

**"ALL THROUGH BUNTER!"** Full-o'-laughs School Story of Harry Wharton & Co. **INSIDE.**

# The **MAGNET** 2<sup>D</sup>





# ALL THROUGH BUNTER!



By  
**FRANK RICHARDS**

## THE FIRST CHAPTER. No Slacking!

**"SLACKER!"**  
"What?"  
"Slacker!" repeated Billy Bunter scornfully. "Lolling in an armchair! Yah! Slacker!"  
Bob Cherry, of the Greyfriars Remove, glared at Billy Bunter.

Bob was seated in the armchair in Study No. 7 in the Remove. That study belonged to Peter Todd and Billy Bunter. They shared the study. The armchair belonged to Peter Todd. But they did not share the armchair. Bunter always had that!

Bob was "teasing" with Toddy that day. He was waiting for Peter to come up to tea. In the meantime, he was taking it easy, after slogging at games practice for a good hour in a keen March wind.

Certainly Bob did not look, at that moment, like the most energetic fellow at Greyfriars. He was stretched in the armchair, in what a novelist might have described as an attitude of un-studied grace. His shoulders were deep in the chair, his hands clasped behind his head, his long legs stretched out, his feet resting on the table. Still, if there was anything that Bob Cherry wasn't, it was a slacker. So it roused his wrath to be called a slacker by the fattest and laziest fellow at Greyfriars, or in the wide world.

Billy Bunter had arrived in the doorway, grunting. Bunter was short of breath, after coming up the Remove staircase. Bunter had a lot of weight to carry upstairs, and it told on him. Bob had heard his fat and breathless grunt long before he reached the study. And he grinned. But he did not grin now, as Bunter blinked at him scornfully through his big spectacles. He glared.

"You fat, frabjous, footling, fozzling  
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frump—" said Bob Cherry, in measured tones.

Grunt from Bunter!  
The fact was that Bunter had an eye on that armchair himself. After negotiating the stairs he wanted a rest, and it was distinctly annoying to find the armchair already occupied.

"Yah! Slacker!" repeated Bunter. "Frowsting in a study on a day like this! Frowster!"

"You pie-faced, piffing, pudding-headed porker—"

"Get out of that chair, for goodness' sake!" said Bunter contemptuously. "Pull yourself together! Brace up! Don't slack! Don't frowst! Be a man!"

"If I get out of this chair," said Bob Cherry, in a sulphurous voice, "you'll wish I hadn't!"

"They're punting a ball in the quad," said Bunter. "Wharton and Nugent and Bull and Inky and the rest. Go and join them. It will do you good. Get a move on! Exert yourself! Don't slack!"

That, Billy Bunter considered, was enough to make Bob Cherry get out of the armchair. He was right—it was!

Bob's feet dropped from the table to the floor with a crash. Then he rose to them.

"That's right!" said Bunter approvingly. "Buck up, you know! I never could stand slacking! It makes me ill to see a fellow lolling and sprawling about! Dash it all, a fellow doesn't come to Greyfriars to slack about! And I'm bound to say—Yaroooop!"

Bunter had not intended to say that. He said it unintentionally, as Bob Cherry fixed a finger and thumb on a fat ear.

"Ow! Beast! Wow!" roared Bunter. "Beast! If that's how you behave in a fellow's study—Wow!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Bob.  
He released the fat ear. After all,

it was Bunter's study, as well as Toddy's.

Billy Bunter rubbed his fat ear and glared. Bunter did not like his fat ear pulled. It had been pulled often and often, but the Owl of the Remove had never grown to like it!

"Ow! Wow! I've a jolly good mind to turf you out of the study!" roared Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. For two pins, I'd jolly well boot you into the passage!" hooted Bunter.

"Only, I—I won't!"

"Oh, do!" urged Bob. "It would be frightfully interesting to see you doing it. Do get on with it, old fat bean!"

"Yah!"

Billy Bunter did not get on with it. Really, it was a task far beyond Billy Bunter's powers. Instead of getting on with it, he rolled across to the vacated armchair and dropped into it, with a weight that made it groan. Bob Cherry sat on a corner of the study table.

"You silly ass!" came a voice from the passage. A junior with a rather prominent nose and a tuft of hair over his forehead, was looking in. Peter Todd had arrived, just after Bunter; and apparently he had been a witness of the little scene in the study.

"Eh?" Bob looked round at him and grinned. "Are you always as polite as that to a visitor, Toddy?"

"You silly ass!" repeated Toddy. "Why didn't you kick him? Why didn't you bang his fat head on the table? What did you let him have the armchair for? Fathead!"

"It's all right, old bean," said Bob, good-naturedly. "The table's good enough for me."

Peter gave a snort. He was accustomed to letting Bunter appropriate the armchair in the study. Peter was wrathful. He stepped into Study No. 7 with an expression on his face that

Billy Bunter did not quite like. The fat Owl blinked at him warily through his big spectacles.

"I—I say, Toddy, old chap—"  
"You fat villain!"  
"Oh, really, Toddy!"  
"You've turned my guest out of my armchair!" roared Toddy.

"I—I didn't turn him out, you know. He—he got out! Dash it all, a fellow shouldn't slack and frown in an armchair!" said Bunter warmly. "I told him he was a slacker—and he jolly well was a slacker! Sprawling in an armchair—"

"And what are you doing?" hooted Peter.

"Eh?"  
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob.  
It had not seemed to occur to Billy Bunter's fat and fatuous brain that he was sprawling in an armchair!

"Oh, really, Toddy! I'm tired!" said Bunter, with dignity. "A fellow can take a rest when he's tired! Look here—"

Peter Todd stepped behind the armchair. He grasped the back of it with both hands. It tilted.

"Whoop!" roared Bunter, as he shot out on the hearthrug.

He landed there on his fat hands and knees, roaring.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bob.  
"Ow! Wow!" Bunter sat up.  
"Wow! Beast! Wharrer you up to? Ow!"

The armchair crashed down on its legs again. Over it, Peter Todd glared at the breathless Owl.

"You get in that armchair again, and out you go," he said distinctly.

"You're down on slacking. Well, you're going to stick to that, my fat pippin! Let me catch you in that armchair again!"

"Beast!"  
Billy Bunter picked himself up, gasping for breath. He blinked at Toddy through his big spectacles with a devastating blink.

Toddy proceeded to get tea. Bob Cherry helped him. Billy Bunter stood and glared at them. He edged towards the armchair at last.

"Look here, Toddy, I've always had that armchair. I'm jolly well going to sit in it!" he hooted.

"Do!" said Toddy.  
Bunter did; but not for long. He bounded out of it again like a fat porpoise as Peter grasped the back. He was just in time.

"Beast!" roared Bunter. "Look here, if you think I'm not going to use that armchair, just because it's yours, you—"

"That's exactly what I think!" agreed Peter.

"Beast!"  
"Let me catch you in it again!" said Toddy.

Bunter decided not to let Toddy catch him in it again. He rested his weary, fat limbs on one of the cane chairs till tea was ready, frowning.

But he brightened up again when tea was ready. Owing to the presence of a guest in the study, it was an unusually festive spread. Tom Dutton was teasing out; but Bunter did not miss him. It left all the more for Bunter. Over tea, Peter Todd and Bob Cherry talked football. But Billy Bunter's fat jaws were too busy for talking. Bunter's fat voice was music to his own fat ears; but he had no time for it now. He devoted himself to packing away the foodstuffs.

It was really a ripping spread. There were still eatables on the table when Bob Cherry had finished and taken his leave. But there were none when Bunter had finished. Bunter did not

believe in leaving anything. And when Bunter had finished, he was breathing hard and looking very shiny, and feeling the need of a rest after his exertions. As usual, he rolled over to the armchair. It creaked as his weight dropped into it.

Peter Todd strolled round behind the chair. He grasped the back. There was a squeak of alarm from Bunter.

"I—I say, Toddy— Yooooop!"  
Bump!

Bunter landed on the hearthrug!  
"Ow! Wow! You rotter!" gasped Bunter. "Look here, Toddy— Wow!"

"No slacking in this study!" said Toddy serenely. "I'm as down on slacking as you are, old bean—in fact, more so!"

"You—you beast!" gasped Bunter. "Do you think I'm never going to sit in that armchair?"

"I think I'm going to tip you out every time!"  
"Beast!" roared Bunter.

Toddy grinned, and sat in the armchair himself. Billy Bunter gave him a devastating blink, and rolled out of the study—in search of an armchair.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Whose Chair?

"I SAY, you fellows!"  
"Too late!" grinned Frank Nugent.

"Eh?"  
"We've finished tea!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

When is an armchair not an armchair?

When Bunter, the Remove "heavyweight," has sat in it!

"Oh, really, Wharton—"  
Billy Bunter was blinking in at the door of Study No. 1. Four members of the Famous Five were there—Harry Wharton, Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. Tea was finished, and four grinning faces were turned on Billy Bunter. Naturally, the juniors supposed that he had come to tea. But, for once, Bunter hadn't!

"Not a crumb left, old fat man!" said Frank. "Roll away!"

"Oh, really, Nugent!"  
Billy Bunter did not roll away. He rolled in.

"I say, you fellows, I haven't come to tea! I've had tea," he said. "It's a bit sickening that a fellow can't look into a fellow's study without a fellow thinking that a fellow's after something!"

"You see, we know you!" explained Johnny Bull.

"The knowfulness is terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter!" chuckled Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

Hurree Singh's slim figure was extended in the armchair. Billy Bunter gave him an irritated blink. Bunter wanted that armchair.

"If a fellow came into my study, and I was sitting in the armchair, I should offer it to him, Inky!" he said.

"But you're not coming into this study!" Harry Wharton pointed out.

"There's nothing to cat—"  
"Oh, really, Wharton—"  
"Shut the door after you!" said Nugent.

Bunter shut the door, but he remained on the inside of it. Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh smiled a dusky smile, but he did not rise from the armchair.

Bunter gave a snort, and sat on a box. Harry Wharton & Co. looked at him expressively. But expressive looks were a sheer waste on Bunter. He sat tight.

"I say, you fellows, I've had a row with Toddy in my study—"

"Go and have another!" suggested Johnny Bull.

"Beast—I mean, do let a chap speak, old fellow! You know, I always used to have an armchair when I shared this study with you and Nugent, Wharton."

"I know," assented the captain of the Remove. "Since we got shut of you, we've had a chance to use it ourselves! Thanks for changing out!"

"I've always had the armchair in Study No. 7 since I've been with Toddy," resumed Bunter, unheeding.

"But Toddy makes out that it's his, you know, because he bought it—"

"Oh, my hat!"  
"Now he's making a fuss about it," went on Bunter. "I'm not the fellow to haggle with a fellow about an armchair. I refuse to use it any longer! I've told him plainly that I shall never sit in it again! I mean that!"

Billy Bunter blinked seriously at the chums of the Remove. "A fellow has to consider his dignity, and all that! I decline to touch Toddy's armchair again! It's beneath me!"

"How can it be beneath you if you don't sit in it?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
"Eh?" Bunter blinked at Nugent.

"Don't be an ass, old chap! This isn't a joking matter! I'm going to buy a new armchair, and we shall have to make room for two in the study, that's all. Luckily, as it happens, I'm expecting a postal order—"

"Oh scissors!"  
"From one of my titled relations. And I've seen a splendid chair at old Lazarus' shop in Courtfield, marked one-pound-five. It's a ripping chair—ever so much better than that shabby old thing of yours, Wharton—"

"Go it!"  
"The fact is, I've tried that armchair," Bunter proceeded to explain. "I felt rather tired when I walked into Courtfield, so I went into Lazarus' shop to ask him to show me some carpets for the study. I sat in that armchair while he unrolled them and showed them to me—see? When I'd had a good, long rest I told him the carpets wouldn't do, and came away. Rather neat—what?"

The four juniors in Study No. 1 gazed at Bunter. They did not seem to think it was rather "neat" to keep old Mr. Lazarus rolling and unrolling carpets while the fat Owl took a prolonged rest in Mr. Lazarus' armchair. They seemed to think it a rather rotten proceeding.

"You fellows wouldn't have thought of a dodge like that!" grinned Bunter.

"I hope not!" said Harry.

"You're not very bright, are you?" said Bunter. "I think of dodges, you know. Old Lazarus looked a bit shirty when I came away without buying anything, after keeping him going for about half an hour. He, he, he! Of course, I had to keep him going while I was taking a rest in his chair. Can't walk into a shop and sit in a chair and say nothing, you know!"

"Did he kick you?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Eh? No, you ass!"  
"Ah, that was a mistake!"

"Oh, really, Bull! Well, as I was saying, I tried that armchair, and it was a jolly comfortable one!" said Bunter. "Solid oak and real leather—worth a lot of money, I should say. Old Lazarus told me he bought it at the

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auktion at General Parkinson's place—you know, the place where the pearl necklace was lost; it was in the papers. Blessed if I know why he's selling it cheap! But it was marked on a ticket one-pound-five. Well, I'm going to buy it."

"Good idea! Go and buy it now!" said Wharton.

"Only my postal order hasn't come yet," explained Bunter. "I could cut down to Courtfield before lock-up, and bag that armchair before it's bagged by somebody else—I can tell you, it's a bargain—only my postal order won't be here now till the morning."

"Good-bye, Bunter!"

"Eh—I'm not going yet!" said Bunter.

"What rotten luck!"

"Oh, really, you beast—I mean, do give a fellow a little attention! This is rather important! I'm in rather a hurry for that armchair, now that beast Toddy won't let me have his—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I mean, now I've contemptuously refused to use Toddy's armchair! It's no good going to old Lazarus without any money. He's a skinfint!"

"Oh crickey! Do you think he would let you have the armchair for nothing if he wasn't?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What I mean is, will one of you fellows lend me the twenty-five bob, and take my postal order when it comes? Then I can get the armchair to-day, and you can have the postal order in the morning. Quite simple!"

"Oh, quite!" agreed Wharton. "It's a simple arrangement, but you'll have to get some simple chap to agree to it. We're not so simple as that in this study!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you mean that you don't believe that my postal order is coming in the morning, Wharton—"

"You're a thought reader, old bean!"

"It's from one of my titled relations, and—"

"But I don't believe in your titled relations, either!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!"

"Now you've done your funny turn, old fat man, bunk!" suggested the captain of the Remove. "Shut the door after you!"

"Well, look here," said Bunter, "I must have an armchair in my study! You see that! What about my having this one?"

"Wha-a-t!"

"It's mine, really—"

"Yours!" howled Wharton. As that armchair had been sent from Wharton Lodge, by Wharton's Aunt Amy, as a present for her dear nephew at Greyfriars, Billy Bunter's claim to ownership was rather surprising—even from Billy Bunter!

"Well, I always had it when I was in this study!" argued Bunter. "You know that! You can't deny that, Wharton—you used to grumble about it sometimes! So did you, Nugent!"

"Guilty, my lord!" grinned Nugent.

"Well, as I always had it, it comes to the same thing. I thought of taking it away with me when I changed into Study No. 7—"

"Great Scott!"

"But I knew you'd make a fuss if I did, Wharton—"

"You're right there!"

"And I never was a fellow to haggle about things, so—so I left it here. But now you see how the matter stands! Toddy's going to be mean about his armchair in Study No. 7—so what's a fellow to do?"

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"Not me!" said the captain of the Remove. "I'm not so easily done."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think you ought to let me have that armchair, Wharton! My leaving it here all this time doesn't make it yours."

"Fan me, somebody!"

"I always had it when I was here! Well, what's the difference if I always have it in Study No. 7? Be reasonable," urged Bunter. "I'm willing to let it be called yours, if you make a point of it, so long as I have it!"

"That's frightfully accommodating," agreed Wharton. "But I'm sticking to it, all the same."

"I call that mean!" said Bunter.

"No objection!"

"Stingy!" said Bunter scornfully.

"Is that the lot?"

"Well, if you won't let me have my armchair, you won't!" said Bunter. "Some fellows would punch your head for it! I won't do that—"

"Oh, do!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I must say I despise you! Sticking to a fellow's armchair!" said Bunter. "I ought to have taken it away when I left, I see that now. Leave a thing in a fellow's hands long enough and he thinks it's his!"

"But it is mine!" roared Wharton.

"My aunt sent it to me from home, you fat, frabjous fozzler."

"You needn't yell at a fellow, Harry Wharton, because he doesn't like you chiselling him out of an armchair! You can't expect me to like it!"

"Why, you—you—you—" gasped Wharton.

"It's a bit thick," said Bunter. "Hardly honest, if you come to that! Well, look here! Suppose I let you keep that armchair—"

"Suppose you let me keep my own armchair!" gurgled Wharton.

"Suppose I let you keep it, and say no more about it, will you lend me the twenty-five bob to buy that second-hand armchair at Lazarus? That's fair!"

Harry Wharton rose to his feet.

"I won't lend you twenty-five bob," he said, "but I've got something I'll lend you—"

"What's that?" asked Bunter eagerly.

"I might get the rest from Mauly! What will you lend me, old fellow?"

"My boot!"

"Eh! What! Beast! Here, keep off!" yelled Bunter, as Wharton proceeded to make him that loan. "Wharrer you kicking me for, you beast? Yooop! I'll jolly well—Whoop! Oh lor! Oh crumbs! Oh crickey!"

Bunter bounded for the door. Twice the boot landed on the tightest trousers at Greyfriars as he bounded. He tore open the door; and a third thud lifted him neatly into the Remove passage.

"Yaroooh!"

Bunter bounced into the passage—and into Herbert Vernon-Smith, who was coming along in his study. The door of Study No. 1 slammed after him. Bunter clutched at the Boulder to save himself. Smithy hooted at him.

"You fat idiot! Leggo! What's this game?"

"Ow! Wow! I couldn't help it—that beast Wharton kicked me!" gasped Bunter.

"Good—I'll do the same!" said Smithy. And he did!

"Yaroooh!"

The Owl of the Remove bellowed—and Smithy, grinning, walked on to Study No. 4 and left him to bellow. And for the next few minutes the celebrated Bull of Bashan had nothing on Bunter!

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

### Just Like Coker!

COKER of the Fifth frowned. A sound that was something like a steamer's siren and something like the complaint of a hinge that needed oiling echoed along the passages.

Bob Cherry was whistling. Bob often whistled when he was cheery—and he was seldom anything but cheery. In the Remove passage fellows would yell to him to chuck it—and they would "chuck" things themselves sometimes! Often and often as Bob whistled he had seldom or never been known to whistle in tune. It was rather painful for a fellow with a musical ear—and not enjoyable for a fellow whose ear was not musical. There was no doubt that when Bob whistled his way up the Remove passage every fellow there realised how very golden silence was.

But Bob wasn't in the Remove passage now. He was sauntering along to the Rag, downstairs. He had had a trot in the quad, after tea with Toddy. Now he expected to find his friends in the Rag. He was quite oblivious of the existence of Horace Coker of the Fifth Form. Coker of the Fifth frowned at him unheeded as he came cheerily and untunefully along.

"Side!" growled Coker. And his friends, Potter and Greene, nodded. Whistling in the passages was "side."

Coker of the Fifth hadn't a musical ear! He was no more musical than an electric drill or an American jazz band. Coker's own voice was music to his ears—which was a proof that there was no music in his soul. It was not, therefore, because Bob's cheery whistle was loud, because it was shrill, or because it was out of tune that Coker objected. He objected, strongly, because it was "side."

There were a lot of unwritten laws on the subject of "side" at Greyfriars, as at most schools. It was "side" for any junior to laugh or whistle in the passages. They often did—still, it was "side"; and if a Sixth Form prefect happened to be by, it might mean a whopping for "side." "Side" was frowned upon, especially in juniors. Bob, by whistling in the passages, was putting on side—a deadly offence, though quite unintentional.

Coker waved his hand at Bob as he came along.

"Stop that!" he called out.

Bob's whistle stopped—for a moment—while he looked round. Had it been Wingate or Gwynne, or any Sixth Form man who called to him, Bob would have turned off the music and kept it turned off. The laws regarding "side" seemed rather ridiculous to the fellows who suffered from them. Still, a fellow had to play up. A fellow had to take his school as he found it; he did not come there to make new laws, and invent new manners and customs. Indeed, schoolboys are such natural conservatives that even a fellow "whopped" for "siding" would probably have objected to the abolition of any of the rules. Such things were traditional; and traditions were traditions!

But to "ring off" at the order of a Fifth Form man was quite another matter. The Fifth were not prefects! They were seniors, that was all. They had no more right to give orders to the fags, than the fags had to give orders to the Fifth! Coker often forgot that! Now he had forgotten it again!

So, having ascertained that it was merely a Fifth Form man who had called to him, Bob Cherry restarted after the interval, as it were. And he put his beef into his renewed whistle!



He turned out a screech that would have made a steamer's siren seem a cooing whisper. It had to be made clear that no Remove man was going to take orders from the Fifth! This was important, as any Remove man would have agreed at once. Bob proceeded to make it clear, with a fearful whistle that might have set the nerves of a statue on edge.

"I said stop it!" roared Coker. Bob whistled on! He slowed down, so as to remain as long as possible in Coker's hearing. The thing had to be made clear to Coker!

"My hat!" said Coker, with a deep breath. "You see that, you fellows!

ceased again, suddenly, as he was grabbed, whirled round, and his head tapped against the passage wall.

"Ow!" roared Bob. It was a hard tap. Coker had a heavy hand!

Having administered that tap, Coker released him, and frowned at him. Bob rubbed his head and glared at the great man of the Fifth.

"That's a tip!" said Coker. "Don't side. It's not allowed. Remember that!"

And Coker, having done justice, turned away, suspecting that the matter was at an end. But it wasn't. It was only at the beginning!

He put up a terrific fight, and he yelled as he scrapped.

"Rescue, Remove!"

He was only a few yards from the door of the Rag. That apartment was crowded with juniors after tea. His yell was heard within, and there was an answering yell, a rush of footsteps, and the door flew open.

"Rescue!" roared Bob.

Coker was punching, and his punches were terrific.

"Coming!" shouted Harry Wharton.

