



The **Magnet** 1^{1/2} Library

No. 603. Vol. XIII.

August 30th, 1919.



BUNTER'S TYPING AGENCY!



BUMPING BILLY BUNTER!

(One of the Scenes in the Magnificent Long, Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars.) 30-8-19



A Magnificent Long, Complete School
Story of HARRY WHARTON & CO.
at Greyfriars School.

By **FRANK RICHARDS**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Budding Authors!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry of the Remove stopped short in front of the letter-rack at Greyfriars and uttered that exclamation.

Bob had nursed the forlorn hope that he would find a fat remittance in a letter addressed to himself; but the only envelope among the C's was one addressed to Horace Coker of the Fifth.

Further down the rack, however, there was a letter for Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove. And this was the letter which had provoked Bob's exclamation.

"What's up?" asked Wharton, coming up with the other members of the Famous Five.

"You're in clover, my son! Here's a letter for you—and it's from the Fleetway House!"

"That is where the esteemed companionly papers are edited, is it not?" said Hurree Singh.

"It is—it are!" said Bob Cherry. "Trot out the joyful news, Harry!"

Wharton opened the letter, and read it aloud to his chums.

"My dear Wharton,—My stock of literary contributions for the 'Extracts from the 'Greyfriars Herald,' which I sometimes publish in the 'Gem' Library, has got very low. So much so that, apart from two articles by W. G. Bunter—both unusable—I have nothing at all.

"Will you please bring this state of affairs to the knowledge of other members of the Remove Form, and tell them that I shall be pleased to consider contributions from any of them. These contributions, if accepted, will be paid for at the usual literary rates.

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"I hope the united efforts of the Removites will result in my having plenty of material to go on with.

"With all good wishes,
Yours sincerely,

"Editor of the Companion Papers."

"Good!" said Johnny Bull, with great satisfaction. "I've been waiting for a chance to get that pirate serial off my hands—"

There was a snort from Nugent. "Do you think any self-respecting editor would publish that potty thing?" he said scornfully.

"My hat! I like that!" growled Johnny Bull. "What's wrong with my pirate serial, anyway?"

"Too many murders, old chap!" said Nugent. "You kill a fellow in every paragraph—"

"Pirates ought to be killed—"

"True, O king! I often think that when Bunter comes and raids our grub. But you ought to kill your characters in moderation. As it is, you splash red paint about all through the story!"

"I'll bet the editor likes it—"

"He'll have a queer sense of humour, then!"

"Look here—"

"Can't; it's too big a strain on the eyesight!"

"You—you—" spluttered the incensed Johnny Bull.

"Pax, my children!" said Bob Cherry.

"Never let your angry passions rise. This is a time for great rejoicing. Contributions will be paid for at the usual literary rates. Think what that means! At present we're all stony. In a few weeks we shall be living on the fat of the land!"

"Perhaps," said Wharton.

"The perhapsfulness is terrific!"

"Matter of fact," continued Bob Cherry, "I've got a brain-wave already."

"Impossible!" said Nugent.

"Eh?"

"How can there be a brain-wave where there's no brain?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry glared.

"Well, if I couldn't turn out better pen-and-ink sketches than you, Franky, I'd go and shut myself in a padded cell for the duration of life!"

"Shush!" said Harry Wharton. "I'm trying to think—"

"How can you, when you haven't the necessary apparatus?" said Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I, too, have the esteemed brainful-wave!" murmured Hurree Singh. "I will write an odeful poem on 'Cricket.'"

"Help!"

"Listen to this, my worthy chums!"

"Of summer game I sing the fame—"

Of keen, inspiring cricketfulness;
When batsmen smite with joyful might,
And bowlers take the wicketfulness."

"Dry up!" hooted Johnny Bull.

But the Nabob of Bhanipur had got well into his stride.

"It seems a shame that summer game

Cannot be played all dayfully;

That we may shirk our usual work

And pass our schooldays playfully!"

"Carry me home to die!" groaned

Bob Cherry. "I've heard Coker spout poetry, and I've heard Inky—and I'm dashed if I know which is the bigger

as!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here," said Wharton. "I think

it's only fair to put this letter from the editor on the notice-board for all the fellows to see. Everybody in the Remove ought to be given a fair chance to contribute!"

"That's so!" agreed Nugent.

The Famous Five marched up to the

notice-board, and Harry Wharton displayed the letter in a prominent position.

A few moments later all the Remove were trying to read the letter at once. Vernon-Smith and Bolsover major, Skinner and Snoop and Stott, Russell and Ogilvy, Squiff and Penfold, Linley and Tom Brown, Peter and Alonzo Todd, and many others, swarmed round the notice-board like bees.

"Corn in Egypt!" said Peter Todd. "This is ripping! I'll go ahead with 'The Further Adventures of Herlock Sholmes, Detective!'"

"And I, my dear Peter, will evolve a brief but telling article dealing with philanthropic pursuits!" murmured Alonzo.

"Philanthropic coke!" growled Bolsover major. "I'm going to do a prize-fighting article!"

"I shall tackle a pirate story," said Squiff thoughtfully.

"You jolly well won't!" grunted Johnny Bull. "You're not going to poach on my preserves!"

"All serene," said Squiff. "I'll cut out pirates, and write about bush-rangers. It's all the same to me!"

"Whichever sort of yarn you write, it's bound to find a home in the editor's wastepaper-basket!" said Bob Cherry soothingly.

Squiff was about to make a retort, when Harry Wharton interrupted him.

"I've got an idea for an article," said the captain of the Remove. "Footer Prospects for Next Season." "I think I'll knock it off now, while the wheeze is red-hot!"

And Wharton nodded to his chums and strolled away.

"I say, Harry, old chap—"

Billy Bunter barred Wharton's progress at the passage.

"Stand clear!" growled Wharton.

"And don't 'Harry, old chap' me!"

The fat junior's little round eyes glittered behind his spectacles.

"Oh, really, Wharton, you're not going to wriggle out of it, you know!"

Wharton stared.

"Wriggle out of what, porpoise?"

Billy Bunter levelled an accusing forefinger at the captain of the Remove.

"What have you done with my remittance?"

"Eh?"

"I'm surprised at you, Wharton, bagging another fellow's money!"

Harry Wharton grasped the Owl of the Remove by the scruff of the neck.

"What do you mean?" he exclaimed angrily. "Are you trying to insinuate that I'm a thief?"

"Yow-ow-ow! Leggo my neck!"

"Answer me!" hissed Wharton.

"Didn't the Editor of the Companion Papers enclose a remittance for me in his letter?"

"Certainly not!"

"Then he's a cheat!" hooted Bunter.

"He's got two articles of mine—"

"Both unusable!" grinned Wharton, quoting the editor's words.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Billy Bunter.

"Do you mean to say he hasn't sent me a cheque?"

"He's certainly sent you one—"

"Ah! I thought so!"

"But it's spelt c-h-e-c-k!" said Wharton.

Billy Bunter blinked wrathfully at the captain of the Remove.

"Beast!" he growled.

Harry Wharton laughed, and released his victim. Then he went along to Mr. Quelch's study.

Billy Bunter followed at a discreet distance.

"Wonder what Wharton wants with Quelch?" he murmured.

The fat junior's sense of curiosity was

fully roused. He rolled along the passage, and, as soon as Wharton had entered the Form-master's study, he glued his ear to the keyhole—a little habit peculiar to Bunter.

"Well, Wharton?" said Mr. Quelch kindly.

"Would you be good enough, sir, to allow me to use your typewriter for half an hour?"

"Might I inquire for what purpose, Wharton?"

"I wish to do a special article for the 'Greyfriars Herald,' sir. The Editor of the Companion Papers is short of copy, and he has written to me asking for contributions."

"Very well, Wharton. Provided the machine is not removed from my study, you may use it. In fact, I am delighted to allow anybody to use my typewriter for such a commendable purpose."

"Thank you, sir!"

The conversation closed. Harry Wharton commenced to knock off his article on Mr. Quelch's typewriter, and the Form-master, strolled out of the study, bumping into Billy Bunter in the passage.

"Bunter! What are you doing here?" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

"Ahem! My bootlace came undone, and—"

"Your bootlace has a constant failing in that respect, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch drily. "I strongly suspect you of eavesdropping!"

"Me, sir?" said Bunter, looking the picture of injured innocence. "Oh, no, sir! You've got hold of the wrong end of the stick, sir. I assure you—"

"Enough!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "Go away at once, and do not let me catch you lingering outside my study again!"

Billy Bunter needed no second bidding. He stood not upon the order of his going, but went at once.

Mr. Quelch was not a person to be trifled with; and the fat junior congratulated himself on having escaped scot-free.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Ever-Open Door!

"I GUESS—"

"Dry up, Fishy!"

"I guess," said Fisher Tarleton Fish, blinking round at the little group of juniors clustered in front of the notice-board, "that I can deliver the goods!"

"Rats!"

"I rather calculate that a story of modern life in New York, written by me, would just about bring down the house!"

"And the circulation of the 'Gem'!" said Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess I've the making of a real, live, go-ahead journalist!" continued Fish. "A story by me would stagger the galeats in this sleepy old island—some!"

"I quite believe you, Fishy," said Bolsover major. "Anything you wrote would be staggering! I suppose you'll start off with a crop of murders—"

"Nope! I shall set the ball rolling by introducing the reader to Wilberforce K. Weedemout, the greatest 'tec of modern times!"

"You'll jolly soon have Toddy on your track if you start that game!" said Skinner.

"Shucks! Herlock Sholmes ain't a 'tec. He's a candidate for a lethal chamber. I guess Wilberforce K. Weedemout will knock spots off him! There's going to be no flies on Wilberforce!"

"I'll wager you six to one in doughnuts that the Editor of the Companion

Papers turns down your story!" said Stott.

"Done!" said Fish promptly.

"Shall I hold the stakes?" asked Bolsover.

"Nope! I guess you'd swallow them!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bolsover major grunted.

"You can keep your mouldy doughnuts!" he said. "By the time my series of prize-fighting articles have appeared—the editor's sure to ask me to do a series—I shall be able to buy up Mrs. Mibble's shop—lock, stock, and barrel!"

"Rats!"

"Are you going to write anything, Skinner?" inquired Stott.

"You bet!" said Skinner. "In fact, there's only one thing that keeps me from going ahead with my 'Naps for Newmarket'!"

"And that is?"

"I can't beg, borrow, or steal, a blessed typewriter!"

"My hat!" said Bolsover. "I'm in the same boat. But contributions can be handwritten, surely?"

"Not in your case!" grinned Stott.

"The editor would publish your manuscript in the form of a jigsaw puzzle!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This typewriter problem," said Skinner, "is jolly awful! Typewritten stuff stands a much better chance of going through than the other sort!"

"There's a girl in Friarade who does typewriting," said Stott thoughtfully.

"Yes, and charges a bob a thousand words," growled Skinner. "Nothing doing, thanks!"

Fisher T. Fish pricked up his ears.

The fact that there were certain people in the world who made money by typing authors' manuscripts set the Yankee junior thinking. In fact, a little scheme had already taken root in his mind. If a local young lady could make money in this way, why shouldn't Fisher T. Fish?

"I say, you fellows—"

Unseen by the juniors at the notice-board, Billy Bunter had been loitering in the background listening to their conversation.

Bolsover major raised a ponderous fist.

"Scat!" he growled.

"Oh, all right!" said Bunter, with dignity. "If you don't want to hear what I've got to say I'll keep it to myself!"

Bolsover lowered his fist.

"What priceless tit-bit of information have you got hold of now?" he inquired.

"Skinner was saying that there was a difficulty about getting stuff typed,"

Bunter began.

"That's so," said Skinner. "If only, I could borrow a siddy typewriter—"

Billy Bunter chuckled.

"Have you forgotten Quelch's?" he said.

"My hat! Of course, Quelch's got a jolly fine 'bus! But then, he wouldn't let us borrow it."

"Oh yes he would!" said Billy Bunter.

"Matter of fact, I'm going to hammer out some stuff on it myself presently."

The fat junior spoke with such an air of conviction that his listeners were really impressed.

"It's like this," explained Bunter.

"Wharton went along to Quelch just now and asked him if he could use the typewriter. Quelch fairly beamed at him. 'Certainly, my boy!' he said. 'I shall be delighted to allow anybody to use my typewriter!'"

"Anybody?" exclaimed Stott.

Billy Bunter nodded.

"Quelch's given all the fellows in the Remove his free and full permission to use the machine whenever they like!" he said, letting his imagination run riot.

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"In that case, I'm on!" said Skinner promptly.

