came by post this afternoon."

"If Bunter has been engaged, as he states, his innocence is proved."

"Oh, yes—certainly!"

The looks of the juniors showed how much reliance they placed upon the statements of William George Bunter.

"Wharton, please go to the school shop at once and inquire of Mrs. Mumble when

Bunter came there, and how long he stayed."

"Ye-e-es, sir."

Harry Wharton ran across to the shop in the corner of the quad behind the trees. Much to the surprise of the rest, Billy Bunter grinned a fat, satisfied grin. "Now you'll jolly well see!" he remarked.

Wharton came back in a couple of minutes. There was rather a curious expression on his face.

"Well, Wharton?"

"H'm! Mrs. Mumble says that Bunter came in about a quarter-past four, sir!" mumbled Wharton.

"The Remove was dismissed at a quarter-past four this afternoon," said Mr. Quelch. "It appears that Bunter went directly to the shop. And when did he leave, Wharton?"

"Ahem! Mrs. Mumble says he left only a few minutes ago."

"My hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter grinned.

"What did I tell you?" he inquired.

"You see, my boys, you have been too hasty," said Mr. Quelch. "It is perfectly clear that Bunter has not been in the studies at all since lessons."

"Oh!"

"I told 'em so, sir!" said Bunter in an injured tone. "They doubted my word! I think it's rather low to doubt a fellow's word, sir!"

"I am afraid, Bunter, that you are not truthful enough for your word to be taken without question."

"Oh, sir!" stammered Bunter.

"We—we jumped to the conclusion, sir!" stammered Wharton, greatly confused.

"You see now that you were mistaken, Wharton?"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Very good. I shall not punish you for this unruly scene—the juniors' faces brightened, but fell again as Mr. Quelch continued—"if you all beg Bunter's pardon at once for your unjust suspicion!"

"Oh!"

"My hat!"

Bolsover major strolled away, grinning. Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another dumbly.

Begging Bunter's pardon was not a pleasant process.

Billy Bunter smiled a fat smile.

His fat little nose was elevated into the air, and he swelled with importance, and blinked at the crestfallen Removites in a very lofty way. He was enjoying the situation now.

"You hear me, Wharton?"

"Ye-es, sir!" stammered the unhappy captain of the Remove.

"You have done Bunter wrong, have you not?"

"I—I—I suppose so," mumbled Wharton.

He could not explain to Mr. Quelch that the suspicion of Bunter was founded upon long knowledge of that cheery youth's manners and customs, and was not really unjust, though it happened to be ill-founded in the present instance.

"Having done Bunter wrong, my boys, it is your duty to beg his pardon—and it is my duty to see that you do so. I am waiting!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh dear!"

"Ah!"

"Hem!"

The juniors looked at one another dimly. But there was no help for it. Mr. Quelch meant business, and there was his cane in the background, as it were. Billy Bunter, swelling like the frog in the fable, blinked at the unhappy juniors in great enjoyment.

"I—I beg your pardon, Bunter!" gasped Wharton. It was the duty of

the captain of the Remove to lead—and he led! And from the rest of the juniors came a stammering chorus:

"Beg your pardon, Bunter!"

"Granted!" said Billy loftily.

And then Harry Wharton & Co. retreated, feeling smaller than they had ever felt in their lives before.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Theory!

"WHAT a go!"
Bob Cherry made that remark as the Famous Five came back to Study No. 1 after the unpleasant ordeal in the quad. They were not looking happy.

"The gofulness is terrific!" remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur. "The esteemed Bunter—"

"Hang Bunter!" growled Johnny Bull. "I believe he had the tuck, all the same."

Harry Wharton knitted his brows.

"Mrs. Mimble said plainly enough that he'd been in her shop ever since lessons," said Harry. "But—"

"If Bunter didn't have the tuck, who did?"

"Yes, that's the question."

"That is the esteemed question, as the revered Shakespeare remarks," observed Hurree Singh. "We have begged the excellent and rascally Bunter's pardon; but my worthy opinion is that he bagged the grubful supplies, all the same. If he was not the esteemed rascal, who was it?"

"Might have been his minor, Sammy of the Second, though," suggested Bob Cherry thoughtfully.

Wharton shook his head.

"The Second weren't out till half-past four," he said. "They came out when we went down to look for Bunter."

"Yes, that's so. It was a Remove chap—but who?"

"Bunter!"

"He seems to have proved—"

"Oh, Mrs. Mimble mistook the time, most likely!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Her clock may be wrong, too. Besides, if it wasn't Bunter, who was it?"

That was really an unanswerable question. Mrs. Mimble's evidence had cleared Bunter to the satisfaction of the Form-master—and certainly it had staggered the juniors at the time. But on reflection it was easier to believe that the good dame was mistaken than that the Owl of the Remove was an innocent and injured party.

"And we've begged his pardon, and he's got our tuck somewhere all the time!" said Bob Cherry sulphurously.

"Rotten!"

"He can't have scoffed it yet!" said Harry.

"There is another important and ridiculous question to be settled, my esteemed chums—"

"What's that, Inky?"

"What are we going to have for our esteemed tea?" answered the nabob.

Bob Cherry laughed.

"That is rather an important question," he remarked. "Bunter's made a clean sweep. Even the loaf's gone. We shall have to get tea in Hall to-day—it's not too late, thank goodness!"

"I say, you fellows—"

The Famous Five spun round towards the door, as if electrified. Billy Bunter was blinking in at them.

"You!" gasped Bob.

"I've forgiven you!" said Bunter loftily.

"What?"

"You've begged my pardon, and I've granted it. I'm willing to overlook the whole matter, and let bygones be bygones," said Billy Bunter magnanimously.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 587.

mously. "To show that there's no ill-feeling, I've come to have tea with you. There!"

"You fat villain!" roared Nugent. "There's no tea here! You've bagged our tea!"

"Wharton said there was a cake—"

"You've got the cake!"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"What have you done with the stuff?" demanded Wharton. "Even you can't have scoffed it all in the time."

"I haven't had it!" yelled Bunter wrathfully. "I haven't been in the studies at all—"

"Rot!"

"I never even knew—"

"Gammon!"

Billy Bunter blinked at the doubting Thomases in great wrath. He certainly looked as if he were telling the truth for once; but the juniors knew William George Bunter of old. He had very indistinct ideas about the dividing-line between truth and untruth.

"Don't you believe me?" stuttered Bunter.

"No fear!"

"Mrs. Mimble knows—"

"She's made a mistake, of course," said Harry Wharton impatiently. "If you didn't bag the grub, who did?"

"You speak just as if I were a chap who's likely to bag another fellow's grub!" hooted Bunter.

"Oh, my hat! Aren't you?"

"No!" howled Bunter. "Somebody else—perhaps one of you chaps—"

"What?"

"Let's go into the matter," said Bunter. "You said the cake came by post this afternoon, Wharton."

"Yes," growled Wharton.

"Who brought it up to the study?"

"I did."

"And put it in the cupboard?"

"Yes."

"Was it your cake?"

"Yes—from my aunt."

"Did Nugent see you put it in the cupboard?"

"He was downstairs."

"Then you were alone at the time?" demanded Billy Bunter triumphantly.

"Yes, you fat duffer! What are you driving at?"

"I'll tell you what I'm driving at!" said Bunter loftily. "I've tracked down the rotter who bagged the cake—that's what I'm driving at! It only needed a little brains. I say, you fellows, it's clear now what became of that cake."

"Well, what became of it, then?" demanded Bob.

"Wharton ate it."

"What?" roared Wharton.

"You ate it!" Billy wagged a fat forefinger at the enraged captain of the Remove reprovingly. "It's clear enough. You ate it—"

"I—I—I—" stuttered Wharton.

"You didn't want to whack it out with the other fellows, so you ate it on the spot," said Bunter. "I don't say you hadn't a right to, as it was your cake. But it was greedy. You can't deny that it was greedy, Wharton."

"Gug-gug-greedy!" babbled Wharton.

"Yes, I think it was greedy, and I'm sure the other fellows agree with me. When a chap has a cake, and scoffs it all on his own, like that, I consider—"

"Here, I say, wharrer you at?" roared Bunter, as the captain of the Remove rushed at him and grasped him by the collar.

Shake, shake, shake!

"Yoop! Ooop! Whoop! Leggo! Wharrer marrer? Oh, my hat!"

Shake, shake!

"There, you fat rotter!" gasped Wharton, as he spun the Owl of the Remove into the passage. "Now, sit down, and shut up!"

Bump!

Billy Bunter sat down; but he did not shut up—far from that! His dulcet tones were heard from one end of the Remove passage to the other. Two or three fellows looked out of their studies.

"Hallo! What's the matter with you, porpoise?" inquired Peter Todd.

"Gug-gug-gug!"

"Has the grub gone down the wrong way?"

"Groogh! Ow! I've been shook—I mean shaken—ow, ow!—all because I bowled Wharton out!" yelled Bunter. "I found out that he'd scoffed the cake, you know!"

"You fat idiot!"

"I found it out. Wharton scoffed the cake, you know, because he didn't want to whack it out with the other chaps!" gasped Bunter. "Just think of that, Toddy! Wasn't it mean?"

"You silly chump!"

"And then he started this yarn about me bagging it, you know!" gasped Bunter. "Think of that! Me, you know—when he scoffed it, all the time! I say, Toddy, you ought to lick Wharton—I'll hold your jacket, if you like! You go into his study and lick him, and—"

Yaroooh! I said, lick Wharton, you silly idiot, not lick me!" howled Bunter. But Peter Todd seemed to be under a serious misapprehension, for it was Bunter he was licking! And Peter's smacks were so powerful that the fat junior did not stay to explain further—he fled.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Peculiar Pal!

FRANK NUGENT came out of Study No. 1 that evening after prep, and glanced rather curiously at Bolsover major, who was lounging in the passage. Wharton had not yet finished work in the study.

Bolsover gave Frank a lowering look as he passed. Frank did not speak. Bolsover major was supposed to be in "Coventry," and Nugent never had very much to say to the bully of the Remove in any case. The sentence of Coventry was not being very rigidly enforced, however; for the juniors could see that, in spite of Bolsover's surly and sullen manners, he was worried inwardly about the missing French junior.

Bolsover's conscience, tough as it was, seemed to be at work for once, and it made the fellows more tolerant towards him, especially as his overbearing manner had toned down considerably.

As Nugent disappeared down the stairs Bolsover major made a step towards the door of Study No. 1—and stopped again. For some minutes he hung about in the passage, his look growing more and more lowering.

He appeared to make up his mind at last, and stopped at the door of No. 1, knocked, and went in.

Wharton looked up from his work. He did not speak, but his look was inquiring.

"Not finished yet?" asked Bolsover major.

The captain of the Remove shook his head.

"I'll wait, then."

Wharton dropped his eyes to his work, and went on with it. Bolsover major moved restlessly about the study while he waited. Wharton was wondering what the bully of the Remove was there for; but he finished his work, and rose to his feet quietly.

"Hold on for a minute before you go down!" growled Bolsover major. "I've come here to speak to you. Are you keeping up that Coventry foolery?"