He was first out of the Rag. But Johnny Bull and Frank Nugent were close behind. Hurree Jamset Ram



"I must say I despise you, Wharton," said Bunter, "sticking to a fellow's armchair!" "But it's mine!" roared Wharton. "My aunt sent it to me from home, you fat, frabjous foozler!" "All right," said Bunter, "you needn't yell at a fellow because he doesn't like you chiselling him out of an armchair!"

This is what Greyfriars is coming to! Fags put on side in the passages and take no notice when a senior man tells them to stop."

"Awful!" said Potter. "Wish there was a prefect about."

"But there isn't!" yawned Greene. "Come on, Coker! Don't let's stop and listen to that awful row."

"I'm not letting that fag put on side!" said Coker. "There's a limit, and that's the limit."

"But it isn't your bizney, old bean!" Potter pointed out.

"Don't be an ass, Potter."

"But it really isn't!" said Greene.

"Don't be a fool, Greene!"

Having thus silenced criticism, Coker strode after Bob, towards the door of the Rag. Potter and Greene exchanged a glance and walked the other way. If Coker was going to wake up a hornet's-nest, he was welcome to the hornets. Potter and Greene did not want any.

A heavy hand descended on Bob Cherry's shoulder. His defiant whistle

Bob Cherry made a bound at Coker.

He grabbed Coker in his turn, hooked his leg, and brought him down with a crash. Coker hit the floor like a sack of coke, and roared. For a moment he was dizzy. In that moment Bob Cherry grasped his ears, one in each hand. They were large, and gave a good hold. With a grip on Coker's ears, Bob tapped his head on the floor.

That, also, was a hard tap! Bob could be as heavy handed as Horace Coker. "Whoo-hoop!" roared Coker frantically.

"You cheeky tick!" bawled Bob Cherry. "How do you like it?"

"Oh, my hat! Why, I'll spifficate you! I'll— Yaroooh!"

His head tapped again, with a loud crack, on the floor.

Then Coker's grasp was on Bob like the hug of a grizzly bear. Bob Cherry rolled over in that grasp, struggling.

Bob was a sturdy fellow—as sturdy as any man in the Lower School. But he was nowhere near Coker's weight.

Singh made a good fourth. Vernon-Smith and Redwing were at their heels.

Peter Todd and Squiff, Mark Linley and Tom Brown and five or six other fellows came speeding on behind. The doorway of the Rag disgorged a mob of juniors, all eager for the fray.

—They piled on Coker of the Fifth. He was jerked away from Bob Cherry, fighting valiantly, but overwhelmed by odds.

"Bag him!"

"Rag him!"

"Scrag him!"

"Down with the Fifth!"

"Give him beans!"

"Give him terrific toco!"

"Hurrah!"

"Lemme get at him! Give a fellow a chance!"

"Roll him over!"

"Oh! Ow! Wow! Groogh! Oh crikey! Yurrggh!" came in suffocated accents from Coker of the Fifth.

"Wurrrrgh! Geroff! I'll— Yoop! THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,311.

I'll— Wow! I'll— Crooooh! Oh crikey! Wooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give him some more!"

"Here's his necktie. Let's shove it down his back."

"And his collar after it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Roll him along!"

"Urrrrrghh!" gurgled Coker, as he rolled. The merry Removites rolled him to the end of the passage. There, as a "beak" appeared in the offing, they left him, and trooped back to the Rag, chuckling and chortling.

Coker sprawled and gurgled. Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, came up, and stared down. He gave a sniff.

"Coker! What are you doing there? Get up off the floor immediately!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "You should be ashamed of yourself, Coker! This horseplay in the passage is ridiculous—indecisive, disgraceful—in a senior boy! Pah!"

Quelch, with another contemptuous sniff, walked away. Horace Coker picked himself up. He glared after Quelch. It was rather fortunate that Coker had no breath left, or he might have told Quelch what he thought of him. All that Coker was able to say was "Urrrrrghh!" And he tottered away—a sadder, if not a wiser, Coker!

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Bunter's Moving Job!

**B**UMP! Billy Bunter was seated in the armchair in Study No. 7 when Peter Todd and Tom Dutton came up for prep.

Peter glanced at him. He did not speak. He grabbed the back of the chair and tilted Bunter out.

Then he sat down to prep. Billy Bunter sat on the hearthrug and roared.

"Beast! Wow! Beast!"

"Don't make that row, Bunter, when a fellow's got to work!" said Toddy, chidingly. "Quiet, old bean!"

"If you think you're going to tip me out of that chair—" roared Bunter.

"Sort of!" said Peter.

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter picked himself up and took a seat at the table. His fat face was red with wrath. He glared at Peter with a glare that might have cracked his spectacles. Billy Bunter had hoped that Toddy had forgotten all about that incident of the armchair. Evidently, Toddy hadn't! He was keeping it up!

"I've a jolly good mind to whop you, you beast!" said Bunter. "But you're not fit to soil a fellow's hands on."

"You seem to have soiled them on something," remarked Peter, glancing at them. "Did you swear off soap and water when you came back this term, fatty?"

"I don't want any check!" roared Bunter. "You jolly well know that a fellow must have an armchair. That beast Wharton's keeping mine!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! It's pretty thick to pinch a fellow's armchair, I think. I'd go to Quelch about it, only—only, I won't! Look here, Peter. Do you call this pally?"

"Not at all."

"I've been a pal to you," said Bunter, more in sorrow than in anger. "I've been decent to you in this study, and—"

"I haven't noticed it."

"Well, I've never had it up against you that you're only a poor solicitor's son, and nothing like my class socially," said Bunter. "I haven't had you home at Bunter Court for the hols—a fellow has to draw a line somewhere, of course. But you can't say I haven't treated you civilly here. Now you turn on me in this ungrateful way! I often wonder whether there's such a thing as gratitude in the world at all!" Bunter's tone was quite bitter. "It's just like Spokeshave says—I mean Shakespeare—that is, Shakespeare—how sharper than a thankless child it is, to have a serpent's tooth!"

"Oh crikey! Did Shakespeare say that?" gasped Peter.

"Well, something like it," said Bunter. "You shouldn't be ungrateful, Peter. Look here, you let me have the armchair, as usual, and I'll overlook the whole matter. Now, what are you going to do?"

"Prep!"

"You silly ass, I mean about the armchair!" hooted Bunter.

"I'm going to give you a tip about being civil to a fellow I ask to the study. I'm going to give you the tip every time I see you in the armchair."

"Beast!"

Bunter gave it up and devoted his attention to prep. It was evident that Toddy was in earnest. Every time he found Bunter in his armchair, Bunter was going to get a "tip." And Bunter was already tired of being tipped out of that chair! He disliked it intensely.

It was a serious matter. Bunter had always had the armchair. A fellow liked an armchair to sprawl in, when he was fat and lazy. Frowsting in the study would be a thing of the past if a fellow hadn't an armchair to frowst in. Bunter had to do his prep; but he was thinking more about this pressing problem than prep.

If his long-expected postal order came in the morning it would be all right. He could get down to Courtfield and bag that armchair at old Lazarus'. It was a ripping armchair. It had once adorned the library at General Parkinson's place, and Mr. Lazarus, who attended all the sales in the neighbourhood, had bought it there at the auction, when the hapless general was sold up. It was solid oak, and real leather, and Bunter really wondered how it was that old Lazarus was letting it go so cheap.

One-pound-five was ridiculously cheap for such a bargain in armchairs. Still, there it was. The fat Owl had seen the ticket on the chair, with the price marked on the ticket. Only twenty-five shillings—or rather, the lack thereof—stood between Bunter and an armchair of his own. As good an armchair as Lord Mauleverer had in his luxurious study. If that postal order came—

But Bunter had a sort of feeling that it wouldn't!

How much belief Billy Bunter had in his famous postal order, which was always expected, but never arrived, it would be hard to say. But he did not seem, at all events, sure that it was coming in the morning! He was sure enough of it to borrow the twenty-five-shillings from any fellow who would lend it on the strength of the postal order. But he was not sure enough of it to depend on it himself.

He shook his head sadly over his prep. Often and often he had been disappointed about that postal order. He could not help feeling that he might be disappointed again!

And all the time, he really had an

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armchair of his own, if that beast Wharton would only look at things as Bunter looked at them! Once upon a time he had shared Study No. 1 with Wharton and Nugent. It could not be denied that he had always had the armchair! Wharton or Nugent had hardly ever had it! Practically, it had been Bunter's armchair. It happened to belong to Wharton, that was all. His aunt had bought it for him—a mere matter of money! Bunter could not help feeling that it was rather sordid to haggle about a mere matter of money! If Bunter's aunt had paid for the chair, it would have been Bunter's! Wharton's aunt had paid for it, and from that, Wharton made out that it was his! A mere sordid matter of money! Sordid was the word! Bunter sniffed with scorn.

Prep over, Toddy and Dutton left the study. Bunter remained. A fellow could take a rest in the armchair when that beast had gone.

Bunter took a rest in it! But it was a brief rest. Toddy, it seemed, had not gone far! He stepped in again!

Bump!

Yell!

Toddy walked out again, leaving William George Bunter distributed on the floor!

"Oh lor!" gasped Bunter, as he gathered himself up.

He rubbed the places that had smitten the floor. He did not sit in the armchair again. He was fed-up with that armchair. He had had enough tips from Toddy.

Bunter rolled out at last, and loafed in the passage till he saw the Famous Five go down after prep. Then he rolled into Study No. 1.

There was his armchair—the chair that was practically his—which any right-minded fellow would have admitted to be his! Billy Bunter blinked at it, and then blinked out into the passage. The coast was clear! Billy Bunter made up his mind! He was going to have that armchair! Possession was nine points of the law—and once it was in his possession, even that greedy beast Wharton might make up his mind to do the right thing!

Bunter grasped the armchair, to wheel it to the door and wheel it along to his study. But there was, so to speak, a lion in the path!

It had been a very good armchair when Aunt Amy sent it to her dear nephew. But it had seen some exciting times since. Fellows had sat on its arms, and on its back. It had been rather roughly handled in a "rag" on Wharton's study. The springs were a bit loose—some of the stuffing exuded here and there. One leg was "wonky," and in that corner it required the support of a box. And two of the castors were off. Wharton had always been going to screw on those castors again. So had Nugent. But they were not screwed on yet.

That armchair jerked, but it did not roll. On two castors, it would not wheel out of the study. It jerked. It rocked! But it did not wheel along.

Bunter breathed hard.

"Beasts! Rotters!" grunted Bunter. "Lot of care they take of an armchair a fellow leaves in their study! Thankless lot! Lot they care if it comes to pieces! Rotters! Now I've got to carry it."

There were still difficulties in the way, however. Bunter heaved at the armchair to lift it. It did not lift! Even Bob Cherry might have found trouble in carrying it. It was far beyond Bunter's powers.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He gave up that method. Then he tilted the chair over, with the bright idea of dragging it along by the legs. On its back it ought to slide along. Billy Bunter tilted it on its back and took a firm grasp with both fat hands on one of the front legs—and pulled!

He pulled hard, putting all his beef into it—and Bunter had a lot of beef. It was sheer ill-luck that it was the wonky leg that he had grasped.

The chair did not shift! The leg did! It cracked off under Bunter's terrific tug!

Bunter hardly knew what was happening for a moment. But he knew that he flew, and that he landed on his back, with a bump that shook all the breath out of his body!

"Oooooogh!" gasped Bunter.

He sat up, dizzily—with a chair-leg in his hand. He blinked at the chair-leg, and blinked at the chair.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

Fisher T. Fish, the last of the Remove to go down after prep, passed the doorway. He stared in at Bunter.

"Say, bo', what's that game?" asked Fishy in surprise. "You ragging

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Said Bunter, the Greyfriars Owl:  
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Wharton's study? I'll say you better not let him catch you at it!"

"Ow! Oooooogh! I say, Fishy, lend me a hand—" gasped Bunter.

"I'll watch it!" grinned Fishy.

"I'm not ragging the study, you ass! I'm taking away my armchair! Lend me a hand to carry it to my study!"

"Lend you a hand to pinch Wharton's armchair!" ejaculated Fisher T. Fish.

"It's mine!" yapped Bunter. "Wharton makes out that it's his, because his aunt sent it to him. But it's really mine."

"He—he—he makes out that it's his, because his aunt sent it to him!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "Waal, I swear! If that ain't the elephant's hind-leg! Carry me home to die! It sure is the bee's knee! I'll say it's the grasshopper's whiskers!"

"Will you lend me a hand?" yelled Bunter.

"Not so's you'd notice it!" answered Fisher T. Fish, and he went on his way chortling.

"Beast!"

There was no help for Bunter! And alone, unaided, he could not get away with it. He hurled the chair-leg at the chair, snorted, and rolled forth to seek assistance in the removal of his property.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### Coker Takes a Hand!

"COKER, old chap!"  
Horace Coker of the Fifth turned a deadly glare on the fat face and glimmering spectacles that looked in at his study doorway.

Prep was over in the Fifth; and Potter and Greene had gone along to the games study. Coker had remained, to rub some of the places that had been damaged in his encounter with the Removites after he had tapped Bob Cherry's head for "siding." How many aches and pains Coker had collected in that scrap was beyond computation.

Coker was feeling sore—in body and in mind.

Coker was cross. His temper was irate. It was not improved by the sight of a Remove fag in his doorway. Still less was it ameliorated by "old chap" from Bunter! Coker did not like "old chap" from a fag!

He looked round for a missile.

Bunter rolled in.

"I say, Coker, old fellow! Will you help me?"

Coker's frown relaxed. His grasp, which had fastened on a ruler, relaxed also. Coker could be kind to a fag who knew his place, and was civil and humble. He was the fellow to help such a fag!

"What is it, kid?" he asked. "Don't call me old fellow! It's cheek! But if you're bottled, I might lend you a hand. If it's Latin—What are you grinning at?"

Bunter suppressed his grin! If it had been Latin, he would hardly have come to Coker for help! Coker's Latin made his Form master, Prout, tear his hair!

"W-w-was I grinning?" stammered Bunter. "I—I mean—it isn't Latin, old fellow—I mean, old chap—that is, old bean! I've got to carry something, and it's too heavy for me. You being the strongest chap at Greyfriars—"

Coker relaxed still more. Anything in the way of flattery was welcome to Coker! He took it like milk. Still, Coker was not the fellow to carry things for a measly fag! He had his position as a Fifth Form man to consider. He relaxed—but he shook his head.

"You see, it's like this," said Bunter. "Me being in the Lower Fourth, I think a senior man ought to help me when I'm put upon! I wouldn't ask any senior, but you, Coker—but you being the pluckiest chap in the school, and afraid of nobody—"

Coker smiled genially.

"Well, what's the trouble?" he asked.

"You see, a fellow's got my armchair in his study," said Bunter. "I used to be in Study No. 1 in the Remove, and when I changed out I left my armchair there. I dare say I was an ass, but I was always good-natured. Well, now I want it, Wharton won't let me have it."

"The young rotter!" exclaimed Coker indignantly. "He's a cheeky young sweep, but I should hardly have thought that of him! Have you asked him for it?"

"Yes, rather; and Nugent, too; and they say out flat that I shan't have it! And as Wharton's captain of the Form, you know—"

Coker rose from his chair.

"I'll give him captain of the Form! The young scoundrel, keeping another fellow's things because the fellow's a fat, blinking idiot and can't put up a scrap!" he exclaimed warmly.

"Oh, really, Coker—"

"It's not your fault that you're a podgy, fat-headed bladder of lard!"

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said Coker. "It's absolutely rotten to put on a fellow, just because he's fat and flabby and funky."

Coker was sympathetic. But the way he expressed his sympathy was really hardly gratifying. Billy Bunter's little, round eyes gleamed behind his big, round spectacles. But he suppressed his feelings. It was no time to tell Horace Coker what he thought of him. Coker was evidently going to help him to get "his" armchair out of Wharton's study, and that was the important thing.

"Come on!" said Coker. "The young rascals! If they kick up a row about it, I'll handle them all right! Come on!"

Billy Bunter grinned as he followed Coker from the study.

It was not really because Coker was the strongest and pluckiest fellow at Greyfriars that Bunter had come to him. It was because Coker was the biggest ass at Greyfriars! Bunter, of course, did not mention that.

Coker was big and burly; he was overpowering and overbearing; he had a short way with fags. But Coker's leg could be pulled to any extent. "Soft sawder" worked with Coker like a charm. Any fellow who treated Coker with respect and humility could do anything with Coker. Respect and humility cost nothing, so far as Bunter could see. Humbly appealing to Coker as a powerful protector, as a champion of the oppressed, was the right way to get round Coker. Bunter had worked the oracle, and he very carefully suppressed his private opinion of Coker's manners and Coker's intellect.

Coker marched away to the Remove passage, with a grim brow. Coker was going to see justice done. He was the man for it. Coker was not going to let a fat and flabby young ass be bullied—actually deprived of his own property—not if Coker knew it! Coker was the man to see Bunter righted!

With heavy tread, he marched into the Remove passage, and arrived at Study No. 1. Perhaps his recent experience at the hands of the Famous Five made him all the more eager to treat the young sweeps as they deserved. Perhaps Bunter guessed as much. There was a good deal of artfulness mixed up with the fat obtuseness of William George Bunter.

"Oh, they're not here!" exclaimed Coker, as he stared into the study.

He was not aware that, had "they" been there, Bunter would not have brought him on the warpath. It was necessary for the owner to be absent when Bunter bagged "his" armchair!

"I—I fancy they cut off when they heard you coming, Coker! You know, they're a bit scared of you!" explained Bunter.

"More than a bit, I fancy!" said Coker.

"I mean, a lot! That's the armchair!" said Bunter. "Look how they've treated it—my armchair, you know! Catch me letting them have any of my things again!"

"Disgraceful!" said Coker. "A fellow who uses another fellow's things might take care of them, at least. They're a rowdy pair in this study—a pair of ruffianly young hooligans!"

"The chair's awfully heavy," said Bunter, still on the soft sawder tack. "I don't think anybody but you could carry it, Coker. I remember Gosling was gasping like anything when he brought it up, and Trotter had to help him."

"I fancy I'm a bit more hefty than Gosling," said Coker. "I'll manage it all right."

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Coker grasped the armchair. It was undoubtedly heavy. Coker was hefty; he was almost as strong as a horse. But the weight of that armchair gave even Coker something to think about. Still, Coker was not the man to admit difficulties. Besides, he was going to show off his great strength before this respectful fag who admired him so much.

He heaved up the heavy chair, grasping it manfully. Bunter backed out to give him room. Coker looked as if he might need a good deal of sea-room while he navigated that big armchair.

"Oooogh!" gasped Coker breathlessly, as he heaved.

"Heavy?" said Bunter. "Oh, no! Quite light—to me! Oooogh! Light as a feather! Grooogh! I'll trot it along to your study in a tick! Ooooh!"

Coker lurched through the doorway with the chair. There was enough room for it to pass, but not too much. Coker banged it on the door, and then on the doorpost. Tufts of stuffing dropped out in several places. That chair had had some hard usage in its time—and it was now getting harder!

Bunter, from the passage, blinked at it rather anxiously. He wanted that chair—but he wanted it in one piece. Already it had one leg missing. A few more of those bangs, and the other legs would have been missing, too, and perhaps the back as well, and the arms also! Bunter, naturally, did not want to have to put it together like a jigsaw puzzle.

"I say, careful!" gasped Bunter. Coker paused a moment in the doorway to glare at him.

"What did you say?" he hooted. "I—I said—I—I mean—" stammered Bunter.

He realised that he had touched the wrong chord. Coker was not the man to take directions from a fag.

"If you mean to be cheeky—"

"Oh, nunno! I—I—"

"Well, shut up!"

Bunter shut up.

Coker heaved again. He emerged from the study doorway with the armchair. It had jammed, but he jerked it loose with a powerful wrench. There was a loud cracking sound as he did so. A leg had gone.

"Oh crickey!" gasped Bunter.

"Gerrouit of the way!"

Bunter jumped out of the way—not quite quickly enough. Coker lurched with the armchair, and one of the remaining legs caught Bunter on a fat ear as it swept round.

"Yaroooh!" yelled Bunter. He clapped a fat hand to a fat ear, and roared with anguish. "Oh crumbs! Wow!"

"Don't make that row!" said Coker. "Get out of the way! Do you think I can carry this chair up the passage with a fat idiot sticking in the way?"

Bunter retreated, still clasping a painful ear. Horace Coker lurched again and staggered, and the chair crashed on the wall. More stuffing dropped out, and the back creaked ominously. Coker, gasping for breath, held the armchair pinned against the wall while he took a brief rest. Then, exerting all his beef, he heaved it up and got it fairly over his head and shoulders, upside-down. That was the way to carry the chair if he was equal to the weight! Hefty as he was, Coker doubled under it, looking as if he was trying to shut himself up like a pocket-knife.

But he rallied manfully. He was feeling rather like ancient Atlas with the world on his shoulders.

But Coker was not the man to give in. He had set himself a task, and he was going through with it. And Billy Bunter, eyeing him warily, gave him plenty of sea-room. If Coker crashed, Bunter did not want to be too near when he nose-dived with the armchair! With steady determination, though rather unsteady steps, Coker progressed.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### Catastrophe!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"Great pip!"

Harry Wharton & Co. simply stared.

Coming up to the study, where there were doughnuts for supper, the Famous Five were amazed by the sight that met their eyes in the Remove passage.

Really, they could hardly believe their eyes.

Many startling sights had been seen in the Remove passage at Greyfriars at one time and another. But this really was amazing. A big armchair was progressing along the passage on a pair of very long legs. Coker's head and shoulders and arms—in fact, all Coker's upper works—were hidden inside the chair that was inverted over him for the convenience of carriage. It really looked as if that armchair had sprouted a pair of long legs, and was walking off on them!

No wonder the Removites stared! It was a startling sight!

"My only hat!" gasped Harry Wharton. "What the thump—"

"Our armchair!" ejaculated Nugent.

"And Bunter—"

Billy Bunter had opened the door of Study No. 7, ready for Coker when he reached it—if he ever did! He was standing in the doorway, blinking anxiously along the passage at Coker and his burden.