Bolover major looked fixedly at Bunter.

"Is this a leg-pulling stunt?" he asked.

"Of course not! I happened to be outside Quelch's study at the time—"

"Tying-up your bootlace?" suggested Skinner.

"Yes, as a matter of fact, my bootlace did happen to come undone at the time. And I couldn't help hearing what Quelch said. He fairly thundered out the words."

"I thought you said Quelch beamed at Wharton?" said Skinner.

"So he did!"

"Well, he wouldn't beam at him and thunder at him at the same time, would he?"

"Ahem! I—I don't mean to imply that Quelch thundered with anger," said Bunter. "He was so awfully bucked at the idea of his pupils writing stories for the Companion Papers that he simply shouted with joy!"

"And he said that any galoot could use his machine?" said Fish.

"Yes. 'They can walk right in and help themselves'—those were Quelch's own words. 'My typewriter is entirely at their convenience,' he said."

"Good enough!" said Skinner. "I'm going along right now to type out my 'Naps for Newmarket.'"

"And I'll make a start on my prize-fighting series," said Bolover.

"I guess I've got first claim," said Fisher T. Fish. "The Editor of the Companion Papers is simply gasping for a story about Wilberforce K. Weedem-out!"

"Rats!"

Skinner, Stott, Bolover, and Fisher T. Fish made hurried tracks for Mr. Quelch's study. Billy Bunter followed.

From within the study came the incessant click-click of the typewriter.

Harry Wharton was going strong. He had a lot to say about the prospects of the Remove for the forthcoming football season, and his fingers fairly flew over the keyboard.

The captain of the Remove looked up in some annoyance as the study door was thrown open.

"What the merry dickens—" he began, as the five Remorites trooped in.

"Time's up!" said Bolover major.

"What?"

"You've had your innings on that machine. It's time somebody else had a look-in!"

"Yes, rather!"

"I guess—"

"Clear out, you mad idiots!" said Wharton sharply. "If Quelch catches you here you'll get it in the neck!"

"Oh, come off!" said Skinner. "You know jolly well Quelch's given us permission to use his tapper!"

"My hat!"

"Fair play's a jewel!" said Stott.

"You've had your turn, Wharton. It's up to you to make room for somebody else."

"Hear, hear!" said Billy Bunter. "I don't want to frighten you, Wharton, but if you don't hand over that machine quietly we shall have to use force!"

Screened by the burly form of Bolover major, Bunter could afford to talk in this warlike manner.

Harry Wharton frowned.

"You're a set of silly asses!" he exclaimed. "I should advise you to keep off the grass!"

Bolover major strode forward.

"Hand over that machine!" he commanded.

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Wharton shrugged his shoulders, and resumed his typewriting.

Before he had completed another line, however, Bolover's hand shot out, and he ripped the sheet of paper from the machine.

Harry Wharton sprang to his feet.

"You cad!" he exclaimed.

"And the next instant his fist had found a billet on Bolover's nose.

The bully of the Remove retaliated at once.

Headless of the fact that they were in the sacred apartment owned by Mr. Quelch, Wharton and Bolover were fighting like tigers.

Fisher T. Fish took advantage of the situation by making a dive towards the typewriter.

But Skinner was too quick for him.

"No you don't!" he said, grabbing the machine.

"I guess—"

"Guess away!" said Skinner cheerfully. "I'm bagging this bus!"

And then followed a desperate struggle for possession.

"Look out!" shouted Stott, in alarm.

But he was too late. The typewriter descended with a crash and a clatter on the floor of the study.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Skinner in dismay. "That's fairly put the lid on it!"

"Skinner, you slab-sided jay—"

Chaos and confusion reigned supreme in the Form-master's study.

Wharton and Bolover were still going great guns; Skinner and Fish stood glaring at each other; and the typewriter—which showed considerable signs of damage—lay on the floor. Its condition was hardly improved when Bolover major's boot smashed upon the keyboard.

Tramp, tramp!

Round and round the study went Wharton and Bolover, indifferent to everything save the prospect of wiping each other off the face of the earth.

"Chuck it, you asses!" said Stott, in growing alarm. "You're breaking-up the happy home!"

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

"Boys!"

There was a gasp from the occupants of the study.

Harry Wharton dropped his hands to his side, and Bolover major followed suit.

Skinner and Stott and Fish spun round in alarm, and Billy Bunter edged nervously towards the window.

For Mr. Quelch, with fury on his face, stood on the threshold!

"Boys!" rasped the Form-master again. "What—what does this mean?"

The scene which met Mr. Quelch's gaze was not an inspiring one.

Harry Wharton's nose had a peculiar sideways look. As for Bolover, he looked as if he had been trying conclusions with an earthquake.

On the floor, battered and bent, lay the typewriter.

Mr. Quelch could scarcely believe the evidence of his eyes. He looked as if he were about to burst a blood-vessel.

"I—I—" began Wharton.

"I—I—" echoed Bolover.

"We—we—" faltered Skinner.

"That is to say—" mumbled Stott.

"Wharton!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "How dare you convert my study into a bear-garden?"

Wharton said nothing. He had no wish to excuse himself at the expense of the other fellows in the study.

"Replace that typewriter on the desk at once!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

Skinner complied. The typewriter was taken up tenderly and lifted with care; but Skinner could not conceal the

fact that the machine was a hopeless crock.

Mr. Quelch strode forward and examined the damage.

"This is monstrous!" he exclaimed, with a frown. "Why—bless my soul!—it is impossible to work the machine in its present condition!"

To say that the Remove-master was angry was to put it mildly. He had hoped to resume his typing of the "History of Greyfriars"—a work which had occupied Mr. Quelch for several terms, and which was still incomplete.

But it would be impossible to do any more typing that day. The machine would need a couple of hours in the hands of a skilled mechanic. "You six boys," said Mr. Quelch, breathing hard, "will be required to pay for the damage caused to this typewriter!"

"Oh, really, sir!" protested Billy Bunter. "I had no hand in it, sir!"

"You entered my study in an unauthorised manner, Bunter!"

"Oh, no, sir! Not at all! I—I just came along to see what all the commotion was about."

Your reputation for telling falsehoods, Bunter, leads me to think otherwise. You will contribute towards the cost of repairing that machine!"

"Oh, very well, sir!" said Bunter.

And he rolled towards the door.

"Bunter! Where are you going?"

"I—I've just remembered that I've got an appointment, sir."

"You will remain where you are! It is my intention to cane you!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Mr. Quelch selected a stout-looking cane.

"Wharton! Hold out your hand!"

The captain of the Remove obeyed. He winced a little as the cane bit into his palm. Mr. Quelch was not in the humour to spare the rod.

Bolover came next. The bully of the Remove had been so badly knocked about already that the additional punishment made very little difference.

"Now, Skinner!"

The cad of the Remove grew desperate.

"I'm not to blame, sir!" he said. "I understood from Bunter that you had given your full and free permission for anybody to use your typewriter, sir!"

"What?"

"Bunter said—"

"I didn't," said the fat junior indignantly. "Don't you believe him, sir! He's only trying to wriggle out of his licking at my expense!"

"Silence, Bunter! Hold out your hand, Skinner!"

Reluctantly Skinner obeyed.

Swish, swish, swish!

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Now the other hand!" said Mr. Quelch.

When the castigation was over, Skinner seemed to be trying to screw himself up in knots.

Stott was the next to go through the mill, and Fisher T. Fish followed.

Both victims yelled sufficiently to wake the echoes!

"Bunter!" panted Mr. Quelch, who was rather short of breath by this time. Billy Bunter stood motionless.

"Do you hear me, Bunter? Come forward!"

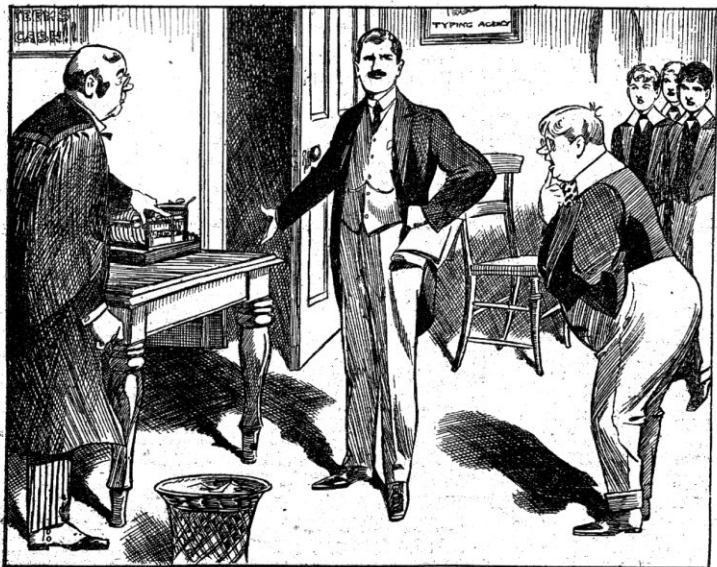
"Yah! Ow! Groooh!" spluttered Bunter, clutching at the window-sill.

"Why are you making those absurd ejaculations, Bunter?"

"I—I feel faint, sir—faint and famished! I'm suffering the most awful agony, sir!"

"And I will endeavour to add to it!" said Mr. Quelch.

And the cane lashed across Billy Bunter's plump shoulders.



Billy Bunter fairly shook in his shoes as the typewriter man came forward. A moment later his doom was sealed. "This, sir," said Mr. Bates, "is the machine which was hired from us over a week ago!" (See Chapter 9.)

"Yaroooooh!"

Billy Bunter dodged frantically round the study, and the Form-master's cane followed him persistently.

The Owl of the Remove was grovelling on the floor by the time Mr. Quelch had finished.

The Remove-master laid down his cane and glared at the juniors.

"Go!" he said. "And understand that you are never to enter my study again without permission! You will jointly contribute to the cost of repairing my typewriter, and neither of you will touch the machine again without my sanction—which I am not likely to give in a hurry!"

Harry Wharton led the procession from the Form-master's study, and Billy Bunter brought up the rear, groaning as if his last hour had come.

Wharton suggested to Bolsover major that they should renew their scrap in the gym.

Bolsover ignored the suggestion. Enough, in his case, was as good as a feast!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Fish Gets Busy!

FISHER T. FISH crawled along to his study—No. 14 in the Remove passage—and closed the door after him with a slam.

"What's up with you?" growled Johnny Bull, who was present.

The Yankee junior squeezed his aching palms.

"I guess I've had it hot!" he said.

"Quelch's a square-headed Hue!"

"You've been licked!"

"Yep!"

"Serves you jolly well right!" said Johnny Bull, strangely lacking in sympathy for his groaning study-mate. "I suppose you've been up to another of your money-making dodges?"

"Nope! I just went along to use Quelch's typewriter—"

"What?"

"And that galoot Skinner chipped in, and tried to bag the 'bus. The result was, we dropped it, and slightly dented the beautiful thing!"

"My only aunt!" gasped Johnny Bull. "You mean to say you've busted Quelch's tapper?"

"Nope—merely dented it!" growled Fish.

"Great pip!"

"But I guess I'm not going to be left!" Fish went on. "I'm going ahead with my story about Wilberforce K. Weedemout. I don't care if it snows!"

Johnny Bull grinned.

"You're in the same boat as all the rest of us, Fishy," he said. "Even a brainy American citizen can't type a story without a typewriter."

"I guess I'll jolly soon get one!"

"But nobody at Greyfriars has got one—barring Quelchy."

"Blow Quelchy! I'll get one from a typewriting firm."

"Couldn't be done!" said Johnny

Bull. "Typewriters cost anything from twenty to forty quids these days."

"I guess—"

"You'll have to go on guessing a jolly long time before you get a typewriter! Not thinking of buying one out of this week's allowance of pocket-money?" said Johnny sarcastically.

"I guess you're not a business man!" said Fish scornfully. "You're covered with moss and fungus, like the rest of the sleepy galoots in this ancient island! No business man ever buys a typewriter outright. He gets it on the hire-purchase system—"

"My hat!"

"You fill up a form," explained Fish, "and pay a dollar a week until you've bought the 'bus!"

"In that case, you'd get the typewriter in about three years' time!" said Johnny Bull.

"No, sir! You get it right away, on paying the first instalment!"

"You mean to say the typewriter people are going to trust you?"

Fish nodded.

"You have to give 'em a reference," he said. "If I gave 'em Quelch's name, it would be O.K."

"Yes, I can see Quelch giving his name as a reference, after what's happened!"