"Well, not specially," said the captain of the Remove, speaking at last. "I

think you're sorry for having been such a brute to poor Nap."

"I never meant to be a brute to him," said Bolsover major, with unexpected mildness. "I liked him. We were jolly good friends, if you come to that. We never had rows in the study."

"You made up for lost time at the finish!" remarked Wharton drily.

"Chaps have rows—dash it all, you've had rows with Nugent in this study! And Nugent's the best-tempered fellow at Greyfriars!" grunted Bolsover.

Wharton coloured a little.

"I know I was to blame; I was ratty," went on Bolsover major. "He wouldn't do my exercise for me—a French exercise—because it would have been spoofing old Charpentier. I thought it was all rot. I never meant to hurt him, though. Any other chap in the Remove wouldn't have made such a fuss about a licking with a fives-bat. 'Tain't my fault that Nap was a hysterical foreigner, is it? Any English chap would have gone for me with his fists or a cricket-bat, and it would have been all right."

Wharton nodded.

"Then he had to start that rot about a duel!" said Bolsover major, in an aggrieved tone. "Who ever heard of such a thing? He must have been a bit potty!"

"He was very sensitive," said Harry. "And foreigners don't think as we do. Of course, he played the fool—I know that."

"Well, there's no news of him?" said Bolsover.

"None, so far."

"Where can he be?"

"I can't guess," said Harry, shaking his head. "It beats me. Do you mean that you are anxious about him, Bolsover?"

"Of course I am!" said Bolsover major aggressively. "He was my pal until we had that row, wasn't he?"

"Oh!" said Harry.

"He's done me a lot of good turns; though I never thought about that just then, when I was ratty. I'd have told him I was sorry, only he started his high-falutin foreign rot. I don't believe he meant any real harm with his silly swords, either. After all, he never touched me. It was most likely only theatrical rot, like all French duelling. I've heard that they never hurt one another in their blessed duels. It's only gas, anyhow. Dupont was simply playing the goat, now I come to think of it. And I think it's hard on him to be kicked out of Greyfriars for it—don't you?"

"Well, I do. But the Head can't let him stay, if he turns up. Whether it was only bunkum or not, it was too thick."

"I—I suppose the Head would look at it like that. You—you don't think there's any chance of the Head going easy with him? Suppose—"

Bolsover paused.

"Well, suppose what?"

"The Head's jawed me already for having ragged him. But—but suppose I went to the Head and told him I was to blame all along, and—and that I'm certain Dupont was only gassing, and never meant any harm—and—and that it was all my fault—"

"It might make a difference," said Harry, looking in wonder at the surly Removite. "But will you do it?"

"Well, I'd do that, or anything else, to make it all right for the poor chap!" said Bolsover.

"It would mean a pretty severe licking for you if the Head knew all the facts."

"I'm not afraid of a licking!"

There was a pause. Bolsover major was looking more surly and lowering

than ever, but Wharton's manner had melted considerably. There was good in Percy Bolsover somewhere, though he had his own surly way of showing it.

"If Dupont is found, or if he comes back, it may do him good if you do as you say," said Harry Wharton at last. "Do you want my advice?"

"Ain't you the proper person to give advice, as captain of the Form?" growled Bolsover, as aggressive as ever.

Wharton laughed.

"Well, my advice, if you want it, is to let the Head know exactly how the matter was, and especially your belief that Dupont never really meant to do any damage," said the captain of the Remove. "Go to him to-morrow after prayers, if he'll see you. That's the best time to catch him in a good temper. But unless Dupont is found—"

"He must be found sooner or later."

Percy Bolsover had remarkable ideas about the proper treatment of a "pal," yet there seemed no doubt that he really felt friendly towards the junior he had bullied into a state of hysterical irresponsibility. It was to be hoped that the occurrence would be a lesson to him—if the affair blew over.

Meanwhile, there was no news of the missing junior, and it was easy to see that the masters at Greyfriars were growing alarmed. When Harry Wharton came down to the Common-room, he found the juniors all discussing the matter.

"You see," Skinner was remarking, "Nap wasn't a common or garden sort of person; he couldn't go around without being noticed, with his foreign ways and his queer English. If he got into a train, or asked his way anywhere, he would be noticed at once. Yet they



A startled face looked down at the Owl of the Remove in the light of the upturned lantern. "All serene, Froggy!" said Bunter cheerfully. "I knew you were up there, you know!" (See Chapter 8.)

If the Head will let him come back to Greyfriars it will be all right. And—and I'll bear in mind that he's a silly foreigner, and be more careful with him."

"That's a good idea!" said Harry, with a smile.

Bolsover major left the study without saying any more, but appearing somewhat relieved in his mind. He looked back, however, from the passage.

"Of course—" he began.

"Well?"

"Of course, I'm only going to do this because I think it's right—not because of your Coventry rot!" said Bolsover major. "That's understood, I suppose?"

"Quite!" said Harry.

"That's all right, then."

And Bolsover major departed, satisfied. Wharton could not help smiling.

can't find a trace of him. Nobody seems to have seen him. It looks bad to me."

"How do you mean—it looks bad?" demanded Bolsover, who was listening to Harold Skinner's remarks with obvious uneasiness.

"Well, he was such a hysterical ass!" said Skinner cheerily. "Suppose he jumped into the river—"

"What?" gasped Bolsover major. "It looks probable to me," said Skinner blandly.

"You silly ass!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "It's not probable at all! Nap was an ass, but not such an ass as that!"

Bolsover major gave Skinner a black look, and turned away and left the Common-room. Skinner was going on with his cheerful surmises, when Tom Brown picked up a cushion.

"Where will you have it?" asked the New Zealand junior.

Skinner dodged.

"Hold on, you ass! Wharrer you mean?"

"I'll keep it ready for you if you begin again," said Tom.

And Skinner forbore to make the fellows' flesh creep any further. But his miserable surmise haunted many minds that evening. The juniors knew that inquiries had been made far and wide for the missing French junior, and it certainly was amazing that nothing had been seen or heard of him since he had left Greyfriars behind. What had become of him was an utter mystery; and the juniors could not help wondering, with a shiver, whether there was anything in Skinner's surmise.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Missing!

BILLY BUNTER wore a thoughtful expression.

He was taking his ease in a big armchair in the Common-room, and he appeared to be buried in thought.

Thinking was rather an unaccustomed occupation for William George Bunter, and after a time his frowning brow drew smiling glances from other quarters. Bunter was heedless of the growing amusement. He sat and stared at the fire with his owl-like solemnity, apparently with very deep thoughts indeed working in his fat brain.

Bob Cherry tapped him on the head at last, and woke him out of his deep reverie.

"Thinking what to do with the plunder, Fatty?" he asked.

Bunter started, and blinked up at him.

"Eh! What plunder?" he asked.

"The plunder you bagged from the studies this afternoon, you fat bounder. You can't have scoffed it all yet."

"I didn't, I tell you!"

"Still keeping that up?" asked Bob, in surprise. "My dear old porpoise, it's all over now. Now you've proved your innocence you can own up."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I never knew there was a cake, you silly ass! And now I've thought over it, I've decided that Wharton—"

"What's that?" rapped out Harry.

"I've decided that Wharton didn't scoff the cake, after all."

"You've just saved your neck!" said Wharton, laughing.

"Oh, really, you know! You see," continued Bunter, blinking at the juniors, "it wasn't only the cake. If it had been only the cake that would have accounted for it. But I don't think Wharton scoffed the things out of Smithy's study, and Browney's, and the rest—"

"You did, you fat bounder!"

"I tell you I didn't!" roared Bunter.

"Gammon!"

"The gammonfulness is terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter. The own-upfulness is the proper caper."

"Yes, go it!" said Harry Wharton.

"We'll agree to let you off, Bunter, if you tell the truth for once. It will be such a new experience to hear you tell the truth."

"Good idea!" exclaimed Peter Todd.

"That's a go, Bunter! Now get the truth off your chest!"

"Gather round!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows! Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! Bunter's going to tell the truth!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Go it, Bunter!"

"A bit at a time, Bunter!" said Vernon-Smith. "Don't do it all at once. The shock to the system might be fatal!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 587.

Billy Bunter blinked round in great wrath at the grinning juniors.

"I tell you I never touched the stuff!" he yelled.

"My dear fathead, you're under a misapprehension!" said Peter Todd.

"It's the truth we're asking for, not more whoppers!"

"Look here, Toddy—"

"Don't you understand? You're going to be let off. Nothing to tell any more whoppers for. Now, then—"

"Go it, Bunter!"

"I never touched the stuff!" howled Bunter.

"Well, my hat!"

"Forso of habit," said Peter Todd, shaking his head sadly. "He can't help it. He's told so many crams that they roll out now of their own accord."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, you might believe a chap!" said Billy Bunter pathetically.

"I never knew there was a cake—"

"Bow-wow!"

"It was some fellow scouted around the studies and bagged the stuff while we were at classes," said Bunter.

"What rot!" said Bob. "Everybody else was at classes while we were at classes."

"I've been thinking—"

"What with?" asked Bob, in surprise.

"Oh, don't be a funny ass, Bob Cherry! I've been thinking hard."

said Billy Bunter. "My idea is, that if old Nap is found I shall be the chap to put my finger on him."

"My hat!"

"You see, it wants a fellow with brains," explained Bunter. "I'm the fellow! I'm jolly well going to take the matter in hand. I could tell you something now, if I liked."

"Go it!" grinned Bob.

"I know what I know!" said Bunter mysteriously.

"And that's precious little!" commented Bob.

Billy Bunter rose from the armchair. "You wait and see!" he said mysteriously. "I've got an idea. Of course, you fellows can't see things as I do. You haven't the brains. I've thought it all out. I'm going to find Dupont."

"Phew!"

"Going to find him now?" asked Harry Wharton blankly, as the Owl of the Remove rolled away towards the door.

"Yes."

"Gates are closed now, ass!" said Bob Cherry.

"That doesn't make any difference to me."

"If you're thinking of breaking bounds, Bunter, don't play the goat!" said the captain of the Remove sharply.

"Yah!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Yah!" repeated Billy Bunter.

And with that elegant rejoinder the Owl of the Remove rolled out of the Common-room, leaving the juniors staring.

"What on earth has the fat duffer got in his silly noddle now?" said Squiff.

"Only pulling our leg," said Bob. "Most likely he's gone off somewhere to scoff the tuck he pinched this afternoon."

"Yes, that's very likely!"

Considering how mysterious he had been, Bunter was very quickly forgotten by the fellows in the Common-room. Nobody took the Owl of the Remove very seriously at any time; and just now the Remove fellows were thinking chiefly about Napoleon Dupont, and wondering what had become of him.

But Bunter was recalled to their minds when Gwynne of the Sixth looked in to shepherd the Removites off to their dormitory.

When the juniors arrived there, Bunter was not with them. The prefect noted his absence at once.

"Where's Bunter?" he rapped out.

"In the study, perhaps," answered Peter Todd. "He didn't come up with us!"

"Go and fetch him, then!"

Peter hurried downstairs; but he came back in a few minutes with a surprised look.

"Well?" asked Gwynne.

"He's not there!"

