

DON'T MISS THE . . . Sensational School Story of Harry Wharton & Co.—Inside!

The Magnet

2^D



DON'T COME BACK
AFTER EASTER.
WE'RE FED UP
WITH YOU!
TOO MUCH
JAW
TOO MUCH
CANE
EVERY MAN IN THE
REMOVE IS SICK OF
YOUR GARGOYLE
OF A CHIVVY
GET OUT
STAY OUT

Mr. Quelch's Easter Egg!



Come Into the Office, Boys—and Girls!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of the "Magnet," The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

YOU know, of course, that in some parts of the world cowry shells are used as money, but doubtless a number of my readers do not know

THE VALUE OF A COWRY.

That is the question which J. B., of Brighton, puts to me this week. Cowries, which are the currency of the British Protectorate of the Maldive Islands, situated west of Ceylon, are not worth much. To be precise, it takes one thousand cowries to make a penny! So if you had four pounds three and fourpence (equivalent to a million cowries), you would be a millionaire on the Maldive Islands!

A Bradford reader sends me along particulars of what appears to be

THE WORLD'S SMALLEST MODEL CAR.

It has been made by a Bradford engraver, and is a model of Sir Malcolm Campbell's Blue Bird. And—you'd hardly believe it—it was made out of a single pin! The wheels revolve on axles which are only one-sixty-fourth of an inch thick. The car will pass through a pipe stem.

This engraver has also constructed a model of a three-wheeled car and a wheelbarrow. These, too, have been each constructed out of single pins. This same man can also engrave a clock face or the whole alphabet on the head of a pin in five minutes—and without using a magnifying glass! The next thing he says he is going to do is to split a pin into four strips, turn each strip back, and make it look like a flower!

A WOLVERHAMPTON reader asks me to tell him this week

WHAT IS A SAFE DEPOSIT?

That's easy. It is a series of vaults and safes constructed in the earth underneath a street or big building. There are many of them in London, and, by paying rent, anyone can hire one of these safes or vaults. They are connected by long, low corridors, and throughout the whole of the day and night armed guards patrol these corridors. Triple-barred gates also protect them, and searchlights are trained on the keyholes of each strong room, which are fastened by time-locks. Some of them even have "water-locks," so that if anyone attempted to tamper with the lock, a flood of water would be let loose, and the burglar would probably be drowned.

Do you know how much gold there is estimated to be kept under the streets of London in these safe deposits at the present time? No less than five hundred million pounds' worth!

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Have you ever wondered how it is that newspapers can be published simultaneously in two or more cities—and have exactly the same appearance as the London edition? P. G., of Morecambe, asks me

HOW IT IS DONE.

First of all, the paper is "made up" in London, then each page is photographed. These photographs are sent by wire to the provincial Editor, who then proceeds to make up his own edition in exactly the same type as the original. So, while the London edition is being printed, the provincial one is also going to press. Wonderful strides have been made in the transmission of photographs by wire and radio, and in the near future it will actually be possible to print an English newspaper in Australia, exactly the same as the London edition, only an hour or two after the paper has gone to press in this country.

If you have ever heard the expression,

THE CURSE OF SCOTLAND,

you may have wondered what it is, and what it means. A Harrow reader asks me if I can tell him something about it. Well, "the Curse of Scotland" is a playing card—the nine of diamonds. It is rather an interesting story as to how this came about. It was the Duke of Cumberland who decided to exterminate ruthlessly the Jacobites in Scotland after the rebellion. He wrote out his order for this to be done on the first thing that came to his hand—a playing-card representing the nine of diamonds. So many people were killed as a result of this order, that it is small wonder that the card became known as "The Curse."

Here is another query about Scotland. "Curious," of Glasgow, wants to know

HOW GLASGOW GOT ITS NAME.

The origin of the name has never been actually traced. It is generally believed, however, that the name is derived from the Gaelic word "glas," which means green or verdant, and "go," which means a dell. The name, therefore, means "a green dell."