"I shall try old Prout, then. I mean to get hold of a 'bus, and do my own typing. In fact," said Fish, warming to

his subject. "I'm willing to do everybody else's typing into the bargain!"

"My hat!"

"I shall charge a bob a thousand words," said Fish. "That's quite fair and reasonable. I guess it's a slick business scheme. I shall be able to pay for the typewriter out of the profits!"

"You silly chump—"

"I shall turn this hyer study," said Fish, "into a Typing Agency."

"Oh, will you growed Johnny Bull. I think I shall have something to say about that! This study's been turned into a good many things in its time. It's been a Bag Agency, and a pawnbroking establishment, and goodness knows what. If you think you're going to turn the place upside-down, again you're quite off-side!"

"Keep your wool on!" growled Fish. "I guess I can soon find another home for my Typing Agency, if you're going to be so beastly unsovable, Bull!"

"Br-r-r!" grunted Johnny.

Nothing daunted by the poor reception with which his new scheme was greeted, Fisher T. Fish sat down at the table and penned a letter to the Nailer Typewriter Company, of Courtfield.

Fish's pen travelled at an amazing speed over the paper, and when the letter was finished he surveyed his handiwork with satisfaction.

"I guess that hits it off!" he murmured.

The letter was worded as follows:

"Greifriars School,
Friaridale, Kent."

"Dear Sirs,—I am anxious to obtain from you, on the hire-purchase system, an 'Overwood' typewriter.

"Will you please send me the necessary form, at the same time quoting your terms."

"I want this little transaction pushed through without any of the delay caused by most English firms.

"Yours faithfully,
"FISHER T. FISH
"(late of New-York City.)"

"That is a model business letter, I guess!" said Fisher T. Fish. "Like to cast your optics over it, Bull?"

But Johnny Bull was busy oiling a cricket-bat. He merely grunted; and Fish, with a snort, sealed the letter, and went out to post it.

In the Close he encountered Billy

Bunter, who was just recovering from the effects of the flogging he had lately received.

"What's going on, Fish?" inquired the fat junior, rolling up.

It was one of Fish's failings not to be able to keep a good thing to himself. He never wearied of prating of his schemes to anyone who cared to listen.

"I guess I'm starting a 'Typing Agency!'" he said. "Authors' manuscripts neatly and accurately typed at the rate of a bob a thousand!"

"A bob for typing a thousand manuscripts?" exclaimed Bunter.

"None! A thousand words, you slab-sided jay!"

"It's a great stunt!" said Fish. "The dollar will come rolling in! Nearly everybody in the Remove will be sending in stuff to the Editor of the Companion Papers. And I shall be the only merchant with a typewriter! Talk about fortunes made in a day!"

Billy Bunter's eyes fairly glittered. "You'll be wanting a partner, Fishy!" he said.

Fish shook his head. "I guess I can knock off all the work myself," he said.

"Rate! You'll be simply swamped with stuff! You won't possibly be able to type it all yourself. Typing's a fearful fag. You'll want somebody to relieve you every hour or so. And that's where I come in! I vote we go shares in this stunt, and divide the profits!"

"Nothing doing!" chuckled Fish.

"Look here—"

"I can manage this affair off my own bat," said the Yankee junior. "I might take a partner later on, when the business is booming. Mauly would make a useful sort of partner—Mauly or Smithy. They've got capital!"

"Now, be a sport, Fishy—"

"I guess I've no use for your services!" said Fish. "But you'll be one of my clients, of course? For your case, I shall have to charge two bob a thousand—the extra bob for correcting your spelling!"

"Beast!" growled Bunter.

Fisher T. Fish grinned, nodded, and walked on to post his letter.

Billy Bunter flourished a fat fist after his retreating schoolfellow.

"Selfish rotter!" he murmured. "He thinks he's going to cut me out, does he? I'll jolly soon show him!"

And the Owl of the Remove rolled away, resolved to do his utmost to checkmate Fishy's latest scheme.

Whether he would be successful, or otherwise, remained to be seen.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Little Game!

TWO mornings later a document in a foolcap envelope arrived at Greifriars addressed to Master F. T. Fish.

Billy Bunter, who was hanging about in the Close, relieved the postman of the missive; and the fat junior would probably have investigated the contents of the envelope had not Fisher T. Fish spotted him at that moment.

"I guess that's my property," said Fish. "Hand it over!"

"Is it a remittance, Fishy?"

The Yankee junior did not reply.

He ripped open the envelope, and drew forth a green form.

"This is the goods, I guess!"

"I say, Fishy— That's a jolly queer sort of cheque!"

"It isn't a cheque," grunted Fish. "It's a hire-purchase form!"

"Oh!"

Billy Bunter edged up to his schoolfellow, and attempted to peruse the form. Fish, however, inserted a bony elbow in Bunter's ribs, and the fat junior backed away with a yell of anguish.

Taking no further notice of Bunter, Fisher T. Fish made rapid tracks for Mr. Prout's study. He could do nothing until he had obtained the necessary reference from a responsible person.

The master of the Fifth was polishing his Winchester repeater when Fish knocked and entered.

"Go away!" said Mr. Prout. "Go away at once! Cannot you see that I am busy?"

"I guess—"

"Complete your guesswork in the passage!" snapped Mr. Prout irritably. But for his desire to obtain the reference, Fish would only too gladly have retired into the passage. He didn't like the look of Mr. Prout's repeater. No one was ever certain—least of all Mr. Prout himself—whether the weapon happened to be loaded or not.

"I sha'n't keep you a minute, sir—"

Mr. Prout inadvertently mopped the perspiration from his face with an oily rag.

"What is it?" he rapped out.

Fisher T. Fish advanced into the study, and laid the green form on Mr. Prout's table.

"I guess I'm getting a typewriter, sir, on the hire-purchase system. Would you mind giving your name as a reference?"

Mr. Prout stared.

"It is most unusual, Fish, for junior boys to be in possession of typewriters!"

"I've simply got to get one, sir!" said Fish desperately. "The Editor of the Companion Papers has begged me—on his hands and knees, almost—to send him contributions. And I sorter calculate that handwritten stuff's no use, sir."

Mr. Prout cast his eye over the hire-purchase form.

"But surely your own Form-master, Mr. Quelch, would give you his signature?" he exclaimed.

"I guess Quelch—I mean, Mr. Quelch—doesn't happen to be knocking around just now, sir!"

Mr. Prout hesitated.

"Are you sure that you could afford to keep up these weekly payments of five shillings, Fish?"

Fish smiled.

"I shall be simply rolling in shillings, sir. The instalments will be paid off as regular as clockwork!"

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"Oh, very well!" said the master of the Fifth, anxious to get rid of his persistent visitor. "I will give you my name as a reference, Fish, but I trust you will not abuse this concession!"

Fisher T. Fish fairly beamed as Mr. Prout affixed his name and address to the document.

"Say, I'm awfully obliged, sir!" he remarked.

Mr. Prout handed over the hire-purchase form, and resumed operations upon his Watchster repeater.

With a satisfied smirk Fisher T. Fish quitted the study.

But he did not quit it in time to see Billy Bunter stooping outside the door, with his ear glued to the keyhole!

On his way to the Remove passage Fish was buttonholed by the fat junior.

"I say, Fishy——"

"Travel!" said Fish curtly. "I'm busy!"

Billy Bunter clutched the Yankee junior by the arm.

"Look here, I've hit upon an awfully ripping wheeze——"

"Eh?" said Fish, stopping short.

"A first-rate wheeze for making money!" said Bunter impressively.

"Cut it out!"

"I can't give away the details, even to my best pal," Bunter went on. "But I'll let you into the secret later on, Fishy."

"I guess you haven't got a wheeze in your fat caboodle at all!" snorted Fish.

"Oh, yes, I have! All I want is some capital."

Fish chuckled.

"You've come to the wrong shop!" he said.

"Only a small sum!" added Bunter hastily.

"Five bob, to be precise. If you'll lend me five bob, Fishy, I can go right ahead with my scheme."

Fisher T. Fish walked on towards his study. Billy Bunter followed, clinging like a fat lippet to the tails of Fishy's Eton jacket.

"Just five bob!" pleaded Bunter.

"I'm expecting a remittance by the next post, and I'll pay you back then—honest injun!"

"Snort!"

"Now, be a sport, Fishy——"

"Snort!"

"I'll also give you a share in the profits when my scheme gets going," said Bunter, by way of a bait.

Fisher T. Fish had arrived at the door of Study No. 14 by this time.

He badly wanted to go inside and complete the hire-purchase form. With Bunter clinging to his coat-tails, however, that was impossible.

Reluctantly, Fish drew a couple of half-crowns from his pocket, and Bunter grabbed at them greedily.

"Not so fast!" said Fish. "I guess I want your I O U for this amount. And when your remittance turns up—if it ever does turn up—I want ten bob from you."

"That's a hundred per cent.!" expostulated Bunter. "Not even a professional moneylender would go so far as that!"

"I guess I'm dealing with a slippery customer. I'm not taking any risks."

Accordingly, Billy Bunter made out the I O U, promising to repay the five shillings with ten.

The two half-crowns clinked into the fat junior's palm, and he rolled away chuckling.

But he didn't go very far. He took up his position in the doorway of Study No. 7, and kept a wary eye on Study No. 14. As soon as Fish came out Billy Bunter meant to go in.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" boomed the dulcet voice of Bob Cherry. "Taking the air on your study doorstep, porpoise!"

"Rats!"

"You seem very bucked about something," said Bob. "What's going on?"

"Mind your own bizness!"

Bob Cherry glared at the fat junior! He would probably have wiped up the passage with Bunter, had not Harry Wharton's voice bailed him at that moment.

"Buck up, Bob! We're waiting to go down to cricket!"

Bob Cherry deferred the slaughtering of Bunter, and hurried away. Shortly afterwards Fisher T. Fish emerged from Study No. 14.

"I guess I'll go along and ask Ogilvy to sell me a three-halfpenny stamp," murmured Fish.

And he walked straight past the doorway of Study No. 7 without noticing Bunter's presence.

As soon as the coast was clear Billy Bunter fairly dived into Study No. 14.

On the table lay the green document which had arrived for Fisher T. Fish that morning.

Billy Bunter pounced upon it, tucked it into his pocket, and fairly streaked out of the study and along the passage.

He did not pause until he reached the old elms in the Close, where he could study the precious document at leisure.

"What luck!" murmured Bunter, his eyes glistening. "This is where a cute American citizen gets left!"

And he commenced to study the document, which started off thus:

"I, Fisher Tarleton Fish, of Greyfriars School, Friardale, in the County of Kent, do hereby express, utter, and signify willingness to purchase, in weekly instalments of five shillings, the 'Overwood' Typewriter No. 234561, at present the property of the Nailor Typewriter Company, of Courtfield."

Then followed a list of the pains and penalties which the hirer would be called upon to undergo if he failed to come up to the scratch with the weekly payments.

At the foot of the form Mr. Prout had signed his name, testifying to the fact that the said Fisher Tarleton Fish was, to the best of his knowledge, a trustworthy and reliable person.

Billy Bunter stowed the document away in his pocket with a fat chuckle.

"Fishy's Typing Agency is changing hands already!" he chortled. "It's Bunter's Typing Agency now—and, what's more, it's going to be the biggest success of the term!"

Meanwhile, there was great consternation in Study No. 14.

When Fisher T. Fish returned to that apartment, having obtained a postage-stamp from Ogilvy, he found Johnny Bull present; but there was no trace of the hire-purchase form.

Fish shot an accusing glance at his study-mate.

"Trot it out, Bull!" he said.

"Eh?"

"There's no flies on me, I guess! Hand it over!"

"If you mean a thick ear," growled Johnny Bull, "I'll cheerfully oblige!"

"I left a form on this hyer table——"

"What sort of a form?"

"A hire-purchase form for that 'bus I'm getting."

"Well, I haven't seen your beastly form!" grunted Johnny Bull. "There's a pretty strong draught from the window. P'r'aps it's blown away."

"You're sure you haven't lifted it?" Johnny Bull snorted.

"Of course I haven't, ass! Are you doubting my word?"

"Nunno!" said Fish hastily, startled by the expression on Johnny Bull's face.

"But it's jolly queer!"

And the Yankee junior started to search for the missing form.

Fish hunted everywhere. He wormed himself into all sorts of odd corners. He tilted up the coal-scuttle, ransacked the fireplace, and turned out all the contents of the study cupboard. But the hire-purchase form had taken unto itself wings.

Fisher T. Fish was in a terrible plight by the time he had completed his search. His face and hair were smothered with coal-dust, and his clothes were sooty and grimy.

"I guess it's no go!" he said dolefully.