Harry Wharton & Co. stared, fairly dumbfounded. Who was carrying the chair they could not see; they could not identify Coker by his legs. Somebody was carrying it—carrying it off—and evidently on Bunter's account. And it was the Study No. 1 armchair! Even if the juniors had not recognised their own property, there was the trail of the chair to enlighten them. A detached leg lay in the doorway of the study. Patches and tufts of stuffing lay along the passage like a trail left in a paper-chase. There had long been a few rents and tears in the chair; there were now many more—very many more! Half the stuffing, at least, had been distributed along the passage, and Coker was not half-way to Study No. 7 yet!

How much of that chair would reach its destination at this rate was rather a problem. Quite a lot of it already required to be swept up with a broom.

Coker, grunting, heaved ahead. He progressed slowly—but he progressed! The seat of the chair, resting on the back of his head and his shoulders, felt rather uncomfortable, as well as weighty, as some of the springs had worked loose. They were jabbing Coker most uncomfortably. But he heaved on his way. But for the arrival of the Famous Five on the scene, no doubt Study No. 7 would have been reached by what was left of the armchair, and what was left of Coker.

But that was not to be! After staring at the startling scene for one dumb-founded moment, the juniors raced up the passage after Coker.

"Chuck it!" shouted Wharton. "Put that chair down!"

"Leave that chair alone!" bawled Nugent.





The Sixth-Former at the telephone was hardly six or seven feet away, but Bob Cherry only had a back view of him. Crawling cautiously along on his hands and knees, the Removite got on the farther side of the table. Peering round that barrier, he recognised Loder!

"Drop it!" shouted Bob.

And Bob, the first to reach the moving job, gave the armchair a shove, as a hint to the bearer to drop it.

That did it!

Coker was already at the end of his tether. Left alone he could have struggled on. But that shove did it. Coker staggered helplessly, and shot over. The armchair landed on the floor with a terrific crash.

Crash!

It was a fearful concussion. It was rather marvellous that the floor of the Remove passage stood it. But Greyfriars had been built in the days when builders were builders. The floor stood the shock. But the armchair didn't. It had already had some hard knocks, and had suffered. This was the finish. How many pieces the armchair flew into required careful computation, if anybody wanted to know. But the pieces were numerous, almost innumerable.

Legs and arms, springs and stuffing, strips and patches and pieces, scattered far and wide. There was not likely to be any further dispute about the ownership of that armchair. It had gone west. It was as extinct as the dodo. Its remains were barely recognisable.

"Urrrrgh!" gurgled Coker, as he sprawled amid the ruin. "Wurrgh!"

"Oh lor!" gasped Bunter.

"Coker!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Coker, pinching an armchair!"

"Coker, you cheeky ass!"

"Urrgh!" reiterated Coker. "Urrgh! Oh, my hat! Gurrgh!"

"You've smashed my armchair!" yelled Wharton.

"Wurrgh!" moaned Coker.

"That villain Bunter—"

"I—I say, you fellows, it wasn't me!" gasped Bunter, in alarm. "I—I never had anything to do with it, you know!

I—I never asked Coker to carry that armchair to my study! I—I was just watching him, and—and wondering what he was doing it for!"

"Urrrrgh!" gasped Coker, sitting up dizzily amid the ruins of the armchair, like Marius in the ruins of Carthage. "Wurrgh! I'm hurt! Wow! Something jabbed into my neck! Ow! Something stuck into my ear! Yow! My chin's hurt! Ooooh! My nose is smashed! Oooogh! Wow!"

"What were you carrying my armchair off for?" roared Wharton.

"Eh? It wasn't yours! Wow! It was Bunter's! Ow! At least, he said so! Groogh! Oh, my chin! Ow! My nose! Wow!"

"Bunter, you fat scoundrel!"

"I—I say, you fellows, I—I—"

Coker staggered up. The crash had not damaged him so much as the armchair. He was still in one piece. But he felt as if he wasn't. Coker was hurt. There was no doubt that Coker was hurt. He was hurt all over.

A calm and dispassionate observer might have considered that Coker was hurt enough. But the Removites were rather excited. So far from considering that Coker was hurt enough, they proceeded immediately to hurt him some more.

How Coker got out of the Remove passage alive was rather a mystery. Only five pairs of hands, and only five pairs of boots crashed and clumped on Coker; but they crashed and clumped so hard and so often that they felt like five hundred.

What was left of Coker escaped at last, in a state that might have moved compassion in a heart of stone.

Then the juniors turned their attention to Bunter. That fat and fatuous youth blinked at them in great uneasiness. He had reason to feel uneasy.

"That chair's a goner," said Harry

Wharton. "Not much use thinking of mending that chair."

It was only too true. Like Humpty-Dumpty on the wall, the Study No. 1 armchair had had a great fall. Not all the King's horses, and all the King's men, could have put that armchair together again.

"Um!" said Bob. "It would want some mending!"

"The mendfulness would be terrific!"

"Well, Bunter can have it now," said Harry. "Let him have it!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton started with a chair leg, which landed on Bunter's well-filled waistcoat, and elicited a loud squeak from the occupant thereof. Bunter jumped into Study No. 7.

Five fellows followed him up with their hands full of fragments of armchair. Those fragments rained on Bunter.

He dodged frantically round Study No. 7.

"Ow! Chuck it!" shrieked Bunter.

"We're chucking it, old bean!" said Bob.

"The chuckfulness is terrific!"

"I mean, stop it! I say, you fellows! Wow! Oh crikey! Keep off! Yaroooh!" Bunter hopped and jumped round the study like a plump kangaroo. "I say, old chaps— Stop it, you beasts! I say, you can have the chair! I don't want it! Yarooop! Oh lor! Stoppit! Whooop!"

Whiz, whiz, whiz, whiz!

"Oh crikey! Oh, you rotters! I say, dear old fellows— I say, you beasts! I'll— Whooop! Oh lor!"

That armchair was in many fragments. Bunter got all the fragments. They rained on him. They hailed on

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him. Bunter had wanted that armchair. Now he was getting it. Still he was not satisfied.

By the time Bunter had got all the armchair, and the Famous Five went along to Study No. 1 to deal with the doughnuts, the fat Owl was feeling that life was hardly worth living.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Bob Has the Big Idea!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

It was the following morning in break. Harry Wharton & Co., strolling in the sunny quad, were considering a problem.

The catastrophe of the previous evening was irreparable. The remnants of the Study No. 1 armchair had been consigned to the dustbin. It was needful to replace that article of furniture.

That was the problem. Fellows liked an armchair in the study. Without being slackers, fellows liked to take it easy sometimes. A study without an armchair could not really be considered a well-appointed study.

But, as so often happens to fellows at school, money was tight. Armchairs cost money. There were plenty of armchairs for sale in Courtfield, both new and second-hand. There were half a dozen places, at least, to which a fellow could telephone for an armchair, and it would be delivered the same day. But—and there was the rub! It would have to be paid for. Bunter had remarked scornfully that it was no use going to old Lazarus without the money. But it would have been difficult to think of any merchant to whom it would have been of use to go without the money. Furniture dealers were not in the business merely for their health.

Wharton and Nugent discussed the matter, with sympathetic help from Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. Then Billy Bunter rolled up and butted in.

"It's easy enough," declared Johnny Bull. "Bunter ought to pay for it. Make him pay!"

"The oughtfulness is terrific," assented Hurree Singh. "But the payfulness is a boot on the other leg."

"I say, you fellows—"  
"Bunter's got no money," said Frank. "But what about Coker? Coker's got lots. And it was really Coker that smashed the chair."

Wharton shook his head. "That's right; but Bunter took him in. That silly idiot's born to have his leg pulled, and Bunter pulled it!"  
"And he mightn't have dropped the beastly thing, if I hadn't shoved him!" remarked Bob Cherry. "Of course, I never thought—"

"You never do, old chap," observed Johnny Bull.

"Look here, you ass!"  
"I say, you fellows," hooted Bunter. "this has got to be settled—see? That chair's got to be paid for."

The Famous Five gave the fat Owl attention at last. If Bunter—improbable as it seemed—was ready to pay for the damage he had done, they were not the fellows to discourage him.

"Well, that's all right," said Harry. "But I suppose you're stony, as usual. Don't tell us you're expecting a postal order."

"As a matter of fact, I am expecting a postal order—as it didn't come this morning, after all. But never mind that. That chair's got to be paid for,"

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said Bunter. "I want to know what you're going to do about it?"

"Well, I don't know what it was worth," said Harry. "Say a couple of pounds."

"Not enough," said Bunter.

"Eh?"

"Four or five pounds, I fancy," said Bunter firmly. "It was a bit wonky in places; but it was a good chair—at least, it had been. Armchairs are jolly expensive. Call it five pounds, and I shall be satisfied."

The Famous Five fairly blinked at him. Apparently Bunter was not only ready to pay for the chair, but to pay more than its owner considered its value. This was rather surprising.

"Call it five pounds, if you like," said Harry, laughing. "But—"

"You agree to that?" asked Bunter eagerly.

"Certainly, if you like."

"Done, then," said Bunter. "Mind, I'm letting you off easy. I fancy my chair was worth more than that."

"Eh?"

"But I'm a fellow of my word! I said five pounds, and I stick to it! I'd like you to settle up at once." Bunter held out a fat hand.

"You—you'd like me to settle up at once!" repeated Harry Wharton, like a fellow in a dream.

"Yes! I don't want to ruin you—but short reckonings make long friends, you know. Besides, I can do with the money."

"You—you can do with—with the money!"

"Yes! I've told you that I've been disappointed about a postal order. And I've got to buy an armchair for my study, now that beast Toddy has cut up rusty. Still, if you can't settle the lot to-day—"

"S-s-settle the lot to-day—"

"Yes; if you can't settle the lot to-day, hand over what you can, and I'll wait for the rest," said Bunter generously.

The Famous Five gazed at Bunter speechlessly. It dawned on them that Bunter was not proposing to pay for the armchair. He was proposing to be paid for it! It was quite a different proposition!

"You see, it's all right if you make it twenty-five bob to-day, and I'll wait for the rest," said Bunter cheerily.

"Not too long, of course—still, I'll wait. I must have twenty-five bob to-day. I want that second-hand chair from old Lazarus'. It's such a bargain that it may be gone if a fellow doesn't bag it at once. Let me have twenty-five bob, and I'll wait for the rest."

The fat hand was still extended.

"You—you—you—" gasped Wharton, finding his voice at last. "You benighted porpoise! You burbling bandersnatch—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

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

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I suppose you're going to pay for my armchair, now you've smashed it to pieces!" hooted Bunter. "Why, you've just agreed to five pounds—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You blithering idiot!" roared Wharton. "I thought you were offering to pay for it, you burbling bloater, though I might have known better."

"Me! Well, I like that!" gasped Bunter. "I'm likely to pay for my own armchair that you fellows smashed—I don't think! Look here, Wharton, if you're hard up, I'll let you off easy—but I simply must have twenty-five bob!

Look here, make it twenty-five bob, and I'll call it a go! There! I never was mean!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton drew back his foot. Bunter hopped away in a hurry. It looked as if he were going to get something, though certainly not a cash payment.

But Bob Cherry interposed.

"Hold on," he said. "Leave this to me. I've got an idea. What about that second-hand armchair at Lazarus'? I haven't seen it, but Bunter has. Sure it's a good one, Bunter?"

"Yes, rather! I've sat in it!"

"Worth twenty-five bob?"

"It's worth three or four times as much! I can't make out why old Lazarus is selling it so cheap! But I saw the ticket on it—£1 5s. I can tell you, that armchair will be snapped up if it isn't bagged at once!"

"Gentlemen, chaps, and sportsmen," said Bob, "Bunter's the biggest idiot at Greyfriars or anywhere else—but if there's one thing he does know, it's about armchairs. Trust Bunter to pick out a comfortable armchair. I fancy we can rely absolutely on Bunter's judgment in that line."

"But what—" asked Wharton.

"Make it twenty-five bob!" said Bunter. "I've said that I'll let you off with that—and I mean it! That armchair at old Lazarus' is solid oak, the genuine article, and real leather—splendid leather! It was in the library at Parkinson Place, and old Lazarus bagged it at the auction, when the old bean was sold up. Don't you remember reading in the papers about old Parkinson, whose butler bagged the jewels and was sent to chokey. They got them all back except the pearl necklace that he'd hidden somewhere—worth thousands. Old Parkinson wouldn't have been sold up if they'd got it back—but it was jolly lucky he was, as it happens, as I want that armchair—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I'm sure General Parkinson wouldn't have minded being sold up at all if he'd guessed you wanted his armchair!" said Nugent, with deep sarcasm.

"Oh, I don't know—people are awfully selfish!" said Bunter, shaking his head. "But about that twenty-five bob, Wharton—"

"You frabjous owl—"

"Well, it's pretty clear that it's a jolly good armchair," said Bob Cherry. "Must be pretty decent if it came from Parkinson Place. And it's fearfully cheap at twenty-five bob—"

"Just giving it away, really," said Bunter. "I say, Wharton—"

"Well, this is the big idea," said Bob, with a cheery grin. "You men want a new armchair, now Coker and Bunter between them have done yours in. You'll never get one under twenty-five bob. Bag that one from old Lazarus!"

Bunter jumped.

"I'm going to bag that chair!" he bawled. "I only want Wharton to hand me the money—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you're short of tin, we'll pass round the hat, and you can settle next week," said Bob. "If that armchair's anything like Bunter's description, it's a bargain—and you don't want to miss it. I'll get in and telephone to old Lazarus, if you like, before the bell goes. What?"

"Good egg!" said Wharton and Nugent together.

"I say, you fellows—" shrieked Bunter.



"I've got ten bob," said Harry. "Nugent's got seven-and-six. That leaves seven-and-six to be made up! Look here, Bunter, you fat scoundrel, you ought to stand that, at least."

"Why, you beast—"  
"Well, you three fellows can lend us half-a-crown each, and that will do it," said Wharton. "Nugent and I will buy it between us, and whack it out. Settle next week."

"That's all right!"  
"The rightfulness is terrific!"  
"I'll cut in now—Lazarus will send it along this afternoon, if I get him on the phone this morning," said Bob, and he started for the House at a run.

Billy Bunter blinked after him. Then he blinked at the other four members of the Co. Bunter simmered with wrath.

**THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.**

**On the Phone and Off!**

**B**OB CHERRY walked into the House and made his way—rather warily—to the prefects' room.

That august apartment, sacred to the great men of the Sixth, was not supposed to be entered by juniors unless sent for. Not that any junior desired to enter it—on the other hand, juniors preferred to give it a wide berth, as a rule.

The prefects' room was associated, in the junior mind, with prefects' whoppings. But circumstances alter cases—and Bob was heading for that apartment—with a wary eye open for Sixth Form men. For in the Prefects' Room

Luckily he was given only one wrong number before he was put through. He really had no time to waste, for some Sixth Form man might have walked into the room at any moment. And whether the outcome was dodging a boot, or taking six, neither was attractive. So Bob was glad to get the right number at only the second shot.

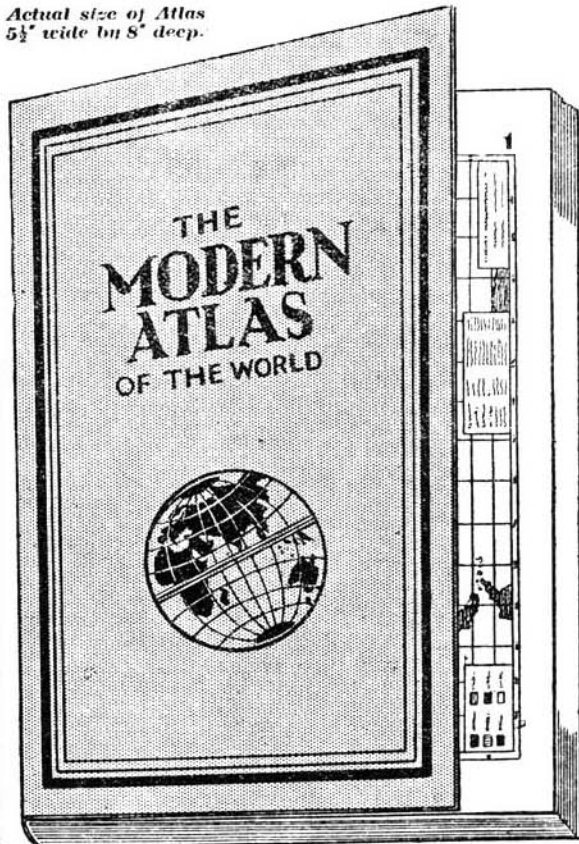
"Mr. Lazarus—"  
"Yeth!" came the smooth and silky voice of Mr. Lazarus. "Vat can I do for you?"

"Bob Cherry, speaking from Greyfriars School—"  
"Goot-morning, Master Sherry! Quite vell zis morning!"

"Oh, topping! I say, Mr. Lazarus, Bunter—you know Bunter—"

"Yeth!" Mr. Lazarus' tone was a

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THE EDITOR.

**THIS WEEK'S COUPON—VALUE 5 POINTS—IS ON PAGE 27.**

"Look here, are you buying that armchair for me?" he bawled.

"Ha, ha! Not quite!"

"You owe me twenty-five bob—"

"I owe you something," agreed Harry Wharton. "We shall be stony for the rest of the week now, and we owe you something for that! Collar him!"

"I say, you fellows—Yarooooh!"

Bump!

"I say—beast—leggo—whoooooop!"

Bump!

"Yow-ow-ow! Help! Fire! Yoooop!"

"Now dribble him round the quad!"

said the captain of the Remove.

"Good egg!"

"Oh erikey!"

Billy Bunter fled for his fat life. Four cheery juniors followed on his trail. Break that morning was quite a hectic time for Bunter! For once, the Owl of the Remove was glad when the bell rang for third school.

there was a telephone, and Bob wanted a phone. He would have dropped into his Form master's study had Quelch been out. But Quelch was in. So it was the prefects' room telephone or nothing.

Naturally, even great men of the Sixth liked a walk abroad on a fine sunny spring morning. Bob thought it probable that the room was deserted in break—and he was right, it was. He slipped in and shut the door after him. Had Wingate or Gwynne or Sykes spotted him at the instrument, he might have had to dodge the lunge of a boot. Had Loder or Walker or Carne spotted him, he might have had to bend over and take "six." It largely depended on what sort of a fellow the prefect happened to be! Luckily, none of those obnoxious personages were at hand, and Bob lost no time in ringing up Mr. Lazarus' number in Courtfield.

little less amiable. Apparently he did not remember Billy Bunter with affection.

"Bunter tells us you've got a second-hand armchair for sale; a really ripping armchair, Bunter says—"

"I have theveral, Master Sherry—"

"The one I mean came from Parkinson Place. Bunter says you got it at the auction there. You remember the Parkinsons, where the butler pinched the stuff. It was in the papers a few weeks ago."

"Yeth! I have that armchair here, Master Sherry! It is a thplendid armchair; tholid oak legs, tholid leather cover—"

"That's the one! Well, we want it. Not sold yet?"

"No; it is not thold yet, Master Sherry."

"Good egg! I'm really ordering it

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for Wharton and Nugent; they're going to whack it out! They want it at once. There's been a bit of an accident to the armchair in their study—"

Bob heard a sound like a chuckle over the wires. Mr. Lazarus was well acquainted with the Famous Five of Greyfriars, who often dropped into his establishment to buy things. He did not appear surprised to hear that there had been accidents in Study No. 1.

"I understand, Master Sherry. Accidents will happen!" said Mr. Lazarus. "I think your friends will like that armchair, if you do not think it too expensive."

"Oh, that's all right! They're whacking it out," said Bob. "Can you send it along to-day?"

"Yeath, with pleasure."

"Good! I'll tell them, then. We shall be in class, of course; but you can leave it, and one of us will run down on a bike and pay for it. We shall be in Courtfield to-morrow, some of us."

"Quite tho," said Mr. Lazarus.

"But—"

"That's all right, then; I've got to get off. I'm not supposed to be using this phone."

Another chuckle on the wires.

"Yeath, yeath, but I thuppose you know the price—"

"The what? Oh, the price! Yes, that's all right; Bunter told us. I'll tell Wharton it's coming this afternoon. I— Oh, my hat! Good-bye!"

Bob put up the receiver hurriedly as the door of the prefects' room opened. He had had to say a rather abrupt good-bye to Mr. Lazarus.

Close by the telephone was a high-backed chair. With wonderful speed Bob replaced the receiver and dropped behind that high back on his knees. A second later Loder of the Sixth walked in.

Bob Cherry, crouching in cover, could not see him, but he knew that it must be a Sixth Form prefect who had walked in. It was judicious to lie low till he walked out again.

Loder crossed over to the telephone. Standing at the instrument, he was hardly six or seven feet from Bob. But his back was turned, and Bob crawled along cautiously on hands and knees, and got on the farther side of the table. He peered round that barrier and recognised Loder, though he had only a back view of him. He was glad that he had hunted cover. The bully of the Sixth was absolutely certain to give him "six" if he found him there; where, as he had to admit, he had no business to be.

Loder had taken up the receiver and given a number. Bob had ten feet of open space to cover to reach the door. Loder's back was partly turned to him, and if he did not look round— The door had been left open; the way of escape was clear, if Bob could only reach it unseen.

As silently as a Red Indian stealing on his prey Bob crept across from the table to the doorway.

His heart beat fast as he left his cover.

Loder, unluckily, had not got his number yet, and was not talking into the phone. Bob heard him grunt. More likely than not the brute would be looking round, and if Bob was still in the room he would be spotted as soon as Loder turned his head. It was neck or nothing; and Bob, throwing caution to the winds, plunged headlong at the doorway.

"What the thunder—" He heard Loder's startled voice as he darted past the open door. "Who's that?"

Loder had not seen him. But he had heard him! The receiver clumped down, and the Sixth-Former whipped across to the door. Obviously he guessed that someone who had no right in that room had been hidden there.

Hardly a second was needed for Loder to come round the open door and see who it was. But hardly a second was needed for Bob to grab the door-handle and drag the door shut after him.

Slam!

"My hat!" ejaculated Loder. "Who —" He grabbed the handle of the door to tear it open.

But there was no time for Bob to scud down the passage and escape unseen. So he held on to the door-handle desperately.

Loder dragged at it. Bob held it shut.