"Bedad, and I'll warn him when he does turn up!" exclaimed the prefect angrily. "Turn in, all of yez, while I look for him."

The Removites turned in, the light remaining on. It was ten minutes before Gwynne of the Sixth came back, looking excited and angry.

"Has he come up?" he demanded.

"No, Gwynne."

"Bedad!" exclaimed Gwynne, in astonishment. "Sure, I thought he'd have dodged up while I was looking for him. He's not downstairs."

There was a buzz of amazement in the Remove. All the juniors sat up in bed, in great wonder.

Patrick Gwynne seemed nonplussed. It was his turn of duty to see lights out for the Remove, and he could not leave them with a member of the Form missing.

"You're his study-mate, Todd. Don't you know what's become of him?" the prefect demanded.

"Haven't the faintest idea," replied Peter.

Read

"THE SNEAK OF ST. JIMS!"

A Wonderful Complete Story of TOM MERRY & CO. at St. Jim's,

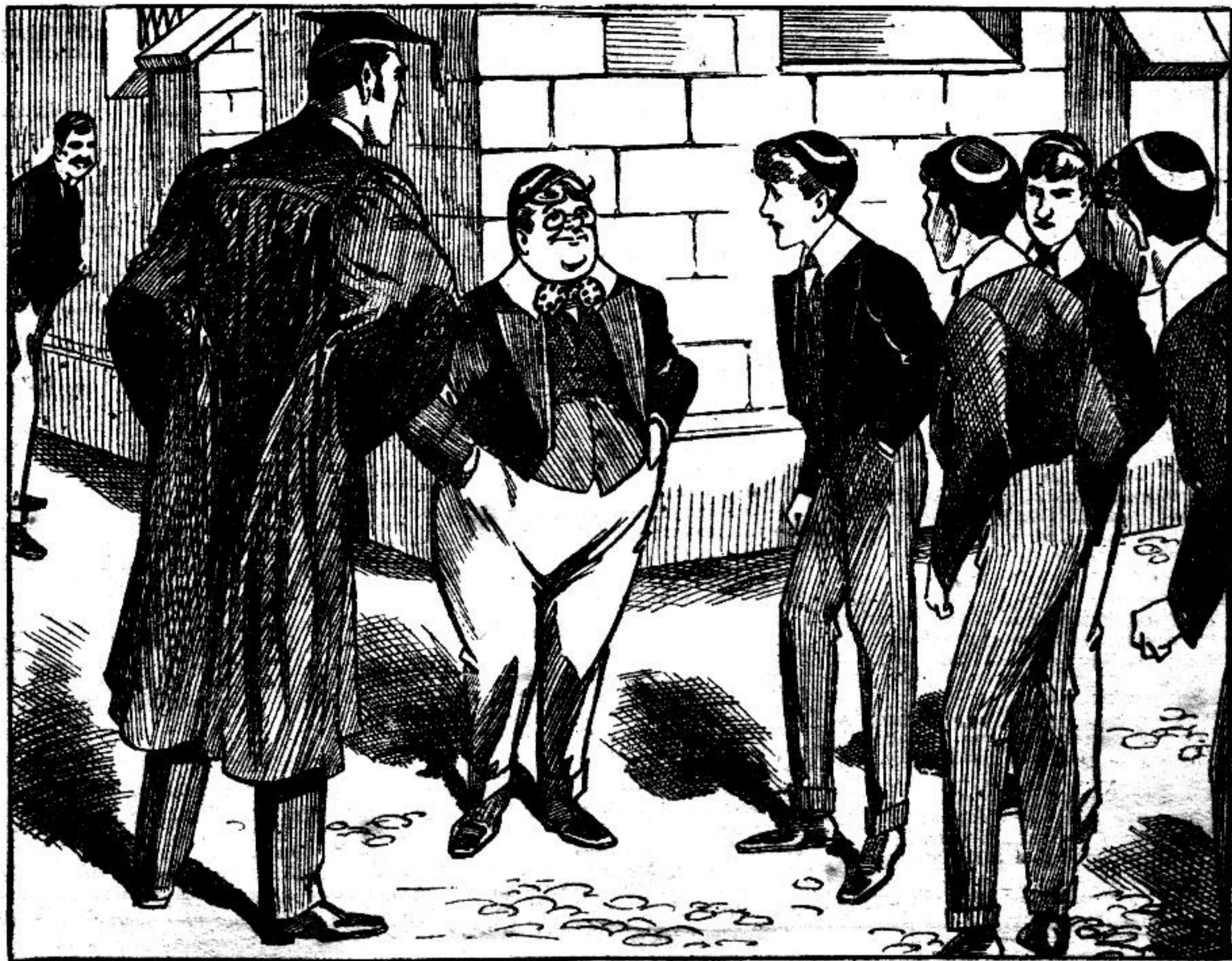
By MARTIN CLIFFORD,

in

"THE GEM."

Out This Wednesday.





"I—I beg your pardon, Bunter!" gasped Wharton. And from the rest of the juniors came a stammering chorus: "Beg your pardon, Bunter!" (See Chapter 4.)

"He hasn't gone out of bounds, I suppose?"

"I—I suppose not."

Peter Todd spoke slowly, remembering Billy Bunter's mysterious words in the Common-room. He glanced at Wharton, who nodded.

"Better tell him," said Harry.

"Eh? Phwat is it you'd better tell me?" exclaimed Gwynne.

"Well, Bunter was talking some rot about going to look for Dupont," said Peter Todd. "We thought it was only his gas."

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Gwynne. "I'll give him looking for Dupont, the fat chump! What put that idea into his silly head?"

"Blessed if I know! He said he'd thought it out, and that he was the fellow who'd find Nap, if he was found."

Gwynne gave a growl, a good deal like a wrathful bulldog, and quitted the dormitory. And there was a buzz of excited discussion in the Remove. To the mystery of Napoleon Dupont's disappearance was added another. Where was Billy Bunter?

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Knows!

WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER, for once in his fat career, had not been "gassing." There really was an idea in his head when he rolled out of the Common-room after his mysterious statements there.

But if he was going to "look for Dupont," he was certainly taking a strange route for his search. For he went up to the Remove passage as a start. In that quarter the fat junior stayed some minutes to reflect, and then he went into Study No. 7, and reappeared with a bicycle-lantern in his hand. He blinked cautiously up and down the passage, but there was no one in sight; all the juniors were downstairs.

With a fat grin on his face, Bunter rolled away to the box-room stairs. He mounted the little stairs in the dark, and stopped on the landing above to light the lantern.

The upper box-room was seldom visited, and was used chiefly as a lumber-room. Old packing-cases, and one-legged chairs, cracked mirrors, and ragged carpets found a final resting-place there. Sometimes Skinner and his friends would come there to smoke cigarettes in deep secrecy, safe from the prying eyes of prefects; or a fellow might come along in search of cheap firewood; but otherwise the apartment had few visitors. If anyone had seen Billy Bunter creeping into the room cautiously with his lantern, the Owl would certainly have been suspected of concealing tuck there, to devour at his leisure.

But, for once, it was not tuck that drew Bunter. He entered the box-room, closed the door after him, and flashed the lantern round, blinking into the shadows of the boxes and lumber.

The room was certainly untenanted, excepting by himself. There was a good

deal of dust about; and Bunter, as he went prying to and fro, seemed to be seeking to ascertain whether the dust had recently been disturbed.

He flashed up the lantern at the ceiling, in which there was a square trapdoor, giving admission to cobwebby recesses above. Above that trap was another in the roof, providing a way of escape in case of fire.

The trapdoor was closed, as usual. In a corner of the room was a pair of steps, which were to give access to the trap in case of need; but they were half-hidden by lumber, and had not been disturbed. Bunter blinked at them, and shook his head.

"Deep!" he murmured. "Very deep! He, he, he!"

Under the trapdoor there was a large packing-case placed on top of another. Anyone standing on the second case could have reached the trapdoor with his hands. The cases might have been piled in that manner by chance; but they had not been so piled the last time Bunter had visited the box room, as he well remembered.

The fat junior stepped on a box close by the packing-cases, and with great care drew himself up. He was soon landed, breathing stertorously, on top of the upper case. He could just reach the trapdoor now with the tips of his fat fingers.

"Deep!" murmured Bunter. "Plain as anything—if the fellows only had my brains! He put a chair or something

on top, and got into the roof, and pulled the chair up after him. Jolly deep! But he can't jolly well spoof me!"

The fat junior knocked on the trapdoor with the bike-lantern.

Tap, tap, tap!

If any Remove fellow had seen William George Bunter thus engaged he would certainly have suspected that the Owl of the Remove was out of his senses. But Billy Bunter knew what he was about.

Tap, tap, tap!

If the fat junior expected a reply from the garrets above he was disappointed. There was no sound; stillness as of the tomb reigned, save for the hollow echo of the tapping.

"Nap!"

Bunter called out cautiously.

"Nap! Dupont! I know you're there, Froggy! If you don't jolly well show yourself I'll call Mr. Quelch!"

He did not venture to call loudly; but his voice was audible to anyone in the garrets above. And it was followed by a sound from those obscure recesses.

Billy Bunter grinned as the trapdoor was raised from above.

A startled face and two glittering black eyes looked down at the Owl of the Remove in the light of the upturned lantern.

Bunter grinned up.

"All serene, Froggy!" he said cheerily. "I knew you were there, you know! I'm not going to give you away! He, he, he!"

Napoleon Dupont stared at him.

"You—Buntair!" he ejaculated.

"Little me!" grinned Bunter.

"Zen you have find me, isn't it, you rottair?"

"Don't you call me names, Froggy!" said Bunter reprovingly. "I haven't given you away, have I?"

Dupont's black eyes flashed.

"You have not tell anyvun?" he asked, breathing hard.

"Not a word!"

"Zat is good! But how you find me, you fat peeg?" asked Dupont.

Bunter chuckled.

"You couldn't spoof me, you see!" he explained. "It was the grub that did it! All the fellows thought I'd raided their studies; but I knew I hadn't, you see. It was some chap did it while we were at classes. Well, the only chap who wasn't at classes, too, was you. See?"

"Ah!"

"And then, you're such a queer beast that—"

"Hein?"

"Such a queer beast that you'd have been seen and noticed if you'd gone outside Greyfriars," explained Bunter cheerfully. "I put two and two together, you see. You hadn't been spotted outside the school, and the grub was missing inside the school. That settled it, didn't it? Why, the other fellows would have thought of it at once if they hadn't been so jolly sure that it was I who had bagged the tuck. You fairly gave yourself away, only they're a lot of asses, and they think I'm the kind of chap to raid a fellow's tuck."

"I zink of zat!" answered Napoleon calmly. "I zink to myself—I am hungry, I have faim—I must eat. But how is it zat I sall eat? Here zere is nozzing but ze spider, vich is not good to eat. So I zink, I comes down quiet while ze garscons zey are in class, and I helps myself, isn't it? And I zink zey sall say, 'Vunce more it is zat Buntair!'"

"Why, you spoofing rotter!" exclaimed Billy Bunter indignantly. "You jolly well wanted them to think it was me!"