Just then the bell rang for morning lessons.

Fisher T. Fish was so concerned about the missing document that he quite overlooked the fact that his personal appearance was, to say the least of it, scarcely presentable.

He followed in the wake of Johnny Bull, and there was a buzz from the Removites as he entered the Form-room.

"My hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Here comes the ace of spades!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fishy, you ass!" exclaimed Wharton. "Take that mask off before Quelch comes along!"

"It ain't a mask!" growled Fish. "It's my face!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Have you been performing in a Christy Minstrel troupe?" inquired Nugent.

"Nope!"

"He's trying to imitate Inky's beautiful complexion!" said Squiff.

Fisher T. Fish blinked at the Removites.

"What's wrong with my face?" he demanded.

"Oh, nothing!" grinned Bob Cherry. "It merely needs a vacuum-cleaner!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cave!" came a warning hiss from Skinner, who sat near the door.

Mr. Quelch entered the Form-room with rustling gown.

"Boys!" he said sharply. "What is the meaning of this merriment? I—Why, bless my soul! Fish, what have you been doing to your face?"

"Mum-mum-my face, sir?"

"Yes, your face! Have you not washed this morning, Fish?"

"I guess so, sir!"

"Your appearance seems to belie the assertion!" said Mr. Quelch grimly.

"You appear to have been removing soot from a chimney, and afterwards groveling in a fire-grate!"

"I guess——"

"Go and cleanse yourself at once, Fish! And take a hundred lines for appearing in the Form-room in that disgraceful condition!"

"Oh, Jerusalem crickets!"

Fisher T. Fish quitted the Form-room, and went along to the nearest bath-room.

He had lost his hire-purchase form and had drained a hundred lines. And as he drifted along the passage he told himself, in the best American language, that life was not worth living.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Man in Possession.

BILLY BUNTER heaved a deep sigh of relief when morning lessons were over.

It was a half-holiday, and for once in a way Bunter was not at a loss how to spend it.

All through the morning the document which he had purloined from Fish's study had been burning a hole, so to speak, in the fat junior's pocket.

Bunter now intended to get rid of the

document, and to receive in exchange a perfectly good "Overwood" typewriter. Of course, there was dinner to come first. The prospect of receiving fifty typewriters wouldn't have caused Bunter to miss his meal.

As usual, he was the first to start and the first to finish.

As soon as opportunity permitted he scuttled out of Hall and hurried along to the bicycle-shed.

Bunter hadn't a machine of his own; but that little detail didn't worry him. He calmly helped himself to Dick Russell's bike—a brand-new Raleigh—and disappeared out of gates before anyone had time to spot him.

Physical exercise was distasteful at all times to the flabby Owl; but he feared that he might be pursued, and this thought lent him wings.

Beds of perspiration stood out on Billy Bunter as he cycled into the old-fashioned High Street of Courtfield.

"Here we are!" he panted, catching sight of a signboard bearing the words, "Nailer-Typewriter Company."

The fat junior rolled off the machine, stood, it carelessly against a lamp-post—Bunter was always careless with other people's property—and went into the shop.

A man with a face like a hatchet came forward rubbing his hands.

"Good-afternoon, sir! What can I do for you—I mean, what can I do for you?"

Billy Bunter drew the precious document from his pocket.

"I've called for my typewriter," he said loftily. "It's an 'Overwood'—No. 234561."

"H'm! You are Master Fisher Tarleton Fish?"

"That's me!" said Bunter, without a tremor.

The man seemed perfectly satisfied. He disappeared behind the scenes, and presently emerged groaning under the weight of a heavy typewriter.

Billy Bunter's brain began to work with unaccustomed swiftness.

He realised that if he returned to Greyfriars with the "Overwood" typewriter Fisher T. Fish would immediately smell a rat.

If, on the other hand, he returned with a different make of machine, Fish would not suspect.

"Ahem! I don't like the look of that old crock!" said Bunter, as the man set it down on the counter.

"You don't, sir? It's a beautiful machine—swift-running and responsive to the lightest touch. I've known this typewriter for over twenty years, sir, and it hasn't a stain on its character!"

The man evidently hoped to convince Bunter that typewriters, like wine, improved with age.

Billy Bunter subjected the machine to a critical stare.

"Why, this blessed thing must have come out of the Ark with Noah!" he said scornfully. "It's got cobwebs on it! Will you exchange it for another?"

"As you wish, sir!" he said.

The "Overwood" was taken back to its kennel, and the man returned with a smaller machine.

"This, sir, is the 'Star-lock'—the Dizzy Man's Typewriter. It's the very latest model on the market. In fact, it almost types of its own accord. It adds up sums for you while you wait!"

Billy Bunter ran his eye over the machine.

"It certainly seems to have been invented after the Stone Age!" he said. "I'll take this one!"

"Very good, sir! I'll make the necessary alteration in the agreement."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 693.

And in place of "Overwood" No. 234561, the man substituted "Star-lock" No. 86446.

"Will you pay the first instalment now, sir?"

"Of course!" said Bunter.

And he produced the two half-crowns which Fisher T. Fish, in a moment of weakness, had allowed to change hands.

A receipt for the amount was duly made out and handed to Bunter.

"Would you like the machine sent, sir?"

"No," said Bunter; "I'm taking it with me."

"It's pretty hefty," hinted the man.

"One of my boys will carry it for you, if you wish."

"That's the idea!"

A grubby youth was summoned from the back of the premises, and he set off for Greyfriars in Bunter's company. The fat junior pushed Dick Russell's bicycle.

"This 'ere machine's an awful weight, sir!" gasped the boy.

Bunter nodded sympathetically.

"I dare say it is!" he said.

"Most gents," continued the youth, "gives me a 'andsome tip for carryin' their machines."

"So will I!" said Bunter. "Don't you worry about that!"

After that there was silence, save for the laboured grunting of the small boy as he staggered along the dusty road.

Billy Bunter's face was beaming like a full moon.

Read

"STRANDED!"

A Wonderful Complete
Story of TOM MERRY
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By MARTIN CLIFFORD,
in
"THE GEM."
Out This Wednesday.



He had outwitted Fisher T. Fish, and he had captured the prize!

The problem of paying off the subsequent instalments didn't worry Bunter. Sufficient unto the day, was his motto.

"What a score!" he chuckled. "I shall be able to start my typing agency right away. Fellows will flock into Study No. 7 to get their stuff typed. I shall be the man of the moment—in great demand here, there, and everywhere. Wharton will go down on bended knees and beg me to type his article. So will all the other fellows. And poor old Fishy will get hopelessly left! He, he, he!"

After a time the small boy was compelled to rest by the wayside.

"It's 'ot work, sir!" he gasped.

"Never mind!" said Bunter soothingly. "We're nearly at Greyfriars now!"

As a matter of fact, there were several stiff hills to negotiate yet; but Bunter thought it discreet not to mention this fact.

The boy resumed his burden, and at length, weary and gasping, he bore the machine through the old gateway of Greyfriars.

Quite a crowd of Removites were in the Close at the time.

"What the thump—" began Bob Cherry, in astonishment.

And then there was a sudden shout from Dick Russell.

"My bike!"

Billy Bunter blinked at Russell as the latter strode towards him.

"Yes, it's your bike, old chap," he said. "You ought to be jolly grateful to me for bringing it along!"

"What?"

"I found it standing against a lamp-post in Courtfield High Street," said Bunter.

"Why, you—you burglar!" hooted Russell. "You lifted it from the bike-shed! I'll felly well slaughter you!"

Dick Russell was about to lay violent hands on the Owl of the Remove when Harry Wharton intervened.

"Hold on!" he said. "Leave the slaughtering of Bunter till afterwards. We want to find out what this means first."

And Wharton indicated the typewriter, which was still being nursed by the perspiring boy.

"Yes," said Nugent. "Who does that typewriter belong to?"

Billy Bunter, after allowing Russell to wrench the bicycle from his grasp, threw light on the situation.

"It's mine!" he said loftily.

"Yours!"

There was a perfect howl of amazement from the Removites.

Attracted by the crowd, a still greater crowd appeared on the scene.

Among them was Fisher T. Fish. The Yankee junior stared in surprise, first at the typewriter and then at Bunter.

"Say, you fat clam! Which old-iron shop did you loot this hyer machine from?"

"I didn't loot it!" said Bunter indignantly.

"You're not going to tell us you bought it!" said Wharton incredulously.

"Of course not! It was sent to me by a titled relation, as a mark of appreciation and esteem."

"My hat!"

"I've just collected it from the station," Bunter went on. "I got this kid to carry it up to the school for me."

The small boy stared at Bunter in amazement. He was on the point of contradicting the fat junior's statement, when Billy Bunter winked at him.



"Chuck it, you asses!" said Stott, in growing alarm. "You're breaking up the happy home!" "Boys!" There was a gasp from the occupants of the study. (See Chapter 2.)

Fortunately for Bunter, no one save the small boy noticed the wink.

"Look here, Bunter," said Harry Wharton seriously, "if you've stolen that typewriter, you'd better make a clean breast of it at once. There may be time to replace it before the theft is discovered!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I'm surprised that you should think me capable of stealing this machine!"

"Hear, hear!" said Bolsover major. "It's too thick, Wharton. A typewriter's a jolly awkward thing to steal. You can't slip it into your waistcoat-pocket!"

"All the same, I'm prepared to wager Bunter didn't come by it honestly," said Nugent.

"I tell you it's a present from one of my titled relations!" persisted Bunter. "Which one?" inquired Bob Cherry.

"Lord Bunter de Granter, or the merchant who keeps the Bunter Arms?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's quite a useful sort of 'bus, anyway," remarked Squiff. "I think I'll borrow it for an hour or so this evening."

"You jolly well won't!" said Bunter. "That machine's wanted for my Typing Agency."

"Your what?" gasped Wharton. "I'm starting an agency for typing other fellows' stories and articles," explained Bunter.

There was a howl from Fisher T. Fish. "You've collared my wheeze!"

"Rate!" said Bunter. "I had the idea months ago!"

"You—you—" stuttered Fish. "Fishy certainly thought of the wheeze first," said Johnny Bull. "He was gassing about it the other day."

"Bunter's got off the mark first, anyway," said Peter Todd. "He's got a typewriter—though goodness knows how he came by it!"

The juniors were completely mystified. They did not believe Bunter's story of the titled relation who had come down handsomely. At the same time, it seemed highly improbable that Bunter could have stolen the machine. Nobody quite knew what to make of it. The small boy, worn-out with his exertions, had placed the typewriter on the ground.

He glanced expectantly at Bunter.

"You made mention of a tip, sir—"

"Oh, yes!" said Bunter. "Certainly!"

And he started going through his pockets.

"My hat!" he exclaimed at length, in well-feigned astonishment. "I must have mislaid my purse!"

There was a chuckle from the spectators.

"Never mind," said Bunter, turning to the small boy. "I won't keep you waiting while I hunt for it. Give me your name and address, and I'll send you a handsome remittance!"

The small boy, not knowing Bunter, gladly complied. He gave Bunter the required information, touched his cap, and departed with nothing more tangible than great expectations. Those expectations were not likely to be realised!

Billy Bunter gathered up the machine, and staggered away with it to Study No. 7.

He told himself that everything had gone swimmingly.

Not only had he secured the one thing needful in order to start his Typing Agency, but Dick Russell had quite forgotten to take revenge for the borrowed bike. Wherefore Bunter rejoiced.

As for Fisher T. Fish, he retired to his own study with considerable chagrin, little dreaming of the cunning trick which had been played upon him by the crafty Owl of the Remove.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Going Strong!

"I'M not sure that I ought to allow it," said Peter Todd.

Billy Bunter blinked at the leader of Study No. 7.

"Oh, really, Toddy! What do you mean?"

"I don't like the idea of this study being turned into a Typing Agency. In the first place, you'll kick up too much clatter. Secondly, there will be a constant procession of fellows trooping in and out. We shan't be able to settle down to our prep, or anything."

"Well, of all the black ingratitude!" exclaimed Bunter. "Look here, Toddy. I'll make you a sporting offer. In return for being allowed to make this study my headquarters, I'll type all your 'Herlock Sholmes' stories for six!"

Peter Todd grunted.

"I'm not at all keen for you to type my yarns," he said. "Your weird style of spelling would make them more humorous than they are intended to be."

"Rate it! My spelling will be just the same as yours, because I shall faithfully copy your manuscript."

"Oh!"

Peter Todd began to waver.

His fat study-mate certainly held all the cards.

Now that Mr. Quelch had forbidden the juniors to use his typewriter, the only way to get work done was to place it in the hands of Billy Bunter.