"Let go that door!" roared Loder. "My hat! I'll teach you to play tricks in this room. Let go!"

By main force Loder turned the handle that Bob was holding outside, and dragged on the door with all his strength.

Bob could not have resisted that pull had he tried. But he did not try. He let go suddenly.

The door flew! Loder flew! Apparently he had not expected such a sudden surrender. Anyhow, it took him by surprise. The door hit Loder's nose as it flew open, and Loder flew backwards with a fearful yell. There was the sound of a heavy bump in the prefects' room. Loder had sat down.

Bob did not wait for him to get up again. A flash of lightning had nothing on Bob Cherry as he streaked down the passage. He vanished round the first corner like a ghost at cock-crow.

Loder staggered up. He clasped his nose with both hands as he stared out of the doorway with rage and vengeance in his eye. But he beheld only an empty passage. Fleeing footsteps came faintly to his ears from afar; but only for a moment. Loder never knew who had been in the prefects' room. Bob Cherry arrived in the quad in a rather breathless state, where he was in time to join in dribbling Billy Bunter till the bell rang for third school.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

### Whose Bargain?

"BARGAIN! What?"

"I should jolly well say so!"

"Fine!"

"Ripping!"

"The ripfulness is truly terrific!"

It was quite a chorus of admiration. The fellows in Study No. 1 gazed at the newly arrived armchair, greatly impressed and greatly pleased.

During afternoon class, Harry Wharton & Co. had been thinking as much about that purchase as about the instruction they received from Mr. Quelch. From Billy Bunter's enthusiastic description they fully expected that that armchair would be a little out of the common. After class, they found that it had been duly delivered and installed in Study No. 1 in the Remove. Trotter, the House page, told them so, and handed over an envelope left by the deliverers which contained Mr. Lazarus' little bill. Wharton slipped the envelope into his pocket; he was more interested in the armchair than in the bill. The chums of the Remove went up to the study at once to see the armchair. And they were really surprised when they saw it.

As Bob had said, Bunter was to be relied on in the matter of armchairs. His opinion in such matters was that

of an expert. But all anticipations fell short of the reality. For it really was a tiptop armchair. The wooden part of it was solid old oak; such oak as was not often seen nowadays. The covering was of leather; not what modern makers call leather, but real, solid leather of the most expensive kind. It was in excellent condition; the springs were good and in perfect order. They sat in it in turn to test it, and found it so. The arms and the seat were thoroughly well padded.

It was amazing that Mr. Lazarus, a good business man, had sold that chair for £1 5s. Originally it could not possibly have cost less than twenty-five pounds; probably a good deal more. And it looked almost as good as new. Still, there it was. The Owl of the Remove had seen the ticket on the chair, when he took a rest in it in Mr. Lazarus' shop, and he had told them the price—one pound five! That it was a bargain at the price—an immense bargain—could not be questioned. It was a tremendous bargain; an amazing bargain! It was such a terrific bargain that the juniors almost wondered whether there was a "catch" in it somewhere.

"Well, this takes the cake!" said Nugent. "This is as good as Mauly's special armchair that came from Maulverer Towers."

"Quite!" agreed Wharton.

"The quietfulness is preposterous!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The luckfulness of my esteemed chums is terrific!"

"Blessed if I'm not glad that Coker busted the old one now," said Harry. "This is worth the money and the old chair thrown in, and more."

"Yes, rather! Lucky I phoned for it before it was bagged by somebody else—what?" asked Bob, with considerable satisfaction.

"Good man! Can't understand why it wasn't bagged sooner, though," said the captain of the Remove. "I'm not a judge of furniture, I suppose, but I know that chair's worth over a tenner!"

"Looks like it to me," said Johnny Bull. "But I suppose old Lazarus knows his business. He must have got it frightfully cheap at the auction at General Parkinson's."

"Well, dealers don't give much at auctions, you know," said Nugent.

"Still, I should have thought that a chair like that would fetch something. We're jolly lucky to bag it."

"Yes, rather!"

The Bounder looked in.

"That the jolly old chair?" he asked.

"That's it, Smithy! Like it?"

"Topping! What are you giving for it?"

The Bounder was evidently surprised at that chair. It looked like an article that few fellows in the Remove could have afforded to buy—none, in fact, but Maulverer or Newland or Smithy himself.

"Twenty-five bob," answered Wharton.

"Gammon!"

"Honest Injun! Bargain, what?"

"Bargain—if true! What are you trying to pull my leg for?" asked Smithy.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"It's a fact, old bean! Hallo, Toddy, look at our new chair! What do you think of that for twenty-five bob?"

"Honest Injun?" asked Toddy, staring. "Well, my hat! Old Lazarus has been making you a present!"

And the same opinion was expressed by Mark Linley and Tom Brown and Hazeldene and several more fellows who came in to look at the armchair. The news of that wonderful bargain spread





As Horace Coker entered Study No. 1, a hassock and a leather cushion swiped together. The hassock landed on Coker's ear and the cushion crashed on the back of his neck. Coker staggered and lurched. "Oh erikey!" he gasped. "What—who—oh—ow—wow!"

up the Remove passage. Fisher T. Fish came in, and fairly jumped as he saw it. "Say, boy, you cinched that for twenty-five bob!" exclaimed Fishy, in great excitement. "Why, I guess I'll take it off your hands if you want to part! Spot cash!"

"Bow-wow!"  
 "Bo'. I calculate I'll make it thirty bob! Is it a trade at thirty bob?"  
 "That means that Fishy thinks it's worth thirty pounds," remarked the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "I say, you fellows—"  
 "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Roll in, and feast your eyes on the big bargain, Bunter! You know something about armchairs, old fat man!"

Billy Bunter rolled in. He blinked at the Parkinson chair, and blinked at its happy owners.

"That's the chair," he said. "I know it's all right—I sat in it for half an hour, as I told you fellows—"

"Some chair!" said Smithy. "If it stood that—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "Yah! Now, you fellows," said Bunter firmly, "that's my chair! I'm not going to say any more about paying for my chair that was smashed! Wharton makes out that it was his chair, and I disdain to haggle about it. Let that go! But this chair is mine—I spotted it—I told you fellows about it—and if you cut in and bag it, you're rotters!"

"You fat idiot!" said Harry. "The chair was up for sale, and you could have bought it if you'd liked. As you didn't, do you think we were bound to stand by and see it snapped up by somebody else?"

"That's all very well," said Bunter.

"But I was going to buy it! I'm expecting a postal order—"

"Ring off!"  
 "I can raise the money," said Bunter, with dignity. "Leave that to me! My pater will stand it when I tell him what a bargain. You fellows would never enough! That chair's worth pounds and pounds, and you know it. I could sell it for twice as much—three times as much! I saw it first—I spotted it as a bargain. You fellows would never have heard of it if I hadn't told you! And I've got the first claim on that chair! Don't be rotters!"

The Famous Five were silent.  
 As a matter of fact, there was something in what Bunter said. If he was prepared to pay for the chair, he had a claim.

"You footling frump!" said Bob Cherry. "That's all very well, if you could pay for it! But you can't! Think Lazarus is going to leave it here for nothing till your postal order comes?"

"I can fix that!" said Bunter calmly. "There's men in the Sixth would give five pounds, and glad, for that chair. There isn't an armchair in the Sixth as good as that, and some of them cost a tenner. You tell Lazarus that I'm buying it, and if I don't pay for it by to-morrow I'll leave it to you. You weren't going to pay for it till to-morrow. So that's all right!" Bunter blinked round at the crowd of fellows in the study. "Ain't that fair? Ain't it mine if I pay for it?"

Some of the fellows grinned.  
 Wharton and Nugent coloured with vexation.  
 They were unwilling to part with that wonderful bargain in armchairs! But cricket was cricket! Bunter had spotted it; Bunter had told them about it;

Bunter had announced his intention of buying it. If he was prepared to buy it, there did seem something rather rotten in cutting in and forestalling him. It was a wrench, but they made up their minds to it.

"We're responsible to Lazarus," said Harry at last. "The chair's got to be paid for. If you've got the money—"

"I shall pay for it to-morrow. I've only got to phone my pater and tell him what a bargain it is!"

"I guess that's a cinch!" grinned Fisher T. Fish. "I surely opine that that fat clam has got you guys just where he wants you!"

"Very well," said Harry Wharton quietly, after a glance at Nugent, who nodded. "The chair's yours, Bunter! Here's the bill!"

He took the envelope from his pocket and tossed it to Bunter.

The fat Owl caught it, and grinned.  
 He slit the envelope with a fat thumb, and took out Mr. Lazarus' bill. He glanced at it carelessly—he knew the price of that armchair. But suddenly his expression changed. He blinked at the bill, and he blinked again—and yet again. All eyes were turned on him. The amazed horror in Bunter's fat face caused general surprise.

"Oh lor!" gasped Bunter.  
 "What on earth's the matter, you fat owl?" asked Toddy.

"Oh erikey!"  
 Evidently the bill had startled Bunter—why, the juniors could not guess. They crowded round and looked at it. Then they knew:

"To one Solid Leather Armchair  
 £15 0 0."

(Continued on page 16.)  
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(Continued from page 13.)

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### Not Bunter's!

"FIFTEEN pounds!"  
 "Oh, great Scott!"  
 "Fif-fif-fif-fif-fifteen quids!"  
 Phew!"

"Fifteen pounds!" said Bob Cherry blankly. "But—but Bunter said it was one-pound-five—he saw the ticket on it!"  
 "Oh lor!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Bounder. "That blind owl—he read the ticket wrong! I jolly well knew you couldn't buy an armchair like that for twenty-five bob! It's fifteen pounds—and worth it—or pretty nearly."

"Oh, my hat!"  
 "I—I say, it's a swindle!" gasped Bunter. "I—I saw the ticket; I—I thought it said one pound five shillings."

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "You potty owl!" roared Bob Cherry. "I—I—I thought—" stuttered Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 There was a roar in the study. It had been an absolute mystery why Mr. Lazarus was selling that valuable article for £1 5s. The mystery was solved now—he wasn't!

Evidently the fat Owl had misread the ticket on the chair in Mr. Lazarus' dusty second-hand shop. The price stated on the ticket which the short-sighted Owl had read as £1 5s. was £15.

The whole thing was explained now. It was a £15 chair that stood in Study No. 1. Probably it was worth as much to any fellow that could afford it. Remove fellows couldn't! Even the wealthy Bounder did not throw about money like that in furnishing his study. To fellows who counted their cash mostly in shillings £15 was a rather stupendous sum.

"Well, my hat!" said Nugent at last, as the roar of laughter died away. "That blinking owl—of course, he got it wrong!"

"Does he ever get anything right?" grunted Johnny Bull.

"No wonder old Lazarus asked me on the phone if we knew the price!" gasped Bob Cherry. "It would have come out if that fathead Loder hadn't interrupted me on the telephone. Phew! Fifteen quids!"

"Well, you fellows have had a lucky escape," said Squiff. "It's a tip-top chair; but fifteen pounds—my hat!"

Wharton and Nugent nodded simultaneously. It had been a wrench to part with the chair when Bunter claimed it. But they were rather glad of it now. They had no prospect of raising such a sum as fifteen pounds—even if they had been prepared to expend so much on an armchair, which certainly they were not. It was up to Bunter now, and the chums of Study No. 1 were heartily glad that it was not up to them.

"Thank goodness we're not landed  
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with it!" said Frank, with a deep breath. "It was that fat fool's mistake, but we should have had to pay for it somehow if it was ours."

"Goodness knows how!" said Harry. "But, of course, we should have had to manage it somehow, after ordering it to be delivered. Thank goodness we're shut of it!"

"Narrow escape!" grinned Bob.

"The narrowfulness is terrific!"

"How long do you think it will take old Lazarus to get fifteen quids out of Bunter?" chuckled the Bounder.

Bunter jumped.

"I—I say, you fellows—" he gasped.

"Well, Bunter will have to manage it, as it's his chair," said Harry.

"Lazarus isn't likely to take it back after delivering it—that's not business—and I fancy he will be a long time selling it at fifteen pounds, if he did. It's up to Bunter, as he bought it."

"I—I—I haven't bought it!" gasped Bunter.

"What?"

"I say, you fellows, if you think you're going to land that chair on me—"

"Land it on you!" gasped Wharton.

"Why, you fat villain, it's yours. You claimed it, and we gave in. It's yours!"

"Tain't mine!" roared Bunter.

"Don't you get making out that that chair's mine! I'll have nothing to do with it—absolutely nothing!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Mean, I call it," said Bunter hotly

—"making out that it's mine!"

"It is yours!" shrieked Nugent.

"It's jolly well not! Who bought it?" demanded Bunter. "Who telephoned for it? Who was it delivered to? I ask you!"

The chums of the Remove gazed speechlessly at Bunter. He had claimed the chair—claimed it as his right! They had reluctantly conceded the point! But the discovery of the real price of the article had evidently made a change! He did not want it now! Very much indeed he did not want it! And he was determined not to have it!

"Catch me buying a chair for fifteen pounds!" gasped Bunter. "Catch me letting you land it on me! Mean, I call it! Disgusting!"

"You fat rascal!" roared Wharton. "You grabbed it, and it's yours! And if you don't pay Lazarus, he will send in the bill to Quelch, and it will go to your father!"

"It jolly well won't!" retorted Bunter. "That chair's yours! In my kind-hearted way, always doing fellows good turns, I told you about that chair! I may have made a mistake in the price. You know I'm short-sighted, and that shop is as dark as a cellar! But if you make out that that's not your chair, Wharton—"

"It's not, you fat sweep!"

"Well, as Cherry telephoned for it, and was such a silly idiot as not to ask the price, leave it to him!" said Bunter.

"It's between you, anyhow. You can leave me out of it! You're not landing your bad bargains on me, I can jolly well tell you!"

"Why, you—you—you—"

"It's no good gurgling at a fellow! I'm not going to be done! Check, I call it! And mean, too! And if old Lazarus sends the bill to Quelch, it won't go to my people—it will go to yours! Who ordered the chair, I'd like to know? I shall certainly tell Quelch the truth if he asks me! You can't expect me to do otherwise."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Bounder.

Billy Bunter turned to the door, having made it clear that that chair, after all, was not his!

The Famous Five gazed at him. If the fat Owl kept to that, there was no doubt that Wharton and Nugent were responsible. And Bunter, evidently, was going to keep to that. Somebody's "people" had to be "touched" for fifteen pounds to pay for that unfortunate chair.

Billy Bunter was determined that the bill, whithersoever it went, should not go to Bunter Villa! It would have mopped up his pocket-money in advance for whole terms! He turned in the doorway and gave the chums of the Remove an indignant blink.

"I'm sorry for you if you're landed with a thing you can't afford!" he said. "Take my advice and be more careful another time! Ask the price of a thing before you buy it! Have a little gumption! But if you're careless and thrifless and silly, and all that, don't try to land it on another fellow! That's mean!"

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

Only the Famous Five did not join in the laugh. To them the matter was rather too serious for laughing. They gazed at Bunter—they glared at him—and as he rolled through the doorway they jumped at him! As if moved by the same spring they jumped at Bunter, and collared him all at once.

"Whooooop!" roared Bunter, as he smote the passage floor.

"Bump him!"

"Jump on him!"

"Burst him!"

"Scrag him!"

"Scrag him terrifically!"

Billy Bunter rolled and roared. The chums of the Remove were rather excited—why, Bunter did not know. But they were, and they were wrathful—and they made that fact clear unto William George Bunter.

They bumped him, they rolled him, they smacked him! Other fellows stood round, roaring with laughter. Bunter roared—though not with laughter.

Bunter was a gurgling, gasping heap when he was finally kicked into his study and left there. He had barely enough energy to crawl to the Study No. 7 armchair and plump breathlessly into it. There he sprawled and gurgled. But even then Bunter's troubles were not over. Peter Todd came in! He grasped the back of the chair at once and tilted it!

Bump! How!

Bunter was distributed on the hearth-rug. He remained there. There was no breath left in the fat Owl, and he lay and gurgled.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

### For Sale!

THE following day there were some long faces in the Greyfriars Remove.

Two faces—Wharton's and Nugent's—were very long. Three—Bob Cherry's and Johnny Bull's and Hurree Singh's—were not so long, but long! For all the Co. felt this calamity.

Other fellows in the Remove, on the other hand, smiled a good deal. Fellows who were not responsible for the fifteen pounds, or any part of it, found something entertaining in what had happened.

Bunter was a little worried. He was haunted by a fear that those beasts might try to make out, after all, that it was his armchair!



The bare possibility of a Bill for fifteen pounds going to Mr. Bunter, at Bunter Villa, Surrey, made the fat Owl shiver. Twenty-five shillings for an article of furniture worth pounds and pounds would have been a different matter. But fifteen pounds for a second-hand armchair! Mr. Bunter would have been a surprised gentleman—and an angry one—and if he had met the bill there could hardly be any doubt that he would have stopped his hopeful son's allowance till the amount was liquidated. Which would not have suited Billy Bunter at all!

The fat Owl's fears were relieved, however. Study No. 1 had given him up as a bad job! Bunter, having disclaimed all responsibility and ownership, Study No. 1 had to take it over. And they took it, and faced the music.

Relieved on that score, Billy Bunter began to see the amusing side of the affair, and he grinned over it a good deal.

Wharton and Nugent, who had fifteen pounds to meet, did not feel like grinning. The rest of the Co. were very serious about it.

The first step was to ascertain on what terms Mr. Lazarus would call it off. He could not very well be asked to wash the bargain out. He had sold the thing, fair and square—it belonged to the buyers.

Mr. Lazarus was quite a nice man, but he was a business man. But he bought as well as sold; and after third school, the next day, Wharton put it to him. Mr. Quelch, having gone for a walk, there was a telephone at Wharton's disposal, and he got Mr. Lazarus on the phone, and asked him

about it. What would he give for that armchair if he repurchased it.

"Thix pounds!" said Mr. Lazarus.

Wharton almost dropped the receiver.

"What?" he ejaculated. "Which?"

"Thix pounds," said Mr. Lazarus gently. "Because you are a good customer, you know, Master Wharton."

Wharton wondered what he would have given a bad customer!

"Buying and thelling are quite different thort of things," Mr. Lazarus further explained, unnecessarily. Wharton had already guessed that one!

"Oh! Ah! Um!" said Harry.

"You don't mean sixteen pounds?"

There was a gentle chuckle on the wires.

"No, thir, I thaid thix, and I mean thix!" said Mr. Lazarus. "You thee, I gave five at the auction at General

(Continued on next page.)

**I**T is very nice to get letters of appreciation from readers of the MAGNET about these notes on football. Sometimes, however, I get drawn over the coals by my correspondents also. Believe me, I don't mind that. While I try to put some ideas of my own into the notes, it is also part of my scheme to get my readers thinking about the game, and I like to get letters which show they are thinking.

A Midland reader considers that, in some observations about heading the ball, and about players who head the ball well, I was guilty of a real error of judgment in not mentioning Billy Walker, the inside-left of Aston Villa. In the opinion of this particular reader Walker is the best header of the ball playing in the first-class game to-day.

*Let me say at once that if I had been trying to give a complete list of the "good headers" of football, I should certainly have included Walker in that list. But I do not think that, even after the most careful consideration, I should have given Walker the credit of being the most capable header of all. Perhaps he is. My reader friend is entitled to his own opinion.*

There is just one point which arises from such a letter, however. My correspondent says that he is an enthusiastic supporter of the Villa, and that as he plays his football games in the mornings, he is able to attend all the games played by the Villa on Saturday afternoons. Consider for a moment, however, what this means. It means that my reader friend sees the players of Aston Villa—including Walker—many times in the course of the season. His attention is focused on these Villa players, too. He knows their strong points. On the other hand he only sees the players of other teams once—or possibly twice at the outside—per season. Hence he has not the same personal knowledge of the qualifications of players of other clubs as he possesses of the players of the Villa. Incidentally, that is where amateur selectors of International teams often go wrong. They think mostly of the merits of the players of the particular clubs which they follow.

The foregoing, of course, is not criticism of Walker, the Villa man. He has been a great player for the side; a great captain, too, and I am quite certain that during the last thirteen years—he played for them in the Cup Final of 1920—he has done a great deal to keep the name of the Villa high in the football world.

**A TRICK WORTH WHILE!**

**W**HILE we are talking of the Villa, I want to pass on, because there is a good point in it, the story of a very smart goal which my friend saw scored by Tom

**SOCCER QUERIES ANSWERED HERE!**

**"LINESMAN CALLING!"**



"Linesman," who is an expert on Soccer, will be pleased to hear from readers who have problems to solve. Write to him, c/o The MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Waring, the Villa centre-forward, in a reserve match. Waring had the ball in the penalty area, but the close attentions of one of the full-backs prevented him from getting in a shot. Waring was gradually forced to a position near the goal line, whence, of course, the angle was so narrow that he could not hope to score. There was no colleague to whom Waring could pass the ball. Looking up, however, he saw a full-back standing near to goal, and so he deliberately—as my reader friend thinks—kicked the ball against the legs of the full-back in such a way that it cannoned into the net.

My friend was rather upset because Waring was not credited with this goal; because it was said that the full-back had scored against his own 'keeper. I have gone into this question of scoring against one's own side before, and I entirely agree that if Waring did deliberately scheme to make the full-back put the ball into the net, then Waring should have been credited with the goal, not the full-back debited with it.

*After all, the clever footballer does look for openings of this kind. The wing man who has the ball near the line, and finds it impossible to centre, can often gain a valuable corner-kick for his side by kicking the ball against the legs of the nearby opponent. This is a trick well worth while, and, of course, quite legitimate.*

**THE LAST INTERNATIONAL MATCH!**

**N**OW we can return to the International subject, which I mentioned earlier. On "All Fool's" day there will be played at Hampden Park, Glasgow, the last International match of the season—and the most important one. It is between the

chosen of Scotland and England. I hope to be there, because there is no football crowd quite so interesting as that which usually turns up in Glasgow to see the International match against England. The bagpipes blare forth; there is tremendous enthusiasm among the spectators, and as an English player once said to me: "I have never heard so much noise connected with any match, as there was connected with the game in which I played for England against Scotland." They do consider these International games most important North of the Tweed, and it is quite likely that the crowd for April First will touch 120,000.

