

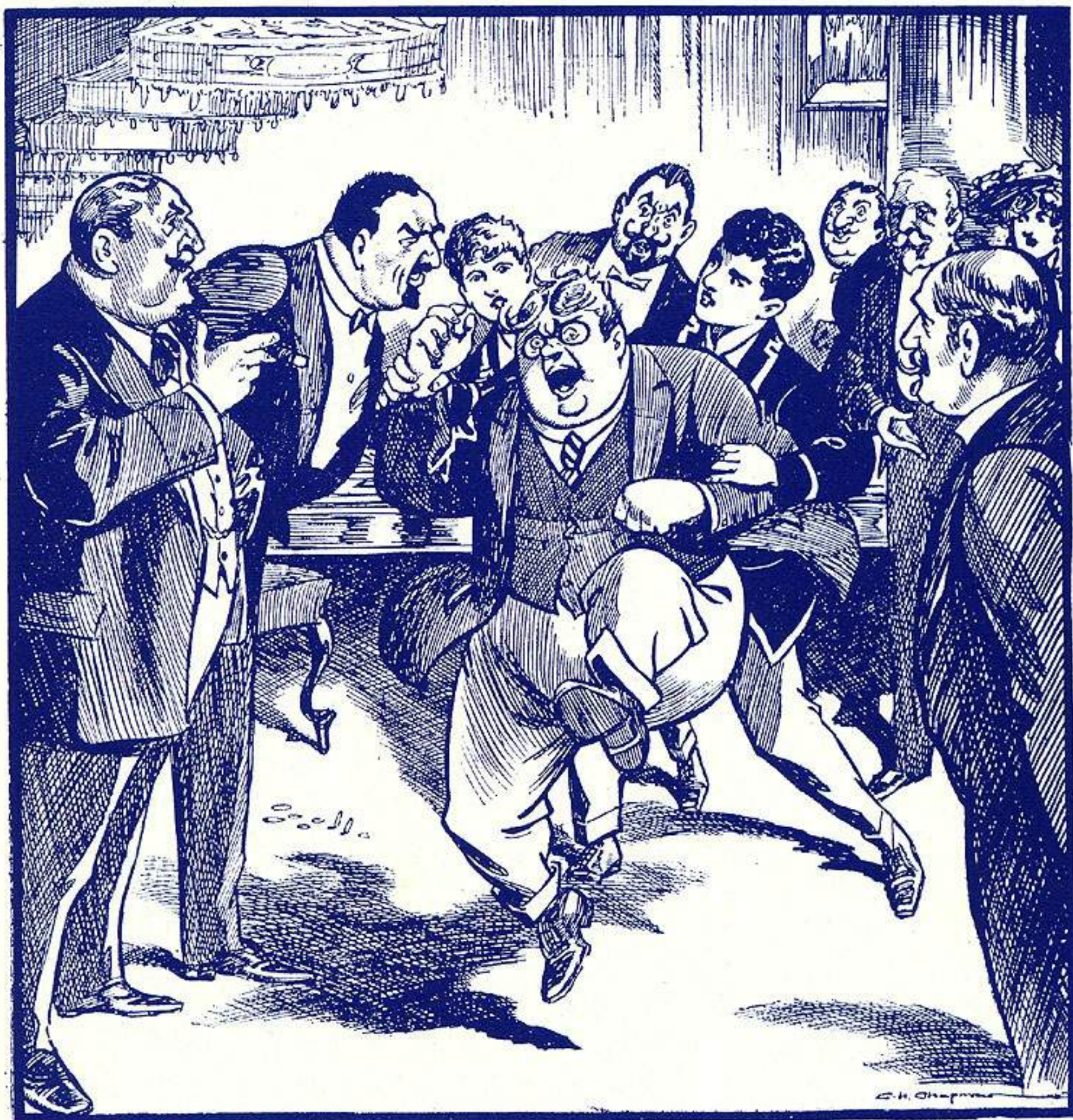
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No. 709. Vol. XX.

September 10th, 1921.



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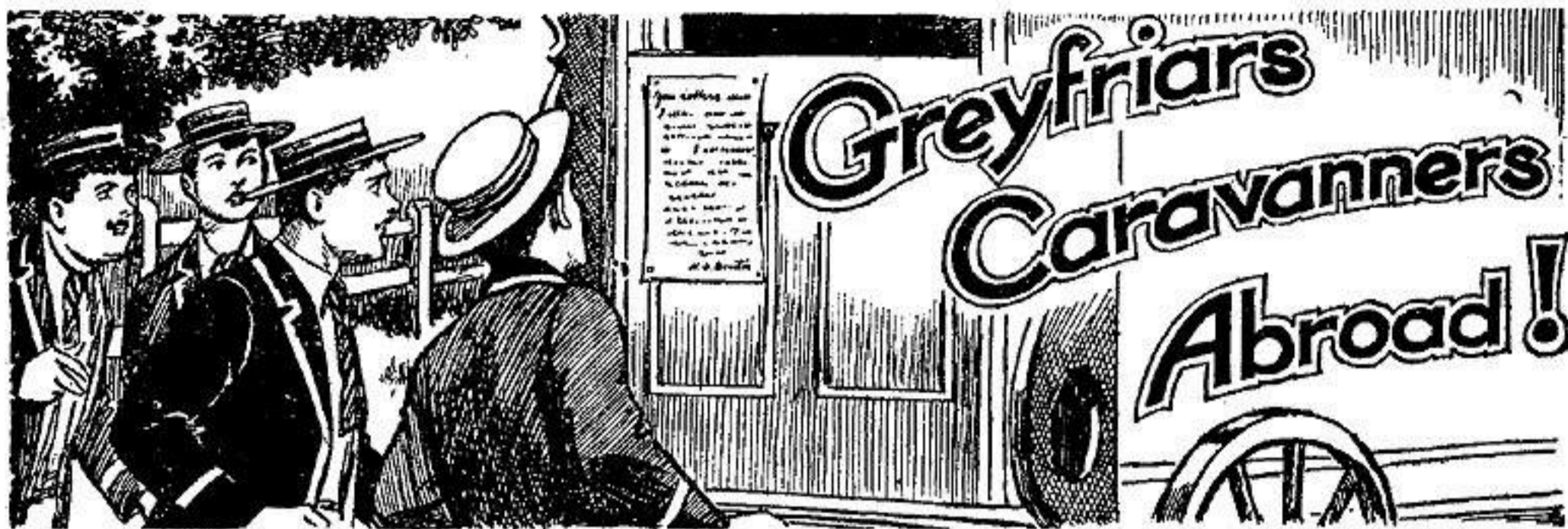
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By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Ructions on the Road!

LEAVE it to me, you fellows—"Fathead!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You pitch it to him in your best French, Wharton," said Bob Cherry. "And you shut up, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter sniffed. He was not inclined to shut up; he seldom was.

Besides, Billy Bunter felt that he was needed now. It was a question of talking to a Frenchman in his own language, and William George Bunter felt that he was the man for the job.

The Greyfriars caravanners had been following a white, dusty road, in the north of France, and they were looking for a camp. Since crossing the Channel the caravanners had been on the French roads some days, and they had quite enjoyed their new experience. They had found that the Lower Fourth French of Greyfriars was not wholly similar to the French spoken in France; but it was at least a kindred tongue, and they had made themselves more or less understood by the natives with whom they came in contact. Billy Bunter, who had assumed the position of interpreter of the party, was the least comprehensible to the native, which he explained on the theory that his splendid Parisian accent was too good for them in Picardy.

The caravan was halted now, on a white road that ran between fenced fields. In the distance on the left was the sea. Far ahead was a hill crowned by a gigantic building which could only have been a grand hotel. The caravanners were not looking for a grand hotel, however. Between a wide fence by the road and the distant sea lay a wide field, dotted with fragments of old Army huts and rusty petrol cans, relics of a British camp during the war. There was a cottage on the edge of the field, by the road, and at the door of the cottage stood the proprietor, in his shirt-sleeves, regarding the caravanners curiously.

Harry Wharton lifted his straw hat to the Frenchman, remembering that he was in the native land of politeness, and inquired:

"Do you speak English?"

The man shook his head with a smile. "Of course, he doesn't speak English, Wharton," said Billy Bunter irritably. "Leave it to me. I'll put it to him in French."

"Do dry up, Bunter!" urged Johnny Bull.

"Bong swah, mongsoo!" said Billy Bunter, blinking at the Frenchman, and addressing him in French—Bunter's French.

"Bon soir!" answered the man politely.

"You see, he understands me," said Bunter triumphantly.

"He's a good guesser, you mean," said Nugent.

"Oh rats! Let me get on with it," said Bunter. "We want to ask him to let us camp in this field, and we'll pay him. It's simple enough. I can rattle it off in a minute or two. You fellows shut up! Monsieur, voulez vous donner — What's the word for leave, you fellows?"

"Partir!" said Johnny Bull, with a grin.

The caravanners grinned. "Partir" certainly was the word for leave in the sense of departing; but it wasn't the word for leave in the sense of "permission," which Bunter wanted. But the Owl of the Remove seemed to be satisfied.

"Voulez vous donner partir?" he recommenced.

"Comment?" ejaculated the Frenchman, astonished, as well he might be.

"Partir!" repeated Bunter.

"Moi!" ejaculated the cottager.

"Yes—oui, oui. You—vous!" said Bunter. "Vous, you know—I mean, vous savez—partir, you know."

"Mais je ne comprends pas!" said the cottager blankly. "Moi, je suis chez moi ici."

There was a chuckle from the caravanners.

"What does he mean by shay mewaw?" demanded Bunter.

"He means that he's at home, ass."

"Well, we know he's at home," said Bunter crossly. "No need to tell us that. Look here, monsieur—I mean, regardez-vous—we want to come here—we want permission—"

"Is that French?" asked Bob Cherry.

"The Frenchfulness is not great," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh, shaking his head.

"Oh, dry up, you fellows, and give a fellow a chance. You're sure that partir means leave?"

"Ha, ha! Yes."

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! Monsieur voulez vous partir—"

"Comment?"

"Partir—"

"Mais non!" exclaimed the Frenchman. "J'ai dit que je suis chez moi ici."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the caravanners.

Bunter—though he did not know it—was asking the Frenchman to depart, to which the astonished man was replying that he was in his own house. But Bunter's wonderful knowledge of French did not make this clear to him at all.

"The chap doesn't seem to understand his own language," said Bunter. "I've noticed that about these Frenchmen before. Their schools can't amount to much. I'll try again. Monsieur, nous voulons rester ici. That's rather good, you fellows. It means that we want to rest here."

"Go hon!"

"It does, really; and he understands. Vous comprenny?" asked Bunter, turning his big spectacles inquiringly on the cottager.

But the man looked more and more astonished.

"Leave it to me, you ass!" said Wharton, laughing.

"Rot! Lemme see. Proprietor—is the word for that 'cochon'?" I think cochon is the word."

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Before the fat junior could escape, the Frenchman had him by the collar and was shaking him with one hand, and smacking him with the other. "Yaroooh!" roared Billy Bunter. "Rescue! He's mad!" (See Chapter 1.)

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the caravanners.

Bunter had got hold of the word that is most insulting to a Frenchman, although it only means a "pig." It is not agreeable to be referred to as a pig in English, but to be referred to as a "cochon" in French is a terrific insult, only to be wiped out in blood. Billy Bunter, happily unconscious of what he was doing, rattled on.

Bunter's memory for foreign words was like the curate's egg in the old story, good in parts. He remembered the words without remembering their precise meaning. Satisfied that "cochon" was the French equivalent of "proprietor," he rattled on:

"Monsieur, etes vous le cochon—"

"Hein!"

The French cottager fairly jumped.

"You are the cochon—vous etes le cochon—" repeated Bunter.

He got no further.

To his amazement and alarm, the cottager threw down his pipe, whipped out of his cottage doorway, and jumped at Bunter.

Before the fat junior could retreat, the Frenchman had him by the collar, and was shaking him with one hand, and smacking him with the other.

Smack, smack, smack!

"Yarooooh!" roared Bunter. "Help! Rescue! He's mad! Oh, my hat! You cackling rotters, dragimoff!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Greyfriars caravanners simply couldn't go to Bunter's help; they were laughing too much. They leaned on the caravan and roared, while the excited Frenchman smacked and smacked, and shook and shook, till the Owl of the Remove hardly knew whether he was on his head or his heels.

"Yow-ow-woop! Help! Police! Gendarmes! Yoooop!" roared Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Voila!" panted the Frenchman breathlessly. "Comment, cochon? Vous m'insultez chez moi, hein? Alors?"

"Help!"

Smack, smack, smack!

The Frenchman released the hapless Owl of the Remove at last. He waved his hand excitedly at the caravanners.

"Allez vous en!" he shouted.

"Yow-ow-ow-wow!"

"Better alley on, I think," grinned Bob Cherry. "We can't camp here after that. Gee-up, old hoss!"

The horse "gee'd" up, and the caravanners went on their way, Bunter yelling with anguish as he followed. And the Frenchman, black with wrath, stared after them angrily till they were out of sight.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

In Camp!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! This will suit us!" said Bob Cherry, after another half-hour on the road.

It was high time for camping. The sun was sinking behind the low hills. And the caravan came to a halt again, opposite a cafe that stood by the roadside.

It was a little white building, with the road in front, and wide, green fields behind, stretching towards the cliffs that looked on the sea. Some of the fields were cultivated, and in others cattle were grazing. There was plenty of room for the caravanners to camp, and it was a pleasant spot, with the little town of Wimereux in view in one direction, and the village of Ambleteuse in the other, along the sea.

"First-rate!" said Harry Wharton. "I'll go in and ask the landlord if we can camp here."

"Better leave it to me, Wharton," said Billy Bunter. "You'll make some mistake with your bad French—"

"What?" ejaculated the captain of the Remove.

"I'm quite willing to do the interpreting," said Bunter cheerfully. "I should have got on all right with that last chap, if he hadn't been insane. Leave it to me!"

And Bunter rolled towards the entrance

of the building. He was brought up suddenly by Bob Cherry's grip on the back of his collar.

"Yow! Leggo!" howled Bunter.

Bob Cherry jerked him back to the caravan.

"You'll stay here, fat old pippin," he remarked. "We've had enough of your calling people names and causing rows. Sit down!"