"Can you use that machine?" asked Peter doubtfully.

"Of course! I can get two hundred words a minute out of her!" said Bunter, as if he were referring to the speed of a motor-car.

"You ought to see me when I'm in form! My fingers simply race over the keys—"

"Supposing you type something, then, by way of a sample?"

"Ahem! I—I've got cramp in my hands at the moment. But I'll give you an exhibition later on."

Peter Todd turned to Tom Dutton, who had been surveying the typewriter with interest.

"What about it, Dutton? Shall we allow Bunter the use of this study for his typing?"

"Careless ass!" said Dutton.

"What?"

"You should be more careful with your property. It's your own fault that you've lost your tie-pin."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 653.

"I said 'typing,' fathead—not 'tie-pin'!" roared Peter. "Are you game to let Bunter go ahead?"

Tom Dutton snorted.

"He's overted already, if you ask me," he said.

"Oh, crumbs!"

And Peter Todd gave it up.

"I say, Toddy!" said Bunter. "Would you like to hand me some of your stuff now? I start work after tea, and I'll make a special point of typing your story first."

"Oh, all right," said Peter, after some hesitation. "But if you make a hash of it I'll scalp you!"

And Peter Todd unlocked his desk and produced his next "Herlock Sholmes" manuscript.

"Cash in advance, please!" said Bunter. "Lemme see. This story is two thousand words long. That'll be two bob."

"Nothing doing!" said Peter Todd. "I'm not paying you till that yarn's properly typed!"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"You shall have your two bob when you've earned it—not before!"

And Peter Todd quitted the study.

Tom Dutton followed shortly afterwards, and Billy Bunter was left to his own devices.

The fat junior carefully barricaded the study door, to prevent interruption, and then sat down at the machine.

In spite of his boast to Peter Todd, Bunter's knowledge of typing was exactly nil. But he told himself that it would be possible to become self-taught in a very short time.

The first difficulty was the insertion of the paper. Bunter tried all sorts of experiments before he succeeded in fixing a sheet in the machine.

Then came the actual typing, and the fat junior was all at sea.

There were two keyboards—the black letters representing capitals, and the white intended for small letters.

Bunter got them hopelessly mixed. He frequently used the wrong keyboard, and jumbled up the capital letters with the small ones.

The additional fact that he was unable to spell produced an appalling result.

At the end of an hour's hard labour Billy Bunter surveyed his handiwork with gloating satisfaction.

"I knew it wouldn't take me long to learn!" he chuckled.

Bang, bang!

Someone was thumping on the study door from without.

"Who's there?" called Bunter.

"It is I—Alonzo Todd! Pray facilitate my entry into the study, my dear Bunter!"

"All right, my dear ass!" growled Bunter.

And he started to remove the barricade.

Alonzo Todd glanced at Bunter in some surprise as he came into the study.

"Why did you communicate yourself from your schoolfellows, Bunter?"

"Because I've been engaged on important work," said the fat junior. "It's finished now, and I'm going to stick it up on the notice-board. You can read it if you like," added Bunter generously. And he wrenched the sheet of paper out of the machine.

Alonzo Todd perused the document in great astonishment. This is what he saw:

roLL uP! roLL uP! roLL uP!
BUNTER'S TYPING agencY!

"ALL kontribewShunS FOR 'the grevriars' herald' typed WITH expeditiun and despatch.

"send IN yore manuscripts TO no. 7 studdy.

"storIEs, artikleS, and poemS will BE neatly typed on be-₁ of the ORTHIERs.

"TermS—a bobb A thousand wurdS.

"(Sined) w. g. BUNTER,

"Soul proprietor,

"BUNTER'S TYPING agencY."

"Dear me!" gasped Alonzo. "You are surely not going to display this to the public view?"

"Certainly!"

"But—"

"Why are you butting like a blessed billygoat? There's nothing wrong with that announcement, is there?"

"I fear," murmured Alonzo, "that there is very little right with it!"

"I warn you to be careful before you start criticising my work!" said Billy Bunter. "You're talking to an expert typist, remember!"

"But you have mixed up the capital letters with the small!" said Alonzo, aghast. "And the spelling is, if I may say so, atrocious!"

"Look here—"

"Is it your intention to drive away custom?" inquired Alonzo.

"Eh?"

"That is what you will certainly do if you display this announcement in its present form. I shall be glad," continued Alonzo, with one of his frequent bursts of generosity, "to re-type this document in a legible manner."

Billy Bunter was about to make a heated retort, but he checked himself.

After all, the announcement did seem to look rather queer, on a second perusal. And it was Bunter's main object to rope in custom—not to drive it away.

"Go ahead, then, Lonzy!" he said.

Alonzo Todd was not a clever typist. He was very slow—painfully so, in fact—but he was at least accurate.

In its revised form the notice looked a lot more arresting:

Roll up! Roll up! Roll up!
BUNTER'S TYPING AGENCY!

"All contributions for 'THE GREY-FRIARS HERALD' typed with expedition and despatch.

"Send in your manuscripts to Study No. 7.

"Stories, articles, and poems will be neatly typed on behalf of the authors.

"Terms—one shilling per thousand words.

"(Signed) W. G. BUNTER,

"Sole Proprietor,

"BUNTER'S TYPING AGENCY."

Billy Bunter gave a grunt of approval.

"It might be a slight improvement on my effort," he said rather grudgingly.

"But the spelling's very weak."

"I fail to understand you, my dear Bunter," said Alonzo Todd.

"Take the word 'contributions,' said Bunter. "Any ass knows that it starts with a 'k.'"

"Really! I was not aware—"

"And there's no 'y' in 'typed,'" Bunter went on. "Still, that's a minor detail. I think I'll go and stick this up on the notice-board."

And Billy Bunter rolled out of the study.

With pompous and dignified steps the Owl of the Remove stalked up to the notice board in Hall.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, who was hovering near with the other members of the Famous Five.

"What's the latest bulletin?"

There was a rush of juniors to read Bunter's announcement.

"My only aunt!" exclaimed Squiff. "Bunter's going strong!"

"Yes, rather!"

"I guess he's lifted my wheeze!" hooted Fisher T. Fish.

But no one heeded the Yankee junior in the general excitement.

"Bunter's no dud at typewriting!" remarked Dick Penfold. "This notice is decently typed, and the spelling's in apple-pie order."

"Bunter must have been swotting on the quiet," said Dick Rake.

The Removites were frankly astonished. From their knowledge of Bunter, they had expected to see a badly-typed and badly-spelt announcement.

Was it possible that Billy Bunter had been shamming all the time, by pretending that he was ignorant of King's English?

It certainly looked like it.

"Where's Bunter?" inquired Johnny Bull suddenly.

"He's buzzed off!" said Wharton. "Why?"

"I'm going to ask him to type my pirate serial!"

"My hat!"

"You must be joking!" gasped Nugent.

"I'm dead serious!" said Johnny Bull. "If Bunter's typing is up to the standard of this notice, there's no reason why he shouldn't type my stuff—or anybody else's, if it comes to that!"

"I'd prefer to type my own!" said Squiff.

"I dare say you would. But Bunter's the only merchant with a typewriter, and there's no other way of getting our stuff done!"

"That's so!" said Wharton thoughtfully. "I'll let Bunter type my 'Footer Prospects for Next Season,' and see what sort of a job he makes of it."

"I guess you'll get left!" said Fish. "But his words fell on deaf ears. The majority of the juniors seemed quite willing to give Bunter a chance."

"I'll take along my article on 'Brighter Cricket,'" said Vernon-Smith. "And if Bunter makes a hash of it I'll make a hash of Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I'll try him with a few poems," said Dick Penfold.

During the next ten minutes quite a steady stream of juniors drifted along to Study No. 7.

To all of them Billy Bunter gave the same explanation.

"I'm starting work after tea," he said. "It's necessary to lay a foundation first. And mind you bring your cash along with you. No work will be undertaken by this agency unless it's paid for in advance."

Even this stipulation did not deter the budding authors.

With the exception of Peter Todd—who happened to have a more thorough and complete knowledge of Bunter than his schoolfellows—the juniors were quite willing to pay in advance.

After all, such an arrangement was only fair to Bunter, who naturally wished to safeguard his own interests.

The Removites were quite satisfied with the fat junior's explanation, and they took their departure, intending to call again after tea.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Busy Evening!

STUDY No. 7—the home of Bunter's Typing Agency—presented a very busy appearance that evening.

The study had been partitioned off by means of a screen.

On one side of the screen sat Billy Bunter, with his machine and paper all ready.

The other side was reserved for Bunter's study-mates, who had promised not to molest him or interfere with his work. Johnny Bull brought along the first instalment of his pirate serial.

"What's the length of this?" asked Bunter, glancing at the manuscript.

"Two thousand five hundred words."

"That'll be half-a-crown, please!" Johnny Bull promptly paid up.

"How soon will you get it typed?" he asked.

"It will be finished before bed-time."

"Oh, good!" said Johnny.

And he withdrew, well satisfied with the transaction.

For the next half-hour or so Billy Bunter continued to sit at the receipt of custom.

The fame of his Typing Agency had spread; and there was no lack of clients.

Harry Wharton and Vernon-Smith handed in their articles, and Dick Penfold brought some verses along.

MAGNIFICENT NEW Long, Complete Stories

of
**HARRY
WHARTON & CO.**

AT
**GREYFRIARS
SCHOOL**

appear every Friday in

**THE
PENNY
POPULAR
BUY YOUR COPY
TO-DAY!**

Billy Bunter promised that the work should be completed that evening.

The fellows who flocked in afterwards were told that their manuscripts would be typed next day. Work would be done strictly in rotation.

When the crowd had melted away Billy Bunter got to business.

Study No. 7 resounded to the clashing of the typewriter.

A notice had been pinned on the outside of the door: "No Admittance Except on Business," and Peter Todd promised to eject anyone who came along merely from motives of curiosity.

Shortly before bed-time Peter poked his head round the screen.

"How's it going, Billy?"

"First-rate!" said Bunter.

"Want any help?"

"No, thanks!"

Billy Bunter had his coat off, and the perspiration stood out in beads on his brow.

"How much have you done?" inquired Peter Todd.

"I've typed the first instalment of Johnny Bull's serial, and a couple of

articles—one of Wharton's, and one of Smithy's. I'm just going to knock off a couple of poems, and then I'm finished for the evening!"

"My hat!"

Peter Todd had never before suspected that his fat study-mate was a worker. He had not thought Bunter capable of any energy beyond that required for eating his meals. This was indeed a new Bunter!

Shortly afterwards Wingate of the Sixth looked in.

"Bed-time, you kids!" he said.

Peter and Alonzo Todd, together with Tom Dutton, went to their dormitory.

Billy Bunter continued to beat a tattoo on his typewriter.

"What on earth's that row?" ejaculated Wingate.

The fat and flustered face of Billy Bunter bobbed round from behind the screen.

"Sha'n't be long, Wingate. I'm just knocking off the last verse."

The captain of Greyfriars stared.

"Where did you get that typewriter?" he demanded.

"Ahem! One of my titled relations sent it along."

Wingate was lacking in that simple faith which is said to be so much better than Norman blood. He surveyed the fat junior grimly.

"You young ass! Do you expect me to swallow a yarn like that? Have you been on a looting-expedition?"

"Certainly not, Wingate!"

"Can you give me the name and address of the titled relation you were babbling about?"

"I—I'm afraid I can't, Wingate. You see, this typewriter was an anonymous present."

"You fat young idiot! If the machine was sent to you anonymously, how do you know it came from a titled relation?"

"Because I—I saw the Bunter crest on the packing-case!"

Wingate frowned.

"You are telling whoopers, as usual," he said. "I shall have to look into this matter, and find out if you are really entitled to have that machine in your possession. Now cut off to bed!"

"Can you give me just two minutes, Wingate? I want to finish this verse, and then go out to the post!"

"Buck up, then!"

Billy Bunter hampered off the concluding lines of Penfold's poem.

Then, gathering up all the typewritten contributions, he tucked them into a large envelope, which he addressed to the Editor of the Companion Papers at The Fleetway House, London.

Having stamped the envelope, he trotted out into the Close, and squeezed the bulky package into the pillar-box.

When he returned to Study No. 7 Wingate had gone.

The fat junior covered up his typewriter, thrust his papers into a drawer, and then collected up the evening's takings—a sum sufficient to keep Billy Bunter in jam-tarts for a week.

"So far, so good!" he murmured.

"Old Wingate seems suspicious about the typewriter, but I expect he'll forget all about it. Hope so, anyway!"