This last International match of the season has one feature of special importance.

*England must win in order to tie with Wales for the International championship of the season. If Scotland beat England, or the game is drawn, then Wales will be International champions, undisputed, for the first time since 1927-8. Scotland can't win the International championship of the season no matter what the result, but this doesn't mean that the game against England will be treated any less seriously.*

Scotland are well ahead of England in victories in these International games with 25 wins against England's 17 victories. Actually, however, it is Scotland's turn to win this time. The games of the last few years have run a peculiar course, a victory first to Scotland and then to England in the alternate years since 1929.

**"LINESMAN."**

Parkinson's. I ought to they five to you, but I am thaying this."

"Oh! Ah! Um!" repeated Wharton. "No doubt I shall thee you to-day," said Mr. Lazarus. "I thuppose you have then the bill—"

"Oh! Yes! Quite." "I underthantand that thereval of you are clubbing together to buy that chair," said Mr. Lazarus. "I trutht you, Master Wharton—I don't mind waiting for the money till Thaturday. That is all therene."

"Thanks very much, Mr. Lazarus," said Wharton quite gratefully. It was something to have time to think about that calamitous matter.

"Not at all, thir."

Wharton rang off, and left the study, luckily before Mr. Quelch came in from his walk. His face was very grave, as he rejoined his friends in the quad.

"Well?" said four fellows with one voice.

"Lazarus is ready to buy the jolly old chair back," said Harry, with a dismal grimace.

"Good!" said Nugent.

"Well, not awfully good—he will give us six pounds for it—"

"Oh, holy smoke!"

"That will leave nine to pay for nothing," said Harry. "If we've got to raise nine for nothing, we may as well have a shot at trying to raise fifteen for the blessed chair."

"Well, yes,—but—" Frank made a grimace. Either nine or fifteen pounds seemed much the same—both out of the range of practical politics.

"Dash it all, that's rather thick!" said Johnny Bull, frowning. "The old bean might go a bit easier than that."

"Well, I don't know," said Harry. "He says he gave five at the Parkinson auction—so it's rather decent of him to offer six. You see, they have a lot of overhead charges in shops—rent, rates, taxes, wages—all sorts of things—the profits aren't very large when that's all come out of them. The fact is, as we bought the dashed thing, it's up to us. Lazarus will wait till Saturday for the tin—that gives us a chance—"

"We'll all help—all we can!" said Bob.

"Yes, rather," said Johnny Bull, "But—"

"The butfulness is terrific!" murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur sadly.

There was undoubtedly a big "but." Fifteen pounds was a large sum. It really seemed hopeless to think of raising it.

"I—I suppose my uncle would pay up, if the bill went to him!" said Harry slowly. "But—"

"I suppose my pater would!" said Nugent. "But—"

"It's Bunter's bizney!" growled Johnny Bull. "He made the mistake about the price, and he claimed the chair as his—"

"No good thinking of Bunter! We've got to handle it somehow," said the captain of the Remove. "May find a way out yet! After all, it's a splendid chair—really worth the money, if—if a fellow had it—"

"If!" murmured Nugent.

"A Sixth Form man might like it," said Harry hopefully. "Some of the seniors have plenty of money. We can let the fellows know that we've got the chair for sale, anyhow, and we may get some offers before Saturday."

And that was that! The Famous Five told all the Remove, and all the Fourth, and all the Shell, and the news spread in the Fifth and the Sixth. Unluckily, instead of bringing forward a purchaser for the fifteen-pound chair, all it seemed

to bring forth was endless mirth and merriment.

Greyfriars generally seemed to think it funny that fellows had brought a chair they couldn't pay for, and wanted to sell it again to raise the money. They thought it funny that fellows had supposed that £15-0-0 was £1-5-0. The chums of the Remove laboriously explained that they hadn't made that mistake—Bunter had. Fellows asked them if they weren't howling asses, and silly idiots, to trust a short-sighted Owl, well known to be the biggest fool at Greyfriars, in such a matter. They had to admit that they were.

It was soon quite a joke. Nugent minor and Gatty and Myers, of the Second Form, came along to Study No. 1 at tea-time, to make an offer for the chair. They offered eightpence; and fled yelling from a shower of books and lumps of coal. Tubb of the Third stopped Wharton in the quad, to ask him if he would take a bob for it—sixpence down, and sixpence next week. Tubb of the Third was left roaring and struggling to extract his cap from the back of his collar. Skinner & Co, of the Remove, enjoyed the jests immensely. Skinner inquired whether Study No. 1 was dealing in old clothes, as well as second-hand furniture. Snoop wanted to know whether they had the Head's permission to open a second-hand shop in the school. There was some satisfaction in banging Skinner's and Snoop's heads together. But not a lot.

When Wharton and Nugent came up to Study No. 1 for prep that evening, they found a large placard pinned on the door of their study.

"HARRY WHARTON & CO.,  
Second-Hand Furniture Dealers,  
Rags, Bones, Bottles, and Jars!"

They glared at it. A group of Removites in the passage were chuckling, seemingly amused.

"That's Skinner!" growled Wharton.

"Bother him!" grunted Nugent.

"This isn't funny."

"Ha, ha, ha!" came along the passage.

Some of the Remove fellows seemed to think it funny.

The placard was torn down, and torn up. It was consigned to the wastepaper-basket in small pieces. Wharton and Nugent sat down to prep.

A sing-song voice came along the passage.

"Rags, bones!" chanted Skinner.

"Any rags, bones, bottles, or jars!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton rose, and picked up a ruler. He whipped into the passage. Skinner, taking the alarm, whipped into his study—not quite swiftly enough. The ruler landed as he whipped in.

There was a fiendish yell from Skinner as he slammed his door. Wharton returned to Study No. 1 slightly comforted. Skinner was not funny again that evening.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### Up to Coker!

**H**ORACE COKER, of the Fifth Form, stood at his study window, and looked out into the quad, with a thoughtful expression on his rugged face.

Another day had dawned on Greyfriars School; and followed the usual tenor of its way. Classes were over once more; and it was tea-time. Coker, standing at his study window, was looking down at two juniors coming towards the House—Wharton and Nugent of the Remove.

They had rather clouded faces.

Coker knew why.

In Study No. 1 in the Remove was the armchair that had once belonged to General Parkinson, and now belonged to Wharton and Nugent—still unsold. It had been for sale a couple of days—but there were no takers. Everybody had heard all about it.

It was true that there had been an offer, Lord Mauleverer, in the kindness of his heart, had made the offer. Mauly had lots of money—more money than sense, according to some fellows. But as the chums of the Remove knew that his kind-hearted lordship was only making the offer to get them out of a scrape, they had declined it—with thanks, but firmly. They did not see, so far, any way out of the difficulty, but certainly they weren't going to get out of it by sticking Mauly for the money.

Monty Newland, of the Remove, had not offered to buy a chair he didn't want—but he had offered to lend fifteen pounds, being, like Mauly, remarkably well supplied with that useful article, cash. That offer also was gratefully declined. To borrow money that they had no prospect of repaying was not a resource for the chums of the Remove. Anything was better than that. So the chair was still for sale—and Saturday was drawing nearer—and Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were worried.

What they wanted was to find a fellow who wanted the armchair and would give fifteen pounds for it. Plenty of fellows wanted the armchair, if it came to that. But the only fellow who would give fifteen pounds for it was Mauly, who didn't want it! Two or three Sixth Form men had kindly come along to the Remove passage and looked at the chair. But there were no buyers so far. Sykes told the owners that if they couldn't do better, he would "spring a fiver." That was not a lot of use, as Mr. Lazarus was good for six. The fact was, that fifteen pounds was a big sum, beyond the means of nineteen fellows in twenty at Greyfriars.

Looking from his study window, Horace Coker watched the two clouded, youthful faces, till they passed out of sight into the House. Then the great Coker turned from the window, still looking thoughtful.

Potter and Greene were regarding him rather impatiently. It was tea-time, and they wanted their tea. There was a hamper in the study, which had arrived from Coker's Aunt Judy. Coker was evidently thinking, but not of tea or the hamper. Potter and Greene could not help feeling that Coker might have selected some other time for these unusual mental exertions.

Coker sat down, still thoughtful. Potter and Greene looked at him, with one eye each on the hamper.

"After all, we could make room for it!" said Coker, breaking a long silence.

"I've got lots of room," said Potter.

"Eh?"

"Shall I open it?" asked Potter.

"Open it?" repeated Coker, staring.

"Yes—I suppose you want it opened."

"Wandering in your mind, old chap?" asked Coker. "What on earth are you talking about?"

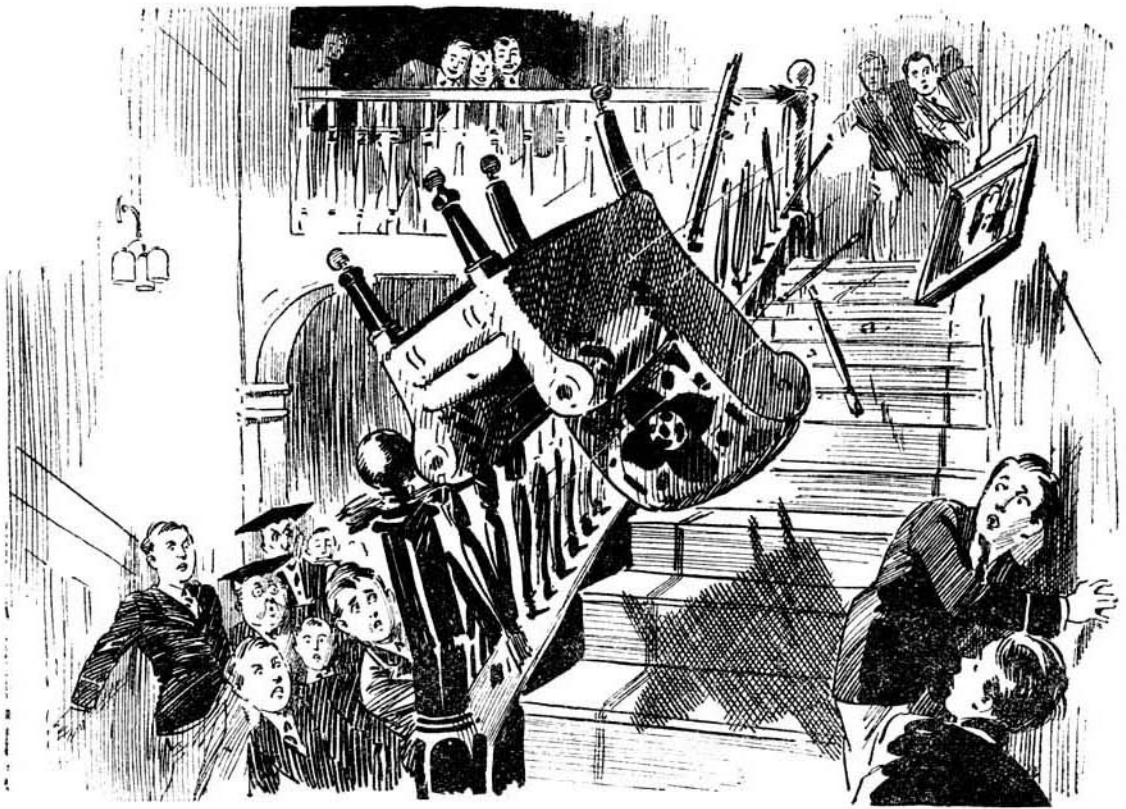
"Eh? The hamper—"

"We've both got lots of room," said Greene feelingly. "After games practice, you know, a fellow gets hungry."

"I wasn't talking about the hamper," said Coker. "I was talking about the armchair—we could make room for another armchair in this study. You fellows might like to sit in an armchair sometimes."

"Oh! Quite! What about tea?"





Crash, crash, crash! The uproar of the falling armchair rang through the House. "What—the-thump—" Masters came whisking out of their studies, Fifth-Formers from the games-study, and juniors from the Rag. "Oh, my hat!" gasped Nugent. "It's our new chair! The Parkinson chair!"

"Never mind tea for a minute. Those young asses in the Remove are in a fearful scrape," said Coker. "Mind, they're cheeky young sweeps! They've cheeked me personally. I've whopped them for it a good many times. I've a short way with fags, as I've told you fellows."

Potter sighed. Coker evidently was going to talk. It was rotten luck when fellows were hungry, and they couldn't very well begin on Coker's hamper till Coker gave the word. Potter and Greene could only hope that Horace would cut it short. It was a faint hope. Horace seldom cut it short.

"It's up to me, in a way," resumed Coker. "That young scoundrel Bunter pulled my leg, you know, making out that Wharton's armchair was his, and it got smashed in the passage. That's how they got landed with this new one. They might have made out that they had some sort of a claim on me. Of course, I should have kicked them if they had. Still, it was rather decent. They're not bad kids—only cheeky. I've been wondering whether I might see them through. A man in my position in the school—generally looked up to, you know—has a sort of responsibility towards Lower boys, what?"

How Coker's position in the school was different from that of any other fellow in the Fifth was a secret known only to Coker. Who were the fellows who looked up to him was another mystery. But Potter and Greene did not argue. Argument only added to the length of Coker's conversation.

"It's a good armchair," went on Coker. "Old Parkinson had his place decently fixed up. I dare say he was sorry to part with it. From what I've heard, his butler snaffled the family

jewels and was copped; they got them all back, except a pearl necklace that was worth pots of money. The brute had hidden it somewhere, and the police never found it. The villain went straight to choker, but he refused to say what he'd done with the pearls. Stuck them in some safe place, you know, for a nest-egg when he came out of quod. Awful rotter!"

Potter and Greene yawned dismally. They had heard all about the misfortunes of old General Parkinson, which had been in the newspapers a few weeks ago. They did not want to hear about them again. They wanted to hear about tea in the study.

"It's queer, too," went on Coker thoughtfully. "From what I've heard, they copped him right on the spot, with the loot in his room; he doesn't seem to have had a chance to get the pearls away. They've rooted all over Parkinson Place for them, thinking he must have parked them in the house somewhere. I hope they'll find them. It seems they weren't insured. Old Parkinson's frightfully hard-up now. Mortgages and tithes on his land, and income-tax. They sold him up, you know. Those pearls would have saved his bacon—poor old bean!" Coker shook his head sympathetically over the woes of old Parkinson.

Potter and Greene sympathised, too, if it came to that. But their eyes lingered hungrily on the hamper.

"But to come back to what I was saying," said Coker, letting General Parkinson drop, as it were. "I fancy I'll see those silly kids through. It seems that they didn't know the price of that blessed chair when they ordered it by phone. Fags are careless in such things. They've got landed. Well, we

can make room for another armchair in this study. It's occurred to me more than once, sitting in this armchair, that you fellows might like an armchair occasionally."

It had occurred to Potter and Greene also, more than once, that Coker might have let them have a turn.

"Well, fifteen pounds is a lot of money," ran on Coker. "I can't say I've got it in my pocket. But I can ask my Aunt Judith to send old Lazarus a cheque for the bill. That's simple enough, isn't it?"

"Oh, quite!" gasped Potter. "Will she do it?"

"Oh, yes, that's all right!" "Coker, old man, if you'd like to swap, I've got three uncles I'll give you for your Aunt Judy!" said Potter.

"Well, I think it's settled," said Coker. "I'll go along and see those silly kids and buy the armchair. If we're rather crowded in the study, we can get rid of your desk, Potter."

"Eh?" "Or your bookcase, Greene."

"What?" "Or both of them. Leave that to me." Coker rose to his feet and went to the door. "I'll be back presently."

Potter and Greene breathed hard and deep as Horace Coker stepped out of the study. Tea seemed further off than ever. Coker, thinking only of his kind intentions towards those young sweeps in the Lower Fourth, seemed to have forgotten tea. Potter and Greene glared at his burly back as he disappeared.

"My desk—" murmured Potter. "My bookcase—" hissed Greene. "The silly owl!" "The cheeky ass!"

"What about opening the hamper—and blow Coker?" asked Potter.

"Um!" said Greene.

"Well, I suppose there's a limit!" said Potter. "But what do you think of him for a silly, fatheaded, burbling, babbling idiot?"

"Of all the idiotic, gabbling, dunder-headed chumps—" said Greene. "Of all the thickheaded, potty, dotty, batty burlers—"

Greene broke off suddenly, as Coker looked in again. Coker evidently had heard. Hopes of the hamper fell to zero.

"Look here, Greene, that's a bit too thick!" said Coker.

"I—I meant—I—I didn't mean—" stammered Greene in dismay.

"Calling Potter names like that—" "Eh?"

"Potter's a bit of an ass, I know, but slanging him like that is a bit too thick, and I tell you so plainly," said Coker severely.

"Pi-Pip-Potter!" stammered Greene. "I—I never—I mean—"

"I heard you," said Coker coldly, "and I tell you it's too thick. What has Potter done, if you come to that?"

"Oh! You—you see—" Greene floundered.

"I think you ought to apologise to Potter for calling him such names," said Coker; "and if you jolly well don't I'll jolly well bang your head on the table, so there!"

Greene gasped.

"Sorry, Potter!" he articulated.

Potter grinned.

"All serene, old man!" he said.

"That's right," said Coker approvingly. "Now, I looked in again to ask you fellows if you'd mind unpacking that hamper while I'm gone to the Remove—"

Would they mind?

"And don't wait for me," added Coker. "Don't worry if I'm not back when you start tea."

"We—we—we won't!" gasped Potter.

Coker nodded and strode away again. Potter and Greene looked at one another in eloquent silence. Potter carefully shut the door before he spoke.

Coker might not have made such a happy mistake a second time.

"Jevver see such a born idiot?" he asked.

"Never!" said Greene.

"Jevver hear of one—outside a lunatic asylum, I mean?"

"Never!"

"What I can't understand," said Potter, "is this—why did they send Coker here, if there was a vacancy in any home for idiots? Why do his people let him out loose?"

Greene shook his head, implying that he gave it up. Then Coker was dismissed from mind, and they started on the hamper. They did not mind unpacking it—not at all! And they did not worry because Coker wasn't there when they started tea!

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Misunderstood!

"I SAY, you fellows!" "Get out!" roared Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

Bunter just then was really the last straw. The captain of the Remove glared at him almost ferociously, as he put his fat face in at the doorway of Study No. 1.

Study No. 1 was worried. Saturday was drawing near, and the dire necessity of paying Mr. Lazarus. The Parkinson chair was still for sale—unsold! The chums of the Remove had fifteen shillings towards fifteen pounds—quite a nice little sum, but not much use for paying Mr. Lazarus. They were going in for economy now—for, as Nugent sagely remarked, every sixpence counted. There was to be no tea in Study No. 1. They were going to tea with Mauly, which would save something. Luckily, Mauly wasn't economising!

Billy Bunter was the cause of all the trouble. It was through Bunter that Coker of the Fifth had demolished the old chair. It was Bunter's idiotic mistake about the price that had landed

Study No. 1 with the new chair! So, when the chums of Study No. 1 were dismally discussing ways and means, it was altogether too exasperating for the fat Owl to butt in. Wharton glared at him and roared—Nugent picked up a ruler.

"I say, you fellows, don't play the goat," exclaimed Bunter. "I only looked in to say—Yaroooooop!"

Wharton caught him by the collar. Nugent gave him a swipe with the ruler on his tight trousers. Bunter roared.

"Now, you fat idiot—" exclaimed Wharton.

"Now, you piffing porpoise—" said Nugent.

"Yow-ow-ow! Leggo!" roared Bunter. "You beasts, I only came in to say that Coker was coming—and now I jolly well won't, see!"

"Eh, what? Coker?"

"That silly ass, Coker—"

"Find out!" yelled Bunter, angry and indignant. "I'm jolly well not going to say a word, I know that! Catch me coming here to give you the tip again, you ungrateful rotters! Yah!"

Bunter was released. Wharton and Nugent realised that they had been a little too previous, so to speak. Bunter rolled to the door, gave an angry snort, and departed in wrath.

Already a heavy tread was heard on the Remove staircase. Wharton and Nugent exchanged a glance of deep and intense exasperation. That tread was too heavy to be mistaken—it was either Coker's or an escaped elephant's. There could be no escaped elephant in the House—so it was Coker coming! If Bunter had been exasperating, Coker of the Fifth was still more exasperating. The worried and irritated juniors were, in fact, just in the mood for Coker!

"The silly ass!" breathed Wharton. "Perhaps he would like to smash up our new armchair like the old one! Let him come—I know who's going to get the smashing."

"Yes, rather!" said Nugent. "The howling fathead—always hunting for trouble! We'll give him all he wants."

"And some over!" growled Wharton. He made a stride towards the door.

"Hold on, though," said Frank. "Bunter's a silly ass—Coker may not be coming here! Wait till he butts in, anyhow."

Harry Wharton paused.

"Oh, all right! Get hold of something—that hassock will do. Coker's a bit hefty for us, you know! Floor him if he butts in, right on the spot."

"What-ho!"

Nugent grasped the hassock. Wharton picked up a leather-covered cushion. They drew back behind the door, to wait for Coker—if he was coming to Study No. 1. Mopping up Coker would not help them to settle with Mr. Lazarus; but it would be a relief to their feelings! They were, as a matter of fact, feeling very much inclined to mop up somebody. Coker was coming in handy.

The heavy tread arrived at the doorway of Study No. 1. If it had passed on—but it did not pass on! Coker swung round to the doorway and tramped in.

That was enough! As the burly form of Horace Coker came into view a hassock and a leather cushion swiped together. The hassock landed on Coker's car. The cushion crashed on the back of his neck. Coker staggered and lurched, and went to earth.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Coker as he went. "What—who—oh—ow—wow—"

"Pin him!" gasped Wharton.