"I'm going to interpret—" roared Bunter.

"You're going to sit down!" grinned Bob Cherry. And the Owl of the Remove did sit down—hard; with a loud howl.

Harry Wharton went into the cafe, and returned in a few minutes with a stout and rubicund gentleman, evidently the proprietor. The landlord looked at the caravan and looked at the caravanners, and nodded, and talked in rapid French, of which the juniors understood about ten per cent. But they understood that monsieur was willing that they should camp on his land, and that his charge was "dix francs" for that permission—which was quite a reasonable charge.

The patron opened a gate, and Bob Cherry led the horse into the field, and the caravan rumbled on over a ruddy path.

The van halted in a green meadow, which sloped a little towards the cliffs overlooking the sea.

"Voila!" said Monsieur le Patron, with a beaming smile. "Ca va, n'est-ce-pas?"

"Oui!" said Wharton.

"Merci!" added Bob Cherry politely.

"Tres bien!"

Harry Wharton succeeded in making him understand that it was water that was wanted, and the cafe-keeper nodded.

He led the way to "la pompe," where one of the caravanners filled a bucket, which was carried back to the camp. There was plenty of firewood for a camp-fire. Scattered in the fields were fragments of old Army huts, and the juniors gathered armfuls of bits of old planks and beams. Monsieur le Patron left them to themselves, and they soon had a camp-fire going, with a kettle singing away merrily over it. Billy Bunter, who was useful as a cook if in no other capacity, started on supper, and the caravanners were glad when it was ready. A day's march had made them hungry.

After supper, round the camp-fire, the juniors sat chatting for a time. Billy Bunter blinked across the fields towards the lights of Wimereux, which twinkled in the distance through the dusk.

"I say, you fellows," he said suddenly.

"Well, ass?" said Bob.

"What about a trot round the town?" asked Bunter. "There's a casino in Wimereux—"

"A what?"

"A casino," said Bunter. "Place where you play petits-chevaux, you know—that's a game on a green table. I've been thinking of that ever since we landed, Wharton."

"Better think of something else, then," said the captain of the Remove grimly. "You're not going to play petits-chevaux, you fat duffer!"

"Oh, really, you know! While your uncle was with us I wouldn't mention it," said Bunter. "He's such a dry old stick that—"

"What?"

"Such a crusty old blighter," said Bunter cheerfully. "But now we're on our own I don't see why we shouldn't have a bit of a flutter. I've been thinking it out. My idea is this. You supply

me with some money, and I'll win something for you. Rather ripping to walk out of the casino with a hundred pounds in one's pocket—what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at," said Bunter crossly. "I've no doubt that I should get on to the game very quickly and skin them. All it needs is a cool judgment, a clear head, and an iron nerve—that's me all over. And a little capital, of course."

"Shall we tie him to a wheel of the caravan?" asked Bob Cherry thoughtfully.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"
"Better peg him out," said Frank Nugent. "There's the tent-pegs—"

"Look here!" roared Bunter. "I'm suggesting this really for you fellows' sakes. A hundred pounds would see us a long way. I'm willing to hand over half my winnings. I can't say fairer than that."

"How much cash have you got at present, Bunter?" asked Wharton.

"Only two francs."

Harry Wharton laughed.
"Then we needn't tie you up or peg you out," he said. "You wouldn't be admitted to the casino with that."

"I say, you fellows—"
"Shurrup!"

"Lend me, say, a thousand francs—"
"Kick him, somebody!"

"Yah!"

Billy Bunter relapsed into moody silence. Afar in the distance the lights of the casino twinkled invitingly; and the Owl of the Remove was thinking of the enormous sums he might have won—perhaps—with a little capital, aided by his clear head, cool judgment, and iron nerve. But if the other requisites were there, a little capital certainly wasn't, and Bunter couldn't start in to break the bank on a capital of two francs—especially as the charge for admission was more than that! So the fat junior pondered gloomily on his grievances and his lost chances of making a fortune, and blinked at his comrades with indignant reproach—without moving them in the least.

And instead of rolling away towards the twinkling, attractive lights of the casino, Billy Bunter rolled into the caravan at last, and into the bunk, whence his resonant snore soon echoed through the night. Harry Wharton & Co. turned in, in the tent.

And in the tent the Famous Five of Greyfriars slept in peace.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter's Little Dodge!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. turned out early in the sunny morning in cheerful spirits. There was a breeze rippling the sunny surface of the sea and stirring the grass in the fields. The camp-fire was soon going, and Billy Bunter trotted out to cook the breakfast. From the cafe a supply of fresh fish was obtained—fresh from the nets of the Boulogne fishermen—and Billy Bunter fried them over the fire, with considerable satisfaction in his fat face.

But over breakfast the Owl of the Remove was observed to look very thoughtful. And the Famous Five grinned as they noted his glances wandering to the white casino in the distance across the fields.

The fat junior was evidently still thinking of his wonderful project of enriching

himself at the expense of the proprietors of the green table—an enterprise compared with which robbing a tigress of her young was an easy task.

But Bunter was prepared to face all the difficulties of the enterprise if only the Co. would provide the necessary capital. Billy Bunter, after all, was not the only person in the world prepared to be reckless with cash that did not belong to him.

"I say, you fellows," said Bunter at last. "It's time we attended to a rather serious matter—"

"Washing-up?" asked Bob.

"No!" roared Bunter. "Nothing of the kind!"

"Well, it's time for washing-up," said Johnny Bull; "and as it's your job, Bunter, the sooner you get on with it the better."

"No need to jaw, old chap!" added Nugent.

"The jawfulness of the esteemed Bunter," said Hurree Singh, "is like the honourable brook mentioned by Poet Tennyson. It goes on for ever."

"Give a chap a chance to speak," said Bunter. "Now, look here, this matter is serious. We've not got too much cash."

"The too-muchfulness is not terrific," assented the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"If I can double it or treble it—"

"Ease off!" said Bob Cherry. "If you say 'casino' again, you get this boot. See?"

Bob Cherry held up a large foot for Bunter's inspection.

The Owl of the Remove snorted.

"I'm really thinking of you fellows—" he said.

"Rats!"

"With a few hundred francs—"

"Ring off!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Look here, Bunter," said Harry Wharton seriously. "My uncle left us on our own in France, on the understanding that we played the game, and didn't get into mischief. He trusts me to see that there is no blagging, or anything of that kind. Even if you had any money of

your own, you couldn't go to the casino and gamble."

"Why couldn't I?" roared Bunter angrily.

"Because it's not in the game. And we should jolly soon stop you."

"Yah!"

"Anyhow, you've not got any tin," said Harry. "and you won't get a centime out of us. So put the silly rot out of your silly head."

"I'm expecting a postal-order—"

"Oh, cheese it!"

"In fact, I think very likely there's a lot of remittances waiting for me in the post-office at—at—at Wimereux," said Bunter. "In the unlikely event of my losing your money, I should square up immediately."

"Wash up, instead," said Bob.

"My idea is to camp here to-day," said Bunter, "and this evening I'll try my luck at the— He was just going to say 'casino,' when Bob Cherry made a motion with his boot, "at the—the—the green table, you know. We're not in a hurry to get farther. This is all right for camping, and we can get some good grub from the cafe-restaurant yonder. They get their fish direct from Boulogne, and it's jolly good. We'll stay here all day—you fellows can go and bathe—"

"We've bathed."

"You can go and swim, then. I'll look after the camp, and—"

Harry Wharton looked at his watch.

"We're going to be on the road in half an hour," he said. "Get on with the washing up, Bunter, while we look after the van and the horse."

"Oh, really, Wharton—don't walk away while I'm talking to you, you beast!" roared Bunter indignantly.

But the chums of the Remove did walk away.

Apparently they were satisfied with the charms of Bunter's conversation already. They strolled away across the field towards the cafe on the road, to settle the account with the patron, and to make some more purchases for the day. Billy Bunter blinked after them in great wrath.

"Rotters!" he murmured. "After all



Bunter blinked round desperately, and snatched the whip from the caravan and cracked it. The horse jumped away a few paces and stopped. "Shoo!" hissed Bunter. (See Chapter 3.)

I've done for 'em! Talk about ingratitude being sharper than the tooth of a thankless child! It's simply sickening."

The Owl of the Remove did some thinking. It was an unaccustomed mental exercise for him; but the case was serious. He was going to be marched away from the spot where fortune was ready to smile on him—that was how Bunter looked at it. And Bunter could be obstinate. The Famous Five disappeared into the cafe, and Bunter, with some trepidation in his manner, but very determined, trotted across to the spot where the tethered horse was quietly cropping the grass. He gave a cautious blink to and fro, and then released the animal from the tether, and waved his fat hands at it.

"Shoo!" hissed Bunter.

The horse eyed him.

Instead of galloping off, however, the animal began cropping the grass again. He did not seem to want his freedom, in fact. Billy Bunter waved his fat arms frantically, and the horse sheered off a few yards, and again fell to cropping the grass. He simply would not run away. Bunter blinked round desperately, and snatched the whip from the caravan and cracked it. The horse jumped away a few paces, and stopped. And Bunter, getting quite desperate, lashed him with the whip.

Then the horse, with a squeal, started off, and Bunter watched him go, with a grin of satisfaction. Without a horse, the caravan certainly could not move from the camp; and Bunter was quite prepared to let his comrades spend their day hunting for a missing horse. He was prepared for anything so long as he did not have to leave the fascinating view of the white building by the seashore.

But the grin faded off his fat face again. The horse trotted twenty yards, stopped, and began browsing once more on the herbage.

"Oh, the rotten beast!" gasped Bunter.

It was clear that the horse was too well brought up an animal to take to its heels. Bunter threw down the whip, picked up the rope, and approached the horse again. With great docility the animal allowed himself to be caught. Bunter put the halter on, and led him away, across the field, behind a fringe of bushes, and into a deep hollow. In this hollow a clump of scrubby trees and thickets grew, and Bunter led the horse into the midst of them, and tethered him there on a short tether. The animal blinked at him, apparently surprised, but still docile. He began cropping the herbage round him quite contentedly.

Leaving the caravan horse out of sight in the thicket in the hollow, the Owl of the Remove returned to the camp, and started washing up. Harry Wharton & Co. had come out of the cafe by the way-side now, and were standing in a group there, talking to Monsieur le Patron. That plump gentleman was giving them directions with great good-humour, in rapid French, and pointing with his plump hands. The juniors left him at last, and came back towards the camp, Nugent carrying a rush basket of fish. Billy Bunter did not look round as they came up; he went on steadily with his task.

"Buck up, Bunter!" called out Bob Cherry. "We want the things in the van, Fatty!"

"Nearly finished. Get the horse in, and then I'll be ready!" answered Bunter, winking at the washing-mop.

"Right-ho!"

The juniors looked round for the horse. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where's the gee?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Dash it all, the tether's come loose!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You are an ass, Bob; you must have left it loose!"

"Rot!" said Bob Cherry warmly. "I tied him safely enough!"

"Well, he's wandered."

"Can't have wandered far," said Frank Nugent. "Did you see the horse get away, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter blinked round.

"The horse?" he repeated.

"Yes; he's gone."

"The horse gone!" exclaimed Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I must say you're awfully careless!"

"Which way did he go?" shouted Bob.

"Blessed if I know! I was washing up," answered Bunter. "I can't do your work as well as my own, Bob Cherry. You can't expect it. As it is, I do nearly all the work in this party—"

"Oh, dry up!" growled Bob.

"He must be in the field somewhere," said Harry Wharton. "He couldn't get through the fences."

"There's a gate open yonder," called out Bunter, with a grin. "Now I come to think of it, I heard him trotting away, and I think he went in that direction. He's got out into the road, you fellows. Perhaps he's been run over by a motor-car. There are a lot on the road."

"Oh, rats!"

The Famous Five started at a run for the distant gate. It was in the opposite direction from the thicket in the hollow where the horse was hidden. Billy Bunter looked after them with a smile, and then turned and glanced at the distant casino glimmering in the morning sunshine. And he winked at the casino.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Horse Hunters!

"WHERE'S that dashed horse?"
"Bless him!"
"Bother him!"
"The blessedness is very terrific!"

Harry Wharton & Co. came out into the road with a run. As the horse was not to be seen in the fields, it seemed pretty clear that he had taken to the road, and it was most exasperating. The caravanners were ready to start on the day's march, and they did not want to waste time. They looked this way, and that way, like Moses of old, but the horse was not to be seen on the long white road, which stretched away towards Ambleteuse in one direction, and Wimereux in the other. It wound a good deal, and there were ups and downs in it, so that it was impossible to see very far in either direction. An early country postman was coming along the road with his sack over his shoulder, and Wharton called to him:

"Monsieur le facteur."

The "facteur" stopped.

"Bon jour, monsieur!" he said civilly.

"Bon jour," answered Wharton.

"We've lost a horse—"

"Comment?"

"I mean, nous avons perdu notre cheval," said Harry. "Avez vous vu un cheval sur la route?"

"Non, monsieur!"

"Vous en etes sur?" asked Bob Cherry, apparently thinking it a good opportunity for putting in a little of his own French.

"J'en suis sur, monsieur!"

"Merci bien!"

The facteur trotted on again.

"He was coming up from Wimereux," said Harry. "He would have seen the horse if it had gone that way. Must have trotted off towards Ambleteuse."



"Here he is!" shouted Harry Wharton. The captain of the Remove plunged through the thicket in the hollow, and there the caravan horse dawned upon him—tethered, and lying at rest in the herbage.
(See Chapter 4.)

"May be miles away by this time!" said Nugent, rather dismally. "Why didn't you tie him up safely, Bob?"

"I did!" snorted Bob Cherry.

"Well, he got loose," said Nugent. "He's dragged the rope with him, so it couldn't have been fixed on the peg!"

"It was!" grunted Bob.

"My dear chap—" argued Nugent.

"Oh, don't jaw!" said Bob. "We've got to get after the gee! No good standing here wagging our chins! Let's find somebody coming up from Ambleteuse and ask him if he's seen the horse!"

"Good!" said Harry.

The Famous Five hurried up the road, and in a few minutes met an old lady who carried a basket slung on her shoulder, laden with fruits. She smiled sweetly as they stopped her, evidently taking them for customers.