And the fat junior quitted the study.

There was a buzz of voices in the Remove dormitory when Billy Bunter came in.

"Did you finish my instalment?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Of course!"

"What about my article?" asked Wharton.

"And mine?" added Vernon-Smith.

"They're both finished!" said Bunter. He did not add that he had taken the law into his own hands and despatched the various manuscripts to the Editor of the Companion Papers. This shock was shortly to follow.

"Are my verses typed out?" asked Dick Penfold.

"My hat!" said Nugent. "You must have had a jolly busy evening, Bunter!" "I've been up to my eyes," said the Owl of the Remove. "In fact, I've only just finished. The stuff I typed was posted a few minutes ago."

"What!" roared Johnny Bull. "You—you posted the stuff!" gasped Wharton.

"Certainly! I enclosed it all in one envelope, addressed to the editor."

"Why, you fat imbecile," exclaimed Vernon-Smith, "are we to know that the stuff is properly typed?"

"The Bunter Typing Agency guarantees neatness and accuracy," said the fat proprietor. "It also undertakes not only to type all the contributions, but to despatch them to their destination, thus saving the authors a good deal of trouble."

The authors didn't seem to see matters in that light. They glared at the fat junior.

"Bump him!" growled Johnny Bull. "I'll wait and see what the editor has to say, first," said Harry Wharton.

"In future, Bunter, all work that you type must be handed to the fellows concerned. You understand?"

"Oh, all serene!" said Bunter. "I thought I was saving you fellows trouble, that's all!"

"Rats!"

"Oh, really you know! I regard you as ungrateful beasts!"

And the proprietor of the Bunter Typing Agency turned in. His trumpet-like snore reverberated through the Remove dormitory. But he would have slept less soundly had he been granted a glimpse into the future!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Editor Regrets!

IN spite of the trouble which had arisen overnight, Billy Bunter was in great demand next day.

All sorts and conditions of manuscripts were taken along to Study No. 7; and the proprietor of the typing agency waxed fat. The shokles fairly poured into Billy Bunter's coffers.

Even Fisher T. Fish had to admit that the Bunter Typing Agency had not merely found its feet. It was going strong.

The plump proprietor, however, did not work so hard as he had done the previous evening. Perhaps he was already beginning to grow a little independent.

Anyway, the interval between afternoon lessons and tea was spent in the tuckshop, from which the Owl of the Remove finally emerged with smears of jam on his face, plus a broad smile of contentment.

Bunter's chief regret was that he had not organised a typing agency before.

Peter Todd did not interfere with his fat study-mate, except to inquire when the Heelock Sholmes story would be ready. Bunter assured him that he should have it next day.

Harry Wharton & Co. pursued the even tenor of their way, little dreaming of the surprise that was in store for them.

It was not until the following morning that the bombshell exploded.

There were letters in the rack for Harry Wharton, Vernon-Smith, Johnny Bull, and Dick Penfold. And they all

bore the stamp of the Fleetway House on the back of the envelopes.

Vernon-Smith was the first to open his letter.

The next moment he uttered an exclamation of mingled astonishment and anger.

"My only aunt!"

"What's the trouble, Smithy?" inquired Wharton, who had not yet opened his own letter.

Vernon-Smith exposed to view a printed slip, bearing the words:

"The Editor of the Companion Papers regrets that he is unable to make use of the enclosed contribution."

When the enclosed contribution—the one that Billy Bunter had typed—was produced, the juniors could scarcely believe their eyes. The article was headed:

"BRITER CRICKET!"

By H. VERNON-SMITH.

"Great pip!" gasped Bob Cherry. "No wonder the Editor of the Companion Papers turned this down!"

Vernon-Smith looked positively homicidal.

He only wanted three things at that moment: (a) a cricket-stump; (b) a quiet five minutes; and (c) the podgy form of William George Bunter.

"Just look at it!" said Vernon-Smith savagely.

The article commenced as follows:

"for sum Considerable time the mynds of the PUBLICK have BEEN okkupied with theOughTs of brienning CRICKET. this is only to be expected. We must not allow the GRATE summer GAME to laps in-2 the lyfeless state it was in be-4 the WAR.

"the stone-WALLER is, an abbotmishun. he must GO—

The juniors stared at that weird collection of hieroglyphics and gasped, as well they might.

The article, as originally written by Vernon-Smith, might have been sound and convincing. With Bunter's spelling amendments, however, it was hopeless.

Harry Wharton had the next shock.

He, too, had a rejection slip; and his contribution, "Footer Prospects for Next Season," appeared in the following unfamiliar guise:

"foeTeR prospecka for NECKS seacan,"

By harry wharton.

"It is with a feeling of konfidence THAT we look 4-ward to the day when the removites will again line up in football 4-mation.

"The bax, the 4-bax, and the 4-wards who plade for us last year are still with us. The 4-ward line is espeshully dazling. frank nugent and sampon quiky ifley field on the Wing, are a 1-derfull pear. Then we have vernon-smITH, to say nothing of hurry jamest ram singh. Modesty 4-bids me talk about myself—

"Oh, help!" gasped Wharton, in dismay.

And then the attention of the juniors was diverted to Johnny Bull, who seemed to be choking.

"What's up, Johnny?" inquired Bob Cherry, giving his chum a sounding slap on the back.

"Yow! You've punctured me, you ass!"

"Well, why are you behaving like a dying duck in a thunderstorm?"

"It—it's this!" spluttered Johnny Bull.

And he produced the first instalment of his pirate serial.

The Removites blinked at the typewritten manuscript:

"ACROSS the spannISH MANE!"

by johnny bull.

"The deck of the 'red rover' was smeared with the Blud of Thousands. The pirates had got IT in the neck rite and proper. there corpses lay piled UP on the bull-works.

"'Alas!' groined the Cheef Pirate.

"'my komrades, we are doomed—

Small wonder that Johnny Bull had been on the verge of choking!

"I've got to thank Bunter for this!" hissed Johnny. "My hat! I'll simply pulverise him!"

"Any more rejected manuscripts?" inquired Bob Cherry.

"Yes!" growled Dick Penfold. "Both my poems have come back—thanks to Bunter!"

And Penfold displayed his verses, which had been sadly mutilated.

The first was an "Ode to Bunter." In its original form it had commenced thus:

"Behold the fat and flabby freak,
The one and only Bunter,

Who, though he gorges all the week,
Is hungry as a bunter.

If he should spot a bag of tarts
He'll promptly try to win it;

In fact, when Bunter really starts,
A porpise isn't in it!"

This verse had been amended by the Bunter Typing Agency to read as follows:

"Behold the Graceful, Slender form
Of bunter, william george;

Although in study and in dorm
He knows the way to gorge.

his hart is in the proper place,
No maiden fare will win it;

he's always 4-most in the race—
A hero evvery minnit!"

The other poem, which also happened to be about Bunter, had been altered from an abusive piece to a complimentary one.

"Can you wonder that the editor sent them back?" said Dick Penfold. "This is the giddy limit!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

Not being one of Bunter's victims, Bob could afford to laugh.

"Stow it, Bob!" said Wharton irritably. "Bunter deserves to be pulverised for this!"

"And he's jolly well going to be!" said Vernon-Smith. "Come on, fellows!"

It was a very stormy procession that went along to Study No. 7.

From within that apartment came the crash and clatter of the "Star-lock" typewriter.

Billy Bunter was engaged in typing another sheaf of contributions, and correcting them where he considered it necessary.

The avengers marched into the study and swept aside the screen which cut Billy Bunter off from the outside world.

The fat junior was too short-sighted to notice the expressions on the faces of the intruders.

"Roll up, you fellows!" he said cheerfully. "I'm simply swamped out with work, but I'm quite ready to take on more. Give your orders, and pay in advance!"

"You fat toad!" exclaimed Wharton angrily.

"Eh?"

"You pudding-headed candidate for Colney Hatch!" hooted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Who authorised you to make alterations in our manuscripts?" demanded Vernon-Smith.

Billy Bunter blinked at the incensed juniors.

"Have you fellows gone potty?" he

asked. "I don't know what you're talking about!"

"Look at this!" roared Vernon-Smith.

And he thrust the article on "Briter Cricket" under Billy Bunter's nose.

"What's wrong with it?" inquired the proprietor of the Typing Agency.

"Oh, nothing!" said Vernon-Smith, with crushing sarcasm. "Except for the putrid typing, and the abominable spelling, it's top-hole!"

"Bump the fat beast!" growled Dick Penfold.

"It was useless to try to point out to Billy Bunter the error of his ways by means of conversation. The only language Bunter understood was the language conveyed by a sound bumping."

The fat junior jumped up in alarm.

"Leggo, you rotters! Hands off!"

But the juniors were out for scalps.

They swung Billy Bunter bodily off his feet, and he descended on the floor of the study with a bump and a roar.

"Yarooooh!"

"Give him another!" growled Johnny Bull.

Bump!

"Yow! Beasts! Rotters! I'll tell Wingate! I'll tell Quelch! I'll—"

Bump!

For the third time the podgy form of William George Bunter hit the carpet.

But the juniors were out for scalps!

He chuckled Bob Cherry from the doorway.

"I shouldn't think you fellows would place any more work with the Bunter Typing Agency after what's happened."

"We sha'n't!" said Vernon-Smith grimly.

"But I'm going to make Bunter type my article out over again, and follow the spelling of the original manuscript."

Billy Bunter groaned. He could no longer hope to conceal from his school-fellows his appalling ignorance of typewriting.

Vernon-Smith inserted a sheet of paper in the machine, and prodded Bunter towards the chair.

"Carry on!" he said.

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Carry on!" repeated Vernon-Smith, in tones which admitted of no defiance.

Reluctantly Billy Bunter started to type from the original manuscript.

The fellows looking on saw that he was hopelessly incapable.

Once again Billy Bunter made a terrible hash of things.

"Why, the fat idiot can't type at all!" exclaimed Wharton. "That announcement which appeared on the notice-board must have been typed by somebody else!"

Vernon-Smith seized the fat junior by the scruff of the neck and shook him like a fat rat.

"Yow-ow-ow!" gasped Bunter.

"Stoppit, you beast! You'll make my gug-gug-glasses fall off in a minute, and then you'll have to pip-pip-pay for them!"

Vernon-Smith desisted at length, and the juniors, having revenged themselves upon the proprietor of the Bunter Typing Agency, quitted the study.

Billy Bunter was left alone with his thoughts. And, needless to say, they were not pleasant ones.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Visitor For Fish!

"P"ORTER!"

Gosling hurried out of his lodge with a grunt.

A hefty-looking man, with rather a prominent jaw, had just entered the gateway of Greffyns.

"Wot's up?" growled Gosling.

"I am Mr. Bates, of the Nailer Typewriter Company," said the hefty-looking person.

"I called to see Master Fisher T. Fish. Will you direct me to him?"

"Cert'nly, sir!" said Gosling, as a shilling was thrust into his horny palm.

And Mr. Bates was escorted through the Close, and taken along to the Remove passage.

Fisher T. Fish was alone in Study No. 14. He looked in surprise as his visitor entered.

"Master Fish!" inquired Mr. Bates.

"That's me, I guess!"

"Ah! I have been directed to call upon you to collect the second instalment, now overdue, in connection with the machine you hired from the Nailer Typewriter Company."

"Waal, I swear!" gasped Fish.

"I am not disposed to stand upon ceremony," continued Mr. Bates.

"Unless the money is paid at once, I shall have no resource but to confiscate the typewriter on behalf of the firm!"

Fisher T. Fish grew more and more astonished.

"I guess I've got no typewriter!" he said.

"Nonsense! You hired one from our firm over a week ago!"

"Try again!" said Fish.

"You surely do not deny the transaction?"

"Yes! I guess I've not hired one of your old crooks—"

"Very well! I will have an interview with Mr. Prout, who gave his name as a reference."

"Look hyer—"

But Mr. Bates was not disposed to waste more time in Study No. 14. He called to Gosling, who was retreating down the passage.

"Kindly conduct me to Mr. Prout's study!"

"Werry good, sir!" said the porter.

The couple moved away, and Fisher T. Fish followed.

"I guess there's something jolly queer about this!" he murmured.

Gosling knocked on the door of Mr. Prout's study, and the typewriter-man entered, with Fisher T. Fish at his heels.

"Good-morning, sir!" said Mr. Bates.

Mr. Prout lifted a worried face from some essays he was correcting.

"Pray, what is the meaning of this peremptory intrusion?" he inquired.