The same reader asks the derivation of the name "Aberdeen." This simply means the mouth of the River Dee. Aber is a Celtic prefix, and is frequently found in most parts of Scotland. But in what was once the old kingdom of Strathclyde, they preferred to use the prefix "Inver," which means the same thing. Hence the various names found in Scotland beginning with the prefix "Inver."

WHILE we are on about names, here are a few more

SURNAMES AND THEIR MEANINGS,

which may interest you:

Bywater was originally "Bythewater," and meant a dweller near a lake, river, or stream.

Lane was a similar name to the above, and the original form was "Bylane," meaning a man who lived near the lane.

Moat has two derivations. One meant a man who lived near a moat. The other was a shortened form of Matilda. The surname Mott is another variation of the name.

Elvey comes from an old Anglo-Saxon word which meant a fairy or a friend. There are many forms of the same name, such as Elvin, Elwin, Alwin, and Alwyn.

Aubrey is a French form of "Alberic," which was originally a German name.

Armour was once "Armourer," and meant, literally, an armourer.

Spicer is another form of "Spicerer," and meant that its first owner was a treasurer. The surname "Tressure" means the same.

Lister came from "Litstere," and means the same as the name "Dyer"—i.e., that its owner was a dyer by trade. Dyster and Dexter are other forms of the same name.

Now for a few

RAPID FIRE REPLIES

to various queries which readers have sent to me:

Did Edison Invent the Telephone? No. Many people think he did, but it was actually invented by Alexander Graham Bell.

Which is the Largest Pyramid in the World? The pyramid of Cholula, in Mexico. It covers 50 acres. In Egypt the largest pyramid covers only 13 acres.

Where is the Largest Clock in the World? In New Jersey, U.S.A. The dial is fifty feet in diameter, and the minute hand is 27 feet long. The hour hand is over 19 feet in length.

What is Britain's Oldest Tennis Court? The one at Hampton Court, which has been in use since 1519. It is enclosed by walls and a roof, and has a stone floor. The tennis played upon it is very different from modern lawn tennis.

What is a "Mammy Chair"? It is a sort of crate which holds four persons, and is used to enable passengers to land from steamers at some places on the west coast of Africa. The passengers are swung over the ship's side, and lowered into surf boats, which are the only small vessels which can withstand the battering of the sea at those spots.

NOW for a query which I feel sure every reader of the MAGNET wishes me to answer: "What is in store for next week?"

Something really good, I can tell you that! First of all,

"JIMMY THE FOX!"

By Frank Richards,

is the title of our splendid school story of Harry Wharton & Co. In this, the first yarn of a grand new series, all your favourite characters play a prominent part, included among whom is Jack Drake, a one-time junior at Greyfriars, but now boy assistant to the celebrated detective, Ferrers Locke, of whom you will hear more in this superb story of the chums of Greyfriars. It is a yarn in which you will revel, so be sure and read it!

Then comes another bright and breezy issue of the "Greyfriars Herald," a first-class instalment of our popular adventure story: "The Sea Spider!"—as well as "Linsman's" Soccer talk, and another "Greyfriars Interview" by the Greyfriars Rhymester. A word of warning—be sure and order your copy in good time!

YOUR EDITOR.

QUELCH'S EASTER EGG!



—BILLY BUNTER, the PAUL PRY of the REMOVE, in the LIMELIGHT

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Borrowing a Bike!

WHO'S going to mend my puncture?"

Five fellows grinned.

Billy Bunter did not intend his question to be taken as a joke. But the Famous Five of the Greyfriars Remove seemed to take it as one.

It was the last half-holiday of the term. Harry Wharton & Co. had come down to the bike-shed to wheel out their jiggers and ride over to Highcliffe. And, good-natured fellows as they were, not one of the famous Co. seemed disposed to give up his ride in order to attend to Billy Bunter's dilapidated bike.