He jumped promptly on Coker. Nugent followed fast. Coker was down—and it was strictly necessary to keep him there. He was too hefty to be



"OOOOOOCH!" That's what Fritz von Splitz, the fat junior at Grimslade School, said when he tried to eat an orange full of mustard. "You burbling mugwump!" That's what Jim Dainty said when he found he had been sent on a wild goose chase by his rival, Ginger Rawlinson. For it's April Fools' Day at Grimslade, and japes are the order of

the day. This week's rollicking story of the cheery chums of Grimslade School, written by famous Frank Richards, is one long laugh from beginning to end. You simply mustn't miss reading it, boys. Look out for "The Fourth Form at Grimslade!" and five other top-notch adventure stories in this week's issue of

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allowed to rise. Coker, taken quite by surprise, wriggled wildly as Wharton sat astride of the back of his neck, holding on to his ears with both hands, and Nugent plumped on his legs like a sack of coke. Hefty as he was, Coker had no chance. He could only wriggle and squirm and splutter.

"Remove!" yelled Wharton. "Rescue, Remove! Roll up!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry came speeding along the passage. "What's the game— Oh, Coker!" Bob piled in.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh and Johnny Bull arrived in another moment. The Bounder and Redwing came next—then Squiff and Tom Brown and Peter Todd. More Remove men rushed after them. The news that Coker of the Fifth was on the warpath again was more than sufficient to rouse the Remove—never very reluctant to rag

"Coker, what?" roared Bolsover major. "My hat! Coker's the man to ask for it, and no mistake! Give him too!"

"Coker again!" chuckled the Bounder. "Bag him! Rag him! We'll make him tired of butting into this passage!"

"The tirefulness will be terrific!"

"Give him jip!" yelled Squiff.

"Alons! Laissez moi frapper ce Coker!" yelled Dupont.

"Smack him!"

"Whack him!"

"Whop him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker of the Fifth hardly knew what was happening. On his last visit to the Remove passage when the Study No. 1 armchair had gone west, Coker had very nearly gone west, too. But this was worse! This was much worse! Bumped and rolled, smacked and whacked, Coker felt like a fellow in an awful dream. He struggled, he squirmed, he gasped, and he howled. But the odds were too great for Coker—he hadn't an earthly. The Removites fairly let themselves go. If Coker hadn't learned to steer clear of the Remove passage, it was high time he did learn—all the fellows agreed on that! And they proceeded to teach him!

Whack! Smack! Crack! Bump! Thump! Yell! It was a wild and whirling scene in Study No. 1. Coker's anguished and spluttering voice was lost in the uproar; it was even as a voice crying in the wilderness! The Remove men were going to make an example of Coker—and they did!

They made an awful example of him. The uproar was terrific. In the excitement of the moment the juniors rather forgot the existence of such troublesome persons as masters and prefects. They were reminded, when there was a hurried tread in the passage, and Wingate of the Sixth, ashplant in hand, glared in at the doorway. Wingate stared blankly into the swarming study.

"You young sweeps!" roared the captain of Greyfriars. "Do you know you can be heard all over the House? What the thump's this game—a Rugger scrum in the study, or what?"

Whack! Whack! Whack!

Wingate could not even see Coker—he had disappeared under swarming juniors. He proceeded to whack with the ashplant, handing out the whacks impartially to every fellow within reach.

"Oh crumbs! Wow!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Look out!"

The juniors scattered. Horace Coker was revealed. Wingate stared at the sprawling, gasping, breathless, gurgling object on the floor in astonishment.

"What—what—what's that?" ejaculated the Greyfriars captain. "Is—is that Coker? Is that you, Coker?"

"Urrrrrghh!"

"What are you doing here?"

"Grrrrrghh!"

"It's all right, Wingate," gasped Harry Wharton. "Coker came along and asked for it! I suppose he wouldn't ask for it if he didn't want it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker sat up. His collar and tie were gone, his coat split up the back, most of his buttons missing, and his hair was like a mop. His face was crimson and dewed with perspiration. He gurgled and guggled for breath. Wingate gave him a stern glare.

"Look here, Coker, this won't do!" he snapped. "I came here to stop a rag among the juniors, and find a Fifth Form man mixed up in it. It won't do."

"Grooooooh! I—I—I came— Ooooooh! Oh, my hat! Grooooooh!" gurgled Coker.

"What do you mean by it?" demanded Wingate. "It's the second time this week you've kicked up a row in the Remove. You've got to chuck it, see?"

"Ooooooh! I came to—to—to—oooh—I came here to— Woooooooh!"

Coker staggered up. He looked an awful object. He struggled wildly for breath, while he glared with rage and wrath.

"Ow! Groooh! I never came here for a row—I—I—"

"Well, what did you come for?" snapped Wingate.

"I—I— Ooooooh! I—I came to—to buy that armchair—those fags are trying to sell it, and I—I came to—grooh—buy it—"

Harry Wharton jumped.

"You—you—you came to buy the armchair?" he gasped faintly.

"Ooooooh! Groooh! Yes, you young scoundrel! I thought I'd see you through—but—wooooh—now I won't!" gurgled Coker. "Woooooooh!"

"Oh, my hat!"

The juniors stared at Coker. Wingate stared at him. For a moment or two there was silence. Then there was a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You young asses!" gasped Wingate. "I heard that you were offering an armchair for sale—is this how you treat a man who comes to buy it?"

"Groooh! Ooooooh!"

"We—we didn't know!" stammered Wharton. "We—we never thought— Of course, we thought the silly idiot had come for a row—"

"What were we to think?" gasped Nugent. "You know Coker. Of course, we—we thought—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wingate. "Well, if you're buying that armchair, Coker, you can get on with it. Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm not!" bawled Coker. "Catch me! No fear! I'm going to smash those young scoundrels. I'm going to spifficate them! I'm going—"

"You're going," agreed Wingate. "I'll see that you do. Come on!"

And the Greyfriars captain grasped Coker's arm and jerked him out of the study. And Coker, on second thoughts, was willing to go. Even Coker had had enough of scrapping—for the present, at least. He went—gurgling.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another in dismay. The other fellows were yelling.

"He—he came to buy the armchair!" groaned Wharton. "We—we might have got shut of it. Oh crikey!"

"Why didn't he say so before you began on him, then?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Well, we—we didn't give him a lot of time. Oh dear!"

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

"Oh, shut up!" roared Wharton.

"It's not funny—"

"Isn't it?" chuckled the Bounder.

"It seems funny to me. Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's just rotten!" groaned Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, go and cackle somewhere else, you cackling chumps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The crowd of fellows streamed out of Study No. 1, yelling. A chance—the only chance—of getting shut of that white elephant of an armchair had come—and gone! Obviously, Coker wouldn't buy it now. To everybody but the owners of that miserable armchair it seemed excruciatingly funny. They chuckled and chortled and yelled as they went. They seemed to think it the joke of the term. The Remove passage rang with merriment.

"It's that idiot Bunter's fault!" said Wharton savagely. "If that fat idiot hadn't butted in and told us Coker was coming we mightn't—"

"Bunter's fault, as usual!" said Nugent. "Let's go and kick Bunter!"

So they went and kicked Bunter, which was some solace—not, of course, to Bunter! That was all right, as far as it went. But the Parkinson armchair was still for sale. It looked like remaining permanently for sale!

## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Declined—Without Thanks!

**B**UMP!

Yell!  
For the umpteenth time, William George Bunter landed hard and heavy on the carpet in Study No. 7.

Toddy had given him another tip!

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

Peter chuckled. Billy Bunter gathered himself up and fixed his spectacles on Toddy with a withering glare. For nearly a week, now, Toddy had kept up this game—tipping Bunter out of his armchair whenever he found him in it. Toddy was sticking to it, and Bunter was getting tired of it. It was beastly for Bunter, for, naturally, a fellow wanted somewhere to rest his weary, fat limbs. Bunter had always had the armchair. Now he never had it—except at the risk of being tipped out headlong. And Toddy really seemed to be gifted with a sort of second sight these days. He always seemed to butt in just when Bunter had plumped his fat person down for a rest. And every time he found Bunter taking his fat case in that armchair there was a bump and a yell. It was most uncomfortable.

"If you think you're going to treat me like this, Peter Todd—" said the fat Owl, in tones of concentrated wrath.

"Sort of!" said Peter.

"I'm sorry I changed into this study now. For two pins I'd change back into Study No. 1."

"Honest Injun?" asked Peter.

"Yes, you beast!"

"Done, then?"

Peter went to his desk and fumbled there. He sorted out two pins and extended them to the Owl of the Remove. Bunter blinked at them.

"Wharrer you mean, you silly ass?" he demanded.

"I mean what I say—done! You've offered to change out of the study for two pins. There's the pins."

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"And there's the door!" added Peter.

"If you think you're turning me out of this study, you cheeky beast—"  
 "A bargain's a bargain," said Peter coolly. "Outside!"

"Why, you cheeky rotter—"

"Here's your pins!"

"I won't— Yaroooooh!" yelled Bunter, in anguish.

Toddy came at him with a pin in either hand. Both stuck into Bunter.

"Wow! Keep those pins away!" shrieked Bunter. "You rotter! Wow! Whoop! You awful beast! Wow! Leave off jabbing me with those— Pins! Oh lor'!"

Bunter made a bound into the passage. He felt fearfully punctured. Toddy slammed the door after him.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He blinked at the shut door, his very spectacles gleaming with wrath. Toddy had always been a beast. Now he was a more dangerous beast than ever! He had been keeping Bunter out of the armchair. Now he was keeping him out of the study. It might almost have seemed that he really didn't want Bunter in Study No. 7—though, considering what a fascinating fellow Bunter was, that was surely impossible. The fat Owl opened the door again and peered in.

"Look here, Toddy—"

Whiz!

A Latin dictionary flew.

Crash!

Bunter flew.

"Oh crikey! Oh crumbs! Oh scissors! Ow!"

Bunter did not open the door of Study No. 7 again. He glared at it and rolled away down the passage to Study No. 1. As a matter of fact, Bunter had often rather regretted his change from Study No. 1 to Study No. 7. More than once he had thought of changing back; but there had been an unmistakable lack of enthusiasm in Study No. 1. For some reason—Bunter did not know why—Wharton and Nugent weren't keen on it.

Now he resolved to try it on.

He blinked rather cautiously into Study No. 1. It was vacant, and he rolled in. There stood the Parkinson armchair—soft, and roomy, and inviting. With a sigh of relief Bunter sank into its well-padded, embracing depths.

It was a very comfortable chair—ininitely more comfy than the one in Study No. 7. Bunter sprawled luxuriously. So far as the armchair went, a change back to Study No. 1 would be a change very much for the better. And, after all, why shouldn't he change back, if he liked? This armchair really was a corker—as good as Mauly's, in Study No. 12. Those beasts would have to pay for it somehow. It would have to stay! And in his old days in that study, Bunter had always had the armchair. His resolve was fixed.

But he felt a quail of uneasiness at the sound of footsteps in the passage, and the voices of Wharton and Nugent. It was Friday—and on the morrow Mr. Lazarus was expecting fifteen pounds! Fifteen shillings, on account, was the best that the chums of the Remove could offer him, which was absolutely certain not to satisfy the Courtfield merchant. In the circumstances, Bunter felt that the beasts would not be good-tempered. It was rather an unpropitious time for landing himself on them. They were worried and troubled, and they seemed to think, somehow, that it was Bunter's fault! The fat Owl had reason to feel uneasy as Wharton and Nugent came in.

They stared at him.

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Bunter gave them an ingratiating blink.

"I say, you fellows—"

"You fat villain!" said Harry Wharton. "Get out of that chair before I bump you out!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! Considering that you'd never have had the chair at all if I hadn't put you on to it—"

"Scrag him!" growled Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent! Look here, you fellows, don't cut up rusty," said Bunter amicably. "I'm going to help you out of your scrape. It was rather fat-headed to buy a chair without knowing the price—silly and thoughtless, and all that. But I'm not the man to let down pals in a scrape. I'm going to lend you some money."

"Oh crumbs!"

"I mean it," said Bunter. "Nothing stingy about me, I hope! Kindest friend and noblest foe, and all that. That's me, all over!"

Wharton and Nugent gazed at him. If, by some wonderful chance, Bunter was in possession of funds, the problem was solved. Certainly, it was up to Bunter, the cause of the whole trouble, to lend a hand, if he could.

"Fifteen pounds is a lot of money," said Harry, at last.

"To you, perhaps!" assented Bunter. "Not to me, really! You see, my people are rich. I've told you so lots of times—"

"You fat chump!"

"That's hardly the way to speak to a fellow who's offering to get you out of a scrape, Wharton. I'm making only one condition—I want to come back to this study. I can't stand Toddy any longer. I've told him so. He begged me, with tears in his eyes, to stay. But I said no, it couldn't be done. I told him plainly that I was going back to my old study—to my old pals. That's that!"

"Look here—"

"Now I belong to this study again I—"

"Do you?" said Wharton grimly.

"Yes, old chap! I shall be all right here. Dash it all, Nugent stands your rotten temper—why shouldn't I?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Of course, it's understood that I have the armchair when I want it. You and Nugent can have it when I don't want it. That's fair all round. Fair play's a jewel," said Bunter. "Play the game, you know—that's always been my motto. If you're going to Bob Cherry's study to tea, I may as well come—now I'm in this study again—what?"

Bunter paused for a reply; but he got no reply. He seemed to have taken away the breath of the owners of that study. The just gazed at him.

"About the money," went on Bunter; "that will be all right. I'm standing by you like a pal. Leave that to me."

"You've got fifteen pounds!" gasped Nugent.

"Well, I haven't exactly got it," admitted Bunter. "But it's all right. I'm expecting a postal order—"

"What?" shrieked the two juniors together.

"A postal order. From one of my titled relations, you know," explained Bunter. "When—when it comes, I shall lend it to you fellows. But that isn't all. I'm going to write roud to all my rich relations, and ask them for tips—see? One of you fellows can lend me a bob for stamps."

Wharton and Nugent gazed at him; then they gazed at one another. Then they made a frontal attack.

Why they cut up rusty after his generous offer Bunter never knew. But

they did. There was no doubt that they did.

They collared Bunter by his hair and his ears, and jerked him out of the Parkinson chair. They landed him on the carpet, into which his fat little nose jammed hard. Then they up-ended the Parkinson chair over him. It almost hid him from sight.

Bunter on the chair had been very comfortable. But the chair on Bunter was far from comfortable.

Bunter wriggled and roared.

"Wow! I say, you fellows— Yoop! Take it off! Oh lor'! Wharrer you up to? Oh crikey! I'm squish-squish-squashed! Wow, wow, wow!"

"There, you fat scoundrel!" gasped Wharton, jamming down the armchair hard. "There, you piffing, pie-faced porker! There, you obnoxious owl!"

"Yaroooooh!"

"There, you burbling, babbling bandersnatch!"

"Ooooooh!"

"Come on, Frank! Tea's ready by this time."

"Ow! I say, you fellows!" shrieked Bunter. "Take that chair off! Drag it off! I'm squish-squashed! Wow! I can't move it! Yow! Beasts! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You rotters, you leave me here like this, and I'll jolly well pay you out!" raved Bunter. "Ow! Lemme out of this!"

Wharton and Nugent, laughing, left the study. Bunter, pinned under the heavy armchair, was left to wriggle. His wild howls followed the juniors along the Remove passage. He wriggled and writhed and roared. But the Parkinson armchair was a terrific weight—solid oak and solid leather weighed something. Bunter heaved under that armchair like the mighty ocean, but he was not so mighty as the ocean, and he heaved in vain. It was long minutes before Billy Bunter succeeded in extricating himself from his peculiar prison; and then he collapsed on the study carpet, gasping and gasping and gasping, as if he would never leave off gasping.

## THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Accidents Will Happen!

"LET 'em wait!"

"Eh?"

"They'll see," said Billy Bunter darkly.

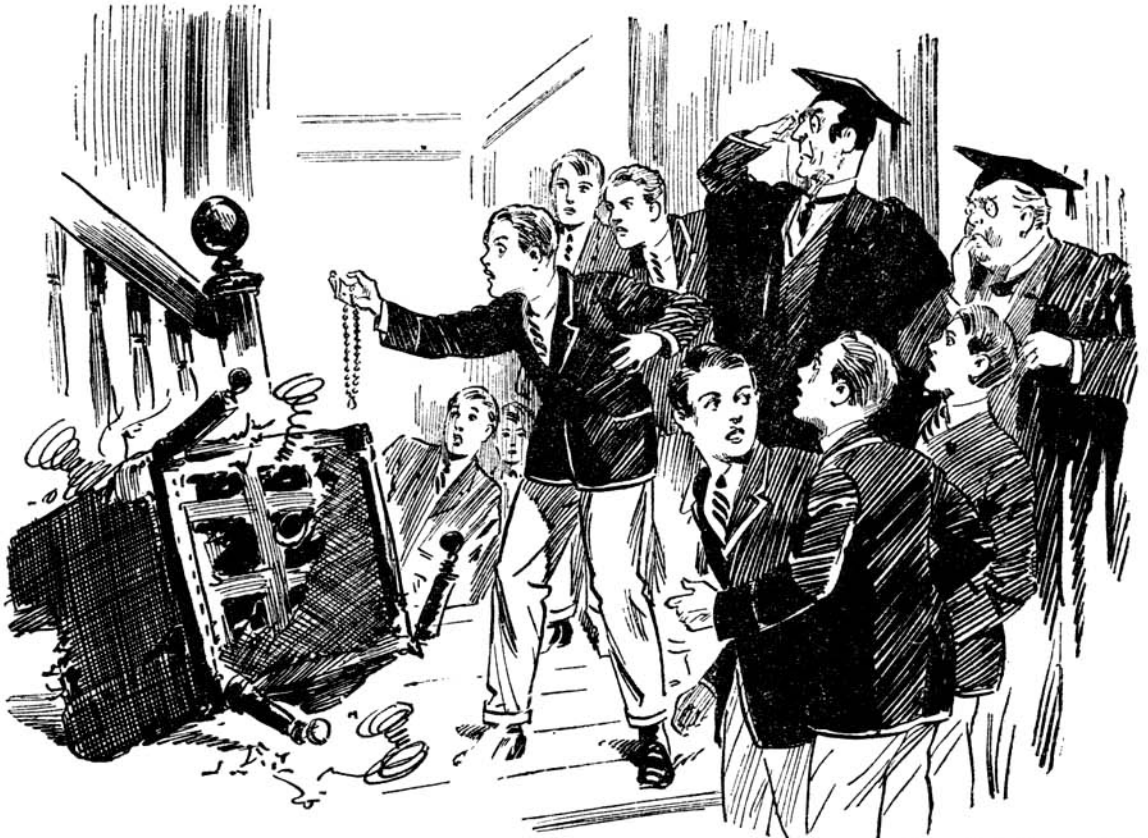
"Who'll see what?" inquired Peter Todd.

"That's telling."

"Fathead!" said Peter politely; and he went on with prep.

Bunter was back in Study No. 7 for prep. Toddy's hope that Bunter would be welcomed back to his old study had probably been very faint. The fat Owl had often, in moments of wrath, threatened Toddy with changing out. But it had never come to anything. Other studies did not offer Bunter the glad hand or the gladsome eye. Toddy, in fact, had no more chance of getting rid of Billy Bunter than Sindbad the Sailor had of getting rid of the Old Man of the Sea.

Bunter gave little attention to prep—even less than usual. His fat face was morose as he sat at the table. Bunter was wrathful. There was a limit, Bunter considered, to what a fellow would stand. Study No. 1 had reached the limit—in jamming the Parkinson armchair over Bunter, and leaving him to wriggle under it, in return for his generous offer. The worm will turn. So Bunter was turning. Vengeance was in his fat thoughts.



Wharton groped at the disarranged stuffing of the wrecked armchair and then withdrew something that glimmered and glistened in the light. Mr. Quelch's jaw fairly dropped in his astonishment as he stared blankly at a rope of glistening pearls. "What—" he gasped faintly. "Pi-pip-pearls!" stuttered Nugent.

"I'll show 'em!" said Bunter, breaking out again.

"Show who what?" asked Toddy. "You wait! You'll see what you'll see," said Bunter mysteriously. "I'd thrash the pair of them, only—only I won't!"

"I wouldn't," agreed Peter gravely. "They mightn't let you, you know."

"Yah!"

Prep again. But Bunter's thoughts were far from prep. Grim vengeance was in his fat mind.

"Let 'em beware!" he started again. "I'll show 'em! I'll make 'em sit up! I'll make 'em sorry for themselves! After all I've done for them, you know. Talk about ingratitude being a sharper tooth than a serpent's child! But let 'em wait!"

Evidently some deep scheme was working in the fat and fatuous brain of the Owl of the Remove. But Toddy wasn't frightfully interested. He devoted himself to prep. When it was over he went down with Dutton, and Billy Bunter was left in solitary possession of Study No. 7.

The fat Owl rolled to the armchair, but he did not sit down in it. That beast Toddy might have looked in again. And he was more than tired of tips from Toddy. He blinked out into the passage. He watched the fellows going down. Not till the last had gone did Bunter roll out of Study No. 7, and roll into Study No. 1.

The coast was clear now. Billy Bunter gave a final blink along the passage, and grinned a fat grin.

Had the fat Owl been bent on snaffling the armchair, as on the previous occasion, it would have been easy. He would have needed no help from Coker, or anybody else. That chair

ran on beautiful castors, softly and smoothly. Heavy as it was, it needed only a touch to set it rolling. Bunter could have wheeled it out of Study No. 1, along to Study No. 7, without an effort.

But he was not thinking of "pinching" the Parkinson chair. With a bill for fifteen pounds hanging over it, Bunter did not want that chair—very much indeed he did not want it. Nothing would have induced him to let it be rolled into his study. His intentions were quite different.

That scrumptious armchair was going to disappear.

Bunter knew how.

That was the scheme. Those beasts, whose ingratitude so shocked Bunter, would be left with fifteen pounds to pay—and no armchair. They would not even be able to send it back to Mr. Lazarus as a last resource. They were going to be done—brown! And then, Bunter hoped, they would be sorry that they had treated a kind and generous fellow as they had.

It was easy to wheel the Parkinson chair, on its beautiful castors, out of the study, and along to the landing. That was as easy as falling off a forn. Many passages opened off the great landing. One of them led to the masters' quarters. Next to Quelch's bedroom was an unoccupied room. The key was in the outside of the lock of that room. Five minutes, at the most, would be required to wheel the armchair to that room, shove it in, and lock the door on it. After which Bunter had only to walk off with the key. It was easy as winking, if Bunter was not spotted in transit. And the coast was clear.