"This boy," said Mr. Bates, indicating Fisher T. Fish, "hired a typewriter over a week ago from the Nailer Typewriter Company, of which firm I am a representative."

"Well?"

"He now denies all knowledge of the transaction, sir. I have called upon him to collect the second week's instalment, and he pretends that he knows nothing about the affair."

"I guess—" began Fish.

Mr. Prout glared.

"We are dealing with facts—not with guesswork!" he snapped. "I distinctly remember that you hired a machine, and approached me for a reference."

"I—I—"

"Do not stand and goggle at me, Fish!" rumbled Mr. Prout. "If you are unable to pay the necessary instalments, you will deliver up the machine to this gentleman at once!"

Fisher T. Fish looked the picture of dismay.

"I guess I never hired the machine, sir!"

"What!"

"I lost the hire purchase form, and couldn't go ahead with the stunt!"

Mr. Bates fumbled in his pocket.

"Here is the form in question," he said, producing a blue document. "You hired, with effect from last week, 'Star-lock' typewriter No. 88446."

Fish gave a violent start.

"Did you say 'Star-lock'?" he exclaimed.

"Yes."

"Then I guess I can clear the matter up!" said the Yankee junior.

He remembered that Billy Bunter's machine was a "Star-lock," and he began to put two and two together.

"Excuse me, sir!" said Fish.

And, without waiting for Mr. Prout's consent, he hurried out of the study.

"This is where that fat clam gets it in the neck, I guess!" murmured Fish.

Billy Bunter was run to earth in Study No. 7.

The Famous Five were present, and they were engaged in telling Bunter in plain language what they thought of him.

The Bunter Typing Agency seemed to be on its last legs.

All the fellows who had sent in stuff to be typed were horrified at the result. Billy Bunter had ruined dozens of manuscripts.

Fisher T. Fish walked straight into Study No. 7 without knocking, and marched up to the typewriter.

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

"What's the little game, Fishy?"

"I guess this fat galoot's going to be clapped into prison!" said Fish.

Billy Bunter brandished a couple of fat fists.

"You jolly well clear out of my study!" he said wrathfully.

Fisher T. Fish ignored the Owl of the Remove. He bent down and examined the typewriter closely.

"'Star-lock' No. 88446!" he murmured. "This is the 'bus, sure enough!"

"What are you burbling about?" demanded Bunter heatedly.

"I guess this is the 'bus you hired from the Nailer Typewriter Company!"

There was a shout from the Famous Five.

"Is that a fact, Fishy?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Yep!"

"You mean to say that Bunter hired that machine from Courtfield?"

Fish nodded.

"I—I say, you fellows," faltered Bunter, "don't take any notice of Fishy. He's only jealous of the success of my agency. That—that typewriter was a gift from one of my titled relations—"

"We'll soon see about that!" said Fish.

And he hurried from the study, returning a few moments later with Mr. Prout and Mr. Bates.

"Bunter!" rapped out Mr. Prout.

"Ye-es, sir?"

"How did you come into possession of that machine?"

"It—it was sent to me by a titled relation, sir!"

Mr. Prout frowned.

"I am not so gullible as to suppose, Bunter, that your relations occupy an exalted position in the social scale. You are guilty of a gross untruth!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Tell me the true facts of the case at once! How did you acquire that typewriter?"

"I—I bought it, sir! It was going begging for twenty quid at an auction sale, and I snapped it up, sir! It was a smart business deal."

Mr. Prout frowned more blackly than ever.

"I am aware, Bunter, that your supply of pocket-money is extremely limited. How could you possibly afford to pay twenty pounds for a typewriter?"

"Dad-dud-did I say twenty pounds, The Magnet Library, No. 603."

shillings!—I should have said twenty shillings!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was an uncontrollable burst of laughter from the Famous Five.

"Silence!" rumbled Mr. Prout. "You are a perverse and wicked boy, Bunter! Although I am not an authority on typewriters, I know full well that it is impossible to procure one for twenty shillings."

"Of course," stammered Bunter, who was beginning to wish the floor would open and swallow him up, "that—that was merely a figure of speech, sir! What I meant to say was that I found this typewriter."

"Where?" demanded Mr. Prout.

"In—in the Close, sir—that is to say, in Friardale, sir!"

"Enough!" said Mr. Prout sternly. "I have reason to believe, Bunter, that you appropriated a hire-purchase form belonging to Fish, and took it to the Nailor Typewriter Company, representing yourself as the owner of the document."

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Would you be good enough to examine that machine, Mr. Bates, and ascertain if the number corresponds with the number on the agreement?"

"Certainly!" said Mr. Bates.

Billy Bunter fairly shook in his shoes as the typewriter-man came forward.

"This, sir," said Mr. Bates, breaking an impressive silence, "is the machine which was hired from us over a week ago!"

"My hat!" murmured the Famous Five in unison.

The last nail had now been hammered into the coffin of the Bunter Typing Agency.

There could be no further doubt of Bunter's guilt.

By making use of the form belonging to Fisher T. Fish the fat junior had obtained a machine on the hire-purchase system. But for the fact that he had been cunning enough to select a "Starlock" in place of an "Overwood" his guilt would have been discovered long before.

"Now look out for squalls and cateracts!" murmured Bob Cherry.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Way of the Transgressor!

MR. BATES was the first to speak.

"The said instalment not having been paid," he said, "I am empowered, on behalf of the company, to confiscate this machine."

Billy Bunter attempted a final piece of bluff.

"It's mine!" he said indignantly. "I forbid you to lay a finger on it!"

Mr. Bates solemnly produced the agreement, and, raising one hand above his head, began quoting from the document, as follows:

"In case the said rent shall be in arrear for more than seven days, or in case the hirer commits any breach of this agreement, the owners shall thereupon be entitled to take and resume possession of the said typewriter, and for that purpose full power and liberty are hereby given to the owners, their servants, and agents, to enter into any house, dwelling, establishment, or building, which the hirer may be, or appears to be, occupying, and there to search for and retake the said typewriter without any resistance on the part of the hirer, his relatives, friends, or servants."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 603.

After which, Mr. Bates drew a deep breath, and glared at the Famous Five, as if he expected some sort of opposition from that quarter.

"Calm yourself, my dear man!" said Mr. Prout. "No one challenges your right to remove this machine in default of payment. You may take it away—unless you, Fish, desire to take over the hire of this typewriter!"

Fisher T. Fish shook his head.

After the sudden and complete collapse of the Bunter Typing Agency, it was not likely that a Fish Typing Agency would receive much support from the amateur authors in the Remove.

"I guess there's nothing doing!" said Fish.

"Very well," said the master of the Fifth. "The machine will be returned to the company. You, Bunter, will follow me."

"Oh crumbs! Where—where to, sir?"

"The question is superfluous!" said Mr. Prout drily. "In the temporary absence of Mr. Quelch, I intend to take you to my study, where I shall explain, through the medium of a severe caning, my strong disapproval of deceit and falsehood! Follow me at once!"

The Fifth Form-master seldom took a delight in caning boys; but on this occasion he made a perfect orgy of it.

"Hold out your hand, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter gingerly extended a fat palm.

Swish, swish, swish!

"Yoooop!"

"Now the other hand!" rapped out Mr. Prout.

"Yow! I—I've had enough, sir!"

"I think I am the better judge of that, Bunter! Obey me!"

Out went Billy Bunter's other hand, and down came the cane. It bit into the fat junior's palm, causing him to execute a nose and grope active form of Jazz.

"Ow! Yah! Grootoo!"

"If you continue to utter those absurd ejaculations, Bunter, I shall administer further chastisement!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"I trust you will not resort to such duplicity again! You may go!"

And Billy Bunter, rubbing his aching palms, went.

But he was not yet out of the wood.

The story of his amazing conduct had spread through the Remove; and when he emerged into the Close the fat junior became the centre of a hostile crowd.

"Here he is!"

"The rotten spoofer!"

"Bump him!"

"Make him run the gauntlet!"

Billy Bunter blinked wildly at the furious faces around him.

He had stepped out of the frying-pan into the fire. The ordeal in Mr. Prout's study had been bad enough; but a worse one awaited him.

"You fat worm!" exclaimed Squiff.

"Give me back my two bob!"

"Likewise my one-and-six!" said Dick Russell.

"And my half-crown!" said Ogilvy.

"You've let us all down! You pretended that you'd type our stuff, and you can't type for toffee!"

"Make him disgorge his ill-gotten gains!" growled Bolsover major.

But the juniors were unlucky.

The funds of the Bunter Typing Agency reposed in Mrs. Mimbles' till. Billy Bunter had squandered all his substance in riotous living.

"I—I say, you fellows—"

"Pay up!"

"You—you'll have to wait till my postal-order comes! I'm stony!"

The juniors said good-bye to their money. But they meant to have their pound of flesh, all the same.

Billy Bunter turned to flee as a massed army of Removeites bore down upon him.

He scuttled along for a few yards like a frightened rabbit. And then Bolsover major tripped him up, and the fat junior landed in a squirming heap on the flagstones.

"Help! Fire! Murder!" he yelled.

Many hands descended upon Bunter, and he was raised bodily in the air, only to be dumped down again with terrific violence.

"Yaroooh!"

"Go easy, there!" rapped out Harry Wharton. The fat cad's already been licked, you know!"

But the juniors were not in the humour to bestow quality of mercy.

They were angry with themselves for having allowed Bunter to dupe them so easily; and they were more angry still with the fat junior.

At least half a dozen times, Billy Bunter was bumped on the unsympathetic flagstones.

When the avengers had finished with him there was hardly a breath left in his body.

At that moment Mr. Bates emerged into the Close, staggering beneath the weight of the "Starlock" typewriter.

Bob Cherry had a sudden inspiration.

"We'll make Bunter carry the machine back to Courtfield!" he said.

"That's the idea!"

"Get up!" growled Bolsover major, inserting a heavy boot in Billy Bunter's ribs.

"I won't! Blast! Bully! Go and eat coke! Yah!"

Bolsover major exerted his strength, and succeeded in dragging the fat junior to his feet.

"This way, Mr. Bates!" shouted Nugent.

"Bunter's kindly consented to carry the typewriter back for you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter squirmed and struggled and protested, but all to no purpose.

The heavy typewriter was thrust into his grasp, and he lurched through the gateway of Greyfriars, groaning and grunting as he went.

"Keep him on the go, Mr. Bates!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Give him a gentle prod in the back every time he slacks!"

"Trust me!" said Mr. Bates.

And a moment later the perspiring form of William George Bunter, late proprietor of the Bunter Typing Agency, disappeared down the long, white road which led to Courtfield.

That evening, Harry Wharton & Co. re-submitted their contributions to the Editor of the Companion Papers, explaining what had happened to them in the first instance.

The explanation was accepted—and so were most of the contributions.

The Editor remarked that, in the circumstances, stories and articles need not be typewritten; and the vexed problem of securing a machine no longer arose.

Thus ended the brief and inglorious career of the Bunter Typing Agency!

THE END.

(Don't miss "THE TWELVE STAMPS!"—next Monday's Grand Long Complete Story of Greyfriars School—by FRANK RICHARDS.)

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.

"THE TWELVE STAMPS!"

By Frank Richards.

Next week's story will deal with the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., and of the fags of the Third and Second Forms. Dicky Nugent is the principal character, and becomes involved in an unfortunate affair when Harry Wharton's precious collection of stamps is pilfered.

However, the fags of Greyfriars rally round Dicky, and eventually the mystery is cleared up in a satisfactory manner, and all is well that ends well.

"THE TWELVE STAMPS"

makes one of the most exciting stories our popular author has written for many months. The fags of the "Magnet" Library are urged to place an advance order with their newsagent at once.

"THE GREYFRIARS HERALD."

No. 1 of the new edition of the "G. H." is now taking definite shape. Another week's hard work upon this great school journal has made all the difference in the world.

I am more than pleased with the way the "Greyfriars Herald" is progressing—I am really delighted; and I am sure that it is going to be the greatest success of its time.

OCTOBER

is now only about a month ahead, and for me that month will go at lightning speed, for long before the first number of the "Greyfriars Herald" is out I shall be working hard upon the succeeding numbers.

The time will go quickly for all of you, too, if you are doing what I asked—that is, carrying on a definite campaign for the purpose of spreading the news of the "Herald's" re-appearance amongst your friends.

CAN YOU THINK?

Yes, of course you can think; but that is only half the question. Can you think of a chum, either boy or girl, to whom you have not mentioned that the "Greyfriars Herald" is coming out again?

And if there is any boy whom you want to make your chum, let him know about it, and persuade him to get the first number of the "G. H." and ever after that he will be your staunch chum.