They lifted their machines from the stands. Billy Bunter, standing in the doorway, which his ample figure nearly filled, blinked at them through his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shift!" said Bob Cherry.

"But I say—"

"Gerrout of the way, fathead!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"But—"

"Do you want these bikes wheeled over you?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Don't be an ass, old chap!" said Bunter peevishly. "Look at my jigger! Can I ride it with the tyre flat like that?"

"Is that a conundrum?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton, if that puncture isn't mended, I can't ride the bike—and that means that I can't come over to Highcliffe with you!"

"That's all right! You're not coming, anyway!"

"Beast!"

"Are you shifting, or do you want

me to bump this bike on your dinner?" asked Bob Cherry. "It will disturb some of the eleven helpings if I do!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've asked you to mend that puncture six or seven times at least, Bob!" said the Owl of the Remove reproachfully. "You mended a puncture for Marjorie Hazeldene the other day! I don't see why you can't do mine!"

Bob chuckled.

Apparently, he saw some distinction between mending punctures for Marjorie and performing the same sticky service for William George Bunter.

SENSATION!

Someone has had the audacity to send Mr. Quelch, the master of the Greyfriars Remove, an insulting message under cover of an Easter egg! WHO'S THE CULPRIT?

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" grunted Bunter. "I never saw such a lazy lot! I say—"

"The sayfulness is too terrific, my esteemed and idiotic Bunter!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Will you get out of the absurd way?"

"Well, this means that I shall have to borrow a bike," said Bunter. "I'm not going away for Easter without saying good-bye to my pals at Highcliffe. I say— Whoooooop!"

Billy Bunter did not intend to say "Whoop!" He said it unintentionally

as Johnny Bull, losing patience, wheeled on his bike.

The front wheel came into collision with the fat figure in the doorway, and Billy Bunter sat down quite suddenly.

He sat and roared.

"Ow! Beast! Wow!"

"Take a rest somewhere else, old fat bean!" suggested Bob Cherry. "You'll get trodden on if you sit there!"

"Wow! Beast! Wow!"

"All together, you men!" said Bob. "If he bursts, Gosling will have to come and sweep it up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But Billy Bunter did not wait to be trodden on. He squirmed hastily out of the way, and the five juniors wheeled out their machines and ran them down to the gate.

Billy Bunter blinked after them wrathfully. Then he blinked round at the other machines on the stands.

Mending punctures was not an occupation that appealed to Bunter. His punctured bike had been out of action for weeks. Bunter had asked nearly every fellow in the Remove to mend that puncture. Nobody had done it. They were, as Bunter said, a lazy lot!

He had to borrow a machine.

It was necessary to get over to Highcliffe School with the Famous Five. Bunter was not, perhaps, frightfully anxious to say good-bye to his pals there—if any! But it was fairly certain that the Famous Five would stop to tea—and tea in Courtenay's study was a great attraction. They did these things well at Highcliffe.

The only question was—which bike was Bunter going to borrow?

He would have preferred Lord Mauleverer's. Mauly's bike was the most expensive in the Remove, and Mauly was

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the Removeite least likely to kick Bunter for bagging it.

But Mauly's bike was gone. Apparently, his lordship had taken it out himself that half-holiday—which caused Bunter to emit a grunt of annoyance. It was rather inconsiderate of Mauly to take the bike out when Bunter wanted it.

He decided on Smithy's.

Herbert Vernon-Smith, certainly, was not the fellow to take it patiently like Mauly. He was very likely indeed to kick Bunter if he found that the fat Owl had bagged his jigger. Still, Bunter hoped that he wouldn't find it out. And it was an excellent jigger. Bunter liked a good machine under him, and the Bounder's was a good one.

So, having decided on his mount, Bunter lifted it down and wheeled it out and rolled it away, almost rolling it into a junior who was coming to the bike-shed.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter, as he blinked at the Bounder.

"Mind where you're going, you blind owl!" grunted Smithy. "Do you want to knock me over, you blithering fat-head?"