He chuckled.

Whatever the beasts fancied had become of the missing armchair, they would hardly guess that it was locked up in the empty room among the masters' bed-rooms. Perhaps Bunter might relent later, and let them have their armchair back—if the beasts were civil. Otherwise, not. In the meantime, they could have the pleasure of paying for it—for nothing. If that wouldn't serve them jolly well right, Billy Bunter did not know what would.

He set the study door wide open, and gave the Parkinson chair a shove. It travelled on its beautiful castors even more easily than he had expected. It shot across the study, and crashed on the doorpost.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He blinked uneasily out of the doorway. But there was no alarm—all the fellows were downstairs. The crash had not been heard.

The fat Owl jerked at the chair, and it rolled out into the passage. He gave it another shove, and it fairly whizzed down the passage towards the landing. It was easier work than Bunter had hoped. Merely a touch was required to send it whizzing.

Bunter grinned and trotted after it. It had come to a halt on the landing, near the head of the Remove staircase. Bunter gave it another shove, to send it across the landing to the passage. It whizzed!

Perhaps it turned on its castors as it whizzed, as armchairs will do sometimes. Or perhaps the fat Owl was clumsy—which was probable! At all events, the big armchair did not shoot off towards the opening of the passage



where Bunter wanted it to go. It shot off towards the Remove staircase.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

He leaped after the armchair.

But once that armchair, on its beautiful castors, was whizzing, Bunter had no more chance in a race with it than a tortoise after a hare.

It shot on—and off! Bunter was yards behind when it tipped over and over down the Remove staircase, with frightful crash on crash!

Bunter gazed at it in horror.

He had not intended that! But that was what was happening! That gorgeous armchair seemed to be about to share the same fate as the old armchair that Coker had carried—only worse! Crash, crash, crash! The uproar of the falling armchair rang through the House. Bunter could not hope that this din would not be heard. It might have been heard across the quad.

"Oh lor!" gasped Bunter.

Crash! Crash! Bump! Bang! Crash!

"Oh crikey!"

There was only one thing for Billy Bunter to do! Parking the Parkinson chair in that empty room next to Quelch's was out of the question now. Bunter could not save the chair. But he could save himself! Leaving the Parkinson chair to its fate, the fat Owl turned away and raced up the Remove passage. He bolted into Study No. 7, and vanished, as there came a buzz of startled and excited voices from below, mingled with the crashing and smashing of the Parkinson chair.

## THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER!

### Pearls of Price!

"WHAT—the—thump—"

Crash, crash, crash!

All Greyfriars heard it!

Some fellows thought it was falling chimney-pots; others, a roof tumbling in. The din was really terrific. A big and heavy armchair, crashing down a staircase, caused quite a lot of noise. Masters came whisking out of their studies—Quelch and Prout and Capper came rushing together to see what was the matter—Sixth Form men and Fifth-Formers from the games study, and juniors from the Rag—Shell and Fourth and Remove—and squeaking fags of the Third and Second. Loud and excited voices rang far and wide. A swarm gathered at the big staircase

—that was the direction from which the terrific disturbance came. Venturesome fellows rushed up the stairs to see what on earth it was.

The crashing had ceased at last. The Parkinson chair had come to rest on a midway landing. Walls and banisters had been chipped and cracked, where the heavy article had struck in its downward flight. The armchair itself was more than chipped and cracked. It was a wreck. Strong as it was, sturdy as was its build, it was not built to resist crashing from stair to stair down a long flight. No armchair could be expected to stand it. It was in a dismembered state—it had left its arms and legs in a trail behind it, and it sprawled forlornly on the landing, with most of the stuffing knocked out of it.

"It—it—it's a chair—rolled downstairs!" ejaculated Harry Wharton, the first to reach the landing where the wreck lay.

"It's our new chair!" gasped Nugent.

"Oh, my hat! The Parkinson chair!"

"Who did this?" Quelch arrived on the scene with gleaming eyes. "Wharton, do I understand that this—is this your chair?"

"Yes, sir, it was in our study—"

"Then how came it rolling down the stairs?" hooted Mr. Quelch.

"I—I don't know!" gasped Wharton.

"We—we left it in the study as usual, after prep, sir."

"Scandalous!" boomed Mr. Prout.

"The whole House disturbed—"

"My hat! It's a jolly old wreck!" murmured Bob Cherry, "and it's not paid for yet. Phew!"

"Lazarus won't take it back now!" grinned Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" roared Mr. Quelch. "The—the young rascal who has played this trick must be found at once and severely punished. Wingate—Gwynne—Sykes—North, kindly go up and ascertain—"

The prefects ran up the stairs.

A buzzing crowd on the lower staircase and the wide landing stared at the wrecked chair. Mr. Quelch's lips were shut in a tight line, his gimlet eyes glinted. Such an outrageous prank could not be too severely punished, in the opinion of the Remove master.

"A—a—a shocking outrage!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "The chair is seriously damaged—very seriously damaged indeed! Wharton, Nugent, if this article is your property, you will gather it up and take the—the remains of it back to your study. Perhaps it can be repaired!"

Wharton and Nugent breathed hard as they proceeded to gather up the wreck. The problem of that unhappy chair was still unsolved—the fifteen pounds still had to be raised. And now the chair itself was a hopeless wreck. It was in several pieces, and it fell into more pieces as they touched it. Really, this was the final blow—the unkindest cut of all. Obviously, Mr. Lazarus would not have given even six pounds for that chair now. Probably he would not give six shillings! Who had done this?

"Great Scott!" yelled Harry Wharton suddenly.

Mr. Quelch spun towards him angrily. "Wharton! What do you mean by shouting like that? What—"

"Great pip!" yelled Wharton.

"Boy!"

"Look!" gasped the captain of the Remove. "Look!" He almost shrieked.

He had been bending over the wrecked chair, groping at the disarranged stuffing. He rose with something in his hand that glimmered and glistened in the light. He held it up, and there was a shout of amazement. Mr. Quelch's jaw fairly dropped in his astonishment as he stared blankly at a rope of glistening pearls in the junior's hand.

"What—" gasped Mr. Quelch faintly.

"Pi-pip-pearls!" stuttered Nugent.

"Pearls!" gasped Bob. "Oh crikey!"

What—who-how—which—"

All eyes were fixed on the glistening thing in Wharton's hand. Fellows crowded and craned to look. It was a pearl necklace—a rope of pearls, dozens of them, large and glistening—obviously very valuable. The captain of the Remove held in his hand a small fortune!

"Where—where did you find that, Wharton?" stammered Mr. Quelch.

"It was in the armchair, sir—stuck inside the stuffing—"

"Bless my soul!"

"The Parkinson pearls!" yelled the Bounder. Smithy was the first man to guess what it meant.

"The—the what? The Pi-Pip-Parkinson pearls!" stuttered Wharton.

"Yes, rather! Old General Parkinson's pearls—that were pinched!" The Bounder shoved forward excitedly. "They never knew where they were hidden—"

"Great pip!"

"Vernon-Smith!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "What do you mean? Do you know anything of these—these pearls?"

"Yes, rather, sir!" chuckled the Bounder. "It was in the papers, sir—General Parkinson's butler pinched the jewels, and when he was copped the police got them all back except the famous pearl necklace! Nobody could find out where he had parked it!"

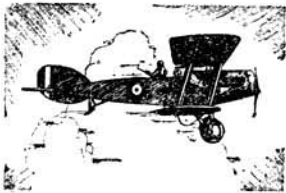
"That's it!" gasped Wharton. "This armchair came from Parkinson Place, sir—Mr. Lazarus bought it at the auction there, and we bought it from Mr. Lazarus!"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch. "Hand me the pearls, Wharton."

He took the glistening rope of pearls from the junior. They were fairly dazzling to look at. To the most inexperienced eye it was plain that their value was very great. It was an amazing discovery.

"Bless my soul!" repeated Mr. Quelch. "I have heard of the loss of General Parkinson's pearls of course. No doubt these are the pearls. If that armchair came from Parkinson Place—Dear me! The thief must have hidden them

(Continued on page 28.)



## The SPY-FLYERS!

By

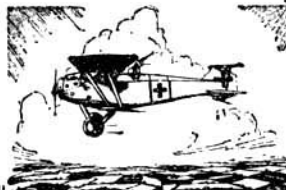
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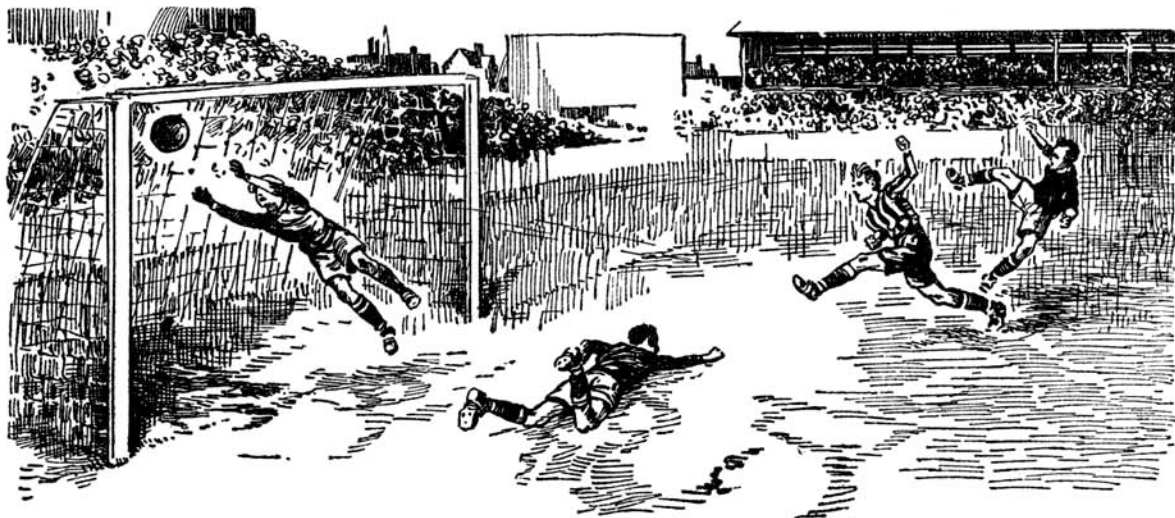
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# NOBBY, the 'Shooting Star'!



## HOW THE STORY STARTED.

Having run away from Don Carlos' circus, Nobby, a sixteen-year-old waif, meets Ferrers Locke, the detective, who introduces him to Lord Douglas Weatherstone, chairman of the Perriton Rovers F.C. From ground-boy, Nobby soon becomes professional, only to fall foul of Lord Douglas' rascally nephew, Daniel Willoughby Thundersley, who determines to bring about his downfall. Hard pressed for money, Thundersley rifles his uncle's safe and Nobby is arrested by mistake. Later, Lord Douglas legally adopts Nobby and throws his home open to him. Meeting Thundersley the following morning, Nobby gives him twenty-four hours to tell his uncle everything.

(Now read on.)

## Weaving a Plot!

**T**HUNDERSLEY sank down on a locker, quite overcome. His feelings were mixed even at this tragic stage. His lordship didn't know—only this red-headed busy-body knew. Twenty-four hours he'd got to make a clean breast of it to Lord Weatherstone—twenty-four hours. He shrank from the honourable course. His nerve failed him.

"You understand!" It was Nobby's voice breaking in on his musings. "I cannot keep a secret like that. I cannot—will not—"

Thundersley, through half-closed lids, watched the youngster walk away. His mind was tottering, but the natural cunning of a trapped animal set his wits working on lines of escape. Only Nobby knew his guilty secret. People with secrets like that had mysteriously disappeared—been silenced—before now. Twenty-four hours—twenty-four hours, in which to stave off ruin.

Thundersley strode out of the club premises like a madman. His two-seater sports car roared into life. Soon it was eating up the miles that lay between Perriton and the site which housed Don Carlos' Travelling Circus.

The Don would help him—of that Daniel Willoughby Thundersley was certain. Twenty-four hours—twenty-four hours.

The speedometer flickered in the region of eighty miles an hour as the plotting villain hastened to meet his equally villainous colleague, the Don.

The Don seemed in no way surprised to see Thundersley when he presented himself in the showman's gilded caravan, after that breakneck journey. The Spaniard smiled at him half-mockingly as he bowed a greeting.

"Good-day to you, Mr. Thundersley! You have seen the morning paper, yes? Of course!"

For a moment Thundersley was taken aback. He fancied the olive-skinned showman was referring to some account of the robbery which had taken place the night before, and, as a consequence, guilt flickered across his handsome face. The next moment he had himself well in hand.

"I don't understand you, Carlos," he replied. "What is it in the paper which amuses you so vastly?"

The showman twirled his long moustaches and winked slyly. Then, as only puzzlement and a mixture of annoyance furrowed his visitor's brow, he picked up a morning paper and pointed to an announcement in the legal column.

"Your good friend, Lord Weatherstone; he has adopted another son, yes? Our mutual foe is in luck's way, yes?"

Our mutual foe! Thundersley started violently. That, of course, could only mean Nobby. Adopted! With a fierce ejaculation, Thundersley snatched the paper from the grinning showman and read the announcement for himself. And as he did so the colour drained from his face, leaving it a deathly white. This was the first intimation he had had that Lord Weatherstone had adopted legally the waif who had once spent his days with Don Carlos' circus. It was incredible. The last thing in the world Thundersley expected to happen; the last thing in the world he would have wished for. Again and again he read the public announcement, snarling over its legal jargon, with its "whereas" and "wherefore" and "hereinafter," and almost doubting the evidence of his eyes.

"Good gad!" he gulped. "The sneaking, cunning, greasy, young hound! Adopted legally by the old fool! I might have known he would suck up to him like that, from the beginning."

His eyes blazed with rage, his thin

lips tightened into a savage, cruel curve. More than ever now, he told himself, it was time that Nobby was removed. All the while Don Carlos regarded him intently, his black eyes gleaming mockingly, for the showman, too, had his own private thoughts over which to gloat.

"Somethin' has got to be done!" snarled Thundersley at length. "Carlos, I rely upon you. Last time you failed; or your fool helpers did, anyway. There must be no mistake next time."

The Don smiled broadly, showing his stained teeth wolfishly.

"There will be no mistakes—no mistakes," he repeated sibilantly. "Listen to—"

Thundersley pulled himself together. He had twenty-four hours' grace. Much could be done in that time. He thanked his lucky stars that he had the proceeds of the robbery to provide the necessary wherewithal to further the amazing scheme the Don now whispered into his ear. It sounded easy, fool-proof, the way the Don staged it step by step. Then, at the conclusion of the rascally showman's plan, came the inevitable demand for cash.

Thundersley's hand went into his jacket pocket and drew forth a bulging wallet. The Don's eyes narrowed to mere slits as he beheld it.

"You said two hundred," said Thundersley, beginning to count out the notes, and blissfully unaware of the greed that glowed in the olive face regarding him.

"I said five hundred, my young friend!" hissed the Spaniard.

Thundersley looked up, frowning.

"It will cost all that to make a sure job of it," wheedled the Don.

Thundersley argued and pleaded in vain. The Don was a hard man to strike a bargain with, and that bulging wallet aroused all the greed in his nature.

"I can't afford it," gave in Thundersley weakly. "Five hundred is far too much—"

The Don made an expressive gesture as if washing his hands of the whole affair.

"Very well, my young friends, if you think that, we will forget this little conversation, yes."

Thundersley bit his lip and cursed himself for a fool. If he hadn't displayed that well-filled wallet the "price" would have been different. Slowly, reluctantly, he capitulated.

"Ah, you are a sensible person," grinned the Don, taking the crisp notes and pocketing them. "Now you need have no more fear of young Nobby. You leave them to me!"

Thundersley picked up his hat, made as if to go, and then lingered uncertainly.

"Of course—of course," he said falteringly, "I don't want anything—anything really bad to happen to the rotter. You know what I mean?"

The Don laughed evilly.

"You mean you don't want him murdered, yes?" He rubbed his hands contemplatively. "Just to disappear, eh?"

A terrifying laugh completed the measured statement which made Thundersley writhe. For a moment he deeply repented him of his visit to the Don and of the villainy contemplated. But his unreasoning hatred of Nobby and the dread of exposure and disgrace swept him headlong into the cunning plot the Don was weaving about him.

"Be careful, Carlos," he adjured, as he took his leave. "For Heaven's sake be careful!"

And the Don, the richer by five hundred pounds, assured him that he would indeed be careful.

Much lighter in heart than when he had made the outgoing journey, Thundersley motored back to London and spent the remainder of the morning in his club. There he had to endure the comments of his club-fellows concerning Lord Douglas Weatherstone's sensational adoption of a nameless waif, and the difference, perhaps, the adoption would make to his chance of inheritance when the "old man"—meaning his lordship—passed on to another world. A couple of hours of this saw Thundersley writhing inwardly, and if any feelings of remorse had assailed him concerning his dastardly scheme against Nobby, they were successfully stifled now. The sooner he was out of the way the better.

### The Trap!

"THAT'LL do!" exclaimed old Sandy, with a glance at his watch.

And the Rovers, who had been hard at ball practice, came off the field for a tub and brisk rub down. Each one of them looked a picture of health, and old Sandy pronounced himself satisfied as he ran his critical eyes over them.

"If ye don't win Saturday's match it won't be because ye're no fit!" he exclaimed. "I shan't want ye here again until to-morrow, so go home and coddle yerselves a wee bit. But mind—no smokin' an' no drinkin', ye ken?"

Like a party of high-spirited school-boys the players dispersed, and half an hour later young Nobby was treading the carpeted floors of his new home. Never had he known such luxury. Weatherstone Court seemed to be a little world in itself, flowing with milk and honey.

Nobby sat alone in the spacious dining-room for his midday meal—his lordship being out and, so the butler

informed him, taking lunch at his club. Around the oak walls at regular intervals a score of his lordship's ancestors gazed down at the newcomer to the household from their gilded picture-frames. The butler, who observed his young master's study of each big portrait, ventured a remark that set Nobby's pulses thrilling.

"Pardon my saying so, sir," said the butler, "but you bear a strange likeness to the Thundersley family."

"Eh? What?" Nobby started and blushed. "You're dreaming, Terrence. There can't be any likeness—except, perhaps, my ginger—ahem!—red hair."

The butler smiled, but persisted that there was a likeness, and was still telling himself so, when Nobby sauntered out into the grounds and headed for the gymnasium. The gym was modern in the extreme, having been added to the main building a century after the foundations of Weatherstone Court had been laid. Everything that an athlete could desire was to be found within its walls, including, ultra-violet ray apparatus, swimming bath, shower baths, parallel bars, horizontal bars, box horse and trapeze.

Soon Nobby had stripped off his coat and waistcoat, and was swinging a hefty pair of Indian clubs; and while he exercised vigorously, something dropped out of his pocket on to the ground before him.

Nobby spotted it lying there, and avoided planting a heavy foot on it, just in time.

"I wouldn't lose you for worlds, old mascot!" he said, picking up the little jade charm Jack Drake had given him at their first meeting. "Besides, I never know when you are going to be useful."

In that latter remark he was prophetic, but he was not to realise that until he had undergone much agony of mind. He slipped the charm back into his pocket, donned coat and vest, and strolled out into the grounds again. Alphonse, the valet, intercepted him, and he carried a large silver salver upon which reposed a sealed envelope.

"For me?" asked Nobby, coming to a halt and eyeing the missive.

"Yes, sir. A district messenger left it here a couple of minutes ago, sir. I didn't know you were in the gym, sir—"

But Nobby wasn't listening to that. His thumb was slitting the edge of the envelope. Wonderingly, he unfolded the single sheet of notepaper it contained, what time the footman stood aside at a respectful distance and admired the scenery.

The message ran:

"Meet me at the Arcadia, Pall Mall. Urgent.

"(Signed) WEATHERSTONE."

The writing of the actual message was not that of his lordship, but Nobby knew that Lord Weatherstone seldom put pen to paper, but the signature looked uncommonly like his spidery scrawl.

The "Arcadia," Nobby knew, was a "posh" club, so he hurried into the house and changed into another suit of clothes. Then he rang for Alphonse, and intimated that he would require a car. When Nobby presented himself at the door, the car was awaiting him.

"Pall Mall, Arcadia Club," he told the chauffeur, and then settled back against the cushions.

The journey was accomplished inside

a quarter of an hour, and telling the chauffeur not to wait, Nobby strolled into the entrance of the club. Before he could announce his business to the busy booking clerk a tall, well-dressed individual rose from a lounge just inside the door and strode towards him.

"Excuse me, sir! Are you Mr. Thundersley—"

Nobby coloured. He had hardly become accustomed to his new name, but the stranger continued, with a respectful smile:

"I am one of his lordship's secretaries. His lordship has had to make a last-moment change in his plans, and wishes me to take you on to his country house. He will be there, of course, to meet you, Mr. Thundersley."

Nobby felt a trifle bewildered by the repetition of the "Mr. Thundersley." Recovering from that, his natural reactions were those of suspicion. But these latter he put away from him. There could be nothing wrong about this. The secretary's explanation was simple and satisfactory.

"If I might say so, sir"—the secretary was talking again—"his lordship seemed a trifle—what shall I say?—displeased that you were so long in coming—"

That decided Nobby.

"I'm sorry," he said hastily. "Hadn't we better be moving? It's a pity I sent the car back."

"Oh, that's all right, sir!" smiled the secretary. "I have one of his lordship's cars here waiting. We'll soon do the journey."

He led the way out of the club and beckoned to a uniformed chauffeur standing beside a smart-looking Daimler car. The chauffeur nipped into the driving-seat, backed the car, and then sprang out again to open the door.

The secretary stood back.

"Here you are, sir. I will ride with the chauffeur."

"Oh, you can sit with me, old chap!" said Nobby.

But that was the last thing the secretary apparently wished to do.

"His lordship would object, sir. He's very particular over such matters. For myself, sir, I thank you most heartily."

With that, the secretary bowed slightly, took a seat beside the chauffeur, and looked fixedly ahead.

The car started off, threaded its way in and out of the traffic, and was soon eating up the miles on the Great West Road.