NOW IS THE TIME

to tell every boy and girl you know about Harry Wharton's great school journal, for there is only about a month left.

Now, please, get busy about it at once, and meanwhile I will carry on the good work of making the "Greyfriars Herald" just what I think all my readers would like it to be.

CONGRATULATIONS FROM MANCHESTER.

The following is a letter I have received from two of my girl chums:

"Dear Mr. Editor,—Having just finished this week's MAGNET, we really must take the opportunity of congratulating you upon your absolutely splendid stories. Though we are two girls, we appreciate the MAGNET as much as any boy, and always shall do.

"We have the MAGNET delivered every Monday without fail, and think it is by far the best way, as there is such a great demand for it that you are never sure of getting your copy. Therefore, Mr. Editor, we will just let you know that even when we are grandmothers—if ever—we shall always encourage the younger people to read the good old MAGNET.

"Two enthusiastic readers,
"Flo and Jo."

I am really grateful to my two Manchester girl chums for that splendid letter. It cheers me up tremendously to know that I have such loyal supporters.

I am always delighted to have such letters from my readers, for, of course, the best reward one can have for one's work is to know that it is appreciated.

Enclosed with the letter, "Flo and Jo" sent me the following verse, which is really a most creditable effort:

AN ODE TO THE "MAGNET."

"Now, boys and girls, the MAGNET buy,
We'll promise you with mirth you'll cry,
To read of Bunter and all his tuck,
The "Famous Five" and their wonderful luck.
Just think of the honourable Coker,
Could you wish for a better joker?
And now the "Bouncer" we really must mention,
Sufficient to say he's quite an invention.
So here's a good luck to the Greyfriars School,
May its popularity never grow cool!"

YOUR EDITOR.



SYNOPSIS.

Johnny Goggs comes to Ryecliffe Grammar School from Frankingham with his chums Trickett, Blount, and Waters. Goggs is a jiu-jitsu expert, a clever impersonator, and the organiser of many brilliant japes. He leads an expedition of Grammarians to St. Jim's, and accomplishes one of the most daring night raids ever perpetrated.

Gerald Cutts of St. Jim's falls foul of Bingo, the butcher, and after a scrap, in which Cutts is worsted, Bingo picks a quarrel with Goggs. Bingo is completely defeated, and Cutts loses a big bet. Goggs accepts Bingo's challenge to a return fight, wherein Snipe and Larking see a chance of scoring off Goggs. They suggest to Cutts, who readily falls into line, that Goggs shall be kidnapped before the fight is due to come off, thus making him appear a funk.

(Now read on.)

The Way to Work Goggs!

"WHAT'S going to be the most difficult thing of all," said Larking. Thursday had come and gone. The Grammarian plotters had met Cutts again, to learn that he had sounded

his two poacher acquaintances, and had found them willing.

Cutts seemed in high feather. He had talked "rich uncle" to St. Leger and Gilmorr, and they had hearkened unto him. They had agreed to give him the same odds upon Goggs that he had previously given them upon Bingo, and he never guessed that they only did it that he might have a chance of wiping out his debts to them. They knew enough of the game to be aware that ten to one was an absurd price in any event where the combatants were so nearly matched.

But he remembered it next day when Snipe tapped at the door of the study which the four shared, just after tea, and stuck in his head.

"Oh, sorry!" he said. "I had a notion Goggs was here alone."

"Come in," said Goggs politely. "No, I won't, thanks—not now." Snipe replied, with some seeming hesitation.

Goggs did not press the invitation, and the pimply, unwholesome face disappeared.

"What did that chap want with you, Goggs?" asked Wactall.

"I really have not the very least idea, most excellent Waters," replied Goggs.

"Don't you have anything to do with the sweep? He'd do you down," Wactall said.

"If Snipe makes overtures apparently designed to that end I will hand him over to you, my dear fellow!" Goggs replied.

"Ho, ha, ha!" laughed Bags and Ticks. "What are you silly asses cackling at?" snapped Wactall.

"Your zoology is defective, dear boy," remarked Goggs mildly. "Asses bray."

"I know that! Haven't I heard 'em" retorted Wactall, glaring at the other two. "It wasn't Wactall's zoology we smole a smile at," Bags said. "It was his blessed cheek in thinking that he could see farther through a brick wall than you."

"Should you consider Snipe a brick wall?" asked Goggs, with his head on one side.

"I shouldn't consider Snipe at all," replied Bags.

But Waters, though he might be the least clever of the four, was not so far wrong as the other three thought.

Goggs undoubtedly had a very good notion of taking care of himself. But in his confidence that he could always do so there lurked an element of danger, as Snipe had seen, though Snipe thought of it from his own point of view—as a chance for him.

After, prop, he managed to spin Goggs alone in the quad.

The meeting then seemed to Goggs quite accidental. Actually, it was cleverly maneuvered by Snipe.

He came rather in a hurry and had his tin into Goggs.

"Oh, beg pardon!" he said. "I didn't see you."

"Don't mention it," gasped Goggs, polite still, though the wind had almost been knocked out of him.

"I hope I haven't hurt you," Snipe said.

"I think I shall recover from it in time," replied Goggs.

"I—I— You don't think I did it on purpose, do you?"

"It's good man, I should never suppose that you would take so clumsily a method of paying off your grudges, I assure you."

"Grudges? Well, you may very well think that I've a grudge against you," Snipe said.

"It has looked like it, I know."

"It has, somewhat," Goggs answered.

"I haven't, though. But you must have one against me."

Snipe's tone was almost pathetic.

"I really do not think I have, Snipe," Goggs said. "I admit candidly that I do not, truly love you. That, I consider, is more than you can expect. But I do not bear malice after I have once got even with an enemy, and I do not think I owe you anything."

"I wish you never had," whined Snipe.

"But it wasn't altogether my fault. I've been too much under another fellow's influence. Look here, Goggs, I'm in a hole—a pretty hole!"

"Indeed?" queried Goggs civilly, but with no marked show of interest.

"Oh, I'm not asking you to help me out of it. But I must tell somebody. I feel that I can't stand it any longer if I don't. There's Carpenter, but I can't talk to him. He's much more Larking's elum than mine—always has been."

Snipe played his part very well. Goggs had little, if any, suspicion that he was merely playing a part. But he felt no enthusiasm for the role of comforter, which Snipe seemed to desire to fasten upon him.

"Do you think there is any use at all in your telling me, Snipe, he said.

"Oh, there's no use in it, and, as I can see you don't want to hear, I'll drop it. But I must ask you to keep this a secret, Goggs. You'll promise that, won't you?"

"Yes, I have no objection to promising that," Goggs replied. "It can hardly be called a secret, for you have told me nothing that matters. But you can rely upon me saying nothing to anyone about it."

"Thanks, Goggs. Even that's more than I deserve, I know," Snipe said.

And then he hurried away, for Bags and Tricks and Wagtail drew nigh.

"What was that cad saying to you, Goggs?" asked Wagtail.

"Nothing that calls for my handing him over to you as yet, dear boy!" Goggs answered.

Bags and Tricks eekled, but Wagtail scowled.

It may have been merely instinct, but he felt very suspicious of Snipe's advances towards his chum.

There was no certainty that Bingo might not be the victor in the return. He would need some luck to win; but a lucky knock-out is possible at any time.

But Gilmore and St. Leeger, having more good nature and less greed where Cutts was

concerned than he, credited him with, did not mind about that.

Larking and Snipe saw everything going well with their plot thus far, and were content. But there still remained the problem of getting Goggs within reach of the kidnapers, and, as Larking said, that was likely to be the most difficult thing of all.

"I can do it!" Snipe said confidently.

"How should you try it yourself?"

Larking arranged his eyebrows.

"Shouldn't know how to begin to do it," he confessed.

"It does need brains!" answered Snipe, with a leer on his unwholesome countenance.

"It needs a great deal of knowledge of human nature, too—what the high-browed people call psychology."

"Oh, rats! If you have to go so giddy far round as all that for it, you're bound to make a mess of the whole thing—simply bound to!"

"Don't you believe it! I'm going to play on Goggs' weakness."

"What are they? Hauged if I know them!"

That was rather a tribute, from an enemy, though perhaps Larking did not mean it to be complimentary.

"I'll, though. The chap prides himself on his efficiency—on never being caught napping. Also, though he reckons to get even with anyone who offends him, he's a soft-hearted ass after he's got even. I don't think I could ever make him like me; but I could make him pity me, and that would work as well. It's the way I shall do it."

"Rather you than me, Snipe?" I could stand anybody's pity, and I should want to know if he's tried his on me, confound him!" said Larking viciously.

"Ah, you're too proud, Lark! I can sink my pride when it suits me."

"First I've got to hear of you having any to sink. But never mind that! What's Goggs going to pity you for?"

"For being led into evil courses by you, old top!"

"Here, I say! Steady on! Dash it all, that's too thick, Snipe!"

"Do you deny that you have led me into evil courses—gambling and things of that sort—Larking?" asked Snipe solemnly.

"Of course I deny it! I could say you led me; but it's about six of one and half a dozen of the other. Now, if Carp said we both—"

"If Carpenter's brought into this the whole scheme will be blown sky-high, you idiot!" protested Snipe.

"I wasn't thinking of bringing him in, you fathead! I was only mentioning him. I know well enough that this isn't his giddy line. But how are you going to do it? That's what matters."

"I'm going to tell the dear Goggs what a ghastly mess you've got me into—see? I'm going to play on his blessed sympathies, and get him out to slip a lame dog. I'm the same dog, you know—over a stile at a time when Cutts' dear friends can seize him."

"You'll have to steer clear of me in public for the next few days, then," Larking said.

"Not that I mind. But I'm not sure you'll fetch him with that yarn, and I don't believe that you'll get him out alone with you. He will want some of his dear little friends to come along, you bet!"

"Right—ho! We'll see," returned Snipe.

He was very sure that he could work Goggs, and there was quite a chance that he was right. At least, he had read Goggs' character with considerable accuracy.

The way in which he described it was not too complimentary; but it was a fact that both Goggs

readily sympathized and its well-rehearsed Snipe's scheme.

Snipe began to plot that scheme into practice almost at once, although there was still almost a week before the end of the term and the day—that on which the Grammar School fellows, as well as St. Jim's travelled home—which had been fixed for the fight.

It was on Friday that Snipe made his first assault upon the outskirts of Goggs' defence.

On Thursday night he had markedly shunned Larking in the dormitory.

Dormitory 29 was not exactly a happy family. Goggs and his three chums had very little to say any time. Lark's, Bags, and Tailpole and Weirid did not count for much, anyway.

But Snipe and Larking were in the habit of talking for a few minutes after lights out, rather as though Goggs and the rest did not exist. Sometimes Carpenter joined in their conversation; more often of late he kept silent.

That night Snipe and Larking did not speak a word to one another.

"You fellows aren't talkative," remarked Carpenter.

"I've nothing to say to Larking or to you!" snarled Snipe.

"And I'm fed up with Snipe!" snapped Larking.

Goggs heard that, of course; but at the time he paid no more heed to it than Bags, Tricks, and Wagtail—which was none at all.

Those advances had not gone very far as yet. But the seed had been sown.

Again that night Snipe and Larking did not speak to one another. By this time their mutual avoidance had been remarked upon by more than one fellow in Goggs' bearing. It seemed to be generally held that they had come to a split at last.

Goggs was thinking about it as he lay in bed.

He did not like Snipe at all, though he cherished no malice against him.

But he told himself that he must be wrong in assuming that there was no such redeeming quality.

Snipe could not be wholly bad.

And the fellow was in trouble, and he had no means now that he had fallen out with Larking.

The chivalrous side of Goggs' nature was being appealed to—just as Snipe had reckoned upon its being, though he thought of it as mere softness.

He fell asleep wondering what Snipe's trouble was and whether it was worth while to offer to help him.

And next day he listened patiently to a queer felicitous account of that trouble. Snipe did not ask for help—then. He was leaving that until later.

But he felt sure he would get it—and in the way he wanted, too.

"I've got him on a string," Lark!" he told Larking that evening. "I've got him fast on a string! He would a thousand times rather have done Carpenter a good turn. He would even have preferred doing you one. He bars me about as completely as he ever barred anyone in his life. I fancy, but he'll shove his head into danger to help me, all the same. And of all the silly, soft asses I ever ran against in all my days, he's the silliest and the softest hang-around."

Perhaps Goggs was right in supposing that Snipe, being human, could not be wholly bad; but few people who had heard Snipe then would have given him credit for having any spark of decent spirit in him.

(To be continued.)

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