"Mais oui! I zink zey say, 'Vunce

more zat greedy peeg Buntair he is aftair ze food! N'est-ce-pas?"

"You—you rotter! I've a jolly good mind to call Quelch in now—"

"Mon cher Buntair—"

"It would serve you jolly well right! Fancy wanting the chaps to think that I'd boned their tommy! As if I'd do such a thing, too! What are you grinning at, you French image? And what did you think I'd think, too? You didn't think I'd think I'd done it, did you?"

"I have not zink zat you zink at all, Buntair. To zink, you sall require some brains, isn't it?"

"Why, you—you cheeky rotter! I've a jolly good mind to call Quelch! I would, only I'm a good-natured chap!" said Bunter indignantly.

"It is all right about ze grub, Buntair. I do not steal him like you. I take him only from my friends, and afterwards I pay for zat grub. But you will not tell Monsieur Quelch zat I am here, isn't it? You will keep zis secret, Buntair?"

"That depends. I've jolly well found you!" said Bunter. "It would serve you right to give you away!"

"But zat is sneaking!"

"You can't stay up there for ever, anyhow!" grinned Bunter.

Dupont's eyes gleamed.

"I will not have zat flogging, and ze ordair of ze boot," he said. "Zat I cannot face. I runs out of ze House; and zen I zink, vere is it zat I sall go? Mon oncle, he is in France; and in zis country I have no one. So I come in ze back way. I zink to myself, I will hide me, and zat flogging he sall not come off—nevair! I hide viz me here, isn't it? And if it is zat I can live vizout food, I am nevair find. But zere come verree great hunger—verree great!" said Napoleon pathetically. "Zere is nozzing to eat. I not zink of zat when I run away; but I zink of him verree mooch when I am stick up here vizout nozzing to eat! Oh, yes!"

"I should jolly well think so!" said Bunter. "You must have missed breakfast and dinner to-day. I call that awful!"

"He is not so awful for me as he would be for you, Buntair, but he is verree unpleasant. But now I have good supply. I am what you call in English bit of all right. Oh, yes!"

Bunter grinned.

"And how long do you think you're going to stick there?" he demanded.

"Je ne sais pas; but I know zat I will not have zat flogging and ordair of ze boot. Zat I am determine on. Also, I have nowhere to go. In Angleterre I have no person."

"So you're keeping it up?"

"Mais oui!"

"I thought so," grinned Bunter. "Well, I'm not going to give you away, Nap. I'm a jolly good-natured chap—loyal, too. Loyalty is my strong point."

"Mon Dieu!"

"I'm going to treat you like a pal," said Bunter. "You rely on me. Of course, I shall expect to be treated like a pal in return."

"You are verree good, Buntair! I did not expect so much goodness from you."

"Oh, really, Dupont—"

"But I am verree mooch oblige. You keep zis secret. You say nozzing to anyvun."

"Certainly!"

"Zat is verree good!"

"By the way, Nap—now I think of it—could you cash a postal-order for me?" asked Billy Bunter.

"Vat?"

"I'm expecting a postal-order to-morrow," explained Bunter. "It's for

ten shillings—I mean a pound! I suppose it would make no difference to you if you handed me the pound—"

"Comment!"

"And I handed you the postal-order when it came—what?"

"Mon Dieu! Is it zat you want me to give you money to keep zis secret, Buntair?" exclaimed the French junior scornfully.

"Certainly not! I'm surprised at you, Dupont! A remark of that kind shows a low, suspicious nature."

"Zen vat is it zat you want?"

"I simply want you to cash a postal-order for me."

"Vere is zat postal-order? I zink I have hear of him before."

"It's coming to-morrow," explained Bunter. "It's quite certain—it's from one of my titled relations, you know."

"Pouf!"

"Look here, you cheeky Froggy—"

roared Bunter. "Taisez-vous—taisez-vous! Shut up viz you, or somevun vill hear you!" exclaimed Dupont in alarm.

"I don't care, you cheeky rotter!" roared Billy Bunter. "Let 'em hear! Let 'em all come! In fact, I'm going to tell the fellows now!"

And William George Bunter, in great wrath, scrambled down from the packing-case, Napoleon blinking down on him from the trapdoor in great dismay.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Spider and the Fly!

"BUNTAIR!" gasped Dupont.

The Owl of the Remove did not heed. He made for the door; but he moved slowly, doubtless to give the French junior a chance to recall him before it was too late.

"Buntair! Mon ami Buntair!"

"I'm coming!"

"I demand zat you come back, mon cher Buntair!" gasped Dupont. "Is it not zat you sall garder zis secret for me?"

Bunter stopped, and blinked up at him, but he shook his head.

"On second thoughts, Dupont, I'm afraid it can't be done," said the Owl of the Remove seriously. "I'm afraid what you're doing is rather disrespectful to the Head. It's defying proper authority, you know. I can't countenance anything of that kind. I feel it's my duty to go to Mr. Quelch and mention that I've found you hiding in the garrets."

"You fat peeg—"

"What?"

"I—I mean, je veux dire. My dear Buntair—"

"That's enough! I'm going! Some fellows have a sense of duty. I dare say Quelch will be here soon—"

"I vill cash zat postal-order for you, Buntair!"

"Which one?" asked Bunter.

"Zat vun for one pound zat you spick of—"

"I'm expecting another for two pounds," said Bunter coolly. "Would you mind cashing that one, Dupont?"

"Mon Dieu! Of all ze fat peegs—"

"Good-bye!"

"I—I mean, I cashes him viz pleasure, Buntair! Come up here viz you, and I vill cash him viz mooch great pleasure!"

"Oh, all right!" said Bunter, relenting.

"I don't want to be hard on a chap who's down on his luck, if you come to that. I was always a generous chap. Generosity is really my weakness. I'll come up."

The fat junior clambered on the packing-case again.

"You come up here viz me," invited

Dupont, regarding the Owl with a peculiar glitter in his eyes.

"No need for that. You can hand down the cash."

"But is it not zat you vill have suppair viz me? Zere is some verree good cake—"

"Oh, I don't mind coming up there, Nap, as you make a point of it. How am I to get up, though?"

"Zat is all right."

Dupont lowered an old, high-backed chair from the trapdoor, and it was set on top of the packing case. Bunter clambered on it, and from the chair clambered through the trap into the garret. The French junior pulled up the chair after him—as he had evidently done after his own ascent into that dusty and cobwebby region.

Bunter blinked at him in surprise.

"No need for that, Nap. I shall be going down again in a few minutes."

"Nous verrons!" murmured Dupont.

"What do you mean?"

Without replying, the French junior closed the trapdoor. Bunter's lantern shed a glimmering light upon planks, and rafters and roof-tiles and battalions of spiders' webs. The runaway junior's retreat was not a pleasant spot, but there was plenty of room for camping-out. Near at hand were candles, and the remains of the tuck Dupont had raided that afternoon from the Remove studies. There were also several rugs and coats, which the French junior had used as a bed.

"Shouldn't think you found it very nice here," remarked Bunter as he blinked round through his big glasses.

"You would not like it?" asked Dupont, with a grin.

"No fear!"

"Yet you have come up here viz me, isn't it?"

"I'm jolly well going down as soon as I've had the cake!" said Billy Bunter. "I'll begin now, if you don't mind."

"Not at all. Go for ze cake, mon ami."

Napoleon Dupont sat upon a cross-beam and watched Bunter, with the same lurking grin, while the Owl disposed of the cake. It did not take the fat junior long.

"That's a jolly good cake!" he said. "Wharton gets some good stuff from that aunt of his sometimes! Now, about that postal-order, Nap—"

"Oui?"

"If you'll hand over the cash I'll get off," said Bunter. "I can't say I like this place. Too many spiders for my taste. Besides, it's close on bed-time."

"I am fellow of my word, I zink," said Dupont. "I cash zat postal-order for you, Buntair, viz pleasure—when he come."

"What?"

"When he come I cash him."

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter. "Look here, if you're pulling my leg I'll—"

"Parfaitement."

"Then I'll jolly well go straight to Quelch!" howled Bunter, in great wrath. "Catch me keeping your secrets for you, you foreign bounder! I'm going down at once!"

"I zink not, mon ami Buntair!" answered Napoleon cheerfully. "I zink zat if I giff you cash you spend him, and you come back for more cash, isn't it? And you do zat vunce again, and again. Zat is not good enough. Mon cher Buntair, it was verree clever of you to find me—"

"I'm a rather clever chap!" assented Bunter.

"But it was not so clever to come up here when you have found me, Buntair," grinned Dupont. "Pourquoi? Because I sall not let you go down again."

"Wha-a-at?"

"I like your company, mon cher Buntair, and I keep you viz me, isn't it?" grinned Dupont. "I fear ve-ree mooch you must get used to ze spidairs. You vill stay here, chez moi."

"You silly ass!" gasped Bunter. "I'm jolly well going down now."

"I zink not."

"You you—you—"

Words failed Billy Bunter. He realised now that he was in a trap—it was a case of the spider and the fly over again; and the fat fly had walked into the spider's parlour. He was rather too unreliable to be trusted with a secret.

Dupont grinned cheerfully at his fat, furious face.

"You—you—" Bunter found his voice at last. "You can't keep me here, you silly chump! I won't stay!"

"I zink so."

"I'm going down!" roared Bunter. And he made for the trapdoor.

Dupont caught him by the collar and

**MAGNIFICENT
NEW
Long, Complete Stories
of
HARRY
WHARTON & CO.
AT
GREYFRIARS
SCHOOL**

will shortly appear in

**THE
PENNY
POPULAR!**

(See the momentous announcement on page 15.)

sat him down on the rafters. There was a howl from the fat junior.

"Perhaps you vish me to zrash you, Buntair?" suggested the French junior smilingly.

"Yaroo! Keep off, you beast!"

"Taisez-vous."

"I'll yell for help!"

Dupont doubled his fists in a very businesslike way, and came closer to Bunter. The fat junior squirmed back in alarm.

"Wha-a-at are you up to?" he gasped.

"I vait for you to yell for help, Buntair. Each time zat you yell, I hit you in ze eye!"

"Oh! I—I say, of—of course, I'm not going to make a sound, Dupont. I—I wouldn't, you know."

"Zat is right."

"But—but I can't stay here, you know!" wailed Bunter.

"I zink you can."

"I—I can't—"

"Nous verrons!" chuckled Napoleon.

Billy Bunter knew enough French to be aware that that meant "we shall see." And they did see. Bunter stayed.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Bolsover Faces the Music!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were still wide awake when Gwynne came back to the Remove dormitory and looked in, apparently in the hope of finding that Bunter had turned up. But Bunter had not turned up. The prefect bade the juniors good-night, and put out the light.

"Bunter hasn't been found, Gwynne?" asked Wharton.

"No; he doesn't seem to be in the House."

Gwynne left the dormitory.

"Well, this beats Banagher!" said Bob Cherry. "Where on earth can that fat snail have crawled off to?"

"He must have gone to look for Napoleon, as he said," remarked Peter Todd. "But where? It beats me hollow."