He walked round Bunter and went into the bike-shed.

Billy Bunter gave a gasp of relief. Smithy had not recognised his own machine in the fat Owl's hands.

But he was certain to miss it in a few moments; he could not have gone to the bike-shed for anything else. Bunter had no time to lose.

He ran the bike swiftly down to the gate and hopped into the saddle. As his weight plumped on it, the Bounder came jumping out of the bike-shed.

He glared after Bunter.

"Stop!" he roared. "Have you got my bike? Why, you fat rotter, that's my jigger! Stop!"

He rushed after Bunter.

"Stop!" he howled, as he rushed.

Bunter was not likely to stop!

It was only too certain that Smithy was going to kick him for borrowing that bike. If the kicking was inevitable, Bunter naturally preferred it to happen after he had had the ride!

He drove at the pedals and whisked out into the road.

After him tore the Bounder.

"Stop!" shrieked Vernon-Smith.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

Smithy's machine was high for the fat Owl. His feet hardly reached the pedals. Plunging at them desperately, he took a list to port, and then a list to starboard. Smithy raced after him.

"Stop!" he yelled. "I'll serag you! I'll burst you all over the road! I'll—"

"Oh lor'!"

Bunter wobbled wildly on.

Less to keep possession of the bike than to keep out of reach of the enraged Bounder, the fat Owl put all his beef into it.

Smithy put on a fierce spurt. He reached the wobbling bike, and made a clutch at Bunter.

But as he clutched, the pedals flew round under a desperate plunge of Bunter's foot, and the bike shot away.

Smithy's clutch missed Bunter. It glided down the rear mudguard, and the Bounder pitched forward.

Crash!

"Oh crumbs!" gurgled Bunter.

He gave a hasty blink back over a fat shoulder. Herbert Vernon-Smith was sprawling on his hands and knees in the dust of the road. The expression on his face was alarming—indeed, terrifying!

Billy Bunter did not stop for a second blink. Wobbling wildly, he whizzed

away up the Courtfield road after the Famous Five, leaving the Bounder to pick himself up and rub painful hands and knees, with an expression on his face like unto that of a demon in a pantomime!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Pride Goeth Before a Fall!

"JOLLY old Pon!" said Bob Cherry. "Steer clear!" said Harry Wharton.

Harry Wharton & Co. slowed down. Highcliffe School lay beyond the town of Courtfield, and, to avoid riding through the town, the Famous Five turned into a bridle-path through the woods. Far behind them, but in sight, the fat figure of Billy Bunter followed on. Ahead of the chums of the Remove a horseman appeared—a rather handsome figure in well-cut and natty riding-clothes.

As they drew nearer, they recognised Cecil Ponsonby, of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe.

Pon was riding at a canter towards the bunch of cyclists. There was not too much room on the bridle-path, and the Greyfriars fellows strung out in file, so as to pass the rider singly.

The dandy of Highcliffe looked at them with that supercilious curl of the lip that often made fellows want to punch his cheeky head. Indeed, more than once it had caused fellows to do so.

On the present occasion, however, the chums of the Remove carefully took no heed of Pon's cheek. They were going to Pon's school, to see Courtenay and the Caterpillar, and did not want a row with Pon en route.

It is said that it takes two to make a quarrel. But that is not always the case. Pon, as he came closer, made his horse prance.

A prancing horse, in a narrow bridle-path shut in by trees on either side, was rather dangerous for fellows on push bikes.

Harry Wharton was pedalling in the lead, with Bob Cherry next, followed by Johnny Bull, then Nugent, and Hurree Jamsot Ram Singh last. With Pon's horse prancing just ahead of him, Wharton put on his brakes, and slowed still more, and Bob nearly ran into him. Bob braked, and the others braked. Harry Wharton shouted:

"Look out, Ponsonby!"

"Mind what you're at, you ass!" shouted Johnny Bull angrily. "Do you want to ride us down, you fathead?"