"Bon jour, messieurs," she said, holding out the basket. "Les oranges—les pommes—"

"Have you seen a horse?"

"Plait-il?"

"Nous cherchons un cheval—"

"Un cheval!" exclaimed the old dame, in astonishment. "Mais ja'i pas un cheval—jai des pommes—"

"Oh, dear! She thinks we want to buy a horse!" groaned Nugent. "Let's buy some of her stuff, and then ask her."

The juniors made an extensive purchase of fruits, and then elaborately explained what they wanted. The old dame smiled comprehensively when she found that they were in search of a lost horse, and cheerfully informed them that she hadn't seen it. And she walked on, leaving them still more exasperated.

"It can't be on the road at all!" Wharton decided. "Perhaps it went towards the cliffs—the fields run right down to the cliffs."

"But they're fenced off."

"There's openings in the fences, though, and the beast may have got through! We may find him on the beach."

"Oh, all right! Let's look!"

The Greyfriars juniors tramped away from the road, across the fields. Billy Bunter had finished washing-up now, and he was sitting on the step of the van as they came by. They deposited the fruit they had purchased from the old lady and tramped on, without speaking to Bunter. The Owl of the Remove grinned after them, and refreshed himself with apples and oranges while they tramped on towards the sea.

A fence of barbed wire separated the fields from the open cliffs, but it had been broken down in two or three places, probably by "trippers." If the horse had wandered in that direction it could have got out on the cliffs, which were steep and dangerous. Beyond the cliffs, a couple of hundred feet down, was a wide stretch of white sand, with the waves curling on it. If the horse had fallen over the verge, certainly it was not likely ever to pull the Greyfriars' caravan again.

Harry Wharton mounted upon the highest point of the cliffs, and scanned the surroundings. There were gay parasols glimmering on the beach below, plenty of promenaders and bathers, and no one showed any of the excitement that would certainly have been caused by a horse tumbling over the cliffs. And on the cliffs themselves there was no sign whatever of the straying animal.

"See him?" called out Johnny Bull.

"No."

"There's a hundred places along here



Billy Bunter fairly wriggled with indignation. Instead of grief and remorse, the caravanners were apparently prepared to bury him by the wayside. He sat up, sneezing. "Beasts!" he roared. "Lemme out of this!" (See Chapter 6.)

where he might be hidden. Let's separate, and search."

It was the only thing to be done. And for a good hour the Famous Five hunted among the cliffs, in hollows and sunken paths and recesses, where the grass grew thick.

They gathered again, warm and red and exasperated. The caravan horse had vanished—gone from their gaze like a beautiful dream. The juniors looked at one another.

"Nice kettle of fish!" growled Johnny Bull. "I think I'd better look after tethering the horse in the future!"

"I tethered him safe enough!" growled Bob.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?"

"Oh, rats!"

"Of all the asses—" began Johnny.

"Oh, dry up, Bull! You talk too much!"

"Look here!"

"Fathead!"

Tempers seemed to be suffering among the Greyfriars caravanners. But the purring tones of the nabob of Bhanipur broke in.

"The rowfulness is not the proper caper, my esteemed chums!" he said soothingly. "We have got to find the excellent and disgusting quadruped! The jawfulness and ragfulness will not help!"

"Let's get back into the field, and see if we can pick up his tracks," said Harry Wharton. "We're Scouts, and we ought to be able to track a horse in grass."

"Might have thought of that before!" grunted Bob.

"Well, we've thought of it now," said Nugent pacifically. "Let's try it on!"

The worried caravanners came back into the field to the camp. Billy Bunter greeted them with a broad grin. The morning was wearing away, and it looked

as if the caravanners would be landed in that camp for the day, after all—which was what the astute Owl of the Remove wanted!

"Found the geegeo, you fellows?" he asked.

"No!" snapped Wharton.

"I'll tell you what," said Bunter. "Let's camp here for the day. I don't mind, if you fellows don't! The horse may wander back of his own accord—I shouldn't be surprised!"

"Rubbish!"

"We're comfortable enough here!" said Bunter. "And, in the evening, we can walk into Wimereux, and see the sights!"

"Oh, dry up!"

"Yah!"

The Famous Five moved on to the spot where the horse had been pegged. Bob Cherry made an examination of the peg, which was still sticking in the ground.

"The peg was safe enough," he said.

"The horse wasn't!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"I don't see how the rope could have slipped off!"

"Well, it has!"

"Or else somebody came along and untied it," said Bob.

"What rot!"

"Look here, Bull!"

"Here's the tracks!" said Harry Wharton. "They're plain enough. The brute seems to have wandered to and fro, and then—here's the trail! It leads towards the sea, anyhow. It's jolly odd!"

"What's odd?"

"There's a boot-track here as well as the hoof-prints—it looks as if the horse was being led away."

"If he was stolen, he would be led away towards the road, I should think."

"Well, here's a track of a boot all the

way," said Harry, following the trail, stooping, and watching for "sign." "It's plain enough! Follow on!"

The trail was lost and found again and followed. As the juniors approached the deep hollow in the middle of the field, Bunter stood up on the step of the caravan, watching them anxiously from that coign of vantage, his round eyes growing wide and anxious behind his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows!" he shouted.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Can you see him?"

"No. But he's not in that direction."

"How do you know, ass?"

"Why, here he is!" shouted Wharton.

The captain of the Remove had plunged through the thicket in the hollow, and there the caravan horse dawned upon him—tethered, and lying at rest in the herbage, quite calm and contented. The Famous Five gathered round, staring at the animal in astonishment.

"Tied up—here!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"How on earth—"

"He was led here and tied up," said Wharton, unfastening the horse. "Some howling ass must have done it for an idiotic joke while we were in the cafe!"

"Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Wha-a-at?"

Bob almost danced with rage. The truth had suddenly flashed into his mind.

"Bunter!" he raved. "That fat villain! It's a trick to keep us here today! That's what he wants! It was Bunter's track alongside the horse's trail! I thought I knew it! That fat villain—"

"Of course!" gasped Wharton. "Why, we—we—we'll—"

Bob Cherry rushed back towards the camp. Billy Bunter saw him coming, and gave a howl of alarm. He knew that the truth was known now. The fat junior whipped into the caravan, slammed the door, and turned the key in the lock. A moment later Bob Cherry was hammering furiously on the outside of the door, while the Owl of the Remove quaked within.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Death of William George Bunter!

"COME out, you fat villain!"

"I—I say—"

"Open this door!"

"Cherry, old chap—"

"I'm going to slaughter you!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh dear!"

The caravanners came up, Wharton leading the horse. Bob, with his face crimson with wrath, hammered furiously on the door. But William George Bunter was not likely to open it just then. Bunter might be an ass—and undoubtedly was—but he was not ass enough to let Bob Cherry get to close quarters at that moment.

"The window!" said Nugent.

Bob made a rush at the window.

But Billy Bunter was watchful. He jammed shut both windows and fastened them inside.

"I say, you fellows—" he quavered.

"You hid the horse, Bunter!" shouted Wharton.

"I—I didn't—"

"He was tied up in the hollow—"

"He—he must have done it himself!" stammered Bunter. "He—he—he's an awfully tricky animal, you know."

"Why, you—you—"

"Will you come out of that, Bunter?" bellowed Bob Cherry.

"Nunno!"

"I'm going to pulverise you!"

"Oh, really, old chap—"

"I'm going to burst you!" shrieked Bob.

"I—I say, you fellows, do be reasonable! I—I—I think it must have been the cafe-keeper who hid the horse—"

"Open this door!"

"Now I come to think of it, it was a tramp," said Bunter. "I remember now that I saw a tramp creeping across the field—"

"Come out!"

"I think you fellows ought to go and look for that tramp. I can give you a description of him. He was a fellow with a squint—"

"Let's smash in the door!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Hold on!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "We don't want to smash up the happy home!"

"I want to smash Bunter!"

"Bunter will keep," said Wharton, with a laugh. "We've got the horse now, and we can get on the road."

"But that—that—that fat Hun!" spluttered Bob. "He's given us two hours or more hunting that blessed horse—"

"Let's get going!"

"I'll smash him as soon as he comes out, then," said Bob. "You hear that, Bunter?"

"I say, old chap—" gasped Bunter.

The horse was harnessed to the caravan. It was a matter of some difficulty to stack on the impedimenta, as Bunter firmly refused to open the door. But the caravanners managed it, and the horse was led out of the field. From the window, the Owl of the Remove had his last view of the distant casino, glimmering in the sun. His little scheme had failed after all, and he was not to try his fortune upon the green tables. Instead of that, he had a terrific thrashing to look forward to, which was not nearly so attractive, though doubtless it would be much better for him!

The caravan rumbled away on the road, with Billy Bunter inside, in a most unpleasant frame of mind.

The Owl of the Remove could only hope that the caravanners' wrath would cool, if it was given time; and, as a matter of fact, that hope was well founded.

Bob Cherry's face cleared by the time he had been tramping along the sunny road for half an hour; by that time his look was as sunny as the blue sky overhead.

When the caravanners halted for lunch, good-humour reigned; and Billy Bunter, blinking from the window, felt his courage revive.

He opened one window cautiously.

"I say, you fellows!" he called out.

Bob Cherry gave him a grim look.

"Coming out?" he asked.

"Ye-e-es, old chap."

"Good. You've had time to make your will."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"I've got this stick ready for you," said Bob cheerfully. "You're going to have it—hot!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific, my esteemed Bunter."

"I say, you fellows, don't you want me to cook the lunch?" asked Bunter. "I—I'm afraid you'll have indigestion if you cook for yourselves. I—I don't want to slack, you know."

"Come out, then!" said Bob Cherry, twirling his big stick in the air. "I'm waiting for you, Bunter."

"Will you make it pax?"

"No! I'm going to make it whacks—hard!"

"You see, you've got to have a lesson, Bunter," explained Harry Wharton.

"You've got to learn not to do it again."

"I—I won't do it again, old chap."

"Not after you're licked!" agreed Bob.

"Look here, there isn't any grub in the van!" roared Bunter. "You've got all the grub in those bags!"

"You can have your lunch after you're licked."

"Yah!"

The caravanners sat about the roadside to lunch. It was a hearty lunch, and Billy Bunter watched it with wolfish eyes from the caravan window. He had long ago finished what remained of provisions in the van larder, and he was hungry—ferociously hungry. But he dared not venture out of the van.

After lunch and a rest the caravanners took the road again.

The van rumbled on cheerfully.

In the van, Billy Bunter suffered all the pangs of famine—all the fearful sufferings of a fellow who had only eaten enough for six that day!

The caravanners paid him no heed; they chatted, or whistled, or sang, as they walked cheerily on with the van. Billy Bunter ventured upon a despairing appeal at last.

"I say, you fellows!" he wailed from the window.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Ready to be licked?"

"I'm starving!"

"Go ahead, then!"

"Give me some grub through the window!"

"You can come out of the van!" smiled Bob Cherry. "Haven't I laid in this big stick specially for you?"

"Beast!"

As the sun sank lower, the caravan halted near a roadside cafe. On the balcony, Bunter had a view of the Famous Five having tea—with a large supply of cake. He gazed at them as the excluded Peri gazed on the joys of Paradise. Almost was he tempted to emerge from the van at all risks. But Bob Cherry had the big stick beside his chair, ready for use, and the unhappy Owl of the Remove dared not make the venture.

The Famous Five enjoyed their tea; and then the van resumed its way, with the famished Bunter inside. About a mile farther on, there was a sound of deep groans from the caravan.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Anything wrong, Bunter?" shouted Bob Cherry.

"I—I'm dying."

"No such luck, old fat pippin!"

"Beast!"

"You can come out and die in the open air, if you like," said Bob considerately. "We'll leave you tucked up comfortably by the roadside."

"I—I say, Harry, old chap, keep that beast off, will you? I—I'm dying of hunger, you know!"

"Go it!" answered the captain of the Remove heartlessly.

Groan!

"Come out, Bunter, old top," said

(Continued on page 13.)

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2:

The Greyfriars HERALD

SUPPLEMENT No. 37.
Week Ending Sept. 10th, 1921.



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.

OUR SPLENDID COMPETITIONS!

Open to all Greyfriars fellows!

- 1.—A prize of half-a-crown will be awarded for the best short story of Greyfriars. Length not to exceed a billion words. MSS. to be written in ink on foolscap paper—not scribbled on slates.
 - 2.—A prize of a "bob" (one shilling) will be awarded for the best poem dealing with Greyfriars. Poems not to contain more stanzas than there are days in the year. No "cribbed" stuff, or blank verse, will be considered.
 - 3.—Goods to the value of sixpence-halfpenny, from the school tuckshop, will be awarded for the best description of a cricket-match. Articles may be serious or humorous, according to taste.
 - 4.—Goods to the value of fourpence, from the school tuckshop, will be awarded for the best essay on "What I Think of 'Billy Bunter's Weekly.'"
 - 5.—Seven prizes, each consisting of a twopenny jam-tart, will be awarded for the seven best Limericks dealing with Greyfriars.
 - 6.—A special prize, consisting of an unsoiled copy of last week's "Boys' Friend," will be awarded to the sender of the best puzzle, riddle, or conundrum, having some bearing upon Greyfriars.
- The results, and the winning contributions, will be published in next week's issue.

ENTER TO-DAY, BOYS OF GREY-FRIARS! NO ENTRANCE FEES!

Supplement i.]

EDITORIAL!

By HARRY WHARTON.

Competitions have ever been a fascinating pastime. Not only do they exercise one's brain, but there is always the chance of making a small fortune by going in for them.

I have long had in mind the idea of a Special Competition Number of the "Greyfriars Herald," and in the next column a number of unique competitions are set forth.

I am sorry that these contests are confined exclusively to Greyfriars fellows, as there must be many thousands of my readers outside the school who would like to have a shot at them. But I hope to atone for this one of these days by setting a competition which everybody may enter.

Meanwhile, I am trying to discover fresh literary talent at Greyfriars. In the past, the success of our little paper has depended almost solely upon a few regular contributors, such as Tom Brown, Dick Penfold, and Bob Cherry.

Penfold's verses, Browney's articles, and Bob Cherry's chatty paragraphs, have been the backbone of the paper. And we must not forget Peter Todd's detective stories, and the excellent yarns which Frank Nugent, Mark Linley, and Vernon-Smith give us from time to time.