It was a deep problem to the Removites, and they gave it up at last, and settled down to sleep. They little dreamed how near the two missing juniors were all the time. Bunter's bed remained unoccupied; the Owl of the Remove was sleeping—far less comfortably than usual—wrapped in a coat in the garret under the eaves.

Harry Wharton & Co. were down very soon after rising-bell in the morning, and inquiring for Billy Bunter. Wingate of the Sixth informed them briefly that nothing had been heard or seen of the Owl of the Remove.

When the Remove fellows went in to lessons that morning Bunter's place in the Form-room was empty.

Mr. Quelch wore a grim expression; he was evidently both worried and angered by Bunter's remarkable disappearance.

The flight of the French junior was trouble enough, in the Form-master's opinion, without Bunter adding to it. So long as Bunter did not turn up his Form-master was anxious about him; but Peter Todd remarked that he would not like to be Bunter when he did turn up!

After morning lessons Bolsover major joined the captain of the Remove as the juniors were going out.

"I haven't seen the Head yet, Wharton," he muttered.

Harry Wharton nodded; he was aware of that.

"Dupont's not been heard of," went on Bolsover major.

"I suppose he's far enough away by this time," answered Harry.

"I think he'd have been seen if he'd taken a train—and nobody seems to have noticed him. I think it's more likely he's hiding somewhere near the school," said Bolsover. "Where could he go?"

"It's possible."

"Well, I'm going to see the Head. I shall make it all right for him to come back, if I can." Bolsover major rubbed his hands. "It means a thumping licking for me, of course. Can't be helped."

"It's the best thing you can do," assented Harry; and he wondered a little whether Percy Bolsover really meant what he said. It was difficult to imagine the bully of the Remove making a clean breast of it, confessing to the Head that it was his bullying that had provoked the French junior's queer outbreak, and taking all the blame upon himself.

It was a painful ordeal for Bolsover major to go through, and few fellows in the Remove would have expected him to face it of his own accord. But Wharton's doubts on the subject were set at rest soon.

Dr. Locke came along from the Sixth Form room and went into his study, and Bolsover, making up his mind to take the plunge, followed him in.

Wharton waited, with some curiosity, to hear the result.

Dr. Locke turned, in some surprise, as the burly Remove followed him into his study, and looked inquiringly at Bolsover major.

"C-c-can I speak to you, sir?" stammered Bolsover, crimsoning under his glance.

"Certainly. What is it?"

"About—about Dupont, sir."

"Have you heard news of him?"

"Oh, no! About his running away, I mean, sir. He—he was frightened about getting a flogging and being sent away, and—and I—I think I ought to tell you, sir, that I—I was to blame—"

Bolsover gasped and stopped.

The Head looked at him sharply.

"I am already aware, Bolsover, that you had treated Dupont in an overbearing manner, and I have spoken to you severely for it," he said.

"That isn't all, sir. I—I bullied him."

"What?"

"I didn't mean to—it was only my way!" gasped Bolsover. "But—but I walloped him with a fives-bat for—for not helping me with something I wanted done. And—and then he wanted to fight me, and I—I made fun of him. So—so when he played the goat—I mean, when he played the fool, sir, I—I think it was really my fault. And—and I think it was all bunkum, sir, about the rot he talked in my study, about a duel and all that—he was only being a theatrical ass, like a foreigner, sir."

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

"After all, he never touched me," said Bolsover. "I'm sure he wouldn't have hurt me, either. It was just gas, because he's got his head full of silly foreign rot. So—so if you'd go easy on him, sir—"

"What?"

"I—I mean, let him off lightly, sir, I think it would be only fair, because it was mostly my fault."

"Is it not a fact, Bolsover, that Dupont produced deadly weapons in your study?"

"Ye-es, sir; but I'm sure it was nearly all play-acting, in the French way, sir, though I was alarmed at the time. Dupont wouldn't really hurt a fly, sir. He was a good chap, only high-flown. And—and he was excited through my ragging him."

"This is a very curious confession for you to make, Bolsover. What is your object in coming to me?"

"I—I want you to let Dupont stay at Greyfriars, sir, if you will—now you know it was my fault. He's my pal."

"Your pal!" ejaculated the Head.

"My friend, sir."

"Bless my soul! I should certainly not have supposed, Bolsover, from your conduct, that Dupont was your friend."

Bolsover hung his head.

"It was only my rotten temper, sir," he mumbled. "I own up. I—I don't mind being flogged, sir, if you let Dupont off."

"Dear me! That is a very extraordinary suggestion." Dr. Locke smiled slightly, as he regarded Bolsover's downcast face. "I shall think over what you have told me, Bolsover, and perhaps I may reconsider Dupont's case, if he returns to Greyfriars. For the present you may go."

And Bolsover major went. Harry Wharton met him in the passage.

"I think it's all right for Dupont, if he only comes back, the ass!" said Bolsover. "I expect I shall get a flogging. I don't care! I've owned up, and got it off my mind, anyhow."

"Good!" said Harry. "It was really decent of you, Bolsover."

"Mind, I did it of my own accord," said Bolsover major. "It wasn't because

of being sent to Coventry, or any of that rot. It was entirely off my own bat."

"That's understood," said Wharton, with a smile.

"And now — if Dupont would only turn up—"

"He would turn up fast enough if he knew!" said Harry. "If we only had an idea where the duffer is—"

But that was still a problem.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Startling Discovery!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry uttered that exclamation in tones of surprise.

It was tea-time, and the fire was out in No. 1 in the Remove passage. Bob Cherry had come along to the top box-room in search of firewood. He was looking over the lumber and the packing-cases, debating in his mind which article he could venture to sacrifice, when a peculiar sound came to his ears.

It was like a far-off howl, and it came from above his head. Bob Cherry dropped his chopper, and stared up at the ceiling blankly.

"Yow-w-w-w-w-w-w!"

The howl was repeated, and this time it certainly came from above. Bob gave a gasp.

"Bunter!"

The junior stood rooted to the floor with astonishment. He knew that unmelodious howl, but the discovery that the missing Bunter was in the garrets under the roof-tiles was astounding. What had become of Bunter was a mystery; but this solution of it had not occurred to anyone.

"Bub-Bub-Bunter!" stuttered Bob Cherry.

He clambered on the packing-cases, dragged up a chair to the top, and mounted on it. From that position he pushed up the trapdoor a few inches.

Through the opening voices came to his ears, and a glimmer of candle-light to his eyes.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"I poonch you again, Buntair—"

"Nap!" gasped Bob.

He almost let the trap fall in his amazement.

"I—I say, Dupont, I—I wasn't going to open the trapdoor!" wailed the unhappy voice of William George Bunter.

"I see you viz my eyes, you fat peeg! You zink zat you slope—zat you call in English slope—while I look ze ozzer vay, isn't it?"

"Nunno! I—I assure you, old chap—"

"You are one fat fibber, Buntair!"

"I—I don't want to go away, Dupont. I—I'm enjoying myself here—I am, really!" howled Bunter. "I—I wouldn't go away for anything, you know!"

"I zink zat I not let you go away, Buntair. You have come here of own accord, and you stay, isn't it?"

"My only hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

He pushed the trap higher, till it stood on end, and looked into the dim recesses above.

Two candles, stuck in bottles, were burning, shedding a dim light.

Napoleon Dupont, a few yards distant, was holding Billy Bunter by the collar, evidently having caught the fat junior in an attempt at escape.

Neither of them observed Bob Cherry for the moment.

"I—I say, Nap," pleaded Bunter, "I'm awfully hungry—"

"You have scoff all ze food while zat I sleep viz myself, you fat peeg!"

"I—I say, I'll go and scout for some more, if you like, Nap—"

"And you vill come back?"

"Oh, yes, certainly! You can rely on my word, Nap—"

"I don't zink!"

"Look here, you Froggy rotter— Yaroooh!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry suddenly. His powerful voice awoke a thousand echoes as it boomed into the garrets.

There was a sharp cry.

"Mon Dieu! Is zat Sherry?"

"Yes, it's Sherry, you howling ass!" exclaimed Bob, scrambling up. "Have you been here all the time, you champion idiot?"

"Oui, oui! Mon ami Sherry—"

"I say, Bob, old chap, keep him off!" howled Bunter. "He's been keeping me here because I found him. Make him lemme go!"

"Oh, my hat! So that's the game, is it?" exclaimed Bob.

"Mais oui! Zat fat peeg he find me, and I keep him here," said Napoleon.

"Zat is ze only vay, isn't it? Now you go 'vay viz you, Sherry, and you say nozzing."

"I don't think!" grinned Bob.

"You're coming out of this, my pippin!"

"Ne vair! I vill not have flogging, and I vill not have sack!"

Harry Wharton's voice was heard in the distance below.

"Have you got that firewood, Bob?"

"I've got something else!" roared Bob. "Come up here, Wharton!"

The captain of the Remove came into the box-room below, and stared up at the open trap.

"You up there, Bob? What on earth—"

"I've found them!"

"Eh? Found what?"

"Bunter and Nap!"

"Great Scott!"

The astonished captain of the Remove jumped on the packing-cases and looked in. Bunter yelled to him.

"I say, Wharton, you make him lemme go, you know. The beast is keeping me here. I'm hungry—starving, in fact! I'm wasting away—"

"Ze fat peeg have eat all ze grub—"

"Help!"

"Zat you shut up!" exclaimed Dupont, shaking the fat junior wrathfully. "Is it zat you vant all ze school to come here?"

"My word!" gasped Wharton. "Chuck 'em down, Bob, and I'll catch them!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry laid his powerful grasp upon Napoleon. The French junior expostulated loudly; but Bob did not heed his expostulations. He lifted Dupont as if he had been an infant, and lowered him, kicking, through the trap. Wharton grasped him and dropped him to the floor.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Get out, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter got out fast enough. He rolled, gasping, out of the trapdoor and down into the box-room.

The unfortunate Owl was covered with dust, and spider-webs were clinging to him in festoons—as well as a spider or two. The fat junior had not been enjoying his enforced residence under the roof.

"I—I say, you fellows, pitch into him!" gasped Bunter. "Give him a jolly good hiding, Wharton, old chap! I'll hold your jacket!"

"Stop him!" roared Bob.

Napoleon Dupont was making for the door. Wharton and Bob rushed after him as he escaped to the staircase outside.

"Stop!"—shouted Harry.

"Mais jamais!" gasped Dupont. "I vill not be flog—I vill not be sack! I vill go—I run—I fly—I bunk—"

And he fled down the Remove passage.

"Stop him!"

Bolsover major was at the head of the stairs as Dupont came whizzing in that direction. He stared blankly at the missing junior, who had turned up so suddenly. But as Dupont came hurtling by the burly Remove grasped him.

"Zat you let go!" shrieked Dupont.

"Nap, old fellow—"

"Zat is you, Bolsover? You are one bully—you are one chamcau—"

"What?"

"Camel, camel!" howled Dupont.

"You are one camel!"

Bolsover major only stared—and he held on to the struggling French junior. He did not mind being called a camel, being quite unaware of the offensiveness of that epithet in French.

"You can call me a camel if you like, old man," he said. "You can call me an elephant, if you choose—I don't mind. But you're stopping."