Ponsonby laughed.

He gave his steed a touch of the whip, and the horse pranced and curvetted more than before, and Wharton jammed on his brakes hard, just in time to escape a collision with plunging legs.

He jumped off his machine, and Bob jumped off behind him, and Nugent, unable to stop in time, bumped into Johnny Bull, and both of them pitched over against the trees. Hurree Jamsot Ram Singh barely avoided crashing into them.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Ponsonby, as he pranced by. "You Greyfriars fellows ought to learn to ride before you go out on bikes!"

"You silly swanking ass!" roared Bob Cherry.

"You terrific idiot!" howled Hurree Singh.

Johnny Bull extracted himself from between his bike and a tree, his face red with wrath. He had knocked his ankle on a pedal as he went over—and a bang on an ankle from a pedal is rather painful. Leaving his bike, Johnny clenched his hands and ran towards the rider.

"Hold on, Johnny!" exclaimed Wharton.

"I'll smash the cheeky cad!" roared Johnny.

Ponsonby, grinning, gave his horse a cut and dashed on. Johnny was left behind him, shaking futile fists.

"The cheeky rotter!" gasped Nugent. "Let's go after him and have him off that horse!" hooted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, let's get on!" answered Harry Wharton. "We don't want a row, and the fellow can't help being a cad!"

Bob Cherry stared back along the bridle-path, after Pon. Billy Bunter was coming on after the Famous Five, wobbling on a bike too high for him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob. "If that idiot Pon plays tricks on Bunter there will be an accident."

"Look out, Ponsonby, you fool!" roared Wharton, in real alarm.

Pon was prancing down on Bunter.

Evidently he intended to barge the fat Owl into the trees, as he had done with Harry Wharton & Co.

He did not allow for the fact that Bunter was not a capable cyclist, like the Famous Five; moreover, with a machine too high for him, plunging at pedals he could hardly reach, Bunter had his bike under very little control.

He blinked at Ponsonby through his big spectacles, and gave a squeak of alarm at the sight of the prancing horse, which seemed to the fat Owl to be towering over him.

Ponsonby chuckled.

"Get out of the way, you fat freak!" he shouted.

Only too gladly Bunter would have got out of the way. But he couldn't! He plunged at a pedal and missed it. The bike gave a fearful wobble, curled up, and landed Bunter on the ground.

The bike sprawled right across the path, with Bunter sprawling beside it, roaring.

Pon dragged on his reins.

Harry Wharton & Co., too far off to intervene, stared at the scene, in horrified expectation of a serious accident. If the prancing hoofs had got mixed up with the bike, Pon as well as Bunter would probably have been badly hurt.

But the Highcliffe fellow dragged his horse round in time, just missing the bike, and crashing into the thicket beside the bridle-path.

The next moment he was sprawling out of the saddle.

The horse, squealing with fright, backed away. Pon was left sprawling with his head in a bush.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"After pride comes a fall!" grinned Nugent.

"Yow-ow-ow!" Bunter was roaring. "Keep off! I say, you fellows, help! I say—Yaroooh!"

Ponsonby scrambled out of the bush, his face red with rage. His fall had been entirely his own fault; but that did not seem to matter to Pon.

"You clumsy fool!" he yelled, and ran towards the Owl, his riding-whip in the air.

"Stop that, Ponsonby!" shouted Wharton.