But I am convinced that there is plenty of other talent at Greyfriars—that there are many budding authors and poets hiding their light under a bushel. And it is with the object of unearthing these fellows, and bringing them into the limelight, that I am setting these competitions.

The entries are bound to be numerous, and next week's issue of the "Herald" should prove to be one of the quaintest, and at the same time one of the best, that has yet been published.

In order that there shall be no suggestion of favouritism or unfair influence, I have asked Wingate of the Sixth to be good enough to judge the entries and decide upon the winners, and he has graciously consented. I don't envy him. His study table will be piled mountain-high with manuscripts!

Tell all your chums about next week's issue, that they may share in the feast of good things it will contain.

HARRY WHARTON.

BILLY BUNTER TO PETER TODD.

(Adapted from Wolsey's Famous Speech to Cromwell)
By DICK PENFOLD.

Toddy, I did not think to shed a tear
In all my miseries; but thou hast forced me,
Out of thine honest truth, to weep such tears
As crocodiles might envy. Let's dry our eyes,
And thus far hear me, Toddy. And when I am forgotten,
As I shall be, and dwell in Colney Hatch,
Where no mention of me shall more be heard,
Say, then, I taught thee; say Bunter, Who went in for a cricket competition,
And hoped to win a fortune, but won nix. Found thee a way, out of his wreck, to rise in.
I have ventured, like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,
These many summers in a sea of hope That I might win a prize. But 'tis a wash-out!
All the awards I get are lines and lickings.
Yea, I have filled in scores and scores of coupons,
Hoping that one of them would hit the mark,
And dreaming rich, full dreams of expectation.
But now, alas! I fall—I fall like Lucifer, Never to rise again! And to the paper-seller
Within yon village, which is known as Friardale,
I do owe the awful sum of sixteen-and-eightpence.
Oh, Toddy, Toddy! Had I but worked in class with half the zeal
I filled up coupons, I should not, at this stage,
Be faced with debt and disillusionment. Toddy, take these, my parting words, to heart:
Never go in for cricket competitions, For they will break thee, e'en as I am "broke"!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 709.



Bunter and the Cricket Competition!

By DICK RAKE.

"TWO hundred and fifty pounds!" Billy Bunter rolled the words on his tongue, as if they were strawberry ices.

The Owl of the Remove was seated at the table in the junior Common-room. In front of him was a pile of foolscap and a pile of periodicals. From these latter Billy Bunter was engaged in cutting coupons with a pair of scissors. And ever and anon, as the scissors glided across the paper, he murmured to himself:

"Two hundred and fifty pounds!"

Bob Cherry looked up from his game of chess.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What are you babbling about, Buntie?" he demanded.

"There's a cricket competition here," said the fat junior, "and I'm going in for it. What's more, I'm certain to win."

"We've heard that tale before," said Harry Wharton, with a grin. "Fishy went in for a football competition last winter—"

"But this isn't footer; it's cricket. You've got to forecast the results of ten matches. And the winner receives two hundred and fifty pounds in cash."

"Ass!" growled Johnny Bull. "You're wasting your time and money in going in for it."

"Why? Don't you think it's genuine?"

"Oh, it's genuine enough. That paper could afford to pay out two hundred and fifty quids several times over. But what's the use of going in for a cricket competition if you don't know anything about cricket?"

"For that very reason Bunter will probably stand a better chance than the experts," said Vernon-Smith.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter laid down the scissors, and blinked at the juniors through his big spectacles.

"I'm working this out in such a way that I'm simply bound to win," he said. "I've bought a hundred papers—that means a hundred coupons—"

"You—you bought a hundred papers?" gasped Bob Cherry. "How did you manage to raise the tin?"

"Ahem! I told the newsagent that I should pay for the papers out of the two hundred and fifty quid—when it comes."

"When!" chuckled Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm dead certain to win," said Billy Bunter. "As I said before, there are ten matches. And the results of four of them are known in advance; so really it's only six matches."

"What are the four certainties?" inquired Harry Wharton.

"Australia will wallop England—"

"True enough."

"Northants will lick Glamorganshire—"

Everybody agreed with this except Morgan, who hailed from Wales.

"Surrey will beat Somerset—"

"Very likely."

"And the other team that will lose is Hampshire."

There was a roar from Harry Wharton.

"You silly ass! You burbling chump! You don't know what you're talking about! Hampshire lose! Not in a thousand giddy years."

Billy Bunter smiled indulgently.

"You only say that because your home happens to be in Hampshire," he said. "But they'll be beaten to a frazzle. There's no question about that."

"Look here," said Wharton seriously, "if you go and give Hampshire to lose on all those coupons, you'll be hopelessly in the soup."

"Rats! I'm going to give England, Glamorganshire, Somerset, and Hampshire to lose on every coupon. That still leaves six matches to forecast. I shall vary those in every possible way, so that one coupon is bound to be absolutely correct. Then I shall get the two hundred and fifty—"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 709.

"Perhaps!"

"And I shall make a rare splash! I shall invest in a motor-bike and side-car—"

"My hat!"

"And I shall stand a feed to the editorial staff of my 'Weekly.'"

"Funds wouldn't run to it," said Bob Cherry solemnly. "Two hundred and fifty quid wouldn't cover the cost of a feed for you and your four fat subs."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter returned to his task, and his schoolfellows watched him with amused interest.

First of all, the hundred coupons were cut out. Then Bunter filled in the four "dead certs," and afterwards worked in the remaining six matches in every possible way.

It was slow and laborious work, filling up all the coupons. And Billy Bunter had to write his name and address on every coupon, besides making a complete copy of all of them, so that he could check them when the results were to hand.

It required three envelopes to accommodate the hundred coupons, when they were ready for despatch.

After a great deal of pleading and persuasion Billy Bunter succeeded in getting a twopenny-stamp out of Dick Russell, another out of Monty Newland, and a third from the good-natured Alonzo Todd.



Billy Bunter uttered a gasp of dismay, and the paper fluttered from his hand.

Having sealed, stamped, and addressed the envelopes, he went out into the Close, and posted them in the pillar-box, in time for the last collection.

During the next few days there was no holding Billy Bunter.

The fat junior was confident of success. If only the four "dead certs" came off, he would be certain to show an all-correct coupon. And then—always provided a few hundred others didn't show an all-correct coupon as well—he would receive the princely sum of two hundred and fifty pounds.

Billy Bunter bragged and boasted of what he was going to do when he got his cheque, and no amount of bumping could cure his boastfulness.

The first five matches on the coupon were duly played, and they ended in accordance with general expectation.

Australia won as usual, and Northamptonshire defeated Glamorganshire.

Billy Bunter had these two matches correct; he also had the remaining three right on several coupons.

Then he had to wait a few days more, until the last five matches on the coupon had been played.

The fat junior was in a fever of excitement. For two days he could not concentrate his mind on lessons, or even on the production of his "Weekly."

On the evening of the third day he borrowed Johnny Bull's bicycle—without per-

mission, of course—and went down to the station to get an evening paper.

Eagerly he scanned the "Stop Press" news. Joy of joys!

Surrey had defeated Somerset. That was the third "dead cert" which had come off.

There was only one other. Bunter had given Hampshire to lose.

"Of course, they've been whacked by an innings and about three hundred runs!" he murmured.

But he could not find the result of the match in the "Stop Press" news.

He transferred his gaze to another part of the paper, and there he saw some headlines which fairly staggered him.

"HAMPSHIRE'S GREAT VICTORY!

Mead and Kennedy in Form!"

Billy Bunter uttered a gasp of dismay. The paper fluttered from his hand, and was borne away on the evening breeze.

Hampshire had won!

And Billy Bunter had given the southern county to lose on every coupon!

"Oh crumbs! What a frightful sell!" he groaned. "Still, there's a chance for me yet. I've got nine right out of ten—and nine may win the prize."

But alas for the fat junior's hopes!

A few days later the result of the competition was published. It was worded as follows:

"CRICKET COMPETITION RESULT!

"The following competitor correctly forecasted the whole of the ten matches on the coupon, and has therefore been awarded the prize of £250:

Mr. HYMIN LUXWAY,
977, Whitechapel Road,
London, E."

It was a sickening blow for Billy Bunter. But the fat junior was not yet in complete despair of getting at least a share of the two hundred and fifty pounds. He wrote a long letter to the prizewinner, pointing out that he was expecting a handsome remittance from one of his titled relations. In the meantime, would Mr. Hymin Luxway be good enough to advance him a loan of fifty pounds?

But Mr. Hymin Luxway, as it happened, proved to be a foreigner in a poor way of business. He needed capital badly, and, in any event, it was highly unlikely that he would have lent or given any of his wealth to an unknown schoolboy.

So Billy Bunter went empty away. And, to make matters worse, his newsagent began to press him for payment of sixteen-and-eightpence for the hundred papers which Bunter had ordered.

It was Bunter senior who had to find the sixteen-and-eightpence, and he was so annoyed about it that he reduced his son's pocket-money to a minimum.

Cricket competitions are a snare and a delusion.

That is Billy Bunter's opinion, anyway!

THE END.

RESULTS
OF ALL COMPETITIONS
WILL BE PUBLISHED
NEXT WEEK.

H.W.

[Supplement ii.]



Coker and the Beauty Contest!

By GEORGE POTTER.

THIS is how the fun started.

Mr. Prout's aunt came to spend a few days at Greyfriars. Now, old Prout isn't exactly a stripling. He's seen about fifty-five summers and an equivalent number of winters. So you can guess what his aunt was like. She would have made an excellent soul-mate for the aged Methuselah.

This dear old soul, who was blind in one eye, deaf in both ears, toothless, and a martyr to rheumatism and sciatica, formed the brilliant notion of holding a Male Beauty Contest.

"The ladies, my dear Paul," she confided in wheezing tones to old Prout, "have had things too much their own way. So have the infants. It is all ladies' beauty contests and baby shows. I think it is high time we had a male beauty competition. I myself will present the prize, and do the judging."

"But, my—my dear aunt, these things aren't done!" stammered Prout.

"Well, they are going to be done, Paul!" said the old lady, with emphasis. "Will you be good enough to place an announcement on the notice-board, giving details of the competition?"

Poor old Prout did his utmost to dissuade his aunt from carrying out her scheme, but she was adam-aunt (ripping pun, that!). She insisted upon lining up the "dear boys" for inspection, and awarding a handsome prize to the one who, in her judgment, came nearest to being an Adonis.

So Prout put a notice on the board to the effect that a Male Beauty Contest would be held at Greyfriars, and that all candidates were to assemble in the library at 8 p.m. He added that his aunt was the promoter of the contest—as much as to say, "It's none of my doing!"—and that a magnificent prize would be presented to the winner. He did not disclose the nature of the prize, because he didn't know himself.

The majority of the fellows sniffed scornfully when they read the announcement.

"Prout's aunt evidently imagines this is a girls' school!" growled Johnny Bull, of the Remove. "A beauty contest, indeed! Dashed if I'm going in for it!"

"I should think not, either, with a face like that!" said Bob Cherry.

"Eh? What's the matter with my face?"

"Is it really a face?" asked Bob, in surprise. "I thought it must be a mask!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Johnny Bull clenched his fists, and advanced upon Bob Cherry. But Wharton and Nugent dragged him back.

"Peace, my children!" said Nugent. "Neither of you will stand a ghost of a chance in this beauty contest if you start disfiguring each other."

"Bless the beauty contest!" growled Johnny Bull.

There happened to be one fellow who really did bless it. This was Coker of the Fifth.

Coker has always hugged the absurd delusion that he is handsome—or, as he himself would spell it, "hansom." I have seen him stand for ten minutes in front of a mirror, murmuring to himself: "Yes, a Byron forehead, a Grecian nose, and a noble chin. Also a pair of scullful eyes, worthy of Owen Nares himself! Horace, old boy—here Coker would tap himself approvingly on the chest—"you're as handsome as a young Greek god!"

Directly he read the announcement concerning the beauty contest, Coker rushed away to his study in order to smarten himself up, that he might expose his features to the greatest advantage.

First of all, he washed (chalk it up, ye scribes!), then he emptied about a tumblerful of brilliantine over his straggling locks. Then, vigorously plying a couple of brushes,

he went through a form of hair-drill. After which he brushed his eyebrows, and the scanty fleece on his upper-lip.

But this was not all. Coker donned a canary-coloured waistcoat, and put on a flaming necktie. Then he surveyed himself long and earnestly in the mirror.

"I shall win this beauty contest hands down!" he murmured. "There's no question about that."

Just before eight o'clock Coker made his way to the library.

About twenty fellows were there, lined up in a row, and grinning broadly. It was only too apparent that they were entering the beauty contest for a joke. Coker was the only fellow who took it seriously.

Among the competitors were some fellows who really were good-looking. Micky Desmond, with his Irish eyes and healthy complexion; Archie Howell, with his aristocratic cast of countenance; and Tom Brown, with thick, curly hair of the same colour as his name.

Coker was far and away the ugliest fellow present. He could not have looked handsome if he had placed himself in the hands of the finest male beauty specialists—if such people exist—in Europe.

Presently the laughter and the gurgles of merriment abated, and a hush fell upon the assembly, as Mr. Prout entered, followed by his dear old doddering aunt.

"Ah! Here are the dear boys!" she murmured, peering over the edge of her gold-rimmed spectacles. "There are not so many as I should like to see. How many are there, Paul?"

"Twenty," said Mr. Prout.

"Dear me! I can only count six!"



"Ha! Here are the dear boys!" murmured the lady, peering over the edge of her spectacles. "But there are not so many as I would like to see!"

There was a titter from the competitors.

The old lady passed slowly along the line, and then back again. She seemed quite unable to make up her mind. Finally, however, she hovered in front of Coker, and dug him in the chest with a bony forefinger.

"I declare this boy the winner!" she announced.

There was a startled gasp from Mr. Prout. "But, my—my dear aunt," he protested, "surely you have made a mistake, or your eyesight is extremely faulty? This boy—Coker—has no pretensions whatever to good looks!"

"Nevertheless, I declare him the winner!" said the old lady firmly.

Coker's face glowed with self-satisfaction. "Thank you very much, ma'am!" he murmured.