Wharton and Bob Cherry came breathlessly up, and a crowd of Remove fellows were on the scene now. Billy Bunter came rolling along, explaining his wrongs and grievances at the top of his voice. Napoleon Dupont was still struggling, but he struggled in vain. And equally in vain he told Bolsover major that he was a camel, and that he laughed him at the nose!

"You'd better come and see the Head, Nap," was Bolsover's mild reply.

"I will not see him! I will not be flog! I will not be sack!" gasped Napoleon.

"It's not so bad as that—"

"It will be all right, Nap—"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Zat you let me go! I will fly! I will vat you call buzz off!"

"What's that thumping row about?" came Wingate's voice from the staircase, and the captain of Greyfriars strode upon the scene. "Why—what—Dupont—Bunter—"

"I say, Wingate, I—"

"You'll both come to the Head!"

"I will not come! I will not be flog and sack—"

"I say, you know— Yaroooh!"

Wingate settled the matter with a heavy hand. He grasped both the juniors by the collar and marched them down the stairs. And Dupont and Bunter, gasping and wriggling, were marched forthwith into the Head's study for judgment.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

All Serene!

QUITE an army of Greyfriars fellows gathered at the corner of the corridor.

The Head's door had closed upon Napoleon Dupont and Bunter, and the news that both the missing juniors had turned up, and were with the Head, had spread like wildfire.

There was a buzz of excitement in the passage. It increased as the Head's door opened and Billy Bunter came forth.

The fat junior grinned cheerfully at the crowd.

"It's all serene!" he said.

"What's all serene?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"I know you were anxious about me, but it's all right. I haven't been licked, you know," said Bunter, blinking at the juniors. "I wasn't to blame in any way. I've simply had a chat with the Head. You needn't have been worried about me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter was apparently under the impression that the concourse in the passage was on his account. That was a little mistake on his part, and the juniors explained to him with great candour.

"You fat duffer!" said Peter Todd.

"What does it matter whether you're licked or not?"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Haven't you been licked?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Of course not! I—"

"Then the Head ought to be remonstrated with!" said Johnny.

"Why hasn't he licked you, I'd like to know?"

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter. "I haven't done anything."

"Rot!"

"I couldn't help that Froggy idiot keeping me up in the roof, could I? What was there for me to be licked for?"

"Well, you ought to be licked. You know that."

"The oughtfulness is terrific!"

"I don't see letting Bunter off!" said Bob Cherry, with a shake of the head.

"If the Head hasn't licked him, we ought to bump him!"

"Hear, hear!"

"But I haven't done anything, have I?" shrieked Bunter, greatly exasperated.

"Rats!"

"Bosh!"

"I say, you fellows, don't play the goat, you know! I'm the injured party, you know! I've been kept a prisoner, you know! You should have seen the Head's face when he heard. It was worth a guinea a box—it was, really!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's he doing to Dupont?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Licking him!"

"Poor old Nap!"

"Serve him jolly well right!" said Bunter warmly. "He kept me up in the roof, just as if he couldn't trust me. Simply because there was a slight dispute about cashing a postal-order, too! I was simply famished. Luckily, I managed to bag all the grub while Nap was asleep, otherwise I should be as thin as a lath at this blessed moment. The least you fellows can do is to stand me a really good spread!"

"Hark!" exclaimed Nugent.

There was a loud howl from the Head's study.

"That's Nap!"

"The Head was bound to lick him," remarked Bolsover major, with a nod. "I don't see that that matters. But he's not going to be sacked. So it's all right."

"It doesn't sound all right!"

Loud howls from the Head's study seemed to indicate that Napoleon Dupont, at least, was not finding it all right.

The howls were accompanied by a steady sound of swishing.

The juniors listened in silence.

The Head was not sparing the rod. He certainly could not be expected to do so in the circumstances. Napoleon had fairly asked for it, and it would have been a surprise if he did not get it.

The sounds of woe ceased at last, and there was a murmur of voices.

"The Head's hoping that the lesson will benefit him!" murmured Bob Cherry. "He always does, you know. It's his way."

The door opened, and Napoleon Dupont came out.

He limped along the passage, almost doubled up. But he stopped as he came on the crowd of juniors at the corner.

"Hurt?" asked Bob Cherry sympathetically.

The question was sympathetic, but it was rather superfluous.

"I zink I am verree mooch hurt," groaned Dupont. "Ze Head he lay on zat cane like anyzing. He zink zat I deserve it, he say. I do not see. Ow! I am verree mooch pain. Helas!"

"But you're not given the order of the boot?" asked Wharton.

Napoleon brightened up a little.

"Non! Ze Head say zat Bolsover have explain somezing, and it is zat he give me one chance," he replied. "Zat surpriso me. I have call Bolsover one camel—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I call him one camel, and I find zat he speak for me, and zat it is now vat you call, in English, bit of all right!" said Napoleon. "I am sorry zat I call Bolsover one camel."

"Perhaps it hasn't hurt him!" said Wharton, laughing.

"Not a bit!" said Bolsover major. "You can call me a dromedary if you like, Nap."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Napoleon looked at Bolsover major rather queerly. He was evidently surprised to find that the bully of the Remove had spoken up for him, and it had touched him.

Bolsover, with a flush in his face, held out his hand.

"I'm sorry, Nap!" he said. "I was rather a beast. I—I didn't really want to row, you know!"

"Say no more, mon ami!" said Napoleon, beaming. "I forget all about him, and vunce more you are my shum!"

And Napoleon shook hands with Bolsover major with both hands, and then kissed him on both cheeks, amid loud chortles from the Removes. The two juniors walked away together—Bolsover looking less sullen than usual, and Napoleon beaming, though occasionally he gave a sharp yelp and a painful wriggle, reminiscent of the licking in the Head's study.

The breach had been healed. Once more peace reigned in Bolsover's study—until, as Peter Todd remarked, the Remove bully should break out again. But really that did not seem likely to happen. For the present, at least, Napoleon of the Remove was on the best of terms with his "shum," and Harry Wharton & Co. cordially hoped that it would last.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY

HIS MAJESTY THE MAJOR!

Another splendid,
long, complete story
of Harry Wharton
& Co. at Greyfriars.

By

FRANK RICHARDS.

Order

THE MAGNET
in Advance.



Goggs, Grammarian

By Richard Randolph

SYNOPSIS.

Johnny Goggs comes to Rylcombe Grammar School from Frankingham in company with Blount, Trickett, and Waters.

Lively times ensue. Goggs creates the impression at first that he is a simpleton; but after a series of fights with the Rylcombe juniors, and a number of japes worthy of Gordon Gay at his best, Goggs shows that there is much more in him than meets the eye.

The Grammarians meet St. Jim's on the cricket-field, and Goggs, disguised as an Irish boy, and calling himself O'Hoggarty, exasperates Tom Merry & Co. by bowling "grubs." Manners returned to the pavilion. "Rotten stuff!" he murmured.

(Now read on.)

A Brilliant Catch.

TOM nodded. He quite agreed with that pronouncement. But he did not propose to put himself out through putting himself out.

Figgy made twelve off Bags' next over, and congratulated himself on keeping at what he had quite made up his mind was the right end.

Then Tom faced Phelim. He got one all along the ground, and pushed it away past point for a possible single.

"Come on!" called Figgins loyally. But as he ran he muttered: "Oh, hang it all!"

And his reluctance to face Phelim was abundantly justified. Figgy had not the patience to play grubs, and he knew it.

One ball he let go past. Off the next he scored an easy two, by getting it round to leg. But then he played all over one, and his middle stump was wobbled in a weak and irresolute way, and the balls fell gently off, while the leather twirled round at the foot of the wicket.

"Shure, an' that's ather bein' out, so don't argy about it at all, at all!" said Phelim.

"Who was going to argue, chump?" growled Figgy, walking away from the wicket. He had scored 62, but he was far from feeling satisfied.

Gay clapped the successful bowler on the back.

"You're getting us out of a deep, deep hole, Goggles!" he whispered. "But I shouldn't more than half like the way it's being done if I didn't know that you can bowl a heap better in your usual style!"

Blake came next—out before he was in, for any practical purpose. It was not his courage that failed, but his patience, and he knew in advance that it would fail him.

He missed one ball. He did not miss the next, but accomplished the really difficult feat—or what would have been so had he been trying to perform it—of picking it up clean off the ground by a blind swipe and putting it neatly into the hands of Carboy at point.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy followed. But Bags bowled him with a leg-break, after Tom Merry had scored a three.

Kerr joined Tom, and there was something like a stand. But when they had added about thirty Kerr was caught in the long-field in hitting out at Wootton major, who had replaced Bags; and a few balls later Tom missed one of the grubs and was smartly stamped by Lane.

Redfern and Levison made a few more; but neither was at ease with Phelim, and eventually he got the New House man caught at

cover off one of his few length balls. Fatty Wynn whipped in, and survived one ball, giving Levison the bowling again. Levison hit a six, and then they stole a single.

Fatty faced Wootton, and put up one high in the slips. It seemed yards over the head of Phelim; but he gave a mighty leap, touched it, knocked it up, and caught it as it descended.

"Bravo, Go—O'Hoggarty!" yelled Wootton minor.

But fortunately no one noticed the slip.

Quite Like an Auction Sale!

WE'VE a chance yet," said Gordon Gay to Frank Monk and Bags and Goggs as they came off the pitch together. "One hundred and fifty-nine; it's enough, but it oughtn't to be too much, if three or four of us can get going. Phelim, me spalpeen, gossoon, omad-hann, leprechaun, and everything else that's rare genuine Irish, ye're comin' in firrst wid me, me darlint, an' it's not lettin' yez off undher fifty I am!"

"Sure, an' I'll do me endeavours," replied Phelim.

"Call that bowling?" demanded Gore, as the supposed Irish junior walked into the pavilion.

"Faith, an' it's not ather knowin' yez I am, so I can't answer yez properly, an' I'd scorn to answer yez improperly. But pwhat would yez call it yerself?"

"Tripe!" replied Gore promptly. "Beastly tripe!"

"Oh, cheese that, Gore!" said Tom Merry. "There's nothing against such stuff in the rules, and it got us out when better bowling couldn't."

"Give them a dose of it!" growled Gore.

"We sha'n't need to. They won't get us tied up," said Figgins confidently.

Goggs proceeded to put on his pads with great apparent care.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Levison. "Look at O'Hoggarty!"

"Sure, an' pwhat's the matter wid me, at all, at all?" asked Phelim.

"Send for Mulvaney minor," said Lowther.

"An' what are yez wantin' me for, Lowther? Sure, an' I'm here, close to your elbow," spoke the youth referred to.

"I wanted you to interpret for us, and to explain to O'Hoggarty that that's not the way to put on cricket-pads."

"What would I be after interpretin' for, then? Faith, O'Hoggarty spakes as good English as anny of yez, an' he can understand it as well. An' if he's likin' to wear his pads that way, what's it to do wid any Saxon of yez all?"

"Begorra, it's not meself that's ather mindin'," said O'Hoggarty obligingly. "If the other way is the English fashion, I'm willin'. But I think yez might have told me, Gay."