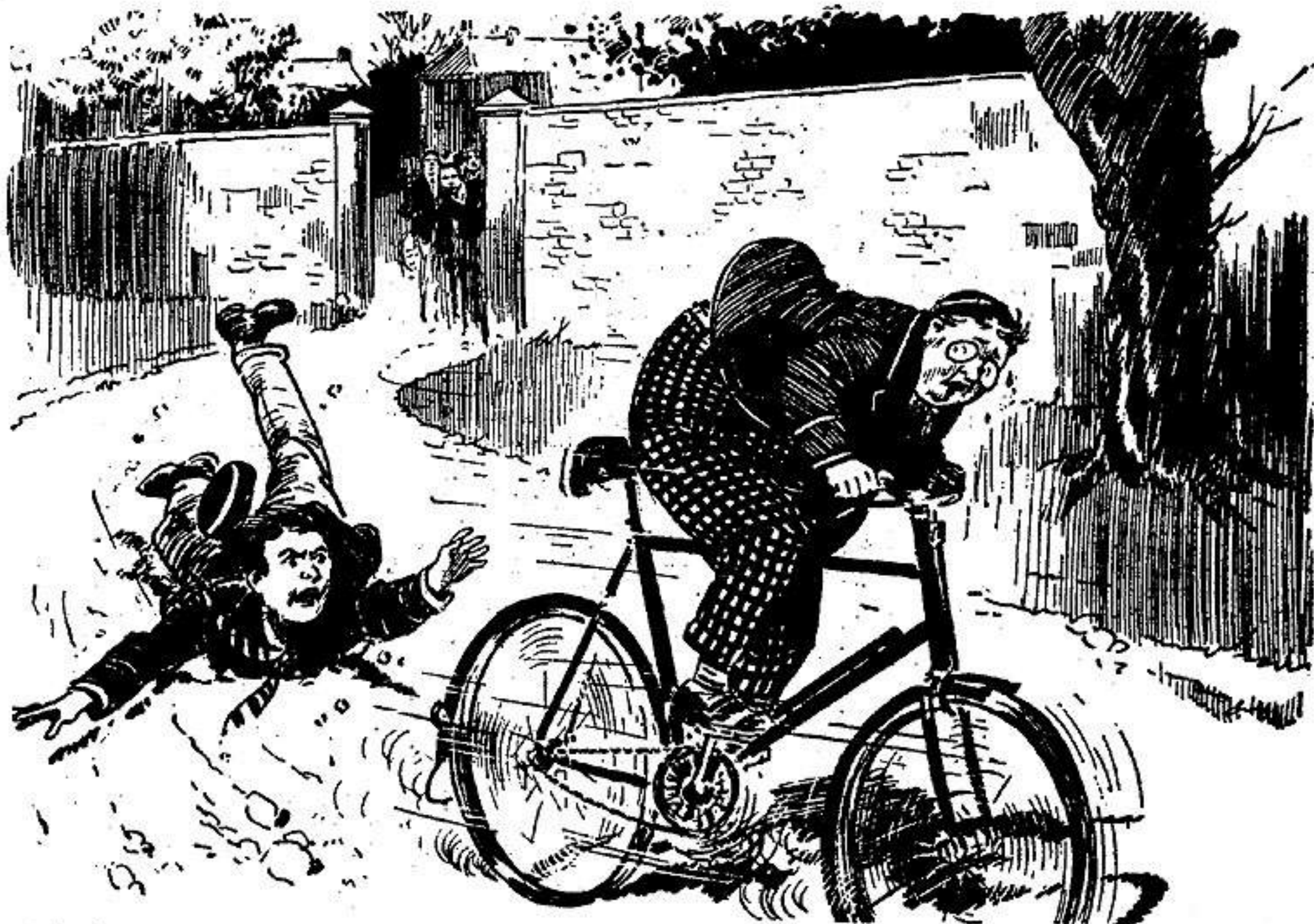
Pon did not heed.

He reached Bunter, and the riding-whip descended. It curled round Bunter's shoulders, and there was a terrific yell from the Owl of the Remove. "Yooooooop!"

Lash, lash, lash! Pon lashed again and again, glaring at the howling Owl with a furious face.

He did not seem to see the Famous Five racing towards the spot. Bob Cherry arrived first.

Pon was lashing again, when Bob grabbed him by the collar, and dragged him back.