"Not at all! You have your own good looks to thank. Wait here a few moments, my boys, while I go and fetch the prize to present to Master Joker."

"Coker, my dear aunt—Coker!" corrected Mr. Prout.

"Yes, yes. Exactly! I congratulate you, Master Croaker, upon being the winner of this exciting contest!"

So saying, the old lady groped her way to the door, and disappeared.

When she had departed, there was much speculation as to the nature of the "magnificent prize."

"It'll be a gold watch, you bet!" murmured Tom Brown.

"Faith, an' I shouldn't be surprised if it was a cash prize—a liver, for instance!" whispered Micky Desmond. He was obliged to whisper, for Mr. Prout was standing near.

Coker's eyes lit up with anticipation.

Funds were low, and a "liver" would be more than welcome.

His imagination began to run riot. It might even be a "tenner"!

The minutes passed slowly.

After what seemed an age, Mr. Prout's aunt returned. She carried an oblong-shaped article in her hand.

"Which is Master Smoker?" she inquired, peering up and down the line of fellows.

"Here I am, ma'am!" said Coker.

"Well, take this, my dear boy, with my most cordial good wishes. It is a photograph of myself, taken when I was a young woman."

Coker's jaw dropped. As for the other fellows, they could scarcely restrain their merriment.

Coker took the proffered photograph, and stared at it in a dazed sort of way.

It was a very faded, musty photograph of a creature in a crinoline.

Mr. Prout's aunt might have been considered a Society beauty by her contemporaries of the Victorian era. The modern girl would have regarded her as a frump. And the modern girl would have been quite right!

Coker began to glare at the photograph as if it had done him an injury.

"Say 'Thank you' nicely!" urged the old lady.

"Thank you nicely!" blurted out the unfortunate Horace.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker could not endure the hysterical laughter of his schoolfellows. He rushed from the room, charged along to his study like a mad bull, rammed the photograph into the fire-grate, and applied a match to it.

"Oh, what a sell—what a rotten sell!" he muttered savagely.

And he paced to and fro, disarranging his carefully brushed hair, and behaving like a fellow demented.

Greyfriars laughed loud and long over the affair. And if anyone wanted to rouse Horace Coker into a state of ungovernable fury, it was only necessary to whisper softly in his ear the question:

"Who won the beauty contest?"

DON'T FORGET!

Special Prizewinners'

::: Number :::

Next Monday.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 709.



Impertinent Interviews

By our Special Representative.

Mr. CAPPER.

"Oh, you've popped up again, have you?" growled the editor, as I trickled into his sanctum. "Your Impertinent Interviews have been out of the paper for weeks."

"And the writer of them has been out of action for weeks!" I said sadly. "This interviewing is a terrible business. One carries one's life in one's hands."

"I see nothing in your own hands but a notebook and pencil!" said the editor drily. "Do I understand that you are ready for business again?"

I nodded. "I've got to earn an honest penny somehow," I said.

"Well, buzz along and interview old Capper, and I'll make it three-ha'pence."

"Your generosity," I said, "far exceeds your beauty, of which Nature has not given you a fair share."

"Look here—" began the editor wrathfully.

"Keep your hair on!" I said soothingly. "Shouldn't like to see you going bald at your time of life. By the way, 'Who is Capper? Who is he, that all the swains commend him?'"

"Capper's the master of the Upper Fourth, of course! Don't tell me you've been at Greyfriars all this time without getting that fact instilled into your wooden pate!"

"Where shall I find this man Capper?"

"In his study. And look here! You might take this along to him. It's a puzzle which one of my readers has sent to me, and nobody on the staff can make head or tail of it. Being a brainy sort of merchant, Capper may be able to decipher it. Anyway, take it along to him, and see what he says."

The editor handed me a sheet of paper, bearing the following riddle, puzzle, acrostic, anagram, or whatever you call it:

"My first is at bridal couples thrown,
My second is in the garden grown.
My third is a country far from cool,
My fourth is a poet at Greyfriars School.
My fifth made a fortune from fruit salt,
My last—a Removeite we all exalt."

My whole is a person who wears coloured ties,
And a 'topper' at which we have coconut-shies."

"Who sent you this?" I asked.

"I don't know the name of the reader. It was sent anonymously."

"Lot of tommy-rot, I call it. I don't believe there's a solution to it at all."

"Well, Capper may be able to make something of it. Take it along to him, and see."

Accordingly, I trotted along to Capper's study.

The master of the Upper Fourth was engaged in checking examination-papers. He didn't look best pleased at the interruption.

"Well, boy, what is it?" he snapped.

"I've come to interview you, sir, for the 'Greyfriars Herald,'" I explained. "But before I start bombarding you with questions concerning yourself, perhaps you'd be good enough to glance at this conundrum, and see if you can make anything of it."

Capper took the sheet of paper, and studied it intently. Then he took up a pencil, and started to write.

"This presents very few difficulties," he said. "'My first is at bridal couples thrown.' That is obviously confetti. 'My second is in the garden grown.' That may mean anything."

"Try 'asparagus,' sir," I suggested. "You've got some of it on your own allotment."

"Very well," said Capper. "Now, 'My third is a country far from cool.' There are heaps of countries answering to that description."

"Lapland, sir?" I suggested.

"Don't be ridiculous, boy! We will try 'Persia,' and if it does not fit in with the rest of the puzzle, we shall have to think

of something else. 'My fourth is a poet at Greyfriars School.'"

"That will be Penfold, for a cert," I said. Capper nodded.

"'My fifth made a fortune from fruit salt.' I should imagine that would be Eno. 'My last—a Removeite we all exalt.' H'm!"

"There are several fellows we all exalt, sir," I said. "There's Wharton, and Smithy, and Linley, and Archie Howell—"

"Is not Redwing popular?"

"Oh, yes, sir! He's as popular as anybody."

"Then we are well on the way to completing the solution."

Capper scribbled away industriously for a few moments, and presently a ferocious gleam came into his eyes.

Glancing over his shoulder, I beheld the puzzle solution. It was as follows:

Confet t I
AsparaguS
Persia
Penfold
Eno
Redwing

The solution could be seen at a glance, by reading first the initial and then the final letters:

"CAPPER IS A DOG."

I looked at Capper's coloured necktie, and his fancy waistcoat, and his silk spats, and I felt inclined to agree with the inventor of the puzzle.

Capper was certainly a "dog"!

He was a very ferocious dog, too! The brute ought to have been muzzled. For what do you think he did?

Picking up a cane, he chased me from the study, belabouring my back and shoulders as he went.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yoooooop!"

"How dare you come and insult me to my face?" roared Capper. "How dare you, I say?"

Then followed a further instalment of whacks. And I fled along the passage as if all the furies of the underworld were in hot pursuit.

Never again will the editor induce me to get old Capper to unravel another puzzle!

It was not until half an hour had gone by that I bethought myself of the anonymous writer of the puzzle. I was suffering from the effects of Capper's cane, and I had an idea that the author of the joke ought to share my sufferings.

I went back to the Editor's study, and sank down into the softest of soft chairs.

"Have you found out who sent in that acrostic?" I asked.

"Not yet. I believe—"

He broke off, and eyed me sadly.

"You're not going to tell me you haven't secured a thumping interview?" he demanded.

"A thumping interview!" I exclaimed. "I got the thumps all right. That acrostic was up against Capper, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The laughter came from the doorway, in which appeared Bob Cherry.

"What's the joke?" I asked warmly.

"That acrostic—I'll have to make up another like that!" said the cheerful ass.

I looked at Bob Cherry, who is the champion fighting man of the Remove, and, curiously enough, as I looked, my desire to come to grips with the author of the acrostic disappeared. I was sore from Capper's cane, and had no wish to add bruises to my sores.

So I went out of the study without a word, leaving Bob Cherry to cackle and Harry Wharton to chuckle. And, but for the remuneration I receive for my interviews, I would hand in my resignation. I get more blows than bobs!

THE CHARM OF COMPETITIONS!

By Tom Brown.

I expect certain silly asses will be writing articles in this Special Competition Number, pointing out that competitions are a snare and a delusion. They have probably entered a competition themselves, failed to win a prize, and then bitterly denounced the whole business as a swindle.

Bolsover major is one of the disgruntled ones.

You may or may not be aware that there's a weekly fairy-story paper being published for children. It's called the "Goblin," and it runs a competition known as "Goblets."

Although Bolsover major is no longer a child, he cannot be persuaded to put away childish things. He takes in the "Goblin" every week, and one week he had a shot at the competition. They give you a phrase, and what you have to do is to make another phrase of three words, having an apt bearing upon the original. For example:

Example.

No Laughing Matter.

"Goblet."

No Matter—Laugh!

Perfectly simple, as you'll see. Something like "Poplets," as a matter of fact.

Well, Bolsover major brought his brain into action, and evolved the following "Goblets":

When Cat's Away	Not at Home.
Spilt Milk	Is Very Upsetting.
Prince of Wales	Awfully Decent Fellow.
The First Prize	I Richly Deserve.

Did you ever see anything so feeble in all your natural? Talk about the German atrocities! Those "Goblets" of Bolsover major's fairly beat the band!

The result of the competition appeared in due course, and Bolsover tore his hair and gnashed his teeth on discovering that his name was missing from the prize-list. He declared that the competition was a fraud, and that the winner of the first prize probably had an uncle on the adjudication staff. He could not be made to see that his own efforts were utterly absurd.

To the really brainy fellow, however, competitions offer splendid scope. My pater's fifth cousin's second aunt once knew a fellow who won a thousand pounds in a "Limerick" contest. And Greyfriars fellows have won fairly big prizes before now—Mark Linley and Dick Penfold, to wit. Competitions are jolly fascinating. There's no question about that.

I notice that Harry Wharton is giving a series of competitions in this number, and I mean to have a shot at all of them. The prizes aren't very substantial. Still, think of the honour and glory of seeing one's contribution in print! Just imagine it being perused by billions of boys and girls throughout the Empire! The thought fairly makes one dizzy.

The next time you hear anybody running down competitions, you can take it for granted that they have competed and lost. Still, you must make allowances for them; for, as the poet observes, "'Tis better to have competed and lost, than never to have competed at all."

My idea of the way to enter a competition is to look upon it as a hobby. After all, you have only to win one prize, and the entrance fees—if there are any—are paid for weeks past and weeks to come.

Now, what is nicer than coming in from a game of footer, physically tired, and taking up a favourite paper and thinking out answers to picture puzzles or "Poplets." When you have finished you are mentally tired and physically tired, and you sleep all the better. That does you good, and if you win a prize, well, it does you more good!

Long live competitions!

[Supplement iv.]

"GREYFRIARS CARAVANNERS ABROAD!"

(Continued from page 8.)

Bob Cherry. "I want to lick you with this stick before you perish, dear boy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The stickful lickfulness may revive you, my esteemed Bunter," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

Groan!

The caravan rolled on, to an accompaniment of dismal groans from the Owl of the Remove. The groans ceased at last, no doubt because they failed to soften the hard hearts of the Removites. Bunter's fat face appeared at the window.

"I say, yo: fellows——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Alive again!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Is that you or your ghost, Bunter?"

"Beast! I'm coming out."

"Right! I've got the stick ready!"

"I hope you won't be beast enough to pitch into a fellow in a dying condition, Bob Cherry."

"Leave it to me!" said Bob.

"It was really a tramp took the horse away," pleaded Bunter. "Now I come to think of it, I saw him. It was a ruffianly-looking fellow, with a squint, and a—a red necktie."

"Not at all," said Bob. "It was a fat rascal, with a pair of blinkers, and a face like a toy balloon. And I've got this stick ready for him!"

"I know you're joking, old chap."

"Right-ho! Step out of the van, and you'll see that I'm no end of a joker."

"Beast!" howled Bunter.

The van door did not open. Bunter suffered all the torments of dire famine for another hour or two, rather than face Bob Cherry's big stick. The caravanners stopped at last to camp on the shelving stretch of sand under the cliffs beyond Ambleteuse, having followed a winding path down from the road to the sea. They were very careful to pitch their camp a good distance above high-water mark. The horse was taken out and fed, and pegged very securely. There was no wood at hand for a campfire, and the stoves were needed, and the stoves were inside the van. Bob Cherry rapped on the caravan door.

"Hand out the stoves, Bunter!" he shouted.

"I'm too ill to move."

"Come out, you silly ass!"

"Will you make it pax if I come out?"

"No!" roared Bob.

"Then you jolly well sha'n't have the stoves!" retorted Bunter. "Yah! You can go and eat coke!"

"We'll jolly well have a cold supper, then, and you sha'n't have a bite of it!" said Bob Cherry vengefully.

"Oh dear!"

"Not a morsel," said Harry Wharton—"not unless you hand the stoves out at once, Bunter!"

"I'm perishing of hunger!"

"You're like giddy old Charles the Second—an unconscionable time dying," remarked Frank Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm very nearly at my last gasp, yo: fellows!" wailed Bunter. "A square meal might revive me."

"I'll try the effect of a licking, when I get at you!" answered Bob Cherry. "I've got a lot of faith in this stick as a reviver."

"Beast!"

The caravanners prepared their camp, Bunter watching them hungrily from the

window. The sight of a cold chicken was too much for him; his fat mouth fairly watered. There was a sound of a key turning in the lock, and the caravan door opened. Billy Bunter rolled out.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is!" Bob Cherry jumped up, and seized the big stick. "Now, then, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter gave a deep groan, and fell at the feet of the caravanners. His eyes closed behind his spectacles, and he lay quite still and motionless.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Burying Bunter!

"**W**HAT the thump——" "Fainted!" said Nugent, closing one eye at his comrades.

"The faintfulness is terrific. The esteemed Bunter is senseless," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "His senselessness is even more terrific than usual."

The Famous Five gathered round Bunter. They grinned as they looked down on him. The fat junior lay with his eyes closed, doing his very best to look as if he had fainted from exhaustion. As a matter of fact, the chums of the Remove were quite well aware that the fat Owl was spoofing—they could even see him attempting to blink out of the corner of one eye without quite opening it.

"Fainted!" said Bob Cherry, in tones of deep gravity. "Poor old Bunter! Quite senseless!"

