

THE SOCIETY FOR REFORMING BILLY BUNTER!

(See the New Long Complete Greyfriars Story inside.)



No. 703. Vol. XX.

"THE GREYFRIARS HERALD" INSIDE.

July 30th, 1921.



BILLY BUNTER OBJECTS TO FORCED BATHING!

(An Amusing Incident from the Grand, Long, Complete Story in this issue.)

The Editor's Chat



Address all your letters to:
The Editor, "The Magnet Library,"
The Fleetway House, Farringdon St., London, E. C. 4.
 I am always pleased to hear from my chums.

OUR NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE.

Readers all over the country have been asking me to persuade Mr. Frank Richards to turn out a series of caravanning stories. Well, as I always do my best to give my chums what they want, our next grand, long, complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, will be entitled:

"THE GREYFRIARS CARAVANNERS!"

Of course, not all the summer vac can be devoted to caravanning, but after a visit to their homes, the chums of the Remove gather at Harry Wharton's house, and from there they set out on the great gay road.

Not a little amusement is brought into the affair by a declaration by Coker that he has a perfect right to the caravan hired by the Removites, despite the fact that the juniors have paid for the hire in advance. How he gets on with his idea is but one of the interesting items in the really splendid story of

"THE GREYFRIARS CARAVANNERS!"

I strongly advise all my regular readers to listen well to the old advice—order your copy in advance! I am advertising this new series all over the country and in a score of papers, and the demand for the MAGNET LIBRARY next Monday is going to beat all records. Do, please, make sure of your copy, as I want all my chums to avoid being told that the MAGNET LIBRARY is sold out when they go to their newsagents' next Monday morning.

If you would be good enough to tell all your chums that Mr. Frank Richards has prepared the finest school stories ever published, and that the first of the new series will appear in the MAGNET LIBRARY next Monday, I shall be very much obliged. Your friends, too, will see the wisdom of ordering their copies in advance, for it is only by orders that I can judge the number of copies to be printed.

THE SUPPLEMENT.

Special Scouting Number of the "Greyfriars Herald!"

I have promised you that Harry Wharton would turn out a Special Scouts' Number of his famous paper, and I have much pleasure in informing you that it will appear in our next issue.

You will have read the above paragraph, and will see that the fact that Harry is turning out a special number in connection with the great Scout movement is but another reason why you THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 703.

should get your order placed for next week's MAGNET.

I feel sure that the issue which will be put before you next Monday is going to be one of the very best we have seen. Mr. Frank Richards has excelled himself, and Harry Wharton, knowing what is going on, has worked like a Trojan to turn out an extra grand supplement. To my great delight and admiration he has succeeded!

That is all, I think, I need write about our next issue.

YOU LEAD—OTHERS WILL FOLLOW.

You have heard the old saying, "Follow your leader."? Yes? But why follow your leader when you yourself can lead?

I am pleased to be able to announce that many hundreds of readers are following their chums in taking in the "Popular," which is our special companion paper, and which is meant to provide you with reading matter for the week-end. Somebody set the lead, and hundreds have followed. I can tell that by the circulation figures.

Now, to every single one of my chums I am going to write:

You lead the way to the newsagent's shop, with a small army of followers, and ask for a copy of the "Popular." Your friends, who see you setting the lead, will follow. Now, just try it this week—march in a bunch to the shops on Friday morning next, and get a copy of the finest boys' paper for the week-end—the "Popular."

You will find therein much to interest you—tales of Jimmy Silver & Co., Harry Wharton & Co., and Billy Bunter's famous "Weekly." Not only that, but

a chance awaits every reader who does not mind thinking for a few minutes—a chance to win Five Shillings. Why shouldn't it be you? Why shouldn't your chums, who followed you to the shop, see their names follow yours in the list of prize-winners?

Chums, YOU LEAD—OTHERS WILL FOLLOW!

NOTICES.

Correspondence.

Miss D. Kelly, Grass Lawn, Moorland Road, Weston-super-Mare, wishes to correspond with readers, ages 15-18.

C. Hall, 123, Green Street, Cardiff, wishes to hear from readers interested in foreign stamps and postcards.

K. G. Lowe, Kwun Gai, Queen's Wharf, Five Dock, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, wishes to correspond with readers, aged about 16, anywhere; interested in sports, especially football and swimming, and stamps.

Miss Kathleen O'Sullivan, Tara, Australia Street, Camperdown, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, wishes to correspond with readers, 16-17.

Harry Kyne, 16, Gordon Street Gardens, Cape Town, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers, ages 16-18.

Edwin McIvor, Rochester, Victoria, Australia, wishes to hear from readers, 15-17, in England or Scotland.

P. Murphy, Wellington Avenue, Wynberg, Cape Province, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers overseas, ages 16-18.

Harry Helleman, Haslemere, 28, Johnston Street, Annandale, N.S.W., Australia, wishes to hear from readers interested in stamps, living in Canada.

Bernam Cramp, Wellington Avenue, Wynberg, Cape, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers overseas, age 15 upwards.

W. B. Eglinton, Rosatta, Percy Terrace, Kilkenny, West Croydon, South Australia, wishes to correspond with readers in England and America.

Philip Finkelstein, 80, du Toit Street, Pretoria, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers, ages 17-19.

Driver Walter J. R. Wright, 1036373, "D" Sub-Section, K Battery, R.H.A., Risalpur, N.W. Province, India, wishes to correspond with readers.

George Banister, 61, Palmer Street, Balmain, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, wishes to correspond with readers, 15 upwards.

Thomas C. Rowe, 60, Addison Road, Heaton, Newcastle-on-Tyne, wishes to correspond with readers in Africa or British Isles, ages 14-15.

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For full particulars see this week's GRAND COMPETITION NUMBER of

ANSWERS

ON SALE TO-DAY PRICE 2d.

Your Editor.



The Society for Reforming Billy Bunter!

A Magnificent Long Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co., at Greyfriars School. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Bob Cherry's Scheme!

"NOW'S my chance!" Billy Bunter halted outside the door of Study No. 13, in the Remove passage.

Save for the fat junior, the passage was deserted.

It was a half-holiday, and from the distant cricket-field came the shouts of players and onlookers.

For an instant Billy Bunter paused and listened. Like Moses of old, he looked this way and that way, and behold, there was no man.

"The coast is clear!" he muttered.

Then he opened the door of Study No. 13, and stepped cautiously into the apartment, which was jointly owned by Bob Cherry, Hurree Singh, Mark Linley, and Wun Lung.

Billy Bunter was on a study-raiding expedition. He had already visited several of the Remove studies, but he had drawn blank. He knew that he would not draw blank in Study No. 13, however, for he had heard Bob Cherry remark to Hurree Singh that a fresh supply of provisions had just been laid in.

It so happened that both Bob Cherry and Hurree Singh were in funds. Study No. 13, therefore, resembled a land flowing with milk and honey.

Billy Bunter expected to find quite a number of tempting delicacies in the cupboard; and he was not disappointed.

On opening the cupboard door, the fat junior gave a whoop of delight.

The shelves were stacked with all manner of good things.

There was a rabbit pie, a dish of jam-tarts, and a huge plum cake.

These were the three principal items which caught Billy Bunter's eye. He didn't worry about the rest.

"Here goes!" he murmured.

And he reached down the rabbit-pie, the jam-tarts, and the cake.

"I'd better not scoff them here, in case anybody comes in!" he muttered. "I'll take them along to the woodshed. I shall be safe there."

With the pie under one arm, the cake under the other, and the dish of tarts balanced in one of his plump hands, the

Owl of the Remove rolled towards the door.

But he never reached his objective.

Crash!

The screen in the study was suddenly overturned, and a junior dashed out from behind it.

It was Bob Cherry!

"Bunter, you fat villain," roared the indignant Bob, "put those things down!"

Billy Bunter obeyed with alacrity. He let go of the pie, the cake, and the jam-tarts as if they had suddenly become red-hot.

There was a series of crashes.

The pie-dish was shattered to fragments, and a rivulet of gravy trickled across the study carpet.

The cake fell into halves, and the jam-tarts were scattered all over the floor.

Billy Bunter took no notice of the wreckage. His startled glance was fixed upon Bob Cherry.

"Oh, crumbs! I—I didn't know you were here!" faltered the fat junior. "I thought you were playing cricket."

"So I was," answered Bob Cherry grimly; "but I had occasion to come to the study for a fresh bat."

"I call it a mean trick to hide behind the screen like that!" said Billy Bunter.

"I wanted to see what you were up to, my fat tulip. Pick all this grub up, and put it back in the cupboard. It's hardly fit for human consumption after you've chucked it on to the floor. But we'll do our best with it."

Billy Bunter stooped down and gathered up the punctured pie, the broken cake, and the shapeless jam-tarts, and replaced them in the cupboard. Scarcely had he done so, when the study door opened, and four juniors looked in. They were Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh.

All were in flannels, and four separate and distinct glares were bestowed upon Bob Cherry.

"We've been waiting for you, you ass!" said Harry Wharton. "It's your innings."

"Sorry; but—"

"What's Bunter doing in here?" growled Johnny Bull.

"He came in to raid my tuck," ex-

plained Bob Cherry. "I caught the fat worm redhanded."

"Oh, really, Cherry, it—it was only a joke, you know!"

Harry Wharton frowned.

"We shall have to cure you of playing jokes of that sort!" he said grimly. "Bump him!"

"Hold on!" interrupted Bob Cherry. "It seems to me, you fellows, that a bumping's much too mild a punishment."

"What do you suggest, then?" said Frank Nugent. "A Form-licking?"

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"It's up to us," he said impressively, "to take Bunter thoroughly in hand and reform him."

"Eh?"

"What?"

Bob Cherry's chums stared at him in astonishment.

"It can be done, and, what's more, it's going to be done," said Bob.

"We've put up with Bunter and his little ways long enough. He's got to be reformed, and converted into a little gentleman."

"My hat!"

"Bumpings are no good," Bob Cherry went on. "Bunter soon forgets all about them. We must form a society—the S.R.B.B.—Society for Reforming Billy Bunter—and we must tackle the job thoroughly."

Billy Bunter looked greatly alarmed. His knees were knocking together in his agitation.

"I—I don't know what you're driving at, Cherry!" he said. "A fellow with high principles, like me, doesn't need reforming. If you've got a sudden passion for reforming fellows, why not start on Skinner, or Fishy?"

"Skinner, like Brutus, is an honourable man, compared with you," said Bob Cherry. "And so is Fishy. They don't need reforming half as much as you do. You're a fibber, and an eavesdropper, and a glutton, and lots more unpleasant things. And I'm going to form a society that will take you in hand and cure you. What do you say, you fellows?"

Harry Wharton shook his head. "Utterly impossible!" he said.

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Billy Bunter was dragged into the woodshed before the Society. Bob Cherry, clothed in a robe belonging to Mr. Quelch, was seated on a wooden box. "Prisoner at the bar, you are arraigned before me on four separate charges!" he said. (See Chapter 5.)

"Hear, hear!" said Frank Nugent. "You'd never reform Bunter in a thousand years!"

"Can the Ethiopian change his skinfulness, or the leopard his spotfulness?" murmured Hurree Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry stuck to his guns.

"I'm positive we can do it," he said. "It will take time, of course. Rome wasn't built in a day. You can't turn a rank outsider into a first-class fellow in five minutes. Are you fellows going to join my society?"

"The answer to the right honourable gentleman is in the negative," said Johnny Bull.

"We'd back you up in your campaign if it had a ghost of a chance of succeeding," said Harry Wharton, "but it hasn't. As Inky said, in his weird and wonderful English, the thingummybob cannot change its skinfulness, or the what's-a-name its spotfulness. A fellow who tries to reform Bunter is biting off more than he can chew."

"That's so," said Nugent.

Billy Bunter began to look hopeful.

Bob Cherry's scheme was receiving no support from his chums, so he would probably abandon it.

But Bob could be very determined when he chose. And he was determined now.

"I shall form that society, even if I'm the only member of it!" he declared.

And Bunter's heart sank.

"Well, come and have your innings first, Bob, and leave the formation of the S.R.B.B. till afterwards," said Johnny Bull.

Bob Cherry suffered his chums to escort him back to the cricket ground. But in the excitement of the game which followed he did not forget his resolve.

Bob had quite made up his mind to take Billy Bunter in hand and reform him. And the outlook was anything but pleasant for the Owl of the Remove!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Getting to Business!

"HALLO! What's all this?" Skinner and Stott and Bolsover major strolled up to the notice-board arm-in-arm, and halted in front of the announcement which had only recently been posted up.

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"Notice!

"There will be a Special Meeting in the Rag this evening to discuss a subject of vital importance. Everybody in the Remove Form is urged to be present.

"(Signed) ROBERT CHERRY,
"President, S.R.B.B."

"S.R.B.B.," echoed Bolsover major. "What the merry dickens is that?"

"The Society for Reforming Bully Bolsover," suggested Skinner, with a grin.

Bolsover scowled.

"Are you looking for a thick ear?" he demanded.

"Nunno!"

"Well, dry up, then!"

"Skinner made a slight mistake," said Bob Cherry, who had come on the scene in time to overhear the conversation. "S.R.B.B. means the Society for Reforming Billy Bunter—not Bully Bolsover. We all know that Bolsover badly wants reforming, but he'll have to wait his turn."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What time's the meeting?" asked Stott.

"Seven o'clock," said Bob Cherry.

And he inserted the time on the announcement.

When the Remove got to know what the meeting was all about there was much amusement and excitement.

Although Harry Wharton and his immediate chums were not keen on joining Bob Cherry's society, there were many fellows who were willing to give Bob a hand.

Peter Todd, Monty Newland, Tom Redwing, Vernon-Smith, Dick Russell—all expressed themselves in favour of Bob Cherry's campaign to make Bunter mend his ways.

At seven o'clock the junior Common-room, familiarly known as the Rag, was packed.

The Remove were present to a man. Billy Bunter himself had turned up. He was hoping that Bob Cherry's scheme would prove a "wash-out," and that there would be nothing doing.

When the last stroke of seven died away Bob Cherry jumped up on to the table.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows—"

"Hear, hear!"

"On the ball!"

"We are assembled here for the purpose—"

"Well, you don't suppose we drifted here accidentally, do you?" said a voice.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry frowned the interrupted into silence.

"We are assembled here for the purpose of forming the S.R.B.B.—"

"Seems Rather Big Business!" remarked Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shurrup, Toddy! Don't interrupt the speaker! The S.R.B.B.—in case any of you chumps haven't the sense to see what it means—is the Society for Reforming Billy Bunter."

"Great pip!"

"You've got a job on, Cherry!"

"I am well aware, gentlemen," said Bob with dignity, "of the magnitude of the undertaking."

"Magnitude's a good word," said Squiff. "I'll back it both ways!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's going to be a difficult job to transform Bunter into a decent and respectable member of society," Bob Cherry went on. "But we don't shirk difficult jobs in this establishment. In fact, the harder the job, the stronger our determination!"

"Hear, hear!"

"I say, Cherry, you beast, I don't want reforming—"

"Dry up, Bunter!"

"Silence for the chair!"

Billy Bunter jumped to his feet. His eyes were gleaming wrathfully behind his big spectacles.

"I refuse to be reformed! I protest! If any fellow lays a finger on me—"

"Oh, gag him, somebody!" growled Bob Cherry.

Peter Todd promptly clapped his hand over Billy Bunter's mouth, and the fat junior's remarks trailed off in a choking gurgle.

"You have doubtless heard, gentlemen," said Bob Cherry, "of the well-known song, 'I'm For Ever Blowing Bubbles.' Well, in Bunter's case it's 'I'm For Ever Telling Whoppers,' and we've got to cure him of that little habit. We've also got to cure him of listening at keyholes, overfeeding, and trying to raise money on imaginary postal-orders that he's expecting."

"My hat!" ejaculated Dick Penfold.

"I don't envy you your job, Cherry!"

"My pal Wharton and others think that I shall fail," said Bob Cherry. "But I'm not going to hear of failure. Now, who will join my society? Don't all speak at once!"

They didn't!

The majority of the fellows were of the opinion that Bob Cherry was setting himself too big a task.

After a moment's hesitation, Peter Todd came forward. Newland and Rodney followed his lead; then Redwing and Vernon-Smith went forward, and finally Russell and Ogilvy.

"Good! We're getting on famously!" said Bob Cherry. "There are eight of us, and if we can't convert Bunter I'll eat my Sunday topper! Any more fellows going to join my society?"

There were no more, so Bob Cherry jotted down the names of those who had already offered themselves.

"Now, gentlemen," he said, "you are duly enrolled as members of the S.R.B.B. The society will not be disbanded until its object has been achieved, and Billy Bunter is a reformed character!"

Billy Bunter, who had been released by Peter Todd when on the verge of suffocation, lifted up his voice.

"Look here, Cherry, you rotter, if you start interfering with me I shall tell Quelch—"

"Sneaking!" said Bob Cherry grimly.

"That's one of the little habits of which we're going to cure you!"

"And what about making him wash his neck properly in the mornings?" suggested Vernon-Smith.

"You can leave that to your Uncle Bob," said Bob Cherry.

"We must make Bunter take an interest in sport," said Monty Newland.

"My dear fellow," said Bob, "he'll be a famous athlete by the time we've finished with him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'll have to work off some of his rolls of fat first!" chuckled Bolsover major.

And there was a fresh peal of laughter. Bob Cherry glanced thoughtfully at the Owl of the Remove.

"Bunter's a hard case, but not a hopeless one," he said. "We shall have to spend a lot of time and patience over him, of course. But we shall lick him into shape eventually. It's going to be a case of kill or cure."

"Ow!" gasped Billy Bunter.

And the fat junior conjured up vivid mental pictures of the awful experiences he would shortly be called upon to endure.

"I—I say, Bob, old chap," he stammered, trying a change of tactics, "don't be hard on an old pal! If you start taking me in hand, as you call it, you'll just about finish me. I'm as weak as a rat as it is. I've got a weak heart, and an awfully frail constitution."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Dick Russell. "Just look at the size of his arms and legs!"

"Ahem! That's muscular rheumatism!" said Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I know a good cure for rheumatism," said Bob Cherry. "You must take the waters—the waters of the River Sark."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll drag you out of bed before rising-bell in the morning, and take you for an early dip," said Peter Todd.

"Oh, really, Toddy! I'm surprised at you! Fancy rounding on an old pal like that!"

"It's a case of 'Save me from my friends!'" chuckled Tom Redwing.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The meeting was now over. Harry Wharton rose to his feet with a yawn.

"Well, we'll leave you to it, Bob," he said. "I wish you luck; but I'm afraid you'll never reform Bunter. It's a perfectly hopeless task."

"Absolutely!" agreed Nugent.

Bob Cherry smiled.

"You'll see some startling developments during the next few days," he said.

A shudder ran through Billy Bunter's frame.

"I—I say, Cherry, I'll give you all the money I've got in the bank, if only you'll leave me alone!" he said.

"What's the use of that, when you're at least a quid in debt?" said Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter saw that there was no escape for him. And his heart sank. There was nothing for it but to resign himself to the tender mercies of the S.R.B.B. And, judging by the grim expressions of the members of that organisation, they were not likely to spare the Owl of the Remove.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Taken in Hand!

BILLY BUNTER was left in peace that evening.

Next morning, however, before the rising-bell clanged out its harsh summons, Bob Cherry was up and doing. He roused the other members of his society, and then he roused Billy

Bunter—by the simple expedient of squeezing a wet sponge over Billy's face from beautiful countenance.

"Ooooooch! Gug-gug-gug!"

Billy Bunter shot up like a plump jack-in-the-box, spluttering wildly, and gouging the water from his eyes.

"Out you get, my fat tulip!" said Bob Cherry.

"Look here, you've got no right——"

"I have got a right, and I'll use it if you don't buck up!" said Bob, clenching his fist. "Put a jerk in it!"

Very reluctantly Billy Bunter parted company with the bedclothes. He looked a forlorn figure in his tight-fitting pyjamas.

Peter Todd poured the contents of a water-jug into one of the basins.

"Come, landlord, fill the flowing bowl!" murmured Vernon-Smith.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter eyed the basin of water with considerable apprehension.

"I say, that—that's not for me, is it?" he faltered.

"Right on the wicket!" said Bob Cherry.

"But I thought you mentioned the River Sark last night——"

"So I did. But before we gather at the river, so to speak, we're going to see that you wash your neck, porpoise!"

"But I washed it only last Friday——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We're going to show you how to do the thing properly," said Newland.

"This way!"

The members of the S.R.B.B. closed in upon Billy Bunter, and hustled him towards the wash-basin. Then they up-ended him—not without difficulty, for Billy Bunter weighed fourteen stone—and the fat junior's head disappeared into the bowl.

Gurgle, gurgle, gurgle!

A number of bubbles rose to the surface of the water.

Billy Bunter tried to extricate himself from his unfortunate position, but in vain. Newland held one of his legs, and Peter Todd the other, while Bob Cherry proceeded to massage Bunter's neck with soap and water.

Bob applied himself vigorously to the task. He was evidently enjoying himself.

"Better let the porpoise come up for a breath of air," suggested Ogilvy. "I know you said it was a kill-or-cure treatment, but we don't want to kill him too quickly!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter was deposited on his feet. He was as red as a turkey-cock, and his breath came and went in great gasps.

"Groo! I—I'm suffocated!" he panted.

"Save your breath," said Vernon-Smith.

"We're just going to up-end you again!"

"Ow!"

"Heave-ho, me hearties!" said Peter Todd.

Once again Billy Bunter's head was immersed in the bowl of water, and Bob Cherry completed the neck-cleansing operations.

When the ordeal was over, the fat junior looked cleaner than he had looked for months.

"What shall we dry him with," inquired Tom Redwing—"sandpaper?"

"We don't want to rub his chivvy away," said Bob Cherry. "A rough towel's the proper caper."

Newland handed over a towel, and Bob Cherry again got busy.

Billy Bunter's face positively glowed by the time the drying process was over.

"Now for the early morning dip!" said Bob.

"Oh crumbs! I—I haven't got a bathing costume!" protested Billy Bunter.

"We'll soon find you one. We're not going to be put off our stroke by little difficulties of that sort. There's only one costume at Greyfriars that you can wear without bursting through it, and that's Prout's. I'm sure he won't mind us borrowing it, in the cause of charity."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Dick Russell slipped out of the dormitory, returning a moment later with a large bathing-costume—the property of the master of the Fifth. It was very unlikely that Mr. Prout would miss it, for he only used it on rare occasions.

"Good work, Russell!" said Bob Cherry. "I'll make you vice-president of the society for that!"

"With a salary of five hundred a year?" inquired Russell.

"Ass! This is voluntary work. We shall be well repaid by seeing Bunter blossom forth into a little gentleman."

"Some hopes!" murmured Monty Newland. "Still, we'll do our best."

The juniors then adjourned to the river.

Billy Bunter was very reluctant to



The members of the S.R.B.B. closed in upon Billy Bunter, and hustled him towards the wash-basin. Then they up-ended him, and the fat junior's head disappeared into the bowl. "We're going to do the thing properly!" said Peter Todd. (See this page.)

accompany the party, and Peter Todd and Monty Newland were obliged to act as warders.

Bunter was marched away in a manner reminiscent of Eugene Aram, when he walked between his captors with gyves upon his wrists.

"I—I say, you fellows," he faltered, "what will the water be like?"

"A trifle damp, I should say!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Quite wet, in fact!" chuckled Ogilvy.

"Groo!"

When the placid waters of the Sark came in sight, Billy Bunter shivered like a table-jelly.

"Dud-dud-don't be hard on me, you fellows!" he pleaded. "If you chuck me in the river, I shall die of composure!"

"Ha, ha! You mean 'exposure'!" chuckled Peter Todd.

"Well, it's the same thing, isn't it? I've got a weak heart—"

"That's another term for blue funk," said Bob Cherry, "and we're going to cure you of all that. Off with your togs!"

Five minutes later, Billy Bunter stood on the bank, clad in Mr. Prout's bathing-costume. He gazed down at the water, and caught the reflection of his own terror-stricken face.

"In you go, porpoise!" said Vernon-Smith. "We'll give you ten seconds to take the plunge of your own accord. If you don't, we shall have to apply a little pressure from the rear."

"Ow! I—I don't like the look of the water—"

"Tackle it, man!" said Bob Cherry. "It won't bite you!"

Vernon-Smith was counting out the seconds, and when he got to ten, Billy Bunter was still on dry land. Whereupon, he was given a gentle push in the back, sufficient to make him lose his balance and topple him into the water.

Splash!

A wild yell rent the air—a yell which died away in a gurgle, as Billy Bunter disappeared beneath the surface.

When he came up, with his hair matted over his forehead, he found Bob Cherry beside him.

"Now, then," said Bob, "I'm going to make a Channel swimmer of you! Strike out!"

Billy Bunter promptly obeyed, but not in the manner intended by his tutor. He struck out wildly with his clenched fist, and Bob Cherry gave a howl as he received a violent blow on the ear.

"Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the other members of the S.R.B.B., who were enjoying the fun.

"If you strike your superior again," said Bob Cherry grimly, "I shall duck you! Now strike out with your arms and legs. You ought to make a fine swimmer, with all that fat!"

Under Bob Cherry's tuition, Billy Bunter made excellent progress. As a matter of fact, he could already swim a little. There had been a time, far back in the forgotten past, when he had actually saved a girl from drowning.

It was Bob Cherry's intention to convert the fat junior from a novice into a champion.

Billy Bunter stayed in the water until he began to look blue about the lips. He was then allowed to return to the boathouse and dress himself.

"Well, we've made a good start, you fellows," said Bob Cherry, as he rubbed himself down. "We've washed Bunter's neck, and we've put him through his paces at swimming."

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"And now I suppose we give him a rest until to-morrow," said Peter Todd.

"Eh? No jolly fear! There's no rest for the wicked. After morning lessons, we'll give Bunter some coaching at cricket."

"Afraid you'll never make a Jessop of him," said Vernon-Smith.

"P'raps not. But we can at least teach him how to play with a straight bat, how to field a ball, and how to hold a catch."

When Billy Bunter appeared at the breakfast-table, he looked fresher and fitter than he had done for weeks.

Mr. Quelch, who sat at the head of the Remove table, noticed the fat junior's healthy appearance.

"I am pleased to see you looking so well, Bunter," he said. "I must also compliment you upon your unusually clean appearance, and the fact that you are wearing a clean collar."

"Thank you, sir!" said Billy Bunter, beaming. "May I have an extra rasher of bacon, sir?"

"Yes, I think you might, as a reward for taking an interest in your personal appearance," said Mr. Quelch.

"The credit's going to the wrong quarter," murmured Bob Cherry. "I'm the one who ought to be congratulated on Bunter's clean appearance. It was all done by kindness, too."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

Billy Bunter's appetite, on this particular morning, was even greater than usual.

Already the fat junior was beginning to feel the benefit of exercising his muscles, which had become flabby through lack of usage.

All the same, Bunter was far from happy. Violent exertion of any kind was painful to him. He wished that Bob Cherry and the others would leave him in peace.

"They won't worry me any more to-day, at any rate," he reflected.

But he was wrong.

As soon as morning lessons were over, Billy Bunter was rushed away to the nets on Little Side.

"Off with your jacket, and on with the pads!" commanded Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter had no option in the matter, for Peter Todd wrenched off his jacket, and Vernon-Smith and Newland were already engaged in buckling the pads on to his plump legs.

"Now," said Bob Cherry, "you've got to stand in front of those three bits of wood that are sticking in the ground, and protect 'em from being hit by the ball."

"Oh, really, Cherry, I'm not much good as a batsman—"

"What a confession!" said Bob. "You're always telling the readers of 'Billy Bunter's Weekly' that you're a Jessop and a Hobbs rolled into one!"

"Ahem! This is one of my off-days—"

But Bob Cherry would hear of no excuse.

Billy Bunter was compelled to take his stand in front of the stumps, and half a dozen juniors, with rolled-up sleeves, and a cricket-ball clasped in each right hand, prepared to bowl.

A grinning crowd stood behind the nets, looking on.

"Play!" shouted Bob Cherry.

And he took a run like a war-horse going into action.

Whizz!

The ball rose wickedly off the pitch, and smote the batsman in the thigh.

Billy Bunter then favoured the audience with a song and dance. The song portion of it was a shrill "Yarooooh!" repeated ad lib.

"Sorry, Bunt!" sang out Bob Cherry. "But you should have pulled that one round to leg, you know!"

Billy Bunter hopped about in anguish for a moment. Then he took his stand once more, and faced Monty Newland.

Now, Newland was a fellow who could bowl only one type of ball, and that was a very fast and deadly one. Sometimes it hit the wicket; more often than not it hit the batsman, unless he hopped out of the way in time.

On this occasion, Billy Bunter stopped the ball with his chest. He toppled backwards with a yell, and sat on his wicket, to the vast amusement of the spectators.

"Trying to hatch the stumps, Bunt?" inquired Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! My breast-bone's broken in three places!" moaned Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter was out of action for some moments. When at length he managed to scramble to his feet, he threw down his bat and declared that he had had enough.

But Bob Cherry thought differently.

"Why, you've only been at the wicket a couple of minutes!" he exclaimed.

"Shure, he's only had two hits, and he missed them both!" said Micky Desmond.

And then he wondered why everybody laughed.

Billy Bunter was compelled to resume his innings.

With the next ball, Peter Todd captured his middle stump. Then Vernon-Smith uprooted the off-stump, and Dick Russell completed the performance by sending the leg-stump spinning.

"Look here, Bunt," said Bob Cherry, "this won't do at all! Let me stand beside you, and show you how it's done."

It was a thankless task that Bob had set himself, but he stuck to it. He showed Bunter when to play forward at the ball, and when to play back at it; also when to leave it severely alone. He also demonstrated the value of keeping a sound bat.

By the time Billy Bunter's innings was over, he was certainly wiser than when he started. He could actually hit the ball—though he invariably spooned it into the air.

"You're getting on famously!" said Bob Cherry. "We'll make a cricketer of you yet!"

Billy Bunter dabbed at his perspiring brow. Then he removed his pads, put on his jacket, and rolled away.

"Hi! Whither bound?" called Bob Cherry.

"I'm going to the tuckshop," said Bunter.

"Your mistake! You're not going to do anything of the sort!" said Bob cheerfully. "If you start stuffing yourself with pastries you'll undo all the good work we've done. We're making you fit, and we're going to see that you keep fit, too!"

"You can't stop me from having a snack!" said Billy Bunter indignantly. "I've got a bob, and I'm going to spend it!"

"On six tuppenny jam-tarts, I suppose?" said Bob Cherry. "Well, there's nothing doing. If you want refreshments you can come along to my study, and I'll treat you to a 'Thin Lunch' biscuit and a glass of milk."

"Groo!"

Billy Bunter was not exactly touched by Bob Cherry's generous offer. But he availed himself of it, for he knew that he would not be allowed to patronise the tuckshop.

"I say, Cherry, you've finished with me for to-day, I hope?" said Bunter.

"Sorry to shatter your hopes, Bunt, but I must ask you to report to me after lessons this afternoon."

"W-w-what for?"
"You're going to have the gloves on with me in the gym."

"Help!"
Billy Bunter nearly collapsed. Bitterly he regretted having attempted to raid Study No. 13 on the previous day. If only he had given that study a wide berth, the S.R.B.B. would never have been formed.

But it was too late for vain regrets. Bob Cherry had set his heart on reforming Billy Bunter, and wild horses would not have turned Bob from his purpose.

The prospect was an enjoyable one for the reformers, but not for the fellow who was to be reformed!

"Hollup!"
"You'll begin to shine at the noble art."

Billy Bunter gave a hollow groan. "I don't see what right you've got to interfere with my leisure in this way," he said. "I want to get on with the next number of my 'Weekly.' It's press day to-morrow—"

"You can put in a couple of hours now," said Bob Cherry. "I sha'n't want you again until this evening."

"Eh? What do you want me this evening for?"

"We're going to do a bit of long-distance running," said Bob calmly.

"Oh crumbs!"

Bob Cherry strolled away, and a few moments later Billy Bunter saw him going out of gates on his bicycle.

"Thank goodness!" muttered the fat

Billy Bunter nodded, and burst into tears. They were crocodile tears, turned on to order.

"There, there! Don't cry, my boy!" said Sir John.

There was a musical clink, and a couple of half-crowns reposed in Billy Bunter's palm.

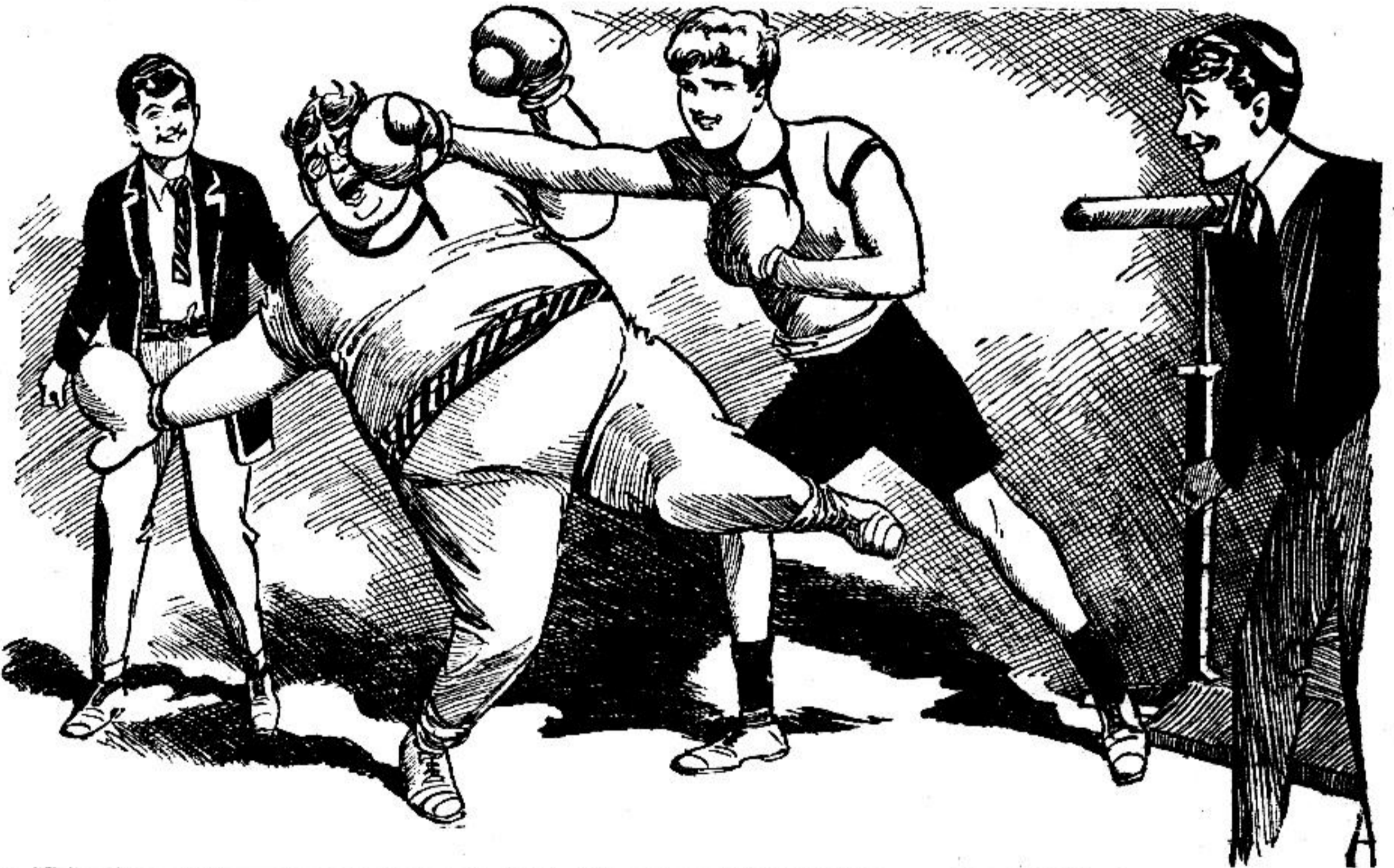
"You must learn to take hard knocks with fortitude," was Sir John's parting advice.

And he patted Billy Bunter on the back, and went towards his car, which was waiting for him.

As soon as the car drove away Billy Bunter's sobs turned into chuckles.

"Five bob!" he chortled gleefully. "That'll get me a first-class feed!"

Forgetful of the fact that he had not written his editorial for "Billy Bunter's Weekly,"* the editor of that weird and



Bob Cherry played with Bunter as a cat plays with a mouse, but now and again he gave his fat opponent a tap on the nose which caused the water to rush to Bunter's eyes. (See this page.)

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

In the Toils!

BILLY BUNTER'S experiences in the gym, when afternoon lessons were over, were the reverse of pleasant.

Of course, Bob Cherry did not go "all out." Had he done so, the floor of the gym would have been strewn with little pieces of Bunter.

Bob played with Bunter as a cat plays with a mouse; but now and again he gave his fat opponent a tap on the nose, which caused the water to rush to Bunter's eyes.

The bout lasted exactly three minutes, but to Billy Bunter it seemed like three decades.

Bunter was no boxer, and not once did he succeed in breaking through Bob Cherry's guard.

"You've a lot to learn before you can hope to challenge Joe Beckett," said Bob. "You don't know the first principles of attack and defence. Still, after you've had a scrap with me every day for a fortnight—"

junior, with a sigh of relief. "I shall be able to get a bit of peace now."

Billy Bunter rolled out into the Close, looking very disconsolate.

Although Bob Cherry had not hit him hard during the boxing bout, his face seemed very tender. He was dabbing at it with his handkerchief, when a benevolent-looking gentleman came towards him.

"Hallo, my boy! What's the matter? Been in the wars?"

Billy Bunter recognised the speaker as Sir John Pringle, one of the governors of Greyfriars.

Sir John came down occasionally to interview the Head. He was by way of being a philanthropist, a fact of which Billy Bunter was perfectly well aware.

"Yow-ow-ow! One of the fellows has been bullying me, sir!" he groaned.

"Tut, tut! Surely you are big enough to take your own part?"

"Yessir. But this was a big fellow, a giant in the Sixth, sir."

"I see. And he gave you a hiding—what?"

wonderful journal wended his way towards the tuckshop.

"Some jam-tarts, some doughnuts, some cream-buns, some pineapple chunks, and a large strawberry ice, please, Mrs. Mimble!" he said, all in one breath.

"Here, not so fast, my son!" said a voice.

And Monty Newland slipped down from the stool on which he had been seated, and fastened a firm grip on Billy Bunter's collar.

"Leggo, Newland, you beast!"

"You're disobeying the second and third commandments of the S.R.B.B.," said Newland. "'Thou shalt not stuff' and 'Thou shalt not make a beast of thyself.' I don't see any difference between the two, really, but they've got to be obeyed—eh, Rodney?"

"Oh, rather!" chuckled Rodney.

Billy Bunter blinked indignantly through his big spectacles at Newland and Rodney.

* "Billy Bunter's Weekly" can be seen in the "Popular" every Friday.

"You can't stop me from having a feed!" he exclaimed.

"We can, and will!" was Monty Newland's rejoinder. "Out you go!"

Billy Bunter was hustled towards the door of the tuckshop, and given a final push which caused him to alight on all fours in the Close.

The fat junior picked himself up with a view to re-entering the shop. But Newland and Rodney stood framed in the doorway, ready for action. So Billy Bunter thought better of it, and reluctantly beat a retreat.

Muttering savagely to himself, he went along to his study.

Alonzo Todd was within, with his head buried in a book.

The sight of Alonzo gave Bunter an inspiration.

He could not obtain food at the tuckshop if he went himself, but what was to prevent him from employing somebody else to do his shopping for him?

"I say, Lonzy!"

"Yes, my dear Bunter?" said Alonzo, looking up.

"Would you mind running along to the tuckshop for me? I sprained my ankle in the Close, and I can hardly walk. Get me five bobs' worth of assorted pastries, will you?"

"Certainly!" said the obliging Alonzo. "I will explain to Mrs. Mimble that they are for you—"

"You'll do nothing of the sort!" said Bunter fiercely. "The pastries are for you, you understand?"

"How very generous of Bunter!" murmured Alonzo, as he strolled away. "This is the first time he has ever treated me to five shillings' worth of pastries. It really is amazingly generous!"

The Duffer of the Remove had completely misunderstood Bunter's meaning. He fondly imagined that the pastries were for his own consumption.

Monty Newland and Rodney had left the tuckshop by the time Alonzo got there. This was fortunate, for the two chums would certainly have smelt a rat.

"I want five shillings' worth of assorted pastries, please, Mrs. Mimble," said Alonzo, laying down on the counter the two half-crowns which Bunter had given him.

"Certainly, Master Todd," said the tuckshop dame. "Which pastries will you have?"

"Oh, two of this, and two of that, and two of those over there," said Alonzo, punctuating his remarks by pointing to various dishes. "And I'll have some cream buns, and some chocolate fingers, and some of those Eccles cakes."

Mrs. Mimble stowed the pastries into a capacious bag, which she handed to Alonzo. Then she swept the two half-crowns into the till, and nodded affably to the Duffer of the Remove, who had been her best customer that afternoon.

Alonzo Todd, fondly imagining that the pastries were intended for him, carried the bulging bag to a rustic seat beneath one of the old elms.

He was feeling peckish, and the sight of the pastries gave an edge to his appetite.

Alonzo was not a glutton, but he never said no to a good feed. He made himself thoroughly comfortable on the seat, opened the bag, and got busy.

"Really, these pastries are delicious!" he murmured. "Bunter's generosity is extraordinary. It has knocked me all of a heap!"

One by one, the pastries disappeared.

By the time he was half way through them, Alonzo began to feel uncomfortably full.

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"I shall have to get somebody to help me out," he murmured.

There was no difficulty in doing that.

Bolsover minor was strolling in the Close, and Alonzo Todd beckoned to him.

On catching sight of the paper bag, Bolsover minor answered the summons with alacrity.

"Would you like a few pastries, my dear Bolsover?" inquired Alonzo.

"Oh, no!" said the fag sarcastically. "I really shouldn't know what to do with 'em!"

So saying, he relieved Alonzo of the bag, and was soon nibbling away contentedly.

Meanwhile, Billy Bunter was waiting, with growing impatience, for his pastries to arrive.

"That idiot Todd's a jolly long time!" he muttered. "I suppose he bumped into Newland and Rodney, and told them that the pastries were for me, so they wouldn't let him bring them."

At last, unable to wait in patience any longer, Billy Bunter sallied forth to see what had become of Alonzo.

The fat junior had the shock of his life when he discovered his study-mate in the Close.

Alonzo Todd was reclining on the rustic seat, with a seraphic smile on his countenance, and with his hands folded in the region of his lowest waistcoat-button. Beside him sat Bolsover minor, in the act of demolishing the last of the pastries.

Billy Bunter gave a roar.

"Todd!"

"Yes, my dear Bunter?"

"I'll 'dear Bunter' you! What's happened to my pastries?"

Alonzo Todd sat up, blinking at Billy Bunter in astonishment.

"I—I fail to understand you," he stammered.

Billy Bunter's expression became so ferocious that Bolsover minor promptly bolted.

"I sent you to the tuckshop to buy me five bobs' worth of pastries," hooted the fat junior.

Alonzo looked more and more astonished.

"But you—you said they were for me!" he protested.

"You—you—I didn't say anything of the sort! I wanted you to pretend they were for you, so that Newland and Rodney wouldn't twig."

"Oh!"

"And now you've been and scoffed them!" roared Bunter, clenching his fists.

"Five bobs' worth of pastries gone west! I want my money back!"

"My dear Bunter—"

"Gimme my five-bob!"

"I would hand you five shillings with pleasure," said Alonzo; "but the fact is, I am in the state which is vulgarly known as stony."

Then Billy Bunter's wrath fairly overflowed. He was not a fighting-man as a rule, but the thought that his pastries had been consumed and that he could get no compensation, filled him with fury.

He gripped Alonzo by the collar, and jerked him off the seat. Then, getting his victim's head in chancery, he pommelled it unmercifully.

"Ow! Yaroooooh! He's mad! Dragimoff!" shrieked the hapless Alonzo.

Biff! Thud! Biff! Thud!

The blows rained like summer hail upon Alonzo's devoted head.

"I'll teach you to scoff my pastries!" panted Billy Bunter, emphasising his remarks with a further series of punches.

"Take that—and that—and that!"

Alonzo took them, and then he sank on to the ground like a limp sack. For three minutes he had been at the mercy of a human hurricane. Billy Bunter's

blows had overwhelmed him, and he lay panting and gasping on the flagstones.

Billy Bunter gazed thoughtfully down at his victim.

"I've a jolly good mind to give you another dose!" he said.

The words seemed to electrify Alonzo. He leapt to his feet, and scuttled away towards the building like a startled rabbit.

Billy Bunter threw himself on to the rustic seat, and bemoaned the loss of his pastries.

He was still seated there when Bob Cherry returned.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Got your editorial finished, Bunt?" inquired Bob.

"No!"

"You lazy slacker! I wonder that your 'Weekly' ever comes out at all. Still, if we can't rouse you to mental energy, we can rouse you to physical. Go and get into your running shorts."

"Look here, Cherry, you beast, this has gone far enough—"

"Do as I tell you!" roared Bob.

And his tone was so imperious that Billy Bunter didn't think twice about obeying. A few moments later he rejoined Bob Cherry in his running garb.

"Now," said Bob, "we're going for a two-mile trot. We'll take it easy for the first mile, and cover the second at top speed."

"Wow!"

"Mind you keep pace with me," said Bob Cherry, as they started off. "If you lag behind, look out for squalls!"

Side by side, Billy Bunter and his coach passed through the school gateway, and set off along the white stretch of road.

Bob Cherry ran in a graceful and effortless style. Billy Bunter was puffing and blowing like a grampus.

"I—I say! Ease up a bit, Cherry! You're going much too fast!"

"Save your breath," said Bob. "You'll need it for the second mile."

Billy Bunter was soon in distress. The perspiration coursed down his flabby cheeks, and he could scarcely drag one leg after the other.

But Bob Cherry was a stern taskmaster. He allowed no slacking, no slowing up.

At the end of the first mile, Billy Bunter was almost an ambulance case. His groans were pitiful. But Bob Cherry, like Pharaoh of old, hardened his heart, and refused to take compassion on the Owl of the Remove.

"It seems a bit strenuous at first," said Bob. "Long distance running always does. But you'll soon get in the way of it. Now, then! Spurt, man, spurt!"

Billy Bunter amused the pedestrians as he floundered along, nearly dropping with fatigue.

When at last the gates of Greyfriars came in sight, the fat junior drew a sobbing breath of relief.

In the gateway itself he collapsed, and declared that his last hour had come. Whereupon, Bob Cherry produced a pin, and stuck it into Bunter's calf.

"Yaroooooh!"

The Owl of the Remove jumped to his feet with remarkable agility for a dying person.

"I've finished with you for to-day, Bunt," said Bob Cherry.

"Yow! I should think you had. You've finished me altogether!"

Bob Cherry chuckled, and strolled away to report progress to the other members of the society.

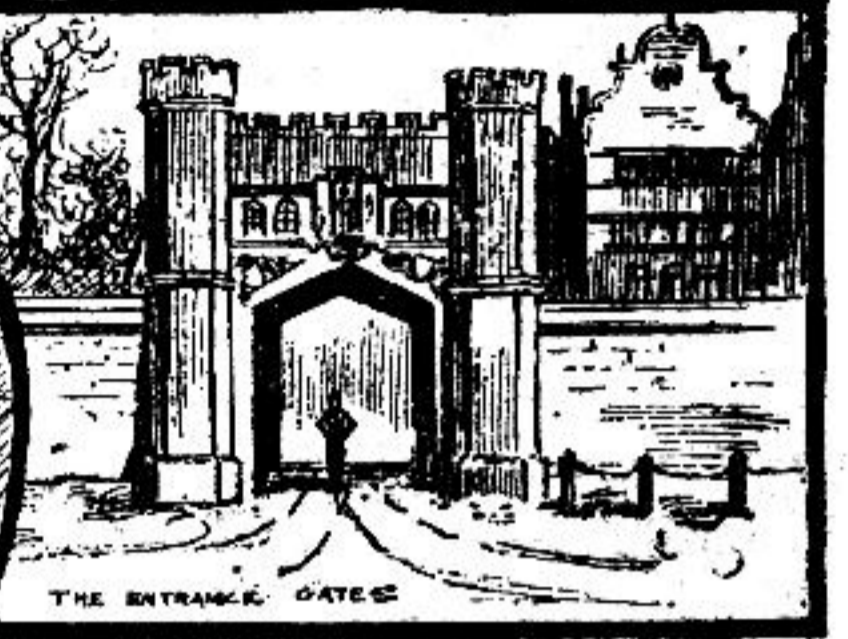
That night, Billy Bunter went to sleep as soon as his head touched the pillow.

Never in all his school career had the fat junior experienced such a strenuous day.

(Continued on page 13.)

The Greyfriars HERALD

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Assisted by BOB CHERRY (Fighting Editor), VERNON-SMITH (Sports Editor), MARK LINLEY, TOM BROWN, and FRANK NUGENT.

Address all letters to HARRY WHARTON, c/o The Magnet Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, E.C. 4.

EDITORIAL.

By Harry Wharton.

ACHANCE FOR THE MASTERS!
The high and mighty men of the Sixth have already given proof of their journalistic ability, and we are now placing our pages at the disposal of the masters of Greyfriars—and not only the masters, but the members of the domestic staff.

The Head, Mr. Quelch, Mr. Prout, and Mr. Larry Lascelles, have all taken a hand in the production of this number. I am awfully pleased, in a way, because none of them will expect to be paid for their contributions!

Of course, the masters are not having it all their own way. Several of our regular contributors are having a finger in the pie, and I hope this number of the "Greyfriars Herald" will receive as warm a welcome as its predecessors.

LOOKING AHEAD!

There are many more treats in store for my reader chums. Soon we shall be having our Special Scouting Number, which—though I say it myself—will prove one of the finest supplements the good old "Magnet" Library has ever had.

The "Impertinent Interviews" are proving very popular, and will continue for a time, and Billy Bunter tells me that he has a new contribution in the stocks. I have always maintained that Billy himself should be in the stocks!

Letters of appreciation continue to pour in from all parts of the world, showing that the "Herald" is becoming more and more popular, and that it holds a high place in the affections of British boys and girls throughout the Empire.

That such prosperity may continue is the ardent wish of

HARRY WHARTON.

P.S.—I am always pleased to hear from my numerous readers concerning special numbers of the old "Herald." If you know of any subject which you think could be made into a "special," please let me know, and I will go into the matter with the rest of the Co. Not that we are short of ideas, you know! We are just anxious to put before you that which pleases you most. Postcards will do. Cheerio, chums!—H. W.
Supplement i.]

IMPERTINENT INTERVIEWS!

By Our Special Representative.

No. 5.—MR. HACKER.

Mr. Horace Manfred Hacker is the master of the Shell. He is a hacker of shins and a flogger of innocent youths. He is a man with a temper, proof of which statement you shall see anon.

"Hacker's the next man on the list," said the editor, when I called upon him for instructions. "You'll find him in his study."

"I like him not," I said, shaking my head dubiously. "He's a sour, cross-grained old buffer. He'd lick me on the slightest provocation."

"Rats! He'd lick you on the hands if he licked you at all. I've never heard of a fellow being licked on the provocation!"

"I've a jolly good mind to refuse to do it!" was my Parthian shot. "You editor fellows are a jolly nuisance!"

The editor caught up a cushion, and hurled it at my head, but I managed to duck in the nick of time.

Then, notebook in hand, and pencil behind ear, I went along to Mr. Hacker's study. I tapped timidly on the door, but there was no response.

"Cheers! Hacker's not at home!" I murmured.

And I calmly strolled into the apartment. Evidently Mr. Hacker had been giving private tuition to some pupils, for there was a blackboard in his study, perched on an easel. On the board were a number of sentences, written in French.

I availed myself of Hacker's easy chair, and waited for him to turn up.

The minutes passed, and there was no sign of the master of the Shell.

Feeling restless and impatient, I rose to my feet, and began to pace up and down the study.

Presently I halted in front of the blackboard.

Whenever I see a blackboard and a piece of chalk, I can never resist the temptation to do a lightning sketch. I am an even better artist than I am a journalist, and that's saying a good deal.

Forgetful of the fact that I was in the sacred study of a master, forgetful of everything save my desire to execute a lightning sketch, I picked up a duster, and rubbed out the sentences that were written on the blackboard.

Then, taking up the chalk, I set to work.

Now, Hacker is a very easy subject to draw. He has a face like a chimpanzee. When he is unshaven he looks for all the world like a member of the monkey tribe.

Having drawn the head and body of a chimpanzee, therefore, I added a gown, and mortar-board.

"Better write something underneath it," I mused.

And I scribbled in chalk the following verse:

"Everyone calls me Tarzan,
Tarzan of the Apes!
Just look at my wonderful figure,
Don't snigger!
His figure's big, but my figure's bigger!
The flappers all flock around me
When I feed on bananas and grapes.
Oh, everyone calls me Tarzan,
Tarzan of the Apes!"

They say it is a poor artist who laughs at his own sketches; but I couldn't help exploding as I surveyed my handiwork.

And then I became suddenly sober as I realised my danger.

"When I hear Hacker coming," I murmured, "I must turn the blackboard round."

Even as I spoke, footsteps sounded in the corridor.

I made a grab at the blackboard, but the easel pegs had been fixed in so tightly that the beastly thing wouldn't budge!

"It's no go!" I muttered. "There's only one thing for it. I shall have to rub my beautiful sketch off the board."

But alas!
Before I could snatch up the duster the door opened, and Hacker came striding in.

The master of the Shell glared at me, and then at the blackboard. Then his eyes seemed to start out from his head.

"Never in all my days have I experienced such an insult!" he exclaimed. "Boy, I presume this is your handiwork?"

"Yes, sir!" I said meekly.
"How dare you draw a caricature of me on the blackboard?"


Hacker made a low, rumbling noise in his throat. Then he snatched up a cane.

"I will deal with you as you richly deserve!" he hissed. "Hold out your hand!"

I obeyed.
Swish! Swish! Swish!

The dose was repeated, and it needed all my powers of endurance to brave the ordeal without flinching.

My right hand is now in such a state that I sha'n't be able to draw another sketch for some time.



MY LIFE MY HISTORY

By Paul Pontifex Prout, M.A.

I FIRST saw the light of day in a little seaside village on the coast of Lincolnshire.

Everyone agreed that I was a most remarkable child—an infant prodigy. The family doctor informed my parents that I should probably die very young, owing to the fact that my brain was developing much too rapidly.

However, I was nursed like a tender plant, and soon became a chubby little chap—the pride and delight of the village.

At the age of three I had blossomed into a great athlete. I participated in all forms of sport. Cricket on the sands, winkle-catching at low tide, fishing from the end of the jetty with a rope and bucket—these were my favourite pursuits.

My chief accomplishment, however, was shooting. My exploits with an air-rifle astonished the natives. I once had three shots at a gatepost at twelve paces, and I hit the post every time! I did not happen to hit the same post that I aimed at; but that is a detail.

In the village school I was recognised as a first-class shot with a peashooter. From my place at the top of the class I could single out any boy in the room and bombard him. In those days I earned the nickname of "Peashooting Paul," and I was the admiration of my friends, and a source of terror to my enemies.

In due course I was sent to a preparatory school, but I was so far ahead of all the other boys in sport and general knowledge that I didn't stay long. I was packed off to a famous public school, and immediately got a place in the Fifth Form. I was thus exempt from the painful ordeal of fagging—in fact, I had a fag of my own.

I left my school under painful and distressing circumstances. I was not exactly expelled; but the headmaster sent a telegram to my father, asking him to take me away, as I was a danger to the community.

I will tell you how it came about. We were in the school chapel one day, and during the sermon a large bluebottle settled on the hat of a lady who was sitting in front of me.

I drew out my peashooter, and took careful aim at the buzzing insect. By some miraculous means I missed, and the pea, travelling with great force, smote the lady in the nape of the neck.

A wild shriek rang through the chapel, and it afterwards transpired that the lady was the Head's wife!

The following morning my father was communicated with, and I suddenly disappeared from the school. Some may call it expulsion, but I think "retirement" sounds much nicer.

I then went to another school, and managed to remain there until I was seventeen. By this time I was a crack shot. I could fire a revolver, a rifle, a blunderbuss—anything which had a trigger.

I was now too old to indulge in peashooting, but I always carried a water-pistol and a toy revolver in my hip-pocket in case of emergency.

It was my father's wish that I should study for the Bar; but, being a teetotaler by inclination, I gave the Bar a wide berth, and made my living, on leaving school, by writing poetry.

I wrote serious verse, but, curiously enough, only the comic papers would accept it.

My first month's income, from all sources, was fifteen shillings. This led me to the conclusion that poetry-writing didn't pay, and I went out to America to seek my fortune.

I worked my passage to the States, and on landing at New York I was fortunate enough to fall in with that famous millionaire sportsman, Sir Lyon Hunter.

Sir Lyon invited me to accompany him on a big-game shooting expedition in the Rocky Mountains. He assured me that if at any

time I happened to shoot at a wild beast and miss, he would give me a decent funeral.

But I never missed. My early training proved invaluable. Everything I fired at was mortally wounded, including two members of the shooting party who happened to get in the line of fire.

Buffaloes, bison, lions, tigers, bears, Red Indians, and other animals all fell victims to my deadly aim. My study at Greyfriars is full of the skins and horns of beasts I have despatched. The rug on my hearth was once the coat of a grizzly bear. The gloves I wear in winter-time are lined with the fur of a large rabbit I shot in Buckinghamshire. The thong of my hunting-crop is the tail of a gorilla I killed in South America. Every trophy in my study tells a story. (And it would appear that the writer of this article tells stories—and tall ones, too!—Ed.)

When Sir Lyon Hunter died—not by my hand, but as the result of being affectionately hugged by a bear—I was left a small fortune. I remained in America until this was exhausted, when I set sail for the Old Country.

I expected to find a huge crowd waiting on the quay at Southampton to welcome one of the greatest big-game hunters of modern



By some miraculous means I missed, and the pea smote the lady in the nape of the neck with great force.

times. But, alas! there was no demonstration of any sort when I landed. Such is fame!

I was still very young, and my father, who did not want me on his hands, sent me to one of the Universities, where I took my M.A. (No, the letters do not stand for "Marvellous Athlete." They mean "Master of Arts.")

My degree enabled me to obtain an appointment as a junior master at Greyfriars. I rapidly climbed the ladder, and am now, as everybody knows, the master of the Fifth Form.

I am still passionately fond of hunting, and during the last thirty years I have managed to shoot a pigeon outright, maim a rabbit, and kill a hare by accidentally treading on it.

My Winchester repeater—the symbol of many shooting triumphs—stands in the corner of my study. Dr. Locke declares that it repeats a good deal too often for the safety of the community. But, then, the Head is only jealous of my wonderful abilities as a marksman.

My fame as a sportsman is immense. I have taken whole continents in my stride. And I have no intention of giving up shooting just yet.

Ah, from my study window I can see a sparrow hopping about in the Close! It is my duty, as a big-game hunter, to despatch it. Stand clear, everybody! I am about to bring my Winchester repeater into action!

CONCERNING MASTERS!

By Mr. Larry Lascelles.

(We little thought that the popular mathematics-master at Greyfriars could be capable of such scathing sarcasm as is contained in the following paragraphs. Ed.)

A master is a beast and a tyrant. You should, therefore, treat him as such. Don't show him any respect, whatever you do. He isn't worth it.

If you meet a master in the street never raise your cap. You will be lowering your dignity if you do. Simply sing out "Hallo, Quelch!" or "What cheer, Larry!" as the case may be.

All masters, you will generally find, have some peculiarity of speech or manner. It is up to you to mimic that peculiarity whenever the master's back is turned. Your schoolfellows will be vastly entertained.

If you feel annoyed with a master, the correct thing to do is to wreck his study, or to fix up a booby-trap over the door. Getting your own back on a master is ripping sport.

Should a master reprimand you, answer him back, and don't be afraid to give him plenty of "cheek." Most masters simply love being insulted!

The best method of pleasing your master is to go to sleep during lessons. You will thus keep out of mischief, and save the master a lot of bother.

Observe these rules carefully, and if you don't get fired out of Greyfriars within a week my name isn't Lawrence Lascelles!

COKERISH!

[A correspondent sent me the following, and claimed it was the original work of H. . . . C. . . . of the Fifth. I doubt it! For one thing, the spelling is correct; for another, the rhyme and metre are just above C. . . . 's "weight." Otherwise—well, it's Cokerish!—H. W.]

Oh, eyes, so nice and blue! So full of charm, of charm!

Oh, how I hope you never come to harm, to harm!

Oh, hair so soft, so wavy, and so brown, so brown!

I hope to see you as I go to town, to town.

Oh, how I like to meet you in the street, the street!

And love to see you smile; it is a treat, a treat.

To hear you speak, in charming voice and fair, so fair,

It makes me feel that I would do and dare, and dare.

And, oh, I hope you like this little rhymer, this rhymer,

For it has taken me such a long time, long time,

To make; but it has been a pleasure, a pleasure

To write and send to you, my treasure, my treasure.

(The remaining ten verses are "held over" —for ever!—H. W.)

[Supplement 14]



The REFORMATION OF RAGGLES

By GEORGE WINGATE.

GREYFRIARS—with one exception—slept.

The exception was Mr. Larry Lascelles, the mathematics master. Larry was a man who always found plenty to do. He was secretary of this society, and president of that, and chairman of the other; and on this particular evening he was working late in his study, balancing some accounts.

It was half-past eleven, and all was still and silent.

The only light which gleamed out into the Close was the light from Larry's study window.

The young master worked on until the midnight chimes rang out. Then he rose to his feet with a yawn.

"Think I'll take a brief stroll in the fresh air, and then turn in," he murmured.

He stepped out of the study, switching off the electric light as he went.

As he passed the door of the strong-room, in which the school authorities kept everything of value, he noticed a subdued glimmer of light shining underneath the door.

Instantly Larry halted.

"Somebody in the strong-room at midnight!" he muttered. "This calls for investigation."

Noiselessly he turned the handle of the door, and gave a push. But the door was locked on the inside.

Nothing daunted, Larry Lascelles went down into the Close, with the intention of climbing up to the strong-room window.

It was evident that a burglary was being committed, and Larry was determined to nip it in the bud.

On emerging into the darkened Close, he glanced upwards.

Yes, there was a subdued glow of light from the window of the strong-room. He must certainly climb up and investigate.

The ascent was a difficult and a dangerous one. It had to be made by means of a rain-pipe which ran down the wall.

But the burglar had evidently climbed the pipe successfully, and Larry Lascelles was as good a climber as most burglars.

Without hesitation he swarmed up the pipe.

It took him scarcely a minute to reach the outer window-sill of the strong-room.

Drawing himself up on to the sill, he glanced into the apartment.

A curious scene met his gaze.

In the far corner of the room was an open safe. Before it knelt a man with an electric torch, which was flashed upon the contents of the safe.

The man had his back to Larry Lascelles, and consequently had no idea that his actions were being watched.

Presently Larry caught a glimpse of the man's face, and it surprised him. The features were refined—almost aristocratic. They were certainly not the features of a burglar.

Who was this midnight marauder? Was he of the class known as "swell mobsmen"?

Larry saw the man extract a bundle of documents from the safe. Then he deemed that the time had come for action. He squeezed himself through the open window, and dropped lightly on to the floor.

The man at the safe looked round. On seeing the stalwart figure of the mathematics master confronting him, he tossed the bundle of documents back into the safe, and rose to his feet. He did not utter an imprecation, as most burglars do when they are discovered at their nefarious work. Instead, he smiled.

"I can see that the game's up," he said, "and I congratulate you on your smartness. You must have clambered up by means of the rain-pipe, and only one fellow in a hundred would have nerve enough for that. Well, you've caught me in the act of rifling the safe—there's some good stuff here, too—and

Supplement iii.

all that remains is for you to telephone to the police. I am in your hands."

The man's attitude was one of cheerful surrender.

"You're prepared to give in without a struggle?" said Larry Lascelles.

"Yes. It's a fair cop!"

"Look here. Why are you at this game? You don't seem the sort of man whom one usually associates with burglaries."

The man bowed half mockingly.

"Thanks for the compliment!" he said. Then he added: "I'm not a burglar from choice, I assure you, but from necessity."

"What do you mean?"

"I've got to do something to keep the wolf from the door. I've tried hard to get an honest living, and failed. So I've come down to this."

Larry inquired the man's name.

"Raggles," was the reply.

"And you say you cannot get an honest living?"

"No. There are precious few jobs going these days."

"What is your special line of business?"

"Cracking cribs."



After a very stern encounter at the Public Hall, Raggles won the middle-weight boxing championship of the county of Kent, and a purse of two hundred and fifty pounds.

"Yes, I know," said Larry impatiently.

"But assuming you weren't a burglar, what sort of job would you be any good at?"

Raggles shook his head, and answered wistfully:

"Afraid I'm no good at anything."

"Nonsense! You're a fine, well-set-up fellow. There must be something at which you excel."

"I can use my fists," said Raggles.

"Is that a threat?"

"Not at all. I've no intention of scrapping with you. It would only make a row, and wake the house, so I shouldn't be any better off."

Larry Lascelles glanced keenly at the speaker.

"Can you box—scientifically, I mean?"

"Yes."

"Then why not become a professional boxer? That, at least, would be an honest way of making your living. This thief-in-the-night business is despicable. I don't like to see a man like you at the game."

Raggles laughed.

"If I knew of a better occupation—and an honest one—I'd take it up," he said. "As I told you just now, I'm not a burglar from choice, but from necessity. A man's got to live somehow. And, having failed to get honest work, I'm not going to fold my arms and starve. I can't become a professional boxer, as you suggest."

"Why not?"

"I'm not good enough."

"You can be trained," said Larry.

"Ha, ha! I like that!" said Raggles, immensely tickled. "Who's going to train me?"

"I will."

"You!"

"Yes. I've no wish to blow my own trumpet, but I've won a good many amateur boxing championships, and I know pretty well everything that's worth knowing about the noble art. If you care to place yourself in my hands—"

Raggles stared.

"You mean, after I've come out of prison?"

"You're not going to prison," said Larry Lascelles quietly. "I don't intend to hand you over to the police. I see possibilities for good in you, and I'm going to train you so that you will be able to hold your own in the best boxing circles. My only condition is this—that you give me your solemn undertaking never to return to this sort of game."

For a moment Raggles was unable to reply. He was not an emotional sort of man, but Larry's generous offer brought a lump to his throat.

"I give you my solemn promise," he said, at length, "that if you'll get me a footing in the boxing world, I'll bury the tools of my profession in the bed of the nearest river!"

And Raggles spoke like a man who meant what he said.

"Very well," said Larry Lascelles. "My name is Lascelles, and I am the mathematics master here. If you will come up to Greyfriars every evening at eight, I will spend an hour with you in the gym."

Raggles' eyes glistened at the prospect.

"In a month's time," Larry went on, "there is to be a big boxing tournament at Courtfield. The contests will be open to all, and there will be some substantial purses. If you will place yourself unreservedly in my hands, I will see that you are moulded into a first-class fighting-man by the end of the month. I gather, from what you have told me, that you are already no mean performer with the gloves. Well, I will endeavour to make a champion of you."

Raggles grasped Larry Lascelles by the hand.

"I don't know how to thank you—" he began.

"You needn't try," interrupted Larry. "And now I will lock this safe and see you off the premises. I shall expect you to-morrow evening at eight."

Five minutes later Raggles climbed over the school wall unobserved. He set off along the road with a light step and a light heart.

"That fellow Lascelles is a real sportsman!" he muttered. "He's saved me from myself. It's good-bye for ever to the burglary business! I'm going all out to make a name for myself in the boxing world, and if I don't succeed it won't be for want of trying."

The sequel is soon told.

Larry Lascelles found that Raggles was a splendid boxer, but that he lacked some of the finer points of ringcraft.

These shortcomings were speedily atoned for, and by the end of the month Raggles was an expert. He could even get the better of Larry Lascelles, so it was a case of the disciple proving greater than his master.

It is now common knowledge how Raggles, in a stern encounter at the Public Hall, Courtfield, won the middle-weight boxing championship of the county of Kent. Attached to his victory was a purse of two hundred and fifty pounds, and there is now no need for the one-time cracksmen to return to his former ways.

And Raggles is the first to admit that he owes everything to Larry Lascelles, who had set his feet in the straight path, and who had proved splendidly successful in reforming the one-time cracksmen!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 703.



Boys I Have Expelled

By the Head.

THIS is a particularly painful subject to me, and I should not have written this article but for the fact that it will convey a warning to the boys who are now at Greyfriars, and show them what to expect if their transgressions are serious.

The first expulsion which I ordered took place over twenty years ago.

When I was given the headmastership of Greyfriars, there were many boys who regarded me as "soft" and easy-going. They thought that they could take advantage in consequence.

There was at that time a boy in the Fifth known as Bartlett, who exercised a powerful influence for evil. He was the leader of a "smart set," and it had long been suspected by the masters that he indulged in card-parties after lights-out.

Suspicion ripened into absolute proof when I paid a surprise visit to Bartlett's study late one night, and discovered a number of boys playing cards for money.

Bartlett was not unduly alarmed at my arrival.

"We shall be all right with Locke," I heard him mutter to one of his companions. "We sha'n't be sacked!"

"No, Bartlett," I said sternly. "You will not be 'sacked,' as you call it; but I will see that you and your companions are publicly flogged in the morning!"

My words caused a sensation. "You can't flog fellows in the Fifth, sir!" said a big lout named Drewitt.

"I do not wish to be dictated to in the execution of my duty, Drewitt," I said. "You will throw these playing-cards on the fire, and go to bed immediately. I will deal with you in the morning."

After breakfast next day the members of the card-party were soundly flogged in Big Hall.

Sturdy and strong though they were, they took their punishment like cowards, screaming for mercy and behaving in a contemptible manner. They each received a dozen strokes with the birch-rod, and I thought the matter would end there.

But it didn't.

Bartlett vowed to be revenged for the flogging, and he took his revenge in a particularly mean manner. He visited my study the following night, and set fire to my bookcase, which contained many volumes of great value.

Fortunately, the fire was discovered, and extinguished before much damage was done.

I made an inquiry into the affair next morning, and wrung a confession from Bartlett. His name was struck off the school register, and he left by the next train—publicly expelled. Few were sorry to see him go.

For several months following Bartlett's expulsion things went very smoothly at Greyfriars. Serious misdemeanours were rare; public floggings were almost a thing of the past.

Then came the affair of Higgins.

Higgins was, without exception, the biggest giant Greyfriars has ever known. He stood over six feet in height, dwarfing all his schoolfellows. Moreover, he was very burly, and possessed of enormous strength.

Strength is a splendid possession so long as it is not abused. As Shakespeare expresses it:

"Oh, it is excellent to have a giant's strength!

But it is tyrannous to use it like a giant."

Unfortunately, Higgins was a bully. He was for ever twisting the arms of small boys, and making them cry out.

Higgins was detested by his schoolfellows, but no one had the courage to stand up against him.

Although not entitled to a fag—being only in the Fifth—Higgins had a youth named

Merton minor to attend to his requirements. One day he ordered Merton to go to the village and buy him some cigarettes. Merton refused, whereupon Higgins, in a towering rage, beat the fag unmercifully with a fives bat.

Mr. Fenner, the science-master, happened to hear the fag's cries for help, and he hastened to the scene. He rebuked Higgins, and ordered him to release Merton minor immediately.

"You are a bully and a cur, Higgins!" he exclaimed.

Higgins released Merton minor, and spun round.

"I don't allow anybody, even a master, to talk to me like that!" he said.

And, with the words, he struck Mr. Fenner a savage blow between the eyes, and the master crashed to the floor.

It was at that moment that I arrived on the scene.

Higgins was so furious that I believe he would have attacked my own person. But before he could do any further mischief he was seized by three prefects and borne away, at my direction, to the punishment-room.

Striking a master constituted an offence which I could not possibly overlook, and William Higgins left Greyfriars for ever.



Bartlett vowed revenge, and one night visited my study and set fire to my book-case, which contained many valuable volumes.

No more expulsions occurred for a whole year. Then came the Great Rebellion, concerning which I expect you have often heard Old Boys of Greyfriars speak.

There was no real cause for the rebellion. It was just a revolt against law and order and discipline, and it was organised by a high-spirited boy named Cassidy.

The rebels held out for nearly a week before they were brought to heel. I could not but admire Cassidy's abilities as a leader of boys. At the same time, I had no alternative but to expel him. He left quietly, and he has amply atoned for his boyish indiscretions. He is now a colonel in the Indian Army.

There was the case of Armitage, who organised the riot of 1905. There was a strong grievance concerning the school food, and Armitage incited his schoolfellows to raid the kitchen, and to attack the prefects who attempted to intervene.

Armitage was an old offender—he had given trouble ever since he had been at the school—and I expelled him without hesitation.

Coming to more recent years, there was the expulsion of Carberry, one of the worst boys the Sixth Form has ever known; and that of Leigh of the Remove.

In conclusion, I trust it may be a long time before I have occasion to expel anyone else from the school.

MY PRIVATE SECRETARY!

By Mr. H. H. QUELCH, M.A.

I am engaged, as everybody knows upon a momentous work known as the "History of Greyfriars."

This task has occupied me for many years, and is not yet nearing its completion. The subject is naturally a very intricate one, and I have to be constantly consulting reference books in order to verify certain facts.

I have a typewriter, which I operate myself. This takes up a great deal of my time, and the other day I conceived the idea of engaging a private secretary.

The question then arose, where was I to find my secretary? I did not relish the idea of obtaining somebody from outside the school. The man would probably require a salary of five hundred pounds a year, and this it would not be in my power to give.

After a good deal of deliberation I exhibited the following announcement on the school notice-board:

"SCHOOLBOY SECRETARY WANTED!"

"Must be an expert typist and a skilled penman. Hours of work, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. daily (except Sundays). A nominal salary will be paid.

"Applications should be made in person to H. H. QUELCH, 'Remove Master.'"

I did not have to wait long for a response to this announcement.

Coker, of the Fifth Form, came and offered me his services, but I told him to go away and learn to spell.

Then a number of fresh applicants came to see me, but in every case they were unsuitable.

The last person to interview me was Desmond, of my own Form.

"Can you use a typewriter?" I inquired.

"Faith, an' I can fairly make the sparks fly, sir!" was the reply.

"Very well, Desmond. I will put you to the test. Your salary, provided you give me satisfaction, will be five shillings a week."

Desmond seated himself at the typewriter, and I proceeded to dictate the following:

"Greyfriars School never enjoyed greater prosperity than in 1913, the year before the war. At that time she was rich in athletes and in scholars."

"Have you got that Desmond?" I inquired, glancing at my secretary.

"Yes, sir."

"Let me see your typewriting."

Desmond jerked the paper out of the machine, and handed it to me. I stared at the typescript aghast, for this is what greeted my gaze:

"greYfr/s schoooool neverenjoyed greater proxcsperty than in 1(1/, the yeAr b 4 the war at that time she was RICH in athletesandinscholars?"

"Boy," I thundered, "what is the meaning of this? It resembles a Chinese puzzle!"

"Shure, an' I did my best, sir, but this typewriter of yours is a dud, if you'll excuse my sayin' so. It's only fit for the scrap-heap."

"Go!" I roared, pointing to the door.

Desmond promptly vanished through the doorway.

He was my first private secretary, and he will be my last!

"THE SOCIETY FOR REFORMING BILLY BUNTER!"

(Continued from page 8.)

The swimming, the cricket, the boxing, the running—all of them had taken heavy toll of his energies.

And there was more to come.

This was the thought that haunted the Owl of the Remove, both in his waking hours and in his dreams.

The S.R.B.B. had not finished with him yet. In fact, the society had only just got into its stride.

Bob Cherry's was a "kill or cure" policy. And Billy Bunter reflected, with a groan, that Bob's methods were more likely to kill than cure!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Striking Improvement!

"BRING hither the prisoner!"

It was Bob Cherry who gave the command.

The members of the Society for Reforming Billy Bunter were gathered together in the woodshed on the following evening.

Bob Cherry was seated on an upturned packing-case. His judicial robes consisted of an old gown of Mr. Quelch's, which the Remove-master had discarded.

As soon as Bob rapped out his command, Monty Newland and Peter Todd marched into the woodshed, dragging Billy Bunter between them.

"Here's the giddy transgressor, m'lord," said Newland.

"Good! Now we'll get to business. Prisoner at the bar, you are arraigned before me—'arraigned' is good!—on four separate charges."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"In the first place, you have been guilty of a terminological inexactitude which—"

"Help!" gasped Vernon-Smith.

"In other words, you told a whopper to Quelch in class this morning. Secondly, you are charged with eaves-dropping. One of the members of the society found you with your ear glued to the keyhole of the door of Study No. 13. You were listening to conversation which was not intended for your ears."

"I wasn't! I didn't! I never!" protested the prisoner wildly.

"Silence, you scurvy knave! Thirdly, you are charged with overfeeding, having devoured no less than six portions of apple-pie in the dining-hall this day."

"Well, what of that?" demanded Billy Bunter.

Bob Cherry frowned.

"Such things aren't done—at least, they are done, but they ought not to be. We don't mind you having a healthy appetite, but at present your appetite is most unhealthy! I wonder you don't go off pop, like the cork of a champagne bottle!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence in court! The fourth and last charge against you, prisoner at the bar, is that you waylaid a kid in the Second, and attempted to raise money on an imaginary postal-order. Mr. Todd, a member of this honourable society, caught you in the act."

"Look here, Cherry, there's no harm in borrowing money—"

"Neither a borrower nor a lender be." That's Shakespeare's maxim, and the members of the S.R.B.B. heartily agree with him."

"Hear, hear!"

Billy Bunter quailed and quaked as he glanced round the woodshed.

The faces of his accusers were set and stern. If he had ever doubted the earnestness of the S.R.B.B., he doubted it no longer. Bob Cherry & Co. meant business.

"Now," said Bob, "do you plead guilty or not guilty? I don't want to influence you in any way, but I warn you that if you don't plead guilty you'll get it in the neck!"

"Oh, crumbs! I'm guilty!" said Billy Bunter promptly.

"On all four counts?"

"Yes."

At this, there was quite a commotion amongst the audience.

"Bump him!"

"Pulverise him!"

"Make him run the gauntlet!"

Billy Bunter groaned. It seemed that he had fallen into the hands of the Philistines with a vengeance. Ever since the formation of the S.R.B.B., he had scarcely had a moment's peace. And now, because of a few minor offences, he was going to be punished by the society.

But no!

The fat junior's fears were set at rest when Bob Cherry spoke again.

"Prisoner at the bar! Although your conduct merits severe punishment, you are going to be given another chance."

"Oh, good!"

"But it's the last chance, mind! If you tell whoppers, or listen at keyholes, or overfeed, or try to borrow money, you'll find that the society won't spare you. We've made up our minds to mould you into a decent fellow—to completely change your character—and if we can't do it by kindness, we shall have to try other methods."

Relieved though he was at having escaped punishment, Billy Bunter could not help trembling.

He realised only too well what was in store for him if he transgressed in future.

Bob Cherry was not a heavy-handed fellow as a rule, but he was determined that his society should succeed in its object.

That meeting in the woodshed, and the warning of the "judge," had a great effect upon Billy Bunter.

From that time onwards, the fat junior was careful to do nothing which would render him liable to punishment.

The change in Billy Bunter's behaviour was extraordinary. He seldom opened his mouth, lest he should be guilty of falsehood or exaggeration; he tied his bootlaces carefully, so that they didn't happen to come undone outside study doors; he refrained from eating to excess in the dining-hall; and he said nothing concerning his expectations in the postal-order line.

Billy Bunter was actually improving! There could be no doubt about it. He went in for cricket and swimming and athletics generally, and his good behaviour extended even to the Remove Form-room.

Billy Bunter's usual position was at the foot of the class. But he worked so well that he soon got out of the rut, and overhauled Bolsover major, Fisher T. Fish, and Wan Lung.

"Really, Bunter, I am delighted!" said Mr. Quelch one day. "I do not know whether any influences are at work, but you are improving out of all knowledge."

"Thank you, sir!" said Billy Bunter, beaming.

"I confess that I have hitherto regarded you as a hopeless case," said Mr. Quelch. "But your recent improvement has caused me to form a different estimate of your character. I congratulate you, Bunter!"

Bob Cherry chuckled softly.

"The congrats are going to the wrong

shop again!" he murmured. "It's the S.R.B.B. that ought to be congratulated."

"Yes, rather!" muttered Tom Redwing.

Billy Bunter's improvement was not unnoticed by Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh. They congratulated Bob Cherry on his achievement.

"But it won't last," said Wharton, with conviction. "Bunter will soon go back to his bad old ways."

"He knows what to expect if he does!" said Bob Cherry grimly.

"Bunter's blossoming out into quite a sportsman," said Nugent. "He'll never make a good athlete, of course, but he's certainly trying hard."

"He's working off a lot of his superfluous fat, too," said Johnny Bull. "He'll be getting quite slim if he goes on like this!"

"And he's making friends everywhere," said Wharton. "On Sunday afternoon I saw him walking out with several fellows who, in the ordinary way, wouldn't be found dead with him!"

Bob Cherry laughed.

"It's wonderful what a society like ours can do, if it goes the right way to work," he said. "A few days ago Bunter was an absolute worm. Now he's thoroughly respectable. You'll have to look to your laurels, Harry, or he'll be bagging your position as skipper of the Remove."

"Not in a thousand years!" said Wharton.

"I say, you fellows!" said Billy Bunter, coming on the scene at that moment. "We mustn't stand about slacking, you know. Let's get down to the nets."

"My hat!"

A week before, Billy Bunter would not have dreamed of suggesting such a thing.

But it was a new Bunter speaking now. And the chums of the Remove, as they accompanied the fat junior to the cricket-ground, felt that they could not agree with the person who said that the age of miracles was past!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Striking Discovery!

IT was a scorching afternoon. The July sun beat down fiercely upon the bared heads of the Greyfriars cricketers as they practised at the nets.

Harry Wharton & Co. didn't mind the sun. But the same could not be said of Billy Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove was perspiring profusely. He was fielding; and Vernon-Smith, who was at the wicket, was giving him plenty of running about to do. He seemed, in fact, to hit every ball in Bunter's direction; and as the fat junior toiled after it, he began to feel that life was a burden, and that there was indeed no rest for the wicked.

Bob Cherry's stentorian voice roused Billy Bunter from his reflections.

"Your turn to bat, Bunter!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

Billy Bunter crawled, rather than walked, towards the wicket.

The bat felt as if it weighed a hundred-weight. Bunter felt inclined to throw it down, declare that he was sick and tired of physical exertion, and walk away. But he knew that if he did this he would only be brought back, and eventually punished by the Society that was endeavouring to turn him into an athlete.

With a groan, the fat junior took his stand in front of the wicket, and faced the bowlers.

For a quarter of an hour, Billy Bunter was bombarded. Ball after ball came

towards him in swift and deadly fashion. Sometimes his wicket was wrecked, sometimes a ball struck him on the shin, causing him to execute a sort of waltz. At other times, Bunter managed to clump the leather good and hard. And on those occasions, Bob Cherry gave him a nod of encouragement or a word of praise.

"We shall see you in the Remove eleven yet!" said Bob.

"You jolly well won't!" muttered Bunter, under his breath.

When the ordeal was over, the fat junior sank down in the grass, utterly exhausted.

For once in a way Bob Cherry was moved to compassion.

"You've had enough for now, Buntie," he said. "Better go and rest."

Billy Bunter picked himself up, and tottered away to Study No. 7.

There was a pile of letters on the table. They had been forwarded from London by the editor of the companion papers, and they were from readers of "Billy Bunter's Weekly."

But Bunter was not in the humour to attend to correspondence just then. He sank on to the sofa, and remained there, with his eyes closed, for half an hour. Then he rose to his feet.

"I can't stand it any longer!" he exclaimed. "That beast Bob Cherry is killing me by inches! He's making my life a misery! I refuse to be reformed! I refuse to be bullied any longer!"

After this outburst, Billy Bunter became calm again. But there was a determined gleam in his eyes. He had made up his mind to break away from Bob Cherry's supervision. And he formed his plans accordingly.

That evening Billy Bunter did his prep, as usual, and he crawled wearily up to the Remove dormitory when bedtime came.

But he did not go to sleep. His unmelodious snore was conspicuous by its absence.

The fat junior lay propped up on the pillow until eleven o'clock began to strike. Then he slipped noiselessly out of bed.

"You fellows awake?"

There was no response. Only the steady breathing of his schoolfellows came to Billy Bunter's ears.

Making as little noise as possible, the Owl of the Remove dressed himself.

Bunter's next movements were extraordinary.

He wrenched off the two blankets which were on his bed, folded them up, and carried them under his arm as he left the dormitory.

It was very dark out on the landing, and Billy Bunter hesitated a moment, with a fast-beating heart.

As a small boy, he had dreaded the darkness, and he dreaded it still. He half expected to hear the Greyfriars ghost come clanking towards him. But no sound reached Bunter's ears, save the beating of his own heart as he stood there in the darkness.

"I won't go back now!" he muttered to himself.

And then he descended the wide staircase.

Groping his way round a maze of corridors, Billy Bunter came at length to Study No. 13—the study which belonged to his would-be reformer, Bob Cherry.

The fat junior switched on the electric light, and stood blinking in its rays. Then he went to Bob Cherry's desk, took out a sheet of notepaper and an envelope. After which he produced his fountain-pen, seated himself at the desk, and started to write.

The letter occupied him quite a long time.

Boom!

The first stroke of midnight caused Billy Bunter to hastily sign the missive, and seal it in the envelope. This he left on Bob Cherry's desk, and then, gathering up the blankets, he hurried out of the study, switching off the light as he went.

He did not go back to the Remove dormitory. It was in the direction of the school kitchen that he wended his way.

Billy Bunter's schoolfellows were sleeping peacefully, blissfully ignorant of the fat junior's midnight prowl.

When they awoke the sun was streaming in at the high windows of the dormitory.

Bob Cherry was the first to make the discovery that Billy Bunter's bed was empty.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob, in surprise. "Where's our prize porpoise?"

"He's vanished!" said Nugent in astonishment. "But his bed's been slept in."

"I know!" said Peter Todd. "He's gone for an early morning dip, of course!"

But Bob Cherry shook his head. "He wouldn't go alone," he said.



"Hullo!" said Bob, as he picked the letter off the table. "Here's a note in Bunter's handwriting!" "Great pip! This surely doesn't mean that the mad duffer has bolted from the school?" ejaculated Wharton.

"Dashed if I can make it out— Why, Great Scott! His blankets have disappeared!"

"Looks as if Bunter's developed the simple life craze, and gone to sleep out in the open," said Harry Wharton.

"Let's go and hunt for the fat duffer," said Monty Newland.

The juniors hurriedly performed their ablutions, and went down into the sunny Close.

They searched high and low for Billy Bunter, but they found him not.

"You kids lost something?" inquired Wingate of the Sixth, bearing down upon a party of searchers.

"We've mislaid Bunter," explained Bob Cherry. "Can't make out where the fat idiot's got to."

"When did you miss him?" asked the captain of Greyfriars.

"At rising-bell," said Vernon-Smith. "His bed was empty, and his blankets had disappeared."

"My hat!"

"We've ransacked the building, but there's no sign of Bunter," said Tom Redwing.

"Well, if he doesn't turn up by brekker, let me know," said Wingate, "and I shall have to report the matter to Mr. Quelch."

Just before the breakfast gong sounded, Bob Cherry had occasion to go to his study. He was accompanied by Harry Wharton.

"Hallo! Here's a note in Bunter's handwriting!" exclaimed Bob.

"Great pip!" said Wharton, in great excitement. "This surely doesn't mean that the mad duffer's bolted from the school?"

"Hope not," said Bob Cherry, looking quite startled. "Anyway, we'll soon see."

Bob ripped open the envelope, and drew out the sheet of notepaper that was within.

As he perused Billy Bunter's ill-written scrawl, Bob Cherry became more and more startled.

"What does he say?" asked Wharton, quite unable to conceal his curiosity.

Bob Cherry passed the letter to his chum.

The following extraordinary message of farewell greeted Harry Wharton's gaze:

"To Bob Cherry and other bullying beasts.

"I've had enuff! I karn't stand it no longer. The Spanish Inkwission was mild kompared with the awful torchers I have been suffering during the last few days at yore hands.

"I am a fello of grate 40-tude, but their is a limmit even to my endurance.

"You have krushed all the spirrit out of me. You have reduced me to a fizzical rock!

"What have I dun to desserve all this? Nuthing—nuthing at all! It's a crod shame that I should be singled out for such treatment, and as I remarked at the kommensement of this letter, I've had enuff!

"I go! This is my letter of farewell. You will serch for me, no dout, but you will serch in vane!

"It is you who have drivven me to take this stepp, Bob Cherry; but in spite of yore croddy I forgive you from my hart. To show their is no ill-feeling, I give and bequeethe to you my pen-knife (the one I borroed from Todd last term).

"To my miner, Sammy, I leeve all my studdy furniture and effecks, to be held in trussed for him untill he comes of age.

"I don't think I have anything more to add. This is yore doing, Bob Cherry. I hate you, you bullying beast. At the same time, I freely forgive you for making my life a mizzery.

"Farewell! Spare a thort sumtimes, you felloes, for yore hartbroken

"BUNTY."

In the ordinary way, Harry Wharton would have laughed at Billy Bunter's quaint spelling, and at his spiderlike scrawl. But he didn't laugh now.

There was something sinister about that letter which Billy Bunter had left behind.

What had become of the fat junior? What was the step which he had been driven to take?

One possibility was uppermost in Wharton's mind.

Billy Bunter had run away from school!

Bob Cherry caught his chum by the arm.

"What are you thinking, Harry?"

"I hardly know what to think—"

"You surely don't suppose that Bunter's run away?"

"I don't like to think so, and yet—"

"He would never have the nerve!" said Bob Cherry.

"Well, how do you account for this letter, and for the fact that Bunter isn't on view this morning?"

Bob Cherry looked quite distressed.

"I had no idea that anything of this sort would happen," he said. "Assuming that Bunter really has bolted, do you think it was because of me?"

"Because of your society, without a doubt," said Wharton. "I'm not reproaching you; I know you meant well. But you must admit that you've handled Bunter none too gently during the last few days."

"It was necessary," muttered Bob Cherry.

"No doubt. But you can see the effect it's had on Bunter. It's made him so fed-up with life that he's bolted."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Of course, that's merely my assumption," said Wharton, noting the look of distress on his chum's face. "It's quite on the cards that Bunter hasn't bolted at all—that he wrote this letter just to scare you."

"Well, what's to be done now?"

"I should hand that letter to Quelch, if I were you. I expect he'll send out search-parties."

Bob Cherry nodded. His brain was in a whirl as he went along to the Form-master's study with the letter.

He had not meant for one moment to make Billy Bunter's life a misery. In forming the S.R.B.B., he had acted in Bunter's own interests. He had wanted to buck the fat junior up—to teach him how to play the game, and how to conduct himself like a sportsman.

Bob had not dreamed of such a tragic sequel as this. Billy Bunter's farewell letter knocked him all of a heap.

The breakfast-gong sounded at that moment, but Bob Cherry took no heed of it. He went on to Mr. Quelch's study, and as he entered, in response to the Form-master's "Come in!" he looked utterly dazed.

Mr. Quelch looked up quickly. He could see that Bob Cherry was greatly agitated.

"Bless my soul! Is anything amiss, Cherry?"

The reply took the form of a bomb-shell.

"Yes, sir," said Bob. "Bunter has bolted!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Spirited Away!

BOLTED!" echoed Mr. Quelch, in amazement. "What do you mean?"

Bob Cherry handed over the fateful letter.

Mr. Quelch frowned as he perused Billy Bunter's missive.

"Is this a joke, Cherry?" he demanded, when he had finished.

"No, sir—at least, I don't think so."

"Bunter has actually gone?"

Bob nodded.

"When we woke up this morning, sir, we found his bed empty, and there is no trace of him."

Mr. Quelch looked alarmed.

"Surely the foolish boy has not absconded from the school?" he exclaimed.

"It looks very much like it, sir."

Mr. Quelch glanced again at Bunter's letter.

"What does this reference to cruelty mean?" he inquired. "Bunter asserts that you have made his life a misery, Cherry. You do not strike me as being a boy of a bullying disposition. Still, I must get to the root of this matter."

"It's like this, sir," explained Bob.

"I wanted to cure Bunter of some of his—er—unfortunate little habits, so I formed the S.R.B.B."

"The—the what?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"The Society for Reforming Billy Bunter, sir."

"Oh!" A smile flickered on Mr. Quelch's lips. "And so you have been taking Bunter in hand, Cherry?"

"Yes, sir. I made him pull himself together, and take an interest in sports. It was the object of the society to make Bunter become a credit to his Form."

"No wonder Bunter has shown such a marked improvement in the Form-room of late," said Mr. Quelch. "Your society has certainly been a powerful influence, Cherry."

Bob was surprised to hear Mr. Quelch say that. He had expected to be called over the coals for having organised such a society, and he had anticipated that Mr. Quelch would blame him for Billy Bunter's disappearance. Instead of which the Remove-master was being complimentary.

"Every endeavour must be made to discover Bunter's whereabouts, and to bring him back," Mr. Quelch went on. "He cannot have got far. He is too stupid to make a successful runaway."



"This is a horrible hole!" growled Bunter. "Still, it'll answer for the purpose." Seating himself on the blankets, he started on the provisions he had raided from the school kitchen.

Besides, he is a familiar figure in the neighbourhood, and he will doubtless be stopped and questioned. You may leave this letter with me, Cherry. You did the right thing in bringing it to my notice."

Immediately after breakfast two search-parties were formed, with a view to bringing Billy Bunter back to the fold.

Wingate of the Sixth was in charge of one of the parties, which consisted of prefects.

The other party was made up of juniors, with Harry Wharton in command.

"You kids had better go to Courtfield, and make inquiries there," said Wingate. "And we will go in the opposite direction."

"I suppose we get a reward for finding Bunter, dead or alive?" said Monty Newland.

"Don't be a silly young ass!"

The search-parties set off in opposite directions.

Harry Wharton & Co. were hopeful of success. For, as Mr. Quelch had pointed out, Billy Bunter was not clever enough to make a successful runaway.

The first person the juniors encountered on their way to Courtfield, was the portly and pompous P.-c. Tozer. They lined up in the roadway, swept off their caps, and bowed gracefully to the constable.

"Good-morning, Tozey!" said Frank Nugent cheerfully. "I trust I see you well?"

"You can see him well without the aid of a microscope!" said Bob Cherry. "In fact, you could see him a mile off. He's almost as substantial as the fellow we're looking for."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Young rips!" snorted Tozer. "Wot I says is this 'ere—why ain't you up at the school, a-learnin' of yer lessons?"

"We're searching for Bunter," explained Harry Wharton. "He vanished in the night, and there's no trace of him."

"You haven't seen a good-sized grease-spot in the road, by any chance?" said Johnny Bull. "Bunter's bound to have melted while he was running away."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tozer looked interested. He fumbled in his pocket, and produced a rather grubby-looking notebook, and a stump of pencil.

"You say that Master Bunter is lost?" he said.

"Not lost, but gone before," said Vernon-Smith.

"Then I'd better take down his description," said Tozer, in a business-like way.

"Go ahead, Tozey!" said Peter Todd. "Name, William George Bunter. Age, fifteen. Weight, fourteen stone. Face like a boiled pudding. Straw-coloured hair; pale-blue optics; ears that remind you of aeroplane propellers; dressed in Etons; has a scar on the back of the nut, where I hit him with a cricket-ball the other day."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tozer scribbled a few notes—not according to Peter Todd's humorous directions. Then he drew himself up to his full stature, which was not very considerable.

"Which it won't take me long to discover Master Bunter's whereabouts," he said. "As for you young rips, you'd better get back to the school. You ain't no good as detectives."

Harry Wharton & Co. did not follow Tozer's advice. They went on to Courtfield, where they made exhaustive inquiries for Billy Bunter.

At the Elysian Cafe, at the bunshop, and at the railway-station—these being the most likely places—they asked many questions. But they could gain no information concerning the Owl of the Remove.

"No go!" said Vernon-Smith at length. "Bunter seems to have vanished off the face of the earth."

"He can't have come to Courtfield," said Dick Russell, "or we should have heard news of him at one of the eating-houses."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"I hate giving up," he said, "but in the circs there's nothing for it but to get back to the school."

"Perhaps Wingate's party has had some luck," suggested Tom Hedwing.

"Hope so!" said Bob Cherry fervently.

Bob was feeling more and more uneasy on the subject of Billy Bunter's disappearance. He knew that he was responsible in a way, and the knowledge made him very uncomfortable.

The juniors tramped back again to

Greyfriars, scanning the hedges and ditches as they went, though it was highly improbable that they would find Billy Bunter by the roadside.

"Any luck?" inquired the captain of Greyfriars.

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"We haven't been able to get a single clue," he said.

"Neither have we," growled Wingate. "I'd better go and report to the Head."

And the tall Sixth-Former strode away.

Dr. Locke was very much disturbed concerning Bunter's absence.

"I shall have to inform the boy's father, and possibly engage a detective," he said. "But I will take no action until this evening. It is possible that Bunter may turn up during the day."

But the hours dragged by, and there was no sign of Billy Bunter.

The fat junior had disappeared as mysteriously as if the earth had opened and swallowed him up.

After dinner, fresh search-parties were sent out to scour the countryside. But when they returned, they had nothing to report.

If Bunter had really run away from Greyfriars he had carried out his plans very skilfully.

Greyfriars was agog with excitement. Billy Bunter's familiar figure was missed by all.

As for Sammy Bunter, of the Second, he pretended to be very upset concerning his major's disappearance.

In reality, however, Sammy was tremendously jubilant. For it meant that he would step into his major's shoes, and conduct "Billy Bunter's Weekly," the title of which, failing the editor's return, would be changed to "Sammy Bunter's Weekly."

Sammy had his own ideas on the subject of running a weekly journal, and he had no doubt that the circulation of the "Weekly" would go up by leaps and bounds if he were given a free hand with the editorship.

Up to a late hour that night the Head and Mr. Quelch sat together in the former's study.

At any moment they expected the telephone-bell to ring, with news of Billy Bunter.

But no news came to hand, and finally the Head put through a couple of telephone calls to London. One was to Mr. Bunter, the other to Ferrers Locke, the famous detective.

Mr. Bunter was the first to respond.

"Who is ringing me up at this time of night?" he demanded over the wires.

"I am Dr. Locke speaking," said the Head. "Has your son William arrived home, Mr. Bunter?"

"Eh? Of course not! Why should he arrive home in the middle of the term? You have not expelled him, I hope?"

"No—though I regret to say that on more than one occasion he has merited such a punishment," said the Head drily.

"The fact is, your son has run away from school."

"Great Scott!"

"All efforts to trace him have failed. I thought perhaps he might have gone home to you."

"He is certainly not here," said Mr. Bunter, in great agitation. "This—this is terrible! What steps are you taking, may I ask, to discover William's whereabouts?"

"The district has been scoured—unsuccessfully; and I am about to engage the services of a detective," said the Head.

"You will inform me of any developments?"

"At once!"

"Thank you!" said Mr. Bunter. "This is appalling news, and no error! I am not likely to get much sleep to-night."

"I hope to give you a favourable report in the morning, Mr. Bunter," said the Head.

And he rang off.

It was nearly one o'clock in the morning before the other call came through. And then the Head was informed, by Ferrers Locke's assistant, that the detective was away. He was engaged upon an important case in the North of England.

"Really, this is most exasperating!"

murmured the Head. "What would you advise me to do, Quelch?"

"Nothing more can be done to-night," said the master of the Remove. "We must wait and see what the morning brings forth."

This seemed to be the only course to adopt. And the Head and Mr. Quelch, both looking worn and worried, went wearily to bed.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

In Hiding!

MEANWHILE, where was Billy Bunter?

Contrary to the general belief, the fat junior had not run away from Greyfriars at all.

After writing his farewell letter Billy Bunter made his way to the school kitchen.

Arrived here, he helped himself liberally to supplies of food.

A loaf of bread, half a pound of butter, some ham, a rabbit pie, a currant cake—all were commandeered by Billy Bunter.

He did not stop to consume them on the premises. He conveyed them, together with the blankets, which he had taken from his bed, to a deserted lumber-room close to the matron's quarters.

The lumber-room had not been in use for months. It was, in fact, little more than a cupboard. It had been kept locked, but Billy had found a key that would fit.

"I shall be safe from that beast Cherry now," he muttered, as he entered the room. "This will make a ripping hiding-place. I can stay here for weeks, if necessary, without being discovered. They'll all think I've run away from school. He, he, he!"

Billy Bunter's chuckle sounded weird and uncanny in the darkness.

"I shall have to get a light of some sort," murmured the fat junior, as he set the blankets and provisions down on to the floor. "I shall get the shivers if I stay up here in the dark. Groo!"

Bunter then made a journey to the bicycle shed. He calmly detached the front lamp of Dick Rodney's machine, and conveyed it to his hiding-place. He had matches in his pocket, and it was the work of a moment to light the lamp, which he set down in the centre of the room.

Excellent hiding-place though it was, the lumber-room had its drawbacks.

A fat rat scuttled across the floor and disappeared through a hole in the wainscoting.

Billy Bunter shuddered.

"Hope that beastly thing doesn't come out and bite me while I'm asleep!" he muttered.

Another drawback to the lumber-room was the almost complete lack of ventilation.

There were no windows; there was no fireplace. The only thing that admitted air was a small iron grating high up on the wall.

"This is a horrible hole!" growled the fat junior. "Still, it'll answer the purpose. If I knew of a better hole I'd go to it; but I don't. Think I'll have a tuck-in now!"

Seating himself on the blankets, Billy Bunter started on the provisions he had raided.

For some days past he had not been allowed to overfeed. The S.R.B.B. had seen to that.

But Bunter was safe now from the supervision of the society which had set out to reform him. He ate to his heart's content, and the good things disappeared at an amazing rate.

When the orgy was over Billy Bunter lay down on the blankets and tried to

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sleep. But he was kept awake by a terrible thirst.

"What an ass I am!" he exclaimed. "I didn't bring anything to drink. I shall have to make another journey to the kitchen."

He picked up the bicycle lamp, and made his way to the domestic regions.

When he returned to his hiding-place, ten minutes later, he brought with him a cup and saucer, a pound of tea, a bag of sugar, a jug of milk, a teapot, and a small spirit-stove. He was also encumbered by the bicycle lamp, but by carrying the sugar and tea in his pockets he was able to manage.

"Now I shall be all right for the night, or what's left of it," he murmured. "My hat! I should like to see the commotion in the morning when they find me missing!"

Having brewed himself some tea, and eaten a further snack, Billy Bunter settled down to sleep.

The rising-bell was clanging out when he awoke. He could picture to himself the scene in the Remove dormitory when his absence was discovered.

Slowly the hours dragged by.

Occasionally Billy Bunter's ear caught the sound of footsteps passing the door of the lumber-room.

But no one thought of looking within. The fugitive was as safe as if he had been a hundred miles away.

By lunch-time Billy Bunter had consumed the whole of his supplies. There had been nothing for him to do but sleep and eat alternately—and he had done a good deal of both.

But it was no use thinking about getting further supplies until nightfall. To venture out from his hiding-place in the day-time was to court disaster.

Billy Bunter spent a thoroughly miserable afternoon and evening.

He could hear the shouts of his school-fellows as they disported themselves on the playing-fields, and at five o'clock he heard the gong sound for tea in Hall.

Tea in Hall was anything but a luxury, but it would have been a positive delight to Billy Bunter at that moment.

His appetite grew sharper and keener as the day advanced. But he had no means of appeasing it.

More than once he thought of crawling out from his lair and giving himself up.

But that would be absurd. Having taken the plunge, he must see it through.

To Billy Bunter, cramped in his self-appointed prison, the hours seemed to pass on leaden wings.

Dusk fell at length; but even then it was not safe to venture out. He must wait until ten o'clock at least.

Despite his hunger, Billy Bunter dozed off to sleep.

When he awoke his surroundings were as black as pitch.

He groped for his matches, and lit the bicycle lamp. As he did so, the school clock commenced to chime.

Billy Bunter counted the chimes.

Eleven!

"I must have slept for hours!" he muttered. "Jove, I am hungry! I doubt if I've enough strength to crawl down to the kitchen!"

Picking up the lamp, he stepped out into the passage.

All was still and silent.

Billy Bunter had taken off his shoes, and he made no noise as he descended the stairs.

He was simply ravenous by this time. He could not get to his destination quickly enough.

As he went he conjured up a mental picture of the fine feed he would have in a few moments.

"The kitchen cupboard's bound to be well stocked!" he reflected.

But there was a big shock in store for the Owl of the Remove.

When he reached the kitchen door he found it locked and bolted.

Evidently the raid of the previous night had caused Mrs. Kebble, the house-dame, to take precautions.

Billy Bunter hurled himself against the door, but in vain. It refused to budge, even though his huge bulk was pitted against it.

"Oh, crumbs!" muttered the fat junior in dismay. "I'm done!"

And then he had an inspiration.

He would not be able to force an entry into the kitchen. That was certain. But he could gain access to the studies in the Remove passage. Several of the cupboards were certain to be well stocked.

"Glad I thought of that!" murmured Bunter.

And he made his way to the Remove passage.

But a further disappointment—or, rather, a series of them—was in store for him.

He tried all the doors along the passage, only to find them locked!

At the end of the passage he halted. He could have howled with vexation.

There could be no doubt as to what had happened.

All the fellows must have been given instructions to lock their study doors.

Billy Bunter gave a hollow groan.

His luck was out. All supplies of food were cut off, and he was famished.

As a last resource he tried the senior studies, but they, too, were locked.

Billy Bunter did not go back to his hiding-place. What would be the use?

Without food and drink, how could he subsist in that wretched little cupboard of a room?

"There's only one thing for it," he muttered. "I must give myself up!"

And with this object in view he went along to Mr. Quelch's study.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Same Old Bunter!

LATE though the hour was, Mr. Quelch was in his study, busy at his typewriter.

The Remove-master was startled to hear a timid tap on his door. He was not expecting visitors.

And then it occurred to him that a message might have arrived concerning Billy Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove had now been missing a whole day, and no news had come to hand regarding his whereabouts.

The tap on the door was repeated.

"Come in!" called Mr. Quelch.

The next moment he nearly fell out of his chair.

Slowly the door opened, admitting Billy Bunter himself!

The fat junior looked a pathetic object. His appearance at that moment would have melted a heart of stone. He had no shoes on; his clothes were smothered with the dust of the lumber-room in which he had taken refuge. He was unkempt and unwashed; there were cobwebs in his hair. He looked the picture of abject misery.

"Pip-pip-please, sir—" he faltered.

Mr. Quelch started to his feet as if he had seen a ghost. For a moment he was deprived of the power of speech.

"Pip-pip-please, sir—" quavered Bunter again.

At last Mr. Quelch found tongue.

"Bless my soul! Boy! Bunter! What does this mean? Where have you been?"

Mr. Quelch did not intend to speak in rhyme, but his agitation was so great that he scarcely knew what he was saying.

"Pip-pip-please, sir, I'm starving!"

"What?"

"I've had nothing to eat for ages, sir! I couldn't raid the kitchen again to-night because it's locked!"

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"Am I to understand, Bunter, that it was you who carried out the raid on the kitchen last night?"

"Oh crumbs! I—I've fairly put my foot in it now!" groaned Bunter.

"Where have you been all this time?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

"In the lumber-room, sir, close to the sanny."

"Good gracious! You have been penned up in that unhealthy hovel? It is a wonder you are not seriously ill!"

"I am, sir!" said Billy Bunter pathetically. "I've had no nourishment, sir. For hours I've been without food and drink! I'm starving before your eyes, sir!"

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Quelch sharply.

"The amount of food you consumed last night was sufficient to sustain you for nearly a week! Your sudden disappearance gave rise to the greatest anxiety, Bunter. Search-parties have been sent out for you, and your father is in a state of distraction. What ever induced you to take up your quarters in the lumber-room?"

"I was fed up, sir!" said Bunter.

"Right up to the hilt! They tried to reform me, sir, and they nearly killed me instead! I didn't have a minute's peace, and my life was a misery. I don't want to stay at Greyfriars any longer, sir! I hope you'll persuade the Head to get me out of this. If Bob Cherry gets hold of me again—"

"I will give instructions that you are not to be interfered with in future," said Mr. Quelch. "At the same time, Cherry's actions were designed for your own benefit."

"I suppose I shall be flogged for this, sir?"

"That remains to be seen. In view of the fact that you have already suffered a good deal, I shall recommend you to leniency."

"Oh, thank you, sir!"

At that moment the door opened again, and the Head looked in.

Billy Bunter stood behind the door, so Dr. Locke failed to observe him.

"Before retiring for the night, Quelch," said the Head, "I looked in to tell you that there is no news of Bunter. There is not a single clue as to the whereabouts of the unfortunate lad—"

"He is here, sir!" said Mr. Quelch.

"What!"

"Do not cower behind that door, Bunter! Show yourself!"

Billy Bunter came out from behind the door, and the Head was no less startled than Mr. Quelch had been.

"Good heavens!" he gasped.

"For the past twenty-four hours, sir," said Mr. Quelch, "this wretched boy has concealed himself in the lumber-room. It was he who carried out the raid on the school kitchen last night. Apparently he paid a further visit to it to-night, but found it locked; and the pangs of hunger compelled him to give himself up."

"Bless my soul! But why should Bunter have concealed himself in this way?"

There was a suggestion of a smile on Mr. Quelch's lips as he replied.

"Some days ago, Cherry, of my Form, organised a society, the object of which was to reform Bunter and make him a credit to his Form and to his school. Cherry was somewhat drastic in his methods. He insisted on Bunter taking part in all forms of sport, and the continual exertion affected Bunter so much

that his one desire was to escape from the society's supervision."

"Yessir! That's so, sir!" chimed in Billy Bunter. "I had an awful time, sir! I wouldn't go through it again for anything!"

For some moments there was silence. It was broken at length by the Head.

"It was very wrong of you, Bunter, to break into the school kitchen."

"Well, I had to keep body and soul together, sir. I should have starved if I hadn't got some grub from somewhere. I hope you're not going to flog me, sir! My constitution won't stand it. Cherry has already reduced me to a skeleton, and—"

"The reduction is not apparent!" said the Head, glancing at Bunter's huge bulk.

Mr. Quelch smiled.

"Might I request you, sir, to take no action against Bunter?" he said. "I am convinced that his sufferings have already been extensive. It is a wonder he is not seriously ill, after shutting himself up in that unhealthy place."

The Head nodded.

"In the circumstances, Bunter," he said, "I shall not punish you. And as a return for this leniency, I trust you will endeavour to reform on your own account, without the promptings of a society of your schoolfellows."

"I'll be as good as gold in future, sir!" said Bunter eagerly.

"I hope you mean what you say, Bunter. And now you had better go and get into a hot bath. Your present appearance is revolting—positively revolting!"

"Please, sir—"

"Get your bath, and go to bed!" said Mr. Quelch.

"But I can't go to bed on an empty stomach, sir!"

"I will arrange for you to have a meal before you retire," said the Remove-master.

"Thanks, awfully, sir! You're a brick!" said Billy Bunter gratefully.

And he disappeared in the direction of the nearest bath-room.

After he had thoroughly cleansed himself, the Owl of the Remove felt better. And he felt better still when he sat in the school kitchen and demolished a meal of bread-and-butter, cake, and cocoa, under Mr. Quelch's supervision.

"You may remain in bed for an extra hour in the morning, Bunter," said the Form-master. "Good-night!"

"Good-night, sir!"

Billy Bunter went up to the Remove dormitory. He undressed and got into bed without disturbing his schoolfellows, and he was asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow.

His unhappy experiences were over, and his sleep was not haunted by visions of Bob Cherry's heavy hand.

The days of the S.R.B.B. were numbered. And that well-meaning society would be disbanded on the morrow.

Harry Wharton & Co. had the surprise of their lives next morning.

Curled up in his bed, fast asleep, was Billy Bunter!

"My only aunt!" gasped Bob Cherry, in amazement. "Do I sleep, do I dream, do I wonder and doubt? Are things what they seem, or are visions about?"

"Bunter's back!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

And the words were repeated up and down the dormitory.

"Wake him up, and make him tell us all about it!" said Bolsover major.

Billy Bunter was duly roused, but he was too sleepy to say much.

"Quelch says I can lay in for an extra hour," he said. "I'm simply dog-tired!"

"But where have you been?" shouted Peter Todd.

"Quelch will explain everything at brekker," said Bunter.

And he rolled over and went to sleep again.

"It's no use trying to pump Bunter for information," said Monty Newland. "We must possess our souls in patience."

At the breakfast-table, Mr. Quelch explained everything. And the mystery of Billy Bunter's movements was made plain.

"With regard to your society, Cherry," said the Remove-master, "it must cease to operate forthwith. Your motive—that of reforming Bunter—was a very laud-

There was cricket practice that afternoon. But Billy Bunter was not to be seen at the nets. The fat junior had had enough cricket to last him till the end of the term.

From the moment that the S.R.B.B. was disbanded, Billy Bunter went back to his former ways. He told fibs; he listened at keyholes; he washed his neck as seldom as possible; and he again trotted out the old, old story of the postal-order.

Bob Cherry writhed to think that his efforts had been in vain. But he was powerless to take any action. The fiat had gone forth, and the commands of Mr. Quelch were like unto the laws of the Medes and Persians.

The Society for Reforming Billy Bunter no longer existed—though the need of such reform was greater than ever!

"It's a case of love's labour lost, Bob," remarked Harry Wharton, with a grin.

"Hear, hear!" said Nugent. "Bunter improved for a time, but now that the society's gone west, he's relapsed."

"In fact, he's the same old Bunter!" said Johnny Bull.

"At any rate," growled Bob Cherry, "I've proved my point. I've shown that it is possible for the Ethiopian to change his skin, and the leopard his spots. If Quelch hadn't squashed the society, we should have carried on the good work, and turned Bunter into quite a respectable citizen. We were getting along quite famously, when Bunter went and spoilt everything by stowing himself away."

"If you want a fresh subject for reform, Cherry," said Skinner, "why not start on Bolsover major?"

But Bob Cherry's reply took the form of an emphatic snort. He was sick and tired—for the time being, at any rate—of trying to reform people. It was hard and thankless work; and, as Harry Wharton had aptly expressed it, it was a case of love's labour lost!

From that time, the S.R.B.B. was no more. And William George Bunter went on his way in peace.

In fact, Billy Bunter was observed to be unusually quiet and preoccupied during the next day or so. Some of the juniors thought that perhaps he was turning over in his mind Bob Cherry's idea of what was right and wrong, and what constituted a decent fellow, with a possible view of taking it up on his own account.

They were sadly wrong in their reckoning. As a matter of fact, the holidays were drawing very near, and what was occupying Billy Bunter's thoughts was: With whom should he go for the vacation?

Nobody would ask him, that was certain. But a little thing like an invitation did not trouble Billy Bunter. He would get somewhere with somebody.

The question of the day was: With whom should he go?

William George Bunter looked like having to spend his holidays at Bunter Court—if such a place existed other than in his imagination.

THE END.

(Next week's grand story of Harry Wharton & Co., is entitled "The Greyfriars Caravanners," by Frank Richards. Does Billy get away with them? You will see next Monday.)

G. L. JESSOP.



The famous cricket amateur, and author of the great newsporting story: "Fighting Jack Cresley!" which appears in this week's issue of THE BOY'S FRIEND. On sale everywhere. Price Three-halfpence.

able one, but I am afraid you were taking too much upon yourself. If any reform is necessary, it is for the masters to bring it about."

"Very well, sir," said Bob meekly.

"Bunter must not be molested any further," said Mr. Quelch. "He may join in sports and games at his own option, but no compulsion must be brought to bear. Is that clear?"

"Perfectly, sir."

"I hope Bunter will continue to show improvement on his own initiative, without any forcible persuasion on the part of others," said Mr. Quelch.

But the Remove-master's hopes did not materialise.

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2:

SPARKS AND SHOCKS!

An Interesting and Instructive Article.

By **GEORGE HOWE.**

"**C**OME in, old man! I've got something to tell you that will make you sit up. But first of all, sit down. I want you to sit in that chair, while I talk seriously about—"

"Oh, oh! There's something the matter with this chair. It has given me beans—I mean pins and needles. What is it?"

"I rigged that up as a surprise for you. As I said, it made you sit up, and only twenty volts!"

"Why, it must be as strong as an electric cable!"

"Oh, no! A live wire for an arc-lamp may be a hundred times as strong, but for a tram-car the voltage may run into tens of thousands. Even at a hundred volts electricity is considered to be dangerous, and it is wonderful that more accidents do not happen."

"What would really happen if I touched a wire of high voltage?"

"Your hand, or whatever you touched the wire with, would be burnt; you would probably shake like a cat in a fit!"

"But surely I could just touch the wire and let go?"

"That's where you make a mistake. As soon as you touched the wire, you would be unable to let go, as electricity of high voltage takes away all power, and kills if you can't get off quickly. The worst of it is, anyone who touched you while you were on the wire would also be affected in the same way unless they were perfectly insulated."

"Let me tell you what to do if someone should get on a live wire. First, send for a doctor. The most important

thing is to get the man away from the electricity.

"This can be done by pushing him with a stick of some sort, but you must be careful that it is quite dry, and that your hand which holds it is insulated by dry clothing, rubber glove, or rubber tobacco-pouch. If he can't be pushed away, he must be pulled. Insulate yourself with dry material to stand on, and have your hand also insulated. Grab him by a part of his clothes and jerk him off."

"When you have got him away he will probably need some attention. If he is breathing, put him in a reclining position, loosen all tight clothing, and let him have plenty of fresh air. If he has ceased to breathe, set to work with artificial respiration by the Laborde method. You will remember that is with the tongue. The burns can be treated if he is breathing, but if you have to perform artificial respiration the burns can wait until after."

"In all cases of unconsciousness, lay the person on his back with the face to one side. If his face is pale, his head must be kept low; if it is red, keep the head up. There is a right way and a wrong one to raise a person's head when he is laid down. The right way is to raise both the head and the shoulders, letting the head rest against your shoulder. That is a position easy for breathing or drinking."

"But it is not always necessary to raise a person's head. He may be injured by his wanting to be moved, but wanting a drink. Let him lay with his head on one side, and give him the drink, a teaspoonful at a time, near the

corner of the mouth, between the cheek and gums. That saves him all exertion but that of swallowing."

"But doesn't a person always go white when he faints?"

"Yes, when he faints, and when he is stunned. Stunning and concussion of the brain are the same thing, and may be very dangerous. A doctor should at once be called to anyone who is stunned by a knock on the head."

"But a person may be unconscious and have a red face if the brain is injured either by disease, as in apoplexy, or by a blow which causes something to press on the brain, which is called compression. This is very serious, and a case for the doctor as quickly as possible; but the person must not be moved unless it is absolutely necessary. The heart beats slowly, the breathing is slow and snoring; if the injury is on one side of the head, the opposite side of the body is limp, and the pupils of the eye unequal, and the skin is hot."

"If hot-water bottles can be got, put one wrapped in flannel to his feet, and keep him quiet until the doctor comes."

"Apoplexy is rarely found in any but elderly people, while epilepsy is usually found in young folk. Epilepsy is what is often called 'a fit.' It usually begins with a cry or a yell, and is followed at once by unconsciousness, falling down stiff, and lying in the same position. After a few moments he stretches himself, takes a deep breath, then starts foaming at the mouth, with twitchings and violent convulsions. It is while in these convulsions that he may damage himself by biting his tongue, and hurting his limbs in banging them about. He feels nothing, and that is the one mark of epilepsy; unconscious, yet throwing the limbs about and muscles in spasms."

"All you can do is to get him away from furniture or other things against which he might injure himself, and put a piece of rubber or wood, well covered with a handkerchief or something else clean, between his teeth. Get him to some place where he can sleep, and give him something hot to drink if he wants it, though it is better to avoid stimulants."



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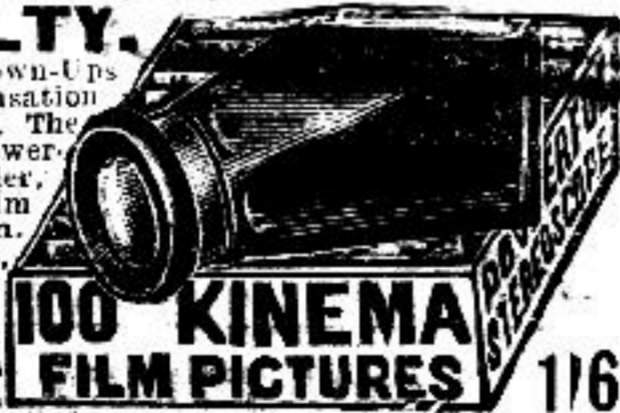


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WHEN ANSWERING ADVERTISEMENTS BE SURE TO MENTION THIS PAPER.



Have you ever camped out and experienced the joys of cooking your own grub? Have you ever felt the desire to seek the woods and highway, to get away from the smoke of the city and town? In these splendid articles you can learn to do all these things. AN OLD HAND tells you how.

Article No. 9. - - - WHAT TO DO IN CAMP!

I HAVE given you some useful hints showing you how to get out into the open either for single days, week-ends, or even whole weeks. But just getting out is only a small part of the great game. True, it is the beginning and the most important; but, as I have already told you, it is useless to get out, pitch your tent, then lie down on your back with your face to the sky.

There is no need to go through it again. Now you're out, the tent pitched, fire going, water and wood at hand, then it is time to look about you and get the full benefit of the open. I have given you one or two hints about how you could spend your time usefully in camp. Now I am going to show you how you can reap the great joy of Nature and the country.

We will presume that there are three of you, all chums, camping for the week-end. You are, of course, out for a good rest, a rest from the great smoky city, from the stuffy office, factory, or class-room. By rest I do not mean slack. A slacker in a camp is more of a hindrance than a companion. In fact, before you start out you must make up your mind on this one important point—that you will not slack.

You might say: "Well, I'm going for a rest, that's what you yourself said, so I don't want any work to do." No, you need not do any work. You can have your rest—or perhaps I had better say change. Rest and change, call it what you like—done properly, it comes to the same thing.

High on the downs your tent is pitched. Away to the front of you and sideways an undulating stretch of purple and yellow-covered downs. At your back a wood of tall, sighing pines and beeches, and overhead a blue sky, broken by fleecy clouds.

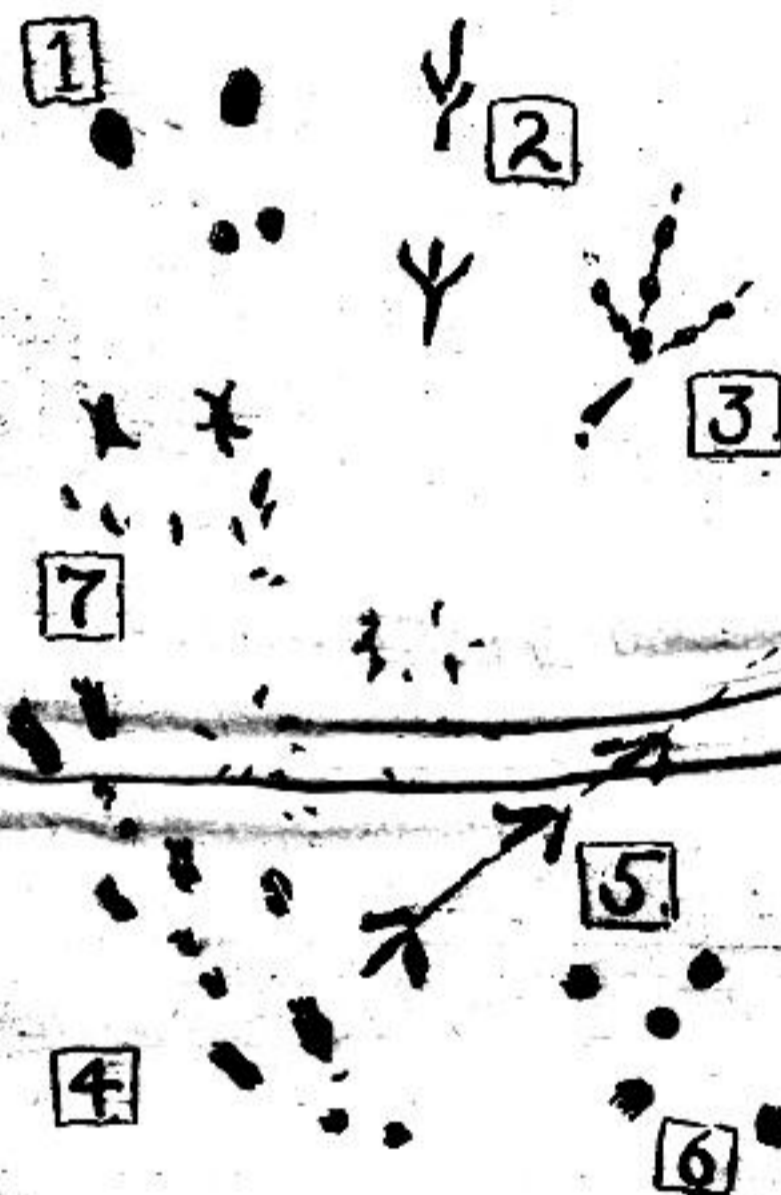
That is the picture you have in front of you—an ideal spot. But all this beauty is lost unless you can appreciate it in the proper way.

Life is all around. You won't find it if you plump down on the ground, stretch your limbs, and close your eyes for a nap like a slacker. Do the right thing; go out and look for it, and enjoy yourself and have a change, a rest.

Some people going about the country see only what is thrust before their eyes. The old hand sets his eyes to search out hidden things, and sees a hundred times as much as the casual onlooker. He soon finds out the usual state of things in any country where he may be. Then he has an eagle eye for the unusual happenings. Go into the silent woods at the back of your camp and make yourself acquainted with the woodland folk, all the creatures of the Great Mystery—how they live, their names and habits.

Oh, it's great fun! Ever done it? No! Ever sat down on the bank of a burbling stream and gazed across to the other side and watched the beautiful kingfisher, the king of the smaller birds, in his home in the cliff-like bank? Ever snapped him whilst he sat on a twig at the entrance to his hole? Ever watched a party of field-mice enjoying themselves, or a mole take a stroll round? Then why not start right now and do it?

All these things help to make your week-end camp more enjoyable, more worth while.



Then on the ground you may come upon signs and marks made by some creatures—and trails of footprints of the rabbit, stoat, weasel, fox, and many others. The knowledge of all this is called woodcraft—the finest sport in the whole world, if only you knew it. All woodcraft is based on observation and deduction. No wood can fail to offer a golden chance to learn and master this science. You may go on for days over the fields and hills without finding so much scope for the exercising of your powers of reasoning as one little wood will give you.

The old hand always walks cannily, and he never goes blundering round a corner or

appears suddenly in any gap. If you go incautiously through underwood you may be half-blinded by a springing twig lashing across your eyes; or a trail of hawthorns lying serpent-like on the ground may snare you. Besides, you will kick up an awful shindy, and scare away all the animals and birds you are on the look-out for.

You must look where you place your foot, so as not to make a rustling noise or a crack of dry twigs. How to walk silently and cautiously are the first things you must learn before starting out on an observation trip. Until you have mastered these properly, keep out of the woods.

And when inside—well in—you can select a certain spot, sit down with a pencil and note-book, and a camera unslung—if you have brought one with you—ready to snap, and wait.

You may not have long to wait, and, again, you may. But it means a certain amount of patience either way. A rabbit may come hopping out from the thicket near by. If it has not scented you, and keeps perfectly still, there is your chance to snap it and take a few notes or a sketch or two. But don't move or "blink an eyelash," otherwise your friend will discover your presence and make himself scarce.

This and many other things you can do to occupy your time in camp. I will not go into this any more for the present; later, perhaps, I will give you further hints concerning habits and description of the woodland folk, but for the moment I will confine myself to the subject of tracks.

You've seen them, small marks of feet made on the soft ground. No doubt you have wondered what animal made them, and how he was moving at the time.

The diagram on this page will show you several different kinds of tracks you will find if you keep your eyes skinned.

1. The track of a squirrel.
2. The track of a hawk.
3. The female water-lily leaves her sign on the banks of the stream.
4. The trail of a cotton-trail rabbit.
5. The marks of a pheasant.
6. Tracks of a mole.
7. The tracks of a toad.

All these signs have the interest of a puzzle, the meaning of which you have to work out. Can you tell from a scratch in the mud and the fluff of a feather what sort of woodland tragedy it was that took place at your feet? Each mark you see you should be able to translate, as if reading from a book. Sometimes it is difficult and needs a lot of reasoning on your part, but it is good sport. You try it at your next camp.

If there are any readers desirous of further information on camping out, I shall be pleased to advise them to the best of my ability, on condition that they enclose a stamped addressed envelope with their letters. It must be understood that it is not always possible to reply by return of post. I have had many letters from my chums already, asking my advice as to how they can improve their knowledge on certain subjects of camp-craft—such as how to read a map, what is the best time to go if you would not gash yourself with an axe when cutting up wood for the fire, how to water-proof a tent, and many other things which a young camper should know before he attempts to go out into the open. Next week I shall have a little chat concerning herbs and natural dyes which go to make up an excellent camp medicine-chest—a thing which should always be carried about by a camper.

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