"Stop!" yelled Vernon-Smith. "I'll scrag you—I'll burst you all over the road! I'll—" "Oh, lor!" gasped Bunter, wobbling wildly on. The enraged Smithy put on a fierce spurt, reached the wobbling bike, and made a clutch at Bunter. His clutch missed, and he pitched forward with a crash. "Ow!"

"You rotter!" roared Bob. "Oh, my hat! Ow!"

He had caught the next lash from the riding-whip across his shoulder.

Ponsonby had no time to deliver another.

The riding-whip was torn from his hand. Bob, breathing rage, pitched him down into the grass, and lashed in his turn.

Whack, whack, whack! came Pon's own riding-whip across his shoulders as he sprawled in the grass.

"Go it!" roared Johnny Bull. "Give the cad toco!"

Bob was giving the dandy of Highcliffe "toco." Pon had seldom had "toco" so energetically administered.

"Ow, ow!" Bunter was roaring. "I say, you fellows—Wow!"

But even Bunter did not roar so loudly as Pon!

The dandy of Highcliffe squirmed and wriggled, howled and yelled, under the lashes of the riding-whip.

He scrambled to his feet at last and dashed to his horse. Bob flung the riding-whip after him, landing it on the back of his neck.

"There, you cad!" panted Bob. "You'll think twice before you handle that whip on a Greyfriars man again, you cur!"

Pon did not answer. He scrambled on his horse. Wharton picked up the fallen bike, and Nugent helped Bunter to his feet.

Pon, his face white with rage, rode past them, and disappeared down the bridle-path. He had grabbed up his whip, and he lashed the horse as he went.

"Ow! Wow! You didn't give him enough, you silly ass!" gasped Bunter. "I say, you fellows—Wow! I say, I'm hurt!"

"So's Pon!" grinned Bob. "Come on, you men—"

"I say, wait for me!" howled Bunter.

"I say, my neck's broken—I mean, my leg! I say, I can't ride! I say, I think I can manage to get to Highcliffe, if two of you fellows hold me and I free-wheel all the way!"

"Can't you get to Highcliffe without that?" asked Bob.

"No!" gasped Bunter.

"Sure?"

"Ow! Quite!"

"Good!" said Bob. "Come on, you chaps! Good-bye, Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts!" roared Bunter, as the Famous Five, laughing, walked back to their machines.

They remounted and rode on. Looking back a few minutes later, they saw the fat Owl of the Remove astern, wobbling onward on Smithy's bike. Billy Bunter had found that he could ride, after all.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Snaffing a Spread!

"BEASTS!"

Billy Bunter made that remark, as he blinked into Study No. 3 in the Fourth Form passage at Highcliffe School.

Bunter had arrived rather late.

So far from free-wheeling him all the way to Highcliffe, the Famous Five had not even dropped to a snail's pace, in order to allow him to keep up.

They had disappeared ahead of Bunter, and were far out of sight, when the fat Owl pedalled up the road to the school.

Bunter was tired—and Bunter was cross! He had collected several bumps

and bruises in his tumble on the bridle-path. And the whacks from Pon's riding-whip left painful twinges. Altogether, the fat Owl was not feeling his brightest.

When he rolled into the House, Mr. Mobbs, the master of the Fourth, spotted him, and gave him a frown. Mr. Mobbs did not like Greyfriars fellows. Mobby's frown annoyed Bunter. He was still more annoyed when, passing Drury of the Fourth in the House, Drury kicked him in passing. Drury, who was a pal of Pon's, did not like Greyfriars fellows, either! Arriving at Courtenay's study, Bunter expected to find Harry Wharton & Co. there, and tea going on—or at least ready! And the study was empty!

"Beasts!" repeated Bunter.

Bunter was not only tired and cross, but he was hungry. It was hardly tea-time yet, but Bunter's unearthly appetite never waited for meal-times. The least the beasts could have done, Bunter considered, was to have had tea ready when he blew in.

Bunter had not been asked to tea, and neither Courtenay nor the Caterpillar expected to see him at Highcliffe that afternoon. But that was a trifling detail unworthy of attention.

He blinked angrily and discontentedly into Courtenay's study. Then he rolled in.

He supposed that the beasts were out somewhere—walking about, like the silly idiots they were; always up and doing when they might have been sitting down and taking things easy! Bunter could, at least, get a rest while he was waiting for them. He would rather have had tea, but the rest was

welcome—Bunter could do with a great deal of rest.

He blinked from the study window. There they were—walking in the quad—the Famous Five and Courtenay and the Caterpillar. But they were not coming towards the House.

Bunter scowled at the tops of their heads as they passed within his view. They were sauntering and chatting—very likely about the Easter holidays.

The Owl of the Remove would have been quite glad to discuss Easter with them. It was rather a pressing matter. Bunter was not yet "fixed up" for Easter. Nobody, as usual, seemed frightfully keen on Bunter's fascinating society for the "hols." Indeed, it was enough for Bunter to begin, "I say, you fellow, about the hols—" to cause fellows to scamper off.

"Beasts!" said Bunter, for the third time.

And he sat down in Rupert de Courcy's very comfortable armchair, and put his feet on the fender. A fire was burning in the grate, and the study was very cosy and comfortable.

Bunter enjoyed a rest, hoping to hear the beasts come in, any minute. It was about ten minutes later that the door-handle turned.

The door opened; but Bunter did not see who looked into the study, as the high back of the armchair was between him and the door. He was about to rise, when he heard a voice—that of Gadsby of the Fourth.

"They're not here, Vav!"

Bunter sat tight.

Gaddy was one of Pon's pals, and Vavasour was another. Bunter did not want to see them. It was only too probable that they would have seized the opportunity of ragging the fat Owl

if they had caught him alone in the study. He fervently hoped that they would not discover his presence.

They did not enter the study. For some reason of his own, Gadsby seemed to desire to ascertain whether the owners of the study were there, with their Greyfriars guests. A glance from the passage showed Gaddy that they were not.

"They're not, absolutely!" agreed Vavasour.

"Rather a lark to snaffle the stuff!" whispered Gadsby—a whisper quite audible to the fat junior in the armchair. "I saw it sent in—you know how the Caterpillar spreads himself when he's got visitors. There's a tremendous cake—"

"I say, they'd kick up a shindy—"

"I don't see wasting all that stuff on Greyfriars cads!"

"Absolutely! But—"

"Tons of jam tarts and eclairs and things—"

"Yaas; but—"

"Safe as houses," said Gadsby. "How'd they know? In fact, they'll most likely put it down to Bunter—"

"Bunter?" repeated Vavasour.

"That fat Greyfriars freak! He's about the place somewhere—I saw him get off a bike at the gate."

"Oh, all right, then!"

Billy Bunter crouched low in the armchair. Stealthy footsteps came into the study.

Luckily neither Gadsby nor Vavasour glanced over the high back of the chair. It did not occur to either of them that Billy Bunter, who was about the place somewhere, was in that study!

Passing behind the armchair, they crossed to the study cupboard.

Bunter breathed hard.

He was almost disposed to reveal his presence, and do battle with the two young rascals who did not "see" wasting that tuck on Greyfriars cads! If anything could have spurred Billy Bunter on to battle, it would have been the prospect of losing a feed.

Almost was Bunter tempted to rise and face the enemy. But not quite! Discretion was the better part of valour! Bunter did not want to be ragged! He sat tight!

He heard a chuckle, as Gadsby opened the cupboard door. It was echoed by another chuckle from Vavasour. Evidently the Highcliffians were pleased with what they saw there.

"Ripping!" murmured Gadsby.

"Toppin'!" said Vavasour.

"I say, we'll stack it in the study, and have a spread when Pon comes in. Ten to one they'll think that fat pig Bunter had it! Anyhow, they won't know we had!"

"Absolutely!"

There was a sound of shifting goods