"That's nothing new," remarked Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mustn't laugh, when Bunter is expiring at our feet!" said Bob seriously. "We ought to try to revive him somehow. I suppose it is only a faint. See if he still lives, Wharton."

Harry Wharton stooped and felt over Bunter's well-filled waistcoat. He started, and shook his head.

"I don't feel the heart beating," he said.

"Dead!"

"Poor old Bunter!"

Billy Bunter, keeping his eyes closed, scarcely breathed. He had hard work not to grin at that moment; but he contrived to keep his fat face quite still. He was very willing to let the juniors believe that he was dead—to wring their hearts with remorse. Remorse, in Bunter's opinion, was just what they wanted to teach them a lesson. Having thought that they had lost him, they would know how to value him when he recovered. So the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove lay perfectly still.

Bob Cherry gave a sob.

"Actually dead!" he murmured. "We might have known what would happen if Bunter missed a meal!"

"Well, how were we to know?" argued Nugent. "He's never done such a thing before."

"That's so. Sure he's dead. Wharton?"

"Well, look at him!" said Harry.

"I—I say, we don't want anybody to come along and see the body!" said Bob hastily. "Might cause us a lot of trouble. We're in a foreign country, you know, and they might make quite a fuss about a dead body lying around. Anybody that knew Bunter would know that it didn't matter a bit——"

Billy Bunter very nearly ejaculated "Beast!" at that point. But he managed to keep silent.

"But these foreigners don't know him, and they are fussy," said Bob. "Of

course, we're awfully sorry for Bunter. But getting ourselves into trouble won't bring him back to life again, will it?"

"Hardly," agreed Wharton. "We'd better stack him away somewhere. It can't hurt him now."

"That's so. Suppose we bury him quietly here, and push on and say nothing?"

"Good!"

"We can cry later," added Bob. "At present the business in hand is getting Bunter decently buried."

"Right as rain," said Wharton. "Luckily, we've got a spade in the van. I'll get on with digging the grave at once."

"Hurry up!"

"You fellows keep Bunter out of sight, in case anybody comes by. Not that it's likely in this lonely spot."

"Get on with it, then," said Bob.

Harry Wharton took the spade from the van, and hurried to a spot where there was a hollow depression in the sand. There he began to dig, casting the soft sand aside at a great rate. The Co. kept round Bunter, and the fat junior, opening one eye cautiously, saw them watching in all directions, as if on their guard against all comers. Billy Bunter blinked at their turned backs, and blinked at Harry Wharton, digging industriously at a little distance. The Owl of the Remove began to wonder whether his little scheme was quite so astute as he had supposed. Certainly he didn't want to be buried in the sand, however deeply the Removites might mourn for him when they went on their sorrowful way with the caravan.

"Bring the body here!" called out Wharton.

"Right you are!"

The four juniors stooped and grasped Bunter. The fat Removite closed his eyes again instantly. They panted under his weight.

"I say, can't we roll him over and over?" gasped Johnny Bull. "He's a bit of a corker to carry!"

"Oh, heave away!" said Bob. "It's the last thing we can do for poor old Bunter. Carry on!"

The captain of the Remove came back to lend a hand. Five pairs of sturdy arms succeeded in conveying Bunter to the hollow in the sand, and with a heave, he was landed in the hole Wharton had excavated. He gasped as he landed there, and there was a subdued chuckle among the juniors. Being dead, of course, Bunter ought not to have gasped, so they affected not to hear it. Wharton took up the spade again.

"Now we'll cover him in," he said sadly.

"I'll pile some of the rocks over him," said Bob.

"That's a good idea."

Billy Bunter fairly wriggled with rage and indignation. Instead of grief and remorse, the caravanners were apparently prepared to bury him by the wayside, and march on their way as if there had never been a William George Bunter in the universe at all! A spadeful of sand trickled over him; and Billy Bunter realised that it was high time to come to life again. It was evidently of no use trying to wring these hard hearts; besides, some of the sand trickled into his fat little nose, and made him sneeze.

"Atchoo-choo-choooooop!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! He's sneezing!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Surely he ought not to sneeze when he's dead! It's really unseemly."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter sat up.



There was ample food, even for Billy Bunter, and the juniors fairly beamed upon their hosts. "Simply topping!" said Billy Bunter to Nugent. "I think it's rabbit." "Chicken, I thought!" said Nugent, doubtfully. (See Chapter 8.)

"Beasts!" he roared.

"Alive!"

"Yah! Rotters! You want to bury me, do you?" yelled Bunter. "Yah! Lemme out of this, you beasts! Yaroooooh! Help!"

Another spadeful of sand swamped over him, and he sneezed and yelled.

"Help! Yooooop! Groooooch! Atchhhooooop!"

"He's alive!" said Bob Cherry, in a tone of wonder. "Isn't that just like Bunter—coming to life at the last minute, and dashing all our hopes to the ground? He was always inconsiderate!"

"Beast!"

"Selfish, I call it," said Johnny Bull. "Bunter never did care how he disappointed people."

"Yah! Rotter! Lemme out!"

"Stay where you are, Bunter," said Bob Cherry, pushing the fat junior back with his foot. "We can't be put to the trouble of digging a grave for nothing. We'd better get on with it!"

"The betterfulness will be terrific. We will bury you in the most satisfactory manner, my esteemed Bunter."

"Shove in the sand, Wharton!"

"Right ho!"

Bunter gave a formidable yell as a spadeful of fresh sand scattered over him.

"Yaroooooh! I'm not dead, you silly owls—"

"You soon will be, if we bury you thoroughly," said Bob. "It's all right!"

Bunter evidently didn't think it was all right! He scrambled out frantically.

"Get back!" roared Bob.

"Why, you—you—you awful beast—" spluttered Bunter. "Do you think you're going to bury me, you villain?"

"We're not going to take all this trouble for nothing. Collar him!"

"Yaroooooh! Help!"

Billy Bunter took to his heels.

"After him!" roared Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Owl of the Remove sprinted across the sand as if he were on the cinder path. He scrambled up the cliffs, and vanished

among the ridges and bushes. The Famous Five roared with merriment. They returned to the van, took out the stoves, and cooked supper—what time William George Bunter lay in a gully of the cliffs, panting for breath, bathed in perspiration, and quaking in every one of his fat limbs.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Chance of a Life-time!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. had finished supper, and were chatting cheerily while they watched the sun sinking over the sea, when a fat figure came creeping cautiously towards the camp on the sea-sand. It was the figure of William George Bunter—dusty and fatigued and apprehensive. The Famous Five chuckled as he came crawling up.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Turned up again like the bad penny!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "We're jolly well not going to bury you now, Bunter. You should have come back before if that was what you wanted."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter grinned feebly. The truth had dawned upon his fat mind at last.

"You awful rotters!" he mumbled. "You knew I wasn't dead, and you were only pulling my leg pretending to bury me."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites.

"Just because I fainted from hunger—"

"We knew you hadn't fainted, either," grinned Bob Cherry. "You see, you fat duffer, we knew you were spoofing all along the line. And if you hadn't been a born idiot and a fat funk, you wouldn't have supposed we were going to bury you in the sand."

"I—I say, you fellows—any supper left?"

"Lots!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Sit down and pile in, you podgy ass. We'll let you off the licking."

But if you ever play any more tricks or the horse, we'll boil you in oil."

Billy Bunter did not need to be asked twice. He really was hungry by this time; and for a quarter of an hour at least no sound came from him, save the heavy, steady champing of his powerful jaws. Then he began to look happier.

"I say, you fellows, I took you in, didn't I?" remarked Bunter, with his mouth full.

"Took us in!" repeated Bob Cherry.

"Yes. He, he, he! Of course, I knew you were only spoofing all the time, and I just played up," explained Bunter. "I'll bet you thought I was scared! He, he, he!"

"We jolly well did think so, and so you jolly well were," growled Johnny Bull. "And I don't agree with letting you off the licking, either!"

"I should hardly be likely to let any fellow present lick me," said Bunter loftily. "I'd be perfectly willing to lick you all round, as a matter of fact, one at a time. But I'm feeling too bad after my long fast. When we get back to Greyfriars, I'll ask you to step into the gym and have the gloves on, Bull!"

"Oh, scat!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Same with you, Bob Cherry—"

"Where's that stick?" said Bob, looking round.

"Don't let's rag now," said Bunter hastily. "I can take a joke with any fellow; and I forgive you all round! There! You've acted like rotters, and treated me like beasts; but I never expected anything better from you, really, you know. It's my own fault for travelling with a lot of outsiders. I wish now I'd accepted D'Arcy's invitation to spend the vacation with him, or gone home with Lord Mauleverer. Too late now! But I can tell you fellows that unless there's a change, I shall have to consider whether I can stay with you any longer."

"Why didn't we think of bringing a muzzle for him?" said Bob Cherry plaintively.

"When we go on from here tomorrow," said Bunter, unheeding, "we shall be getting towards Le Bosquet. There's a casino there."

"Well?"

"I'm still willing to use my unusual intellectual powers in making you fellows rich—"

"I can see that we shall want that stick, after all!" said Bob Cherry. "There are fellows who simply beg to be licked!"

"I'm going to make the fat fly at the casino," said Bunter firmly. "If you fellows refuse to back me up, I shall simply leave you out, and keep all my immense winnings myself. That's flat!"

"If we catch you rooting round any casino, Bunter, you'll get scragged!" said the captain of the Remove warningly.

"I'm giving you fellows a last chance," said Bunter. "The question is, are you going to back me up in breaking the bank at Le Bosquet? I feel sure I can do it."

"Sit on him, somebody!"

"For the last time?" said Bunter sternly.

"Fathead!"

"Ass!"

"Then I shall take the matter into my own hands, and leave you out," said Bunter. "I mean that! Now you needn't say anything more about the matter. My mind's made up!"

And Billy Bunter devoted his attention to what was left of the provisions, and let the matter drop at last. But his stern

threat did not have any dismaying effect on the chums of the Remove. They did not seem to miss the enormous fortune they might have made—perhaps—by letting W. G. Bunter loose on the green tables. And they certainly did not see how he was going even to attempt to break the bank on a capital of two francs. And as a matter of absolute fact, they weren't very deeply interested in William George Bunter at all.

Just before rolling away to the van for the night the Owl of the Remove referred to the subject once more.

"My mind's made up!" he announced.

"Go to bed, old porpoise, and don't be an ass!" advised Bob Cherry.

"I've offered you fellows the chance of a lifetime——"

"Buzz off!"

"You've refused!" said Bunter with dignity. "You've refused a practical certainty of getting rich quick. Now, I'm going to make my own fortune and leave you out in the cold! Yah!"

And Bunter rolled into the caravan, and was soon snoring, and doubtless dreaming golden dreams of huge sums being pushed to him across the green cloth by the rakes of astonished croupiers.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Very Enjoyable Supper!

"JOLLY, isn't it!" remarked Frank Nugent.

And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh declared that the jollyfulness was terrific.

There was no doubt that it was jolly. Up hill and down dale the caravan rolled, and the caravanners marched, under a sunny sky dotted with fleecy clouds, and with a fresh breeze blowing from the blue sea. Harry Wharton & Co. undoubtedly were enjoying their caravanning holiday in la belle France.

Billy Bunter wasn't quite satisfied; his dream of breaking the bank at some casino or other remained a dream. But even Bunter was cheery; the open air and exercise did him good, and he looked much less fat and flabby than he had looked during the term at Greyfriars.

All the caravanners agreed that it was rather rotten that the vacation was coming towards its end. Certainly, they would like to see old Greyfriars again, and foregather with Squiff and Tom Brown and Lord Mauleverer and the rest in a rag; and chip Coker of the Fifth in the passages, and rag Temple & Co. of the Fourth in the quad.

But they were not tired of caravanning by any means; and they would have been satisfied to keep on right across the fair land of France, and go on caravanning through Spain for the winter. But that was not to be.

"But some day," Bob Cherry remarked, "we'll have a real trip, and go right round the giddy globe in this old bus. What?"

"Some day!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"The some-dayfulness," remarked Hurree Singh, "will be terrific. But in the honourable meantime we are enjoying our noble selves, and everything in the botanical department is lovely!"

"It's topping!" said Bob. "In the open air all day, you feel that you can stand anything. Why, we can even stand Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's some more merry campers!" exclaimed Bob. The caravanners followed Bob's glance.

The road ran by a stretch of open grassy land, backed by a shadowy, dusky wood. In the distance the little white town of Le Bosquet glimmered in the sunshine on a headland stretching out to sea. Prominent among the distant buildings was a gleaming white casino, with a flag flying.

Bunter's glance turned upon that, but the Famous Five did not even look at it. They were interested in the little scene by the wayside.

Two men had camped between the road and the wood. A fire was burning smokily, and over the fire three sticks were erected, and a "billy" of water was boiling. The two men were evidently natives of the country, with dark, good-humoured faces; and though they were poorly dressed, they did not look like tramps. They glanced round at the caravan, evidently interested in it.

"This looks like a decent place for camping," said Bob. "I suppose it's permitted, as those chaps are there. Lots of room for both parties. Halt!"

The van rumbled to a halt.

One of the Frenchmen came away from the fire towards the roadside, and approached the caravanners, raising a rather battered hat politely.

"Bon jour, monsieur!" said Harry Wharton, with equal politeness.

The Frenchman smiled.

"Anglais?" he remarked.

Apparently Wharton's French had indicated that he was English!

"Yes," said Harry.

"I speak a small English," said the stranger, possibly meaning a little English. "You shall look for somewheres to rest you for the night, isn't it? I recommend this spot which is at liberty to all."

"Thank you very much," said Harry. "We'd like to camp here."

The French camper waved his hand.

"All is at liberty!" he said. "Camp where you shall prefer, monsieur. I, Gaston Duboc, make you welcome. All is said."

And, with another bow, the Frenchman returned to his camp.

"Jolly polite, ain't they, in this merry country," remarked Johnny Bull. "It's rather decent, really, you know. Politeness don't cost anything."

"The politeness is great," said the Nabob of Bhanipur. "A sojourn in this delightful country would be good for many of the esteemed inhabitants of the tight little island."

"Bow-wow!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Come on with the van! Geo-up, old hoss. Shove up behind, you fellows!"