Nobby lolled back on the cushions and gave himself up to reflection. What on earth could it be that his lordship required to see him about?

The car sped on, the zipping sound of the tyres completely obliterating a slight hissing which came from the bell mouthpiece of the speaking-tube. Suddenly Nobby yawned, pulled himself up with a jerk and reached forward to lower one of the windows. It seemed jammed, for Nobby's lazy efforts failed to move it. The same negative result came from his attempts on the opposite window.

Nobby found himself yawning again and again. There seemed no air in the interior of the spacious Daimler saloon. Furthermore, Nobby felt himself sinking into slumber—his head nodding forward on his chest more than once.

Too late the youngster realised that he was the victim of foul play; too late he realised that in some way an overpowering gas, pleasant yet deadly in its



effect, was poisoning the air of the saloon. Realisation only came to him as he saw the secretary's face peering in at him through the intervening plate glass—a face which grinned triumphantly.

Nobby opened his mouth to shout—was horrified by the weakness of the utterance, and with one despairing effort staggered to his feet and lurched across to the speaking-tube.

"Stop—stop—" he began.

Then, as a final wave of gas flowed from the mouthpiece of the speaking-tube, he clutched at it with his last conscious effort, half dragged it from its chromium-plated fittings, and collapsed on the floor of the car in an unconscious heap.

The secretary, peering in, meanwhile, whispered something to his companion at the wheel, at which the latter put his foot down hard on the accelerator and drove at sixty miles an hour until he came to a small, disused garage in a deserted stretch of country.

The familiar figure of the Don came in sight when the Daimler drew up outside the tumbledown garage.

"Good boys!" he smiled greedily.

"How did it go?"

"Like a charm!" chuckled the secretary. "The fool walked into the Arcadia, all dressed up to the nines, and swallowed everything I told him—including the gas I pumped through the speaking-tube. He's out to the world! Take a squirt at him!"

"Better let the dope clear first," said the Don. "Unlock those doors and open the windows."

The chauffeur did as he was bid. Inside, curled up in a heap, lay Nobby, dead to the world.

Between them the Don and the "secretary" dragged the youngster out and carried him into the shelter of the garage, what time the chauffeur made a pretence of inspecting his engine, for the benefit of any chance passer-by and of giving a warning if need be at the same time.

"The dog!" The Don's olive face wrinkled into such a murderous expression that his companion drew back. "This time, my young friends, you and I will be what you say squares for keeps! Ho, ho, 'tis a pretty plans I have made!"

He looked up sharply at the secretary, saw the almost frightened expression on his face, and smiled.

"You will help me bind him—yes? We must take no chances. Come!"

A length of cord was passed round Nobby's wrists and ankles, a silk muffler was bound round his jaws, then the Don motioned towards a large packing-case which stood in the corner of the garage.

"In with him!" he snarled, and at the same time dropped a small leather cardcase into the packing-case.

The secretary stooped and took Nobby's feet, while the Don grabbed a hold of his shoulders. In another moment Nobby was sprawling in the packing-case. A hammer came into play, and nail after nail went home into the wood as the Don fixed the lid of the packing-case.

"Ah, that's better!" grinned the Don, surveying the label on the packing-case. "Now you will see to the rest, Smithers, and if you're wise, my friends, you will get out of the country just as quickly as you can."

"I'm all for it, boss," replied the secretary. "You know I'm only waiting for the money to take me abroad."

"Yes, yes, of course," smiled the Don. "Let me see, for your share of this little job I promised you fifty pounds. In my generosity, Smithers, I will make it

seventy-five, but only on the understanding that you sail for Brazil to-morrow."

The secretary was profuse in his thanks.

"I'd be gone to-night if there were a boat sailing, boss. If I stop in this accursed country another day the police will have me!"

"I know, my friends—I know!" smiled the Don, rubbing his hands. "Twas for that reason I selected you for this job."

"The chauffeur? Is he all right?" was Smither's whispered query. "I mean, he won't talk."

The Don smiled evilly.

"Can't talk," he chuckled—"he's

dumb! Been like it ever since he came to my circus as a kid. Don't worry about him."

Smithers swore.

"And I wasted an hour of my sweet conversation on him!" he said. "Never crossed my mind that the devil couldn't reply!" He was counting the money the Don had paid him as he spoke. "All O.K., boss! Easiest bit of cash I've ever picked up. So-long! I'm going to see about the removal of this case."

(Now look out for next Saturday's MAGNET and further exciting chapters of this powerful story, chums. There's a big surprise awaiting you, believe me. —Ed.)

## COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address: The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped, addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

**O**UR FREE GIFT OFFER of a 32-page Atlas is fast drawing to a close now, chums, and you have only one more week in which to make certain of collecting the necessary EIGHT COUPONS which will enable you to become the proud possessor of one of these splendid Atlases.

Next week I shall give you particulars as to where and when to send in your coupons.

Which country possesses the greatest number of volcanoes? Do you know? That is the poser which is propounded to me by "H. P. F.," of London, and I must admit that it is not an easy one to answer. For volcanoes have a habit of upsetting everybody's calculations, and sometimes one finds that a volcano which has been "extinct" for centuries, suddenly wakes up again and starts "business as usual."

By far the greatest number of volcanoes encircle the Pacific Ocean. Commencing in Alaska, this tremendous ring of volcanoes extends all the way down the west coast of North, Central, and South America. It comes to light again in New Zealand, and then runs north, via New Guinea, the Caroline Islands, and Japan, to Kamatchatka and the Aleutian Islands.

Looking at a volcanic map, I should say that the United States (which include Alaska), Mexico, and Chile would probably tie for the honour of possessing the greatest number of volcanoes.

Now for a number of

### RAPID-FIRE REPLIES.

To What Family does a Donkey Belong? ("Young Reader," of London): The

Cut This Out and Keep it By You!

donkey, or ass, is related to the horse. The domestic donkey of this country is probably identical with the wild asses of Africa and Asia, but it has degenerated greatly, owing to lack of care in breeding, etc.

**Factory Acts** ("Every Saturday," of Totnes): Where there are Acts applying to certain factories, etc., a copy of the Act must be displayed in a prominent place, for the benefit of those who work in that factory. Factories must be sufficiently heated, and factory inspectors carry out periodical visits to ensure that the Acts are being carried out.

**Where did the word "Sirloin" Originate?** (Same Inquirer): The story of the king who "knighted" a loin of beef and called it "Sir Loin," is a sheer romance! The word comes from the French "surloine," meaning the upper part of the loin. Regarding your third query, the cars you mention have not been manufactured lately, but a firm of world-wide reputation have now taken over affairs, and these cars will soon be seen on the road again.

**Joining the Royal Air Force.** (S. Simpson, of Leicester): The nearest R.A.F. depot to you appears to be at Cranwell, Lincs. Write to the Recruiting Dept. there for full particulars.

I am afraid I must "pipe down" now, for I am getting to the end of my space.

There is another bumper number in store for you next week, chums, the principal feature of which is:

### "BILLY BUNTER'S EASTER CRUISE!"

By Frank Richards.

This is a story of the type in which you revel, and it will hold your interest from beginning to end. It's crammed full of good stuff, and—but there, you know what to expect from this author; don't you? And you won't be disappointed! You can take my word for that!

There'll be another full-of-thrills instalment of our splendid serial: "Nobby, the 'Shooting Star'!" and you'll find plenty to make you chuckle in the "Greyfriars Herald" supplement, while I will be "in the office," as usual, to answer your queries, and to give you whatever advice I can.

Cheerio, chums!

YOUR EDITOR.

**ALL THROUGH BUNTER!**

(Continued from page 24.)

in the interior of the armchair and—  
and—

"And they got him at once, and he had to leave them there!" grinned the Bounder. "What luck!"

"I will take charge of these pearls, Wharton. I will communicate with the police at once! I understand that a reward is offered for their recovery. You, I presume, will be entitled to it. Certainly you found them. It—it is somewhat fortunate that this outrageous trick was played with the armchair, since it has led to the discovery of General Parkinson's property!"

Mr. Quelch carried away the glistening prize to his study, where he at once got on the telephone to the police station. A buzzing, excited crowd was left on the staircase. Nugent caught Wharton's arm.

"Quelch says there's a reward, old chap!"

"Yes—what?"

"Couldn't be less than fifteen pounds—"

"Hardly—what?"

"That will see us through!"

"Oh, my hat! What luck!"

"Hurrah!" chortled Bob Cherry. "What jolly luck!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"We owe something to the silly idiot who buzzed this armchair down the stairs," he said. "But who—"

A howl from above came as if in answer. Billy Bunter, squirming in the grasp of Wingate of the Sixth, appeared in view. He was yelling.

"It wasn't me, Wingate! I never touched the chair! I wasn't going to hide it in the room next to Quelch's to pay out those beasts! Leggo! Besides, it was an accident—an accident entirely! The beastly thing ran on its castors, you know, and slipped over the stairs before I could stop it! It just went!"

"You can tell Quelch that," said Wingate. "Come on, you young rascal!"

And Bunter, still protesting his innocence, was led away to his Form-master's study.

It was quite a nine days' wonder at Greyfriars.

The mystery of those missing pearls

was solved—in the most unexpected manner. It was clear now that the bold, bad butler, when he had lifted his master's property, had hidden the one article of great value in that very safe place, intending to remove it later when the coast was clear. A seam in the

believed that the loot was safe, and that he would be able to get at it when he had served his sentence—knowing nothing of the auction that had taken place at the general's residence, and the scattering of the household goods. But undoubtedly the purloined pearls would have remained safe in their strange hiding-place but for chance.

As it was, they had been found—and Harry Wharton had found them. An excited and delighted old general dropped in at the school in the morning. The pearls went back to their owner. A reward, obviously, was due to the finder. Wharton did not exactly want a reward, but he did want to settle with Mr. Lazarus. So the general was told how the matter stood. He was more than willing—in fact, glad—to write a cheque for £15 for Mr. Lazarus, and in addition to undertake the cost of thorough-going repairs to the armchair.

The day the repaired chair was delivered at Greyfriars, and installed once more in Study No. 1, the Famous Five gave a celebration in that study, to which a crowd of fellows came. Billy Bunter rolled in with a determined expression on his fat face.

"I've come for my chair!" said Bunter.

"Eh?"

"My armchair—the Parkinson armchair!"

"Yours?"

"Yes, rather! You fellows grouched when I said I wouldn't have it, so—so I'm going to have it, after all. It was really I who found those pearls in it—they'd never have been found if I hadn't rolled it downstairs. The fact is, I—I thought they might be there, and—and I busted the armchair on purpose to—to find them! If you think you're going to keep that armchair, Wharton, I can only say— Whooooooop!"

Billy Bunter never knew how many feet helped him out of Study No. 1.

THE END.

(Next week's MAGNET will contain the first of a splendid new series of yarns dealing with the Easter holiday adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled: "BILLY BUNTER'S EASTER CRUISE!" You'll vote this coming series the finest Frank Richards has ever written, chums—so don't miss it!)

**THIS WEEK'S TONIC  
LAUGH!**



**Little Boy:** "Please, sir, can you tell me why a clock doesn't strike thirteen?"  
**Clockmaker:** "No, sonny—I'm afraid I can't."  
**Little Boy:** "Because it hasn't the face to do it!"

A useful pocket-knife has been awarded to: Miss A. Burgess, 21, Spencer Gardens, East Sheen, S.W.14, who sent in the above winning "smiler."  
**You REALLY MUST try to win one of these handsome prizes.**

leather had been opened, the pearl necklace thrust in, and the seam reclosed—

No doubt that bold, bad butler had hoped to elude suspicion, and to remove his loot at his leisure. But he had been suspected and "copped," as the Bounder expressed it immediately, and being safe in "chokey," he had been unable to handle the hidden loot. No doubt he

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 Wealthy Rowing Eight are prepared to pay handsomely for a powerful noiseless engine that can be fitted secretly to their skiff and controlled by the cox. Write in confidence, "PON AND HIS BOYS," c/o The Three Fishers, near Farndale.

No. 26 (New Series).

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

April 1st, 1933.



**OARSMEN, RALLY!**  
 Remove rowing men are invited to join a search party after school next Tuesday. Objects: To find the self-styled Rowing Eight known as Pon and His Boys and duck them in the Sark. Oarsmen, rally!

## AS OTHERS SEE THEM

**What I Think of Frank Nugent**

By *Napoleon Dupont*

Heads! I myself find unable to express in the so beautiful English language the excellence of that splendid oarman, Frank Nugent. But I tell you something that means a lot: HE IS ONE ENGLISH GENTLEMAN!

Myself I arrive at Greyfriars with myself, isn't it, and what do I find but that I am alone. I feel the depression; I sigh one big sigh for la belle France. I say to myself, "Napoleon! You feel the oh-so-loneliness!"

Voilà! In this hour of the distress of me, the enfant Frank Nugent he come along; he smile; he comfort me; he say: "Back up with yourself, old chap, isn't it?" And then I laugh with the joy of me; my troubles—poof!—they go! Frank Nugent, as you say in the beautiful English, he do the trick!

I forget not that great kindness of Nugent in the time of the oh-so-loneliness for long time. I salute him to-day as the friend of me, isn't it? He have the modesty; he bring not and boast not, like my big study-part, Bolsover. He have the large kind heart; yet also he is brave and fear no foe in shining template.

As you English remark! Vive Napoleon Dupont! And last to use the so quaint English expression) but not least, VIVE LEAR EXCELLENT ENFANT, FRANK NUGENT!

(Young Nap's certainly done Franky proud, hasn't he? Next week Franky will tell you what he thinks of young Nap in return.—Ed.)

## FIFTH COACH "BRIDGES" DIFFICULTIES

**Potter Surprises Boat Fans**

Potter, who has been acting as coach to a Fifth Form Eight, created something of a sensation when he appeared on the towpath last week walking on a pair of stilts. Fellow rowers wondered at first what the thing he was attempting at.

Then he stripped off the towpath into the river, and they understood. With the aid of the stilts he was able to stand right beside his team and give them instruction at first hand, so to speak.

Of course he found there were drawbacks. The effort of drawing his feet out of the mud, for instance, almost deprived him of his powers of speech and he had to limit the extent of his verbal pronouncements, but he bravely

## Who Will Win The Boat Race?

**Opinions of Greyfriars Celebrities**

HARRY WHARTON: The best team—or so every sportsman hopes, anyway! Merry DEXSOND: Shame, and I'll be the team that deserves to win, unless the team that deserves to win happens to be unlucky and lose to the team that deserves to lose. I'd be rather following played I name at all, at all!

BRITZ BRYTER: Blow the blessed Boat Race! Who's willing to adventure me five shillings on my postal order?

ALONZO TODD: In the matter of this exposition of hydra-headed (No room for the rest, "Lonzy! Sorry"—Ed.)

TOX DUTTON: No trace of what? If you mean there's no trace of common sense in the fellows who number in my ears, then I'm in entire agreement with you!

BOLSOVER MAJOR: I think Oxford, and if any punch thinks otherwise I'll jolly well punch his head!

LORD MATREMENT: Yass! I certainly think—(at this point his noble lordship fell fast asleep.)

WUS LENS: No sorry!

HERN SIKER: I confess I admit that I am unable to prophesy, but I do not doubt that the crew which is just caught in the net will be victorious!

LESTER T. FISH: Aw, baloney! Yale or Harvard could walk away with it blindfold and with their hands tied behind their backs. Yep, yep!

H. S. QREICH, M.A. (Oxon.): Oxford, undoubtedly.

P. P. PROUR, M.A. (Camb.): Cambridge, indubitably.

Mrs. MURRAY: Tottenham Hotspur, to be sure!

## BOAT ON END IN WATER Cause—Bunter

The crew who were spotted watching the Senior Eight at shallow and nobody was in practice on the Sark last Saturday were treated to a sight that must have done their eyes good. No sooner had Wingate and his men passed the Highcliffe bridge than their racing skiff reared up out of the water and stood on end, hurrying the dismayed oarsmen into the river!

Fellow rowers who saw it assure us that it was the most amazing of accidents. Inquiries into the cause of the unprecedented occurrence revealed the fact that Bunter had been sitting on the wall of the bridge just before he had ever seen. Fortunately, consuming a bag of dough-nuts and gazing ruminantly

## LONZY'S LITTLE LETTERS

Dear Editor.—On Wednesday evening I had projected the delivery of a lecture on the absorbing subject of "Morphological Actuality and its Relationship with the History of Potato Cultivation." Contemporaneously, a specimen of that scientific conglomeration of visual and auditory effects terminologically designated as a "talking picture" and colloquially referred to as a "talkie" was being presented in Hall, the film being devoted to the peculiarly inconsequential subject of Oarsmanship and the Inter-University Boat Race.

I had quite anticipated that the prospect of a discursive annunciation of metaphysical principles characterised by mental coruscation would eventuate in the assembly of a copious concourse. But the actual result—invariably as astonishing to you as it was disappointing to me—revealed all intelligent anticipations: NOT A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL ATTENDED MY LECTURE. EVERYBODY HAD GONE TO SEE THE PICTURE INSTEAD!

The only permissible assumption would appear to be that the juveniles in question were unaware of the engaging nature of the proposed lecture. Surely, dear Editor, it is inconceivable—unthinkable, that any sane person could evince a preference for a "talkie" about a contest between two rowing teams on a stretch of that natural combination of hydrogen and oxygen known as water, to a lecture on the history of potato-cultivation from the morphological aspect?

Yours agitatedly,  
 ALONZO TODD.

(Perish the thought, Lonzy! We should think they all made a mistake in the venue and turned up in Hall expecting to hear your lecture. Imagine how disappointed they must have been when they found out their mistake!—Ed.)



into the rippling waters beneath. The sudden appearance of the Senior Eight from under the bridge must have given Bunter a shock, for the next thing he knew was that he was hurtling downwards!

The full weight of William George Bunter descended with frightful force astern. The result was inevitable. Up went the prow and down came the crew with such a wallop that the banks of the river experienced a miniature tidal wave!

The crew waded ashore

## STICKLEBACK LOSES BOAT RACE

**Angler-Oarsman in Shame**

The moral of this story seems to be: Never include enthusiastic anglers in your rowing eight!

When the Fourth challenged us to a mile race on the Sark last Wednesday, we jumped at the chance of once more emphasising our all-round superiority to Temple & Co.

But we made one big mistake. We included Dick Russell in the crew. Russell is a hefty fellow who handles an oar like a champion. But he's also an enthusiastic angler.

He spends quite a lot of time in the Rag telling us of his amazing catches. We fancy he spends his nights dreaming of landing an 800-pound tunny single-handed!

When we dipped our oars in the water for the first pull in the race we had no idea that Russell had left his line in the water half-way down the course, and even if we had known it we should never have guessed what was going to happen.

But it happened!

When we reached the half-way mark our boat was leading by two lengths and there didn't seem to be much doubt about the result.

Then Russell gave a sideways glance promptly spotted that the boat was bobbing up and down. He'd got a bite!

Russell tried to explain it afterwards by saying that he forgot where he was, in his excitement at the prospect of landing a really worth-while fish. Our own view of the matter is that he suddenly went off his rocker!

Which ever explanation is correct Russell promptly choked his oar astide and dived into the water, with the result that our unhappy boat shot off at a tangent and almost collided with the bank!

While we were trying to get going again the Fourth forged ahead, and by the time the remainder of our Eight had once more settled down, Temple & Co. were several lengths in front. Naturally, we found it impossible without one of our best men to make up the deficit, and we consequently suffered the bitter humiliation of a five lengths defeat.

Meanwhile, Russell was standing on the bank, cooing water and hauling in his line, at the end of which process he discovered that he had caught—not an 800-pound tunny, nor anything like it!

As a matter of fact it was a stickleback, weighing exactly two ounces!

In the Remove we believe in making the punishment fit the crime. We showed the stickleback down Russell's neck and anyone who objects to it is welcome to come round and see the Editor and talk it over!

## DICKY NUGENT'S WEEKLY WISDOM

An extraordinary coincidence happened last week, dear readers. One hundred years ago a coach was held up near Greyfriars.

Last Wednesday, on the hundredth anniversary of this incident, another coach was held up near Greyfriars!

Of course I'll admit there was a slight difference.

On the first occasion it was a stage-coach held up by highwaymen.

On the second occasion it was the school rowing-coach held up by cars; he fell off the towpath, you see, and that was how the fellows rescued him!

Still, it's funny how history repeats itself, isn't it?

## WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?

His greatest achievement was when he got stuck in the middle of the river just as the Fifth Form Eight were approaching. Potter promptly straddled out his legs and overcame such minor difficulties.

Now we know what Smilly meant when he said that Bolsover had been almost overcome by the swift currents!



## DISTINCTION WITH A DIFFERENCE

They say that Temple of the Penarth is supercilious. Personally, we think he's a Super Silly Ass!

## FOND OF SHELLFISH?

If so, hop down to the river at once. Dicky Desmond has just caught six "crabs" in succession!

## "WATER" DISASTER!

We hear that the Second-Formers are using dried fruit as ammunition in their peashooters.

Now we know what Smilly meant when he said that Bolsover had been almost overcome by the swift currents!



## GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!

Bob Cherry is the mightiest hitter in the Remove cricket XI, his driving powers being terrific! He once smashed the pavilion clock with a "sixer"!

The school fire brigade, under the command of George Warrate, is speedily quelling an outbreak in the Head's house. The Remove members of the brigade were real to the fore!

in days of yore Connon Wharton and Major Cherry used to share No. 1 as Wharton and Nugent do to-day.

When Iung invited several friends to a study "spread"—and placed before them a huge platter of boiled rice, which they had to eat with chop-sticks!

Fishes, I fish, says the Remove a bespoken demonstration—which ended abruptly when Bob Cherry "pitched" one on Fishy's nose!

## IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE!

On opening a jam jar he had fished from the cupboard of Study No. 1 recently, Bunter found that it contained ancient egg-yolks and stink-bomb mixture.

Perhaps it's hardly necessary for us to tell you that Bunter got a nasty "jar"!

## GIFTS OF MUFFLERS

Will be welcomed in Study No. 2, in what Brown tells us is true. He says that Hazelton has got an awful neck!