Gordon Gay grinned. He was still grinning when he walked out with Phelim. For Gay had seen Phelim bat, and he knew that there was a shock for St. Jim's in store, bar accidents.

"No need to disguise your style now, old chap," he said. "They may think you're Tom Hayward; but there's nothing about your batting to give you away."

"You do not think that I had better bat left-handed, then, Joyful?"

"My hat, no! We want every run you can

make; and Levison and Wynn and Talbot are bowlers—don't you forget that, my boy!"

Phelim took guard. Ernest Levison bowled the first over, and every ball of it was a good one. But the red-wigged batsman met each ball in cool, masterly style, and scored two twos and a three by deft strokes.

Then Fatty Wynn had an experience such as seldom fell to his lot. For once Fatty started badly, and Phelim, who had been taken to the business end of the pitch by that three, was not the kind of person against whom one could afford to bowl badly.

He cut Fatty for four, drove him for another four, placed the third ball through the slips for two, got the fourth round to leg for four more, slammed the fifth over the boundary for six, and finished the over by tapping the leather into the middle of the pitch and running a single, which brought him again to the batting end.

"This is hot work!" said Tom Merry to Talbot.

Again Phelim had to be more careful with Levison. But he got one four, and off the last ball of the over hit a three.

He had now scored 85, while Gordon Gay had not only not made a run, but had not even had a ball to play.

But Gay did not mind. He felt quite happy about it. Goggs might go on like this until the match was won without getting a grumbling word from his captain.

"I say, though, Tommy, I must have another go at him! I'm awfully sorry, you know. But I sha'n't let him score again like that, I promise you," pleaded Fatty.

Tom looked doubtful. He had thought of putting on Talbot. But Fatty seldom bowled badly, and it seemed only fair to give him another chance.

He had it, and he did not let his side down. But he did not get the red-wigged batsman out. Five came off the over, and after Gordon Gay had played two good deliveries from the Falstaff of the New House Phelim again faced Levison.

He hit a four. Then, as he waited while the ball was being thrown in from the boundary, he looked round, and saw Earking, Carpenter, and Snipe come on to the ground.

Prompt action was needed, and nothing could have been more prompt than the action Phelim took. He was sure that if those three were given the chance they would let out the secret. He was sure that it was for no other purpose they had come.

So he stepped back to the second ball of Levison's over, as if to play late, and knocked over his wicket in making his stroke.

"My hat!" gasped Gay. "Oh, you clumsy duffer!"

Then he, too, saw those three, and realised that it was not through clumsiness Goggs had got out.

The best thing to do, of course! It was not by any means certain that even the ingenuity of Goggs would be equal to the task he had to face. But it was quite certain that it was Goggs or nobody. There was not another fellow among them all who could rise to the occasion, for methods of force were obviously out of the question.

Goggs ran for the pavilion, raising his cap as cheers rang out—and not from his own schoolfellows only—for his brief but glorious innings. He came very near to raising his wig with it, and he murmured to himself:

"John, my boy, you must be cool! Cool-

ness alone will save the situation—therefore, be cool, John, be cool!"

"Ripping good!" said Jack Wootton heartily, as he came out with bat under arm. "But what on earth made you hit your own wicket like that, O'Hoggarty?"

"Sure, I did it for a lark!" said Phelim.

Wootton major failed to understand; and he glared at the red-wigged japer.

But Frank Monk heard, cast a glance round, saw the three new-comers, and twigged at once.

He could do nothing. Like Gay, he saw that only Goggs could do anything.

And Goggs was taking off his pads as calmly as if there was nothing hanging upon what he did.

But in another moment Monk understood that, too.

Larking & Co. had halted. They were not standing near any St. Jim's fellow. It was likely enough that they would postpone their disclosure till Tom Merry and the rest came in from the field. It was not certain; that was why Goggs had felt bound to be on hand. But while they were harmlessly engaged he would do nothing.

Out of the corner of an eye he watched them. His pads were off now, and he had put on his blazer. He strolled towards them.

Goggs seldom missed much. He had not missed either the entrance or the exit of Carker, although at the time he had been so busy that it would have been quite excusable had he done so.

And he had guessed that Carker might go to fetch his fellow-conspirators.

Goggs seldom missed much. He had not here. His business was to get them off the ground without giving them a chance to tell what they knew.

"It is not an easy one, John," he said to himself. "It will tax all your wonderful powers, John, my lad. But it must be done!"

Now Larking and his companions were moving towards the pavilion.

It was not safe to wait. There were plenty of fellows in the pavilion to whom the disclosure might be made.

So Goggs—in the guise of the red-headed Phelim O'Hoggarty—drew nigh.

There also drew nigh the great George Alfred Grundy, with his chums Wilkins and Gunn.

Goggs knew Grundy. Goggs liked Grundy. But Phelim O'Hoggarty could not afford to consider the feelings of Grundy. And Grundy really was quite an easy fellow to involve in a row.

So the red-wigged schemer took his place where a group on the ropes screened him somewhat, and began operations.

Just as the three Shell fellows drew opposite the three from Rylcombe, Larking said—or seemed to say, for the voice was really the voice of Goggs thrown into his mouth:

"Why, here's that slab-faced, flat-footed, silly ass of a Grundy! How's your poor, unfortunate countenance, Grundy, old chump?"

And Goggs murmured to himself:

"Quite a good one, John! Abuse without profanity! If that does not fetch Grundy—"

But, of course, it did fetch Grundy.

He put a fist like a small shoulder of mutton under the nose of Larking, and flourished it threateningly.

"Were you speaking to me?" he hooted.

"Let us leave this speech to the dear Larking!" murmured Goggs.

Larking & Co. had not yet spotted him, and naturally he preferred that they should not do so.

"Speaking to you?" retorted Larking. "I think not! Why should I want to speak to you?"

"You called me a—slab-faced, flat-footed, silly ass!" gasped Grundy. "Me—me!"

"Well, it fits you better than anyone else I know!" Larking replied coolly. "There are lots of other things I can call you, if you're fishing for compliments, matter of that!"

"John, dear boy, you thought Larking was to be depended upon for insolence; and you were right, John—you were right!" Goggs said softly to himself.

"Oh, come off, Lark!" said Carpenter. "What do you want to get rowing with Grundy for? That wasn't—"

"Who's rowing with Grundy? It seems to me that it's Grundy who's picking a quarrel with me!" howled Larking.

"I wouldn't condescend to notice your existence if it wasn't that you cheeked me—me!" Grundy snorted. "As it is, I shall be obliged if you will be good enough to come somewhere more private than this with me at once!"

(Continued on page 16.)

The Editor's Chat.

The Companion Papers are:

THE MAGNET. THE GEM. THE BOYS' FRIEND. CHUCKLES. THE PENNY POPULAR.
Every Monday. Every Wed. Every Monday. Every Friday. Every Friday.

YOUR EDITOR IS ALWAYS GLAD TO HEAR FROM HIS READERS.

For Next Monday:

"HIS MAJESTY THE MAJOR!"

By Frank Richards.

Major Thorndyke Thresher, late of the Guards, rents a house near Greyfriars School in order to pass a peaceful summer. He hopes to have such a restful time that it will remind him of his old days at the War Office.

It so happens, however, that the school cricket-ground is closed down for alterations, and the fellows are forced to play in a field adjoining the major's premises. It is superfluous to add that the major's "quiet time" is not realised! There are raids on his cherries; there are bombardments of his summer-house; there are misadventures to his pet parrot; and a feud springs up between the old soldier and the Greyfriars juniors, who, however, eventually come to respect

"HIS MAJESTY THE MAJOR"

as a jolly good fellow.

This is essentially a humorous yarn, and will, I venture to think, find favour with many Magnetites who like Frank Richards best when he is in a laughter-making mood.

THE GREAT SECRET OUT!

HUGE SENSATION IN THE WORLD OF BOYS' LITERATURE!

I am now in a position to tell my readers the exact nature of the impending changes in that bright little school-story paper, the "Penny Popular."

Up to the present time, as most of you are aware, the stories in the "Penny Pop" have been reprinted from the early issues of the MAGNET, the "Gem," and the "Boys' Friend." The object of this was, of course, to meet the wishes of many thousands of boys and girls who were anxious to read of the early schooldays of Harry Wharton & Co., Tom Merry & Co., and Jimmy Silver & Co.

These early stories have not yet been exhausted. But they have reached a stage where I feel quite justified in making

A SWEEPING CHANGE

of programme in the "Penny Popular."

Instead of containing reprint stories, our Friday companion paper will shortly consist of

ENTIRELY NEW AND ORIGINAL STORIES!

Those dealing with Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars will be written by Frank Richards.

Those which concern Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's will be the work of Martin Clifford. The popular Rookwood stories will be contributed by Owen Conquest.

The result of this new programme is to create what might almost be described as a combined edition of the MAGNET, the "Gem," and the "Boys' Friend."

Just think of it! A NEW Greyfriars, St. Jim's, and Rookwood story all in one issue!

But instead of charging fourpence, as was at first suggested, for this fine budget of stories, I have made a strenuous fight on behalf of my readers, with the result that the price of the "Penny Popular" will remain unchanged! Each issue, therefore, will cost three-halfpence, as at present.

Lots of people have refrained from buying the "Penny Popular" in the past because they have already read the stories appearing therein. These people may now look forward to

THREE DELIGHTFUL NEW STORIES

each week!

The Harry Wharton stories will be particularly attractive, because of an altogether novel scheme in connection with them—a

scheme which I will outline fully when space permits. Meanwhile, I want every boy and girl who loves really good stories of school-life to

SPREAD THE GLAD NEWS THROUGH THE EMPIRE,

and to hold themselves in readiness for a school-story paper which is calculated to beat all comers!

A CRY OF DESPAIR FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR!

An Editor's Chat, I tell you flat, is a difficult thing to write, when readers press for you to guess the age and weight and height of Harry Wharton, Johnny Bull, and all the merry chaps who wake things up at Greyfriars School by means of japes and scraps.

I really think a cooling drink would cause my fevered brow to simmer down, and it would drown the cares that haunt me now. From early morn I sit forlorn, and battle with my post; the size of which would give the "stitch" to Hamlet's merry ghost!

The letters pour in by the score, and leave me limp and weak. Some say that Wharton is a bore and Coker is a freak. With speed and zest I do my best to answer all the lot. Most notes are cheering, but the rest are simply tommy-rot.

An Editor's Chat, I tell you flat, is not a simple task. To sit and swot like lord knows what to carry out what you ask. But never mind! I always find great joy and consolation in knowing that the MAGNET's still the best book in the nation!

NOTICES.

Correspondence, etc., Wanted.

Stanley Robb, 105, Park Street, Aberdeen—with readers, 13-15, in the Colonies.

Charles H. Leckenby, 3, Horsefield Street, Middlesbrough, wants members for Correspondence Club. Stamped envelope.

R. Broadbent, 33, Newsham Drive, Newsham Park, Liverpool—with readers anywhere.

Miss Madeleine Stratton, 135, Bonner Hill Road, Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey—with readers in England and Colonies, 15-16.