The Greyfriars caravan was turned off the road, and bumped on to the grassy stretch. It was stopped at a respectful distance from the other camp. Harry Wharton & Co. set to work preparing their camp, while Billy Bunter sat on the van and rested his fat limbs. Several times the two Frenchmen glanced across to them and spoke to one another, and at last Monsieur Gaston Duboc approached the caravanners again.

"Messieurs," he said, raising his battered hat, "I have the honour to request you to join my comrade and myself at souper—supper. We shall have dish that is of the most delightful. I, Gaston Duboc, am one good and excellent cook, and I shall answer for it that you will like it. Is it that messieurs accept?"

"You're very good," said Harry Wharton, with a glance at his comrades. "We'll be very pleased to join you at supper, if you like. Perhaps you'll breakfast with us in the morning?"

"But with great pleasure," said Monsieur Duboc. "Dix minutes, messieurs—in ten minutes all will be ready."

"Right-ho!" said Bob Cherry.

"Mercy bee-ang!" said Billy Bunter.

M. Duboc returned to his camp, and with his companion, began setting out the supper. He came over again to borrow some plates and cutlery, with many apologies, for the use of his guests. There was an iron pot slung over the Frenchman's fire, from which a delightfully savoury odour emanated. Billy Bunter sniffed at it with great satisfaction.

"Those Froggies can cook, you know," he told the caravanners. "There's some



With his glasses to his eyes, Harry Wharton was staring fixedly towards the distant camp. Then he gave a sudden start. "My only hat!" he exclaimed. "Bunter! With horse and bike!" (See Chapter 9.)

thing jolly nice in that pot, and it's jolly decent of them to ask us."

"Jolly decent," agreed Wharton.

"Saves the trouble of cooking supper, too," remarked Bunter.

When the ten minutes had elapsed the Greyfriars caravanners joined their hosts. Mr. Duboc introduced his comrade, Monsieur Alphonse Tucquet, who bowed and smiled, but did not speak even a "small" English. But he was beaming with good-nature and hospitality.

The iron pot contained what looked something like a soup, and something like a stew. Undoubtedly, it smelt very nice, and tasted very nice; and the caravanners were hungry enough after a day's march to do it full justice.

There was plenty of it, too—ample for Billy Bunter, who passed his plate along incessantly for new supplies. M. Duboc seemed quite pleased by Bunter's appreciation of his provender, and he beamed on the Owl of the Remove as he supplied him.

"Simply topping," Bunter murmured to Nugent, over his sixth plateful. "I think it's rabbit. I'm sure there's rabbit in it, at least."

"Chicken, I thought," said Nugent.

"Chicken too," agreed Bunter. "But rabbit—I'm sure of the rabbit. And some other things I can't quite place—but jolly nice! That chap can cook, and no mistake."

Monsieur Duboc chatted cheerily over supper, and with the confident candour of his race, related his history from the time when he first saw the light in Gascony to the present moment. He had been through the war, too, and had been a prisoner in Germany. And he had found hard times after the war, and now he was taking his holiday on terms the most cheap. He asked the caravanners questions about themselves, but ran on with his own yarns without waiting to be answered.

That delightful supper was over at last, and the two Frenchmen lighted cigarettes, and M. Duboc offered his case to the juniors, who declined politely. Billy Bunter, however, accepted a cigarette, and smoked, with a blink of defiance at the Famous Five. Bunter's doggishness had been in a state of severe repression during the caravan tour, and he was glad of a chance of spreading himself a little.

There was another matter that interested Bunter, and that was the composition of the delightful dish the caravanners had enjoyed so greatly. In class at Greyfriars Bunter was not keen on acquiring knowledge, and in most matters the things he did not know, and did not want to know, would have filled whole libraries. But when it was a question of "grub," and of the cooking thereof, Bunter was deeply interested. He was already scheming to produce this delightful dish in Study No. 7 at Greyfriars next term, if he could obtain the recipe. So he put the question to M. Duboc, who was not at all reticent. Indeed, he was pleased by the fat junior's interest in the matter.

"Il faut deviner," said M. Duboc, with a smile, "you shall guess, isn't it?"

"Rabbit!" said Bunter. "Le lapping, you know."

"Lapin? Non."

"Pulley!" said Bunter.

"Comment?"

"Pulley—chicken, you know."

"Poulet—non."

"It wasn't mutton?" said Bob Cherry.

"Non," said M. Duboc, with a smile.

"Nor veal?" said Johnny Bull.

"Pas de veau. Non."

"Blessed if I can guess, then!" said

Bunter, puzzled. "Once or twice I thought there was some lobster in it."

"Mais non."

"And oysters."

"Jamais!"

"Then I give it up," said Bunter. "Tell us what was in it, mongseer. I want to turn it out at home."

"What do you zink of ze leetle frog?" smiled Monsieur Duboc.

The caravanners started.

"The—the frog!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Mais oui; he is so good to eat, and in France we love him," said M. Duboc. "But zat is not all."

"Oh, dear!"

"Groooogh!" murmured Bunter faintly. He thought of his seven platefuls, and felt an inward trouble.

"N-n-not at all?" said Wharton faintly. "Wha-a-at else?"

"Vat you call slug—"

"Oh!"

"And ze excellent snail—"

"Ooooooch!"

"And some ozzer leetle zings," said Monsieur Duboc, beaming. "It is very nice, hein? And of the most cheap."

The Greyfriars caravanners looked at one another with ghastly faces. From William George Bunter there came a deep, deep groan.

Billy Bunter was not particular in his diet. In that line, generally speaking, all was grist that came to Bunter's mill. But even the Owl of the Remove drew the line at slugs, snails, and frogs. Perspiration in large drops bedewed the fat brow of W. G. Bunter. He gazed at Monsieur Duboc through his big spectacles, with a fixed and glassy gaze. Horror forced him to his seat.

M. Duboc seemed a little puzzled. He could see that there was something wrong, but he could not guess what it was.

The Famous Five, though quaking inwardly, made a great effort to keep calm, heroically striving not to fail in politeness. But Bunter, with another groan of anguish, staggered from his seat. He turned away without a word, and staggered from the camp, strange and terrible sounds proceeding from him. M. Duboc gazed after him, surprised and concerned.

"Votre ami est malade—your friend, he is eel?" he asked. "He look as so he is eel very much, isn't it?"

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There was no doubt that Billy Bunter was ill very much. He staggered away, and collapsed at a little distance, and lay in the grass in a state that would have touched the heart of a steward on a Channel boat. Seven large helpings of frog, snail, and slug, followed by a cigarette, were too much for William George Bunter.

Harry Wharton rose unsteadily to his feet.

"Many thanks!" he faltered. "We—we've enjoyed ourselves immensely. We—we usually take a little walk after supper. Excuse us, Monsieur Duboc!"

"Mais certainement! But—"

"G-goo-good-night!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Oh dear!"

"Groooogh!"

The Greyfriars caravanners hurriedly retired.

They took a little walk. It was not an enjoyable little walk. Far from it. When they returned to their camp they were pale and dismal. They found Billy Bunter still stretched in the grass, white and flabby, and he blinked at them with lack-lustre eyes.

"I—I think I'm g-g-going to die!" whispered Bunter. "I hope they'll be hanged! Groooogh! I hope they'll be guillotined! Ow! Oh dear!"

And Bunter groaned deeply.

The Famous Five went to their tent in a subdued mood. They were still grateful to Monsieur Duboc for his hospitality. But they made up their minds, firmly and fervently, that they would be very, very careful how they accepted invitations to supper again on the road. One supper of that kind was quite sufficient to last them for the whole of the trip.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Farewell!

THE next day the Greyfriars caravanners were feeling better. Messieurs Duboc and Tucquet breakfasted with them in great spirits, and then went on their way, rather to the relief of the caravanners. Billy Bunter did not turn out in the morning, and when he was called, he announced that he was ill. And for once the fat junior was allowed to slack. The Famous Five still felt inward tremors themselves whenever they thought of that supper, and as Bunter had eaten as much as three or four of the others, he was entitled to be ill for once. So he was allowed to slack in bed, and Bob Cherry even brought him his breakfast in the van.

Bunter did not turn out till lunch-time, and then he declared that was still too ill to travel. The caravanners agreed to remain on the spot till the next day, and Bunter's little round eyes glimmered rather curiously behind his spectacles when he heard that decision. The Famous Five planned a long walk round the country, which was very picturesque and attractive, and Bunter announced that he would mind the camp.

"You fellows go out and enjoy yourselves," he said feebly. "I'll stay here. I don't feel like walking. I'll just rest."

"Right you are!" agreed Wharton.

And early in the afternoon the Famous Five started off, heading up the hill that lay behind Le Bosquet.

They took sandwiches with them and several bottles of lemonade. And after a long tramp they stopped on the hill for tea. From the hill they had a wide view of the coast and the little seaside resort of Le Bosquet, and the sea and

the brown sails of the fishing-boats dotting the blue waters. They enjoyed their sandwiches and lemonade. Then Harry Wharton unslung his field-glasses, and stood upon a high rock, and looked back towards the grassy field where the caravan was camped.

"See the camp from there?" called out Bob Cherry.

"Yes, quite clearly," answered Wharton.

"Bunter feeding?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see Bunter or the horse," said Harry. "I hope the fat duffer hasn't let the horse wander."

"He was tethered all right," said Bob. "I saw to that."

Harry Wharton did not answer. With the glasses to his eyes, he was staring fixedly down towards the distant camp.

With the aid of the powerful field-glasses he could make out the caravan distinctly, and even the burnt patch where the camp-fire had been. Bunter was not to be seen; but he might have been inside the van. But where was the horse? It had been tethered quite near the van, and could not have got loose by itself. Wharton had not forgotten Billy Bunter's little dodge at Wimereux. He compressed his lips as he turned the glasses to take a wider survey.

Then he gave a sudden start.

On the white road leading into Le Bosquet, a fat figure shot into sight as the glasses turned on what, to the naked eye, looked like a speck. The fat figure was walking between a horse and a bicycle, leading the horse with one hand, wheeling the bike with the other. It was Bunter.

"My only hat!" exclaimed Wharton.

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

"Bunter!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "The fat idiot must be off his chump! He's tramping away towards the town with the horse and the bike!"

"Great Scott!"

"What can he want both for?" exclaimed Nugent, in wonder.

"Blessed if I know; but he's up to something," said Harry. "You remember his silly trick at Wimereux? I think we had better get back."

"We weren't going back till sundown."

"Better get back. Goodness knows what that duffer is up to! He must be playing some trick, taking away the horse and the bike."

"Yes, rather!" said Bob Cherry. "Better hurry up, chez nous."

The Famous Five lost no time. Wharton crammed the glasses into the case, and the juniors hurried down the hill. There was no direct cut back to the camp, however, and they had to go a long way round to return. It was more than an hour later when they came into camp, tired and dusty, and not in the best of tempers.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's a message!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

A sheet of notepaper was pinned on the caravan door with a nail.

Upon it could be seen the sprawling handwriting of William George Bunter.

Wharton took down the note, and the Famous Five read it together, and fairly gasped. This is what they read:

"You Rotters,—I warned you that I was getting fedd up with your selfishness and being such beests. I decline to travel with you anny more.

"I despize you too much.

"I have been treated with disgusting selfishness, and kept short of munny in the meanest possible way. I've had enough of it, I can tell you.

"I'm going to break the bank at Le Bosquet; and, as you have selfishly refused to lend me anny munny, I am going to sell the horse and the bike for what they will fetch. This is the only way—a larst resorse.

"You needn't think I shan't pay for them, though. I shall utterly refewse to remano under any munnetary obligations to fellows I despize. I shall pay you in fool out of my winnings at the casino.

"You may rely on this when we meet again at Greyfriars I decline to parse the rest of the vack with you. After winning suffisient money at Le Bosket, I am going on to Montey Carlo to make a fortune.

"Yours, with kontempt and disgust.

"W. G. BUNTER."

Harry Wharton & Co. read that precious epistle through, and looked at one another, with feelings almost too deep for words.

"I—I think I could kick myself!" gasped Wharton, at last. "Of course, he was only spoofing about being ill to get rid of us for the day. He thinks we sha'n't be back till sundown, as we arranged, and by that time he would have—"

"We shouldn't have been back, if you hadn't spotted him from the hill with the field-glasses," said Bob. "And now I fancy we're too late. He must have got into the town long before we got back here."

"The awful rotter!" gasped Nugent.

"We'll kick him out, after this!" growled Johnny Bull, in great wrath. "Why, he's stolen the horse and the bike! And the horse isn't ours; we only hired it in Boulogne."

"We shall have to pay for it, if we don't take it back," said Nugent blankly. "My only hat! What a kettle of fish!"

"We'll slaughter him!" hissed Bob Cherry.

"The slaughterfulness will be terrific. But the catchfulness is the first esteemed proceeding," remarked Hurree Singh.

Wharton contracted his brows in thought. He was deeply exasperated; but there was evidently no time to be lost in slanging the absent Owl of the Remove.

"It's not so jolly easy to sell a horse to strangers," he said. "They would want to know how Bunter came by it. The bike's different. If there's a bike shop in Le Bosquet, he can sell that easily enough, as if it were his own machine. The awful rascal! And to think of selling them, and throwing the money away at gambling!"

"The born idiot thinks he's going to win money!" said Bob.

"The howling ass! Going to Monte Carlo to make a fortune!" breathed Johnny Bull. "He ought to be in a padded cell!"

"We'd better get after him at once," said Harry. "Even if he's sold the things, we may stop him before he has spent the money. That will be better than nothing."

"Good egg!"

It was decided that Hurree Jamset Ram Singh should remain in charge of the caravan, while the other four hurried to the town. They started at a trot along the white road. And their feelings towards William George Bunter, as they hurried on, were nothing short of Hunnish.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Row in the Casino!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were a little breathless when they came out of the country road into the white street of Le Bosquet. There was no sign of Bunter or the horse or the bike to be seen; but they hardly expected that. The fat junior was a long way ahead of them, and he had had ample time to dispose of the stolen goods, if he had been able to find a purchaser. And in that case they knew that he was already within the white walls of the casino.