P. Rossiter, 23, White Road, Vicarage Lane, Stratford, E. 15, wants to join amateur theatrical troupe; any reasonable distance; age 17; any part.

James Betts, 3, Jubilee Terrace, City Road, Norwich, and W. J. Cockadoy, 50, Hollis Lane, Hall Road, Norwich—with Colonial readers.

J. Gregory, 119, Devon Street, Ardwick, Manchester, wants members for Correspondence and Exchange Club; also contributors to magazine.

C. Rockley, 203, Oxford Street, Swansea, South Wales—with readers anywhere, 16-18.

C. B. McMenamin, P.O. Box 120, Montreal, Quebec, Canada—with readers anywhere.

W. H. Duncan, 25, Beechfield Street, Cheetnam Hill, Manchester, wants more members for stamp exchange. Overseas readers specially invited.

Francis Linegar, 72, New Gower Street, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada—with readers in any of the British Colonies and possessions, 11-17.

Wm. Rettie, 7, Raeburn Place, Aberdeen, wants members, 16-20, for a Journalists' Correspondence Club. Only those keen on journalism.

Miss May Taylor, 391, Sherrard Road, Manor Park, E. 12—with readers anywhere, 11-13.

Miss Victoria Mussabini, 69, Holmwood Gardens, Streatham Hill, S.W. 2, wants members for Junior Arts Club (Girls' Branch). Stamped addressed envelope.

Alfred Myers, The Close House, Greenisland, co. Antrim, Ireland—with readers anywhere.

Alec Beeney, 17, Langton Park, Southville, Bristol—with readers anywhere, 15-17.

H. A. H. (YOUR EDITOR).

"Oh, drop it, old man!" pleaded Wilkins. "I don't suppose Larking really meant anything."

"Mind your own business, George Wilkins, or you'll have me to reckon with! Now, then, Larking—"

"You want me to go somewhere with you, Grundy?" asked Larking.

"Yes, of course. I mean—"

"Sorry, I'm sure! But the fact of the matter is that I'm a bit particular about the company I keep. I'll lend you Snipe if you like. He's not so particular!"

Grundy opened his mouth, and Goggs popped into it a better retort than the mighty brain of George Alfred would have been likely to evolve.

"I shouldn't think either you or Snipe can be very particular in that way, or you wouldn't be going round together!"

"Look here, you hulking—"

"Come and have a hiding!"

"Stop it!" hissed Carpenter. "What a silly ass you are, Lark! You're mucking up the whole dashed show!"

"Well, I like that! What have I done?"

"Couldn't you leave Grundy alone, you idiot?"

"What did I do to Grundy? I didn't even look at the fatheaded ass!"

Carpenter and Snipe gasped. It had not occurred to either of them that Goggs' ventriloquism was at work; and they were certain that they had heard their chum insult Grundy in the most uncalculated way.

They did not mind abuse slung at Grundy. But it was rather an unsafe game to play at St. Jim's, and it interfered with a plan on which they had imagined Larking to be no end keen.

"You—you insulted me!" hooted Grundy.

"It moves, John—it moves!" murmured Goggs. "Safer that you should now vanish from the scene, John!"

And he mizzled. George Alfred Grundy could be trusted not to let the trouble drop.

A small crowd had now gathered around the disputants, and it was increasing every moment.

Larking was as irate as Grundy, which is saying quite a lot.

Goggs went off to the pavilion. That now seemed to him the safest place. It was hardly likely that Larking & Co. would reach it, in the circumstances.

Gay and Wootton major were still together, and had added fifteen runs or so. Gay was batting really well; but Wootton evidently found Levison troublesome.

Just as Goggs joined the rest he was bowled, and Frank Monk went out to take his place.

"What have you been after, Goggles?" whispered Bags.

"I grew fatigued, my dear Bagshaw, and, not caring for the ostentation of retiring without being either out or hurt, I knocked down my wicket."

"Ass! You know I don't mean that! As if I couldn't twig that you had a reason for getting out! But what have you been doing since?"

"Where is your place on the batting list, Bagshaw?"

"Number seven. What's that to do with it, fathead?"

"Merely that if you care to trot along to that corner"—Goggs nodded towards where the trouble was developing—"I think you may have time to see something funny before your turn comes round."

"What have you done, you spoofer?"

"Started an auction sale. First, dear Bagshaw, I knocked down my own wicket. Then I retired from the role of auctioneer in favour of Grundy. Grundy will knock something down before long, I feel sure!"

"Oh, I'm off! I want to see that. I've heard about Grundy, though I don't know the bull-headed bounder!"

Bags bolted. A cheer announced that Fatty Wynn had lowered Monk's wicket. It looked as though the game would be a close one, after all.

Wootton minor went in. He shaped better than either his brother or Monk had done—which was as well for Bags or Tricks. For they were down for numbers six and seven respectively, and if Wootton minor had been early dismissed Tricks would have been needed at once.

But he had followed Bags at a word from Goggs. Both had their pads on, and took their bats with them. Once they had joined the crowd, however, they really forgot all about the game. For they arrived at the identical moment when, after some more verbal passages of a somewhat heated nature, Grundy had seized Larking by the nose!

"I say, Grundy, you can't do that to a visitor, you know!" protested Dane, who had just come up.

"It really looks as though you are mistaken, Dane!" remarked Lowther, who had also arrived on the scene at an interesting stage of the controversy. "I admit that Grundy should not do it. To do it is very wrong of Grundy. But when you say that Grundy cannot do it—"

"Oh, I say! The cad!" gasped Dick Julian.

Perhaps there was some slight excuse for Larking, who knew that he had not started the row. But he should not have done what he did, however great the provocation.

Grundy's grip upon his nasal organ was so hard that it seemed to Larking impossible to wrench it free without pulling it off.

He was too close to hit out effectively.

But he could kick. And he kicked!

It was a spiteful hack, right upon Grundy's shin.

"Shame!" yelled the crowd.

"Oh, I say, Lark!" came from Carpenter, in dismay.

"Yooooop!" howled Grundy.

Larking's nose was free now. It was very red, but not so red as it was fated to be.

For Grundy stepped back one pace and then let out with his left.

Straight from the shoulder it came, and full on the nose Larking took it.

He went down like a ninepin.

"Goggles was right—as per usual! It's quite like an auction sale," said Bags to Tricks.

"Hurrah! Oh, well hit!" came from the pavilion.

Gay had slammed a six. Gay and Wootton minor were getting on quite nicely at the wickets.

Larking Pays.

LARKING went down before that heavy punch of Grundy's. But he was up again in a moment, his nose streaming blood. His wretched temper was completely in the ascendant; and his face looked like that of some savage to whom all rules of fair play were unknown.

Grundy scrambled up, too. He was hardly on his feet before Larking was upon him, hitting, kicking, fighting in wild-cat fashion.

"My hat!" gasped Dane. "This will have to be stopped!"

"I'll stop it!" roared Grundy. "Leave the cad to me!"

But Larking, in that insensate rage, ready to scratch, bite, and kick, was a handful even for the powerful Grundy.

A great long streak appeared upon the Shell fellow's face. Blood oozed from it.

"The sweep's using his dashed nails!" cried Gore.

Larking was using both nails and boots. He seemed to have taken leave of his senses. In fact, he hardly knew what he was doing. He saw red, and his one desire was to hurt Grundy in any way possible.

Carpenter threw his arms around his chum and tried to drag him back. But he got Larking's elbow full in his face with cruel force, and he staggered and all but fell.

Julian and Kerruish tried.

"Leave him alone!" hooted Grundy. "I'll deal with him! I'll make him sorry that he was ever born!"

"Oh, well hit, Wootton!" came a roar from the few Grammarians in the pavilion.

One game was going well for the Grammar School. The other was not. If Goggs had guessed that matters would take this turn he would never have played that trick.

But who could have guessed it? Even Carpenter, who knew Larking so much better than Goggs did, was utterly taken aback. Larking had fouled Monk, it was true; but that was not quite so bad as this.

This was a sheer disgrace to the Grammar School.

Larking would have to pay for it afterwards, that was certain.

But he was also having to pay for it now. He was no weakling, but he was far from being a match in strength for Grundy.

The Shell fellow had him by the collar now, and was shaking him furiously.

Larking's wild attack had died down. There seemed no strength left in the fellow. Blood dripped from his nose, his face was ashen pale; he was helpless in the hands of the ireful Grundy.

"That's enough, Grundy!" cried Clifton Dane.

Grundy hurled Larking from him, so that he fell headlong, completely spent.

"I'm the best judge of that, Dane!" he snorted.

"Oh, well, old chap, as long as you stop now it's all serene," replied the Canadian junior, half apologetically.

For really Grundy was showing some forbearance. Other fellows as strong as he might have taken it out of Larking to a greater extent than he had done, given his provocation.

"And now, may one inquire what it was all about?" asked Lowther blandly.

Lowther happened to have rather a special objection to Larking, and would not have minded had old Grundy gone on a little longer.

"That chap checked old Grundy," Gunn began to explain.

"It's a lie!" hissed Larking, whom Carpenter was trying to get to his feet.

Snipe had already disappeared. It was Snipe's way to disappear when there was trouble afoot.

"Oh, that's rot!" snapped Carpenter. "I heard you, and it was really something a bit more than mere chaff. What licks me is what on earth you did it for. And I'm dashed if I can begin to understand how you could go for him tooth and nail as you did. Hang it all, Larking—"

"Shut up, and leave me alone! I don't want your help, and I won't listen to your sermonising!"

(Another grand long instalment of this magnificent school serial will appear in next Monday's issue. Order early.)

GRAND LONG STORY BOOKS FOR MAY

JUST OUT.

Detective Tales.

SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY.

No. 76.—A CONVICT BY PROXY.

A Detective Story that will strike you as something out of the ordinary. Told in three parts by Tinker, Sexton Blake, and the Hon. John Lawless.

No. 77.—THE CRIMSON MASK.

Now Sexton Blake and Tinker were too clever for a cool and daring Scoundrel.

No. 78.—THE FIVE DIAMONDS; or, the Case of the Working Jeweller.

The true facts relating to the theft of the famous and valuable McCullum Necklace, telling how Sexton Blake recovered the jewels with the assistance of Tinker, and a brave and determined girl whose father was under suspicion.

No. 79.—THE RIDDLE OF RIVERDALE.

A Story of Detective Work and Thrilling Adventure, introducing Sexton Blake, Tinker, and Pedro, and a new and powerful character, Brand, K.C., M.P., and . . .

Short and Adventure Tales.

BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY.

458.—ROBIN HOOD AND HIS MERRY MEN.

Grand Story of the Outlaws of Sherwood Forest.

By MORTON PIKE.

459.—THE BULLIES OF ST. CLAIRE.

Topping School Yarn.

By HENRY T. JOHNSON.

460.—THE BLACK OPAL.

Thrilling Tale of Treasure Seeking.

By FENTON ASH.

461.—THE PRIDE OF THE RING.

Magnificent Story of Boxing and Adventure.

Price
4d.
each.

COMPLETE STORY IN EACH NUMBER.

—ASK YOUR NEWSAGENT FOR THEM.—

Price
4d.
each.