The big casino, in its extensive gardens, stood by the sea, and all the three or four big streets of Le Bosquet led to it. The casino, in fact, was the only business carried on there, the whole village being shut up eight months in the year, only opening for the summer holidays. There were half a dozen shops, which opened when the casino opened, and closed when the casino closed in September. One of them supplied motor-cars and cycles, and Harry Wharton decided to look into it. If Bunter had sold the bike, this was probably the place. And the captain of the Remove was not mistaken. Just within the shop was a bike on a stand, bearing the ticket, "A Vendre," and the chums of the Remove recognised the bike at once.

"This is where he sold it," said Harry. "We can't very well claim it—not without landing Bunter into trouble with the law. We don't want that. We'll deal with him ourselves."

"We want the bike!" growled Johnny Bull.

"We shall have to buy it. But never mind that now. I'll ask the proprietor when the fat villain sold it to him. There may be still time to save the money he got for it."

Wharton went into the shop, his comrades waiting for him. Through the window they saw him in talk with the proprietor of the establishment. He came out in a few minutes.

"It's half an hour since Bunter was there," he announced. "And the man says he went off towards the casino. He must have sold the horse earlier; he hadn't it with him when he arrived here. Let's get off to the casino."

"Come on, then."

It was late in the afternoon, and the dusty caravanners passed through a fashionably-dressed throng on their way to the casino. Arrived there, they entered at the big gates, and Wharton stopped at the little ticket-office within.

His feelings were not pleasant at entering the home of the "petits chevaux." Colonel Wharton had trusted his nephew to keep clear of such places during the caravan tour on the Continent. But it was necessary to get hold of Billy Bunter, and extract him, by force if necessary, from the gaming-room. But at the ticket office Wharton paused.

"No need for us all to go in," he said. "It's two-fifty for admission, too. Bob can come in with me, and you fellows wait here, if you don't mind."

"I'd rather!" grunted Johnny Bull.

And Nugent nodded assent.

Wharton bought two "billets d'entree," and went up the path through the shrubberies with Bob Cherry. There were plenty of people going to the casino, and there was a gay hum of chatter and laughter on all sides. Harry Wharton and Bob arrived in the big marble vestibule, and looked around them there.

At the end of a wide corridor they

caught sight of a notice bearing the words, "Salle de Jeu."

"That's the place," said Bob. "Come on!"

The two juniors went quickly along the corridor, glanced at rather curiously by the promenaders there. All sorts and conditions of people came to Le Bosquet to try their luck, but Wharton and Bob Cherry were certainly the youngest in the crowd. They paid no heed to the glances cast at them, however, but hurried on into the gambling-room.

A droning voice greeted their ears as they entered.

"Faites vos jeux, messieurs."

It was the voice of the croupier, standing at the number bowl in the long, green table, with a rubber ball in his hand.

"Marquez vos jeux!"

The room was crowded. Every seat at the table was taken, and behind the seated punters were dozens more, standing up, throwing on their stakes over the shoulders of those in front.

The scene was new and strange enough to the chums of Greyfriars. But they hardly glanced at the long green table, with the yellow numbers—the glimmering bowl in which the rubber ball circulated and swerved and bounced, followed eagerly in its gyrations by the eyes of the punters. The ball came to a rest in a numbered slot, and the droning voice of the croupier announced the winning number.

"Le cinq!"

"The brute must be here, Harry!" muttered Bob Cherry. "Not so easy to find him in this dashed crowd, though."

"We'll find him soon," said Harry.

"And when we've found him, he's coming out—what?" asked Bob, with a grin.

"Yes—willy-nilly."

"If he kicks up a row——"

"Let him!" said Wharton grimly. "He's coming out all the same. I don't want a row here, but he's coming out. After all, I dare say they have rows enough, at times, in a rotten den like this."

"Very likely," assented Bob. "One more won't hurt them! Anyhow, we're going to see Bunter safe home."

The two juniors moved along the tables, looking for the Owl of the Remove. They felt certain that he was there.

A few minutes later they spotted him. Bunter had secured a seat at the green table, and was sitting there, with a little pile of counters before him, and several in his fat fingers.

He was blinking at the spinning ball, his eyes gleaming behind his big spectacles.

Evidently the Owl of the Remove had started playing already, and some of his ill-gotten cash was gone.

"Le sept!"

The croupier's voice announced seven as the winning number, and there was a subdued grunt from Bunter. Apparently his stake had not been on seven.

Wharton and Nugent insinuated themselves into the crowd by the table, seeking to get nearer to Bunter.

But they could not reach him immediately. It was impossible to shove their way roughly through a crowd of strangers, and they had to take time to get to Bunter's chair.

Meanwhile, the Owl of the Remove was going on with his wonderful scheme for "getting rich quick."

His fat fingers jerked piece after piece on the green cloth, and once the juniors heard him give a fat chirrup of satisfaction as he won on a number. But that

win seemed to be the only one that came Bunter's way. His intellectual powers, great as they were in his own estimation; did not seem equal to the game of petits-chevaux. His little pile of counters diminished at a rapid rate, and as Harry Wharton reached the back of his chair, at last, the final piece was in Bunter's hands, and was tossed upon the board. It fell on the number seven, and a few moments later the croupier's droning voice announced:

"Le neuf!"

It was nine that was the winning number, and Bunter's last piece was gone. He gave a discontented grunt, and dived his fat hand into his pocket for a further supply of money. The money-changer came pushing through the crowd to hand him counters in exchange for banknotes. But the money-changer's occupation was gone, so far as Billy Bunter was concerned. Harry Wharton dropped a heavy hand on the fat junior's collar from behind.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

His head spun round in alarm and surprise, and his glasses almost fell off at the sight of Wharton's stern face, with Bob Cherry looking over the shoulder of the captain of the Remove.

"Oh dear! I—I say, Harry, old chap——"

"Get up!"

"I—I haven't finished yet. I—I've only lost fifty francs so far, old chap," mumbled Bunter. "I—I'm going on, you know."

"Will you come?" asked Wharton quietly.

Bunter wriggled.

"No, I won't! he gasped desperately.

"Lemme alone! I'm going on—I'm just going to win—I say—Yaroooooooh!"

Wharton did not stand upon ceremony. Heedless of the surprised looks around him, he compressed his grip upon Billy Bunter's collar, and jerked the fat junior out of his chair.

"Leggo!" roared Bunter.

"Come on, Bunter!"

"Yooop! I won't! Help!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter wriggled and kicked. There were loud exclamations of surprise and wrath on all sides. The croupier forgot to spin the ball, standing staring with it in his hand; the chef-de-partie, on his high seat, gesticulated and ejaculated. All the seated croupiers along the green table stared; the punters looked round; hundreds of pairs of eyes were fixed on the Greyfriars juniors. Three or four porters and "chasseurs" hurried towards the spot.

Harry Wharton's face was crimson; but he did not falter. With an iron grip on Bunter's collar, he yanked him bodily away from the green table.

"Help! Yooop! Beast! Yarooooh!" roared Bunter, struggling wildly as he slid over the smooth parquet.

The chef-de-partie held up his flabby white hands in horror. Such a "row" had perhaps never happened in the select "cercle" before; roguery and swindlers and blackguardism were conducted with a nice regard for appearances. But the Casino of Le Bosquet had never been visited before by the Greyfriars Remove!

"Come on, you fat scoundrel!" panted Wharton.

"Yarooooooh!"

"Come on, you fat brute!" exclaimed

Bob Cherry.

"Leggo!"

"Monsieur——"

"Messieurs——"

"Partez donc!" shouted the chef-de-partie, waving his flabby hands. "Allez-vous-en! Partez donc! C'est une chose affreuse! Partez!"

The porters and chasseurs gathered round the juniors, and all three of them were whisked out into the corridor. The gaming-room was left in a buzz of excitement behind them.

In a few minutes Harry Wharton, still with Bunter in his grip, was outside on the wide granite steps, amid a howl of excited French and frantic gesticulating. Bob Cherry took a grip on Bunter's arm.

"Come on, you fat blackguard!"

"Yooop! Grooogh! I'm going in——"

"Your mistake; you're coming out!"

And Billy Bunter did come out, with a grip on either arm, and the occasional help of a boot behind when he strove to linger.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Home Again!

"GOT him!" grinned Johnny Bull, as the breathless juniors rejoined their chums at the casino gates.

"Yes, rather!"

"As large as life!" grinned Nugent.

"Did you break the bank, Bunter?"

"Yow-ow-ow! Leggo! I'm going in again."

"This way!" said Wharton.

The Greyfriars juniors walked quickly away. They felt that they had attracted quite enough attention in Le Bosquet, already; and they were anxious to get back to camp.

Billy Bunter walked away with the caravanners, sorely against his will. But the grip on his fat arms did not relax; and he was kicked without mercy when he stopped. The Co. were quite fed up with Bunter and his little ways, and they wasted no ceremony on him.

Le Bosquet was left behind as the evening shadows fell, and the juniors tramped out on the country road. Billy Bunter gasped and puffed and blew as he trotted on at a good pace.

"I say, you fellows, you're acting simply like beasts!" he panted. "I—I was coming back to whack out my winnings, really."

"Shut up!" growled Johnny Bull.

"I was only fifty francs down," said Bunter, almost tearfully. "I've got a lot of ready money now, and this is the chance of a lifetime! Just you let me go back and—— Yarooooh! Stop kicking me, Bob Cherry, you ruffian!"

"Get on!"

"Beast! I only got two hundred francs for the bike," said Bunter, "and I had to sell the horse to a gipsy for a hundred francs—I couldn't sell him to anybody else——"

"You fat villain——"

"I'll get them back out of my winnings, if you fellows will give me a chance," pleaded Bunter.

"Kick him, Bob!"

"Certainly!"

"Yaroooooooh!"

Bunter bundled on in deep depression of spirits to the camp. It was reached at last, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh came to meet his comrades.

"You have discoverfully found the esteemed and disgusting rotter!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, really, Inky——"

"Here he is!" said Bob Cherry. "He's sold the horse and the bike for next

(Continued on page 20.)



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Greyfriars Caravanners Abroad!

(Continued from page 18.)

to nothing, and we're going to take it out of his hide!"

"I—I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"D-d-d-did you find my note on the van?"

"Yes, you fat rascal!"

"It—it—it was only a joke, you know," mumbled Bunter. "I—I suppose you fellows can take a joke? I—I thought you wouldn't be back till dark, you know. I—I say, you fellows, I'm prepared to let the whole matter drop, if you like. In fact, I don't care to discuss it any further!"

"Hand over the money you have left, Bunter!" said Harry Wharton quietly. "It will go a little way towards getting the horse and the bike back."

"I—I say!"

"Kick him!"

"Here's the money!" gasped Bunter.

It was not much. It was evident that the juniors would be put to rather a severe strain to redeem their lost property. They gave the Owl of the Remove almost bloodthirsty looks.

"Now, Bunter's got to be punished," said Bob. "We can't kick him out of the camp in a foreign country!" Bunter brightened up. "But he's got to have a severe lesson that he won't forget!"

"Hear, hear!"

And the caravanners sat in council round the camp-fire, while Billy Bunter quaked with apprehension. The council came to a decision at last, and Billy Bunter gave a yelp when he heard his sentence.

"Twenty licks with a cricket-stump, and bread and water for three days!" said Harry Wharton. "And if ever you do anything of the kind again, Bunter,

you go out of the party neck-and-crop and get home the best you can!"

"I say, Harry, old chap!"

"Shut up!"

"Bob, dear old fellow——"

"If you dear-old-fellow me, I'll squash you!" roared Bob Cherry.

"I—I say, Franky—good old Franky!"

"I'll stomp him, if you like!" grinned Frank Nugent. "I'll give him good old Franky!"

"I—I say, you fellows, I—help! Yoop! Ow! Wow!"

The fat junior was spread-eagled in the grass, and Bob Cherry fetched a cricket-stump from the van. The twenty licks were laid on by Bob's powerful arm, and twenty loud yells rang out from William George Bunter. But that was only the beginning. When the caravanners sat down to supper, there was dry bread for Bunter, and there was water. And there was nothing else—merely that and nothing more!

And the provisions were taken care of during the night, safe from a raid from the hungry Owl of the Remove! And Billy Bunter dreamed that night of gorgeous spreads and fantastic feeds instead of dreaming of "breaking the bank" at Monte Carlo!

Harry Wharton & Co. occupied the following morning in a longer and more troublesome hunt for the horse than on the previous occasion. But it was found at last—in possession of the gipsy to whom Bunter had sold it for a hundred francs—and who certainly knew that he ought not to have bought it. He parted with it for two hundred francs, however, and the juniors were glad enough to recover it on those terms. And then the bike had to be repurchased. And altogether the caravanners had to go so deep into their reserve funds that they felt more like scalping Billy Bunter than letting him off his punishment. So the pathetic looks of the Owl of the Remove, when they started on the road that afternoon, were quite wasted on

the Famous Five—he was not to be pardoned!

The next day Bunter was in the deepest depths of woe. Lickings he could have stood and recovered from—but shortness of grub was a punishment that affected him more nearly! Like Cain of old, he felt that his punishment was greater than he could bear.

But there was no mercy for the fat sinner! For three days he subsisted on bread and water—and the quantity of the "staff of life" that he managed to consume was simply amazing! His anguish during those three dreadful days was, as the Nabob of Bhanipur would have said, terrific! It was not till the awful period had expired, and he was admitted to the circle round the camp-fire at supper on the third day, that the Owl of the Remove decided that life was worth living after all.

And if Billy Bunter ever thought any more of green tables, and casinos, and breaking banks, he was in a hurry to dismiss such thoughts from his mind. The penalty was a little too severe for William George Bunter to dream of facing it again.

In fact, the lesson he had received had done Bunter so much good that he almost behaved himself during the remainder of the caravan trip on the Continent.

That trip was enjoyable to the finish, and it was with some regret that the Greyfriars caravanners turned their faces towards the Channel again for the homeward journey. However, they were looking forward to seeing all the fellows at Greyfriars again in the new term, and that was a consolation. A week or two later the Famous Five were again walking the Remove passage at Greyfriars—and Billy Bunter, in study and passage and Common-room, was relating wondrous tales of his exploits during the trip of the Greyfriars Caravanners Abroad.

THE END.

(Another grand long complete story of the chums of Greyfriars will appear next Monday in the MAGNET Library. It is entitled "Champion of the Remove," and is a rattling fine story. Order your copy now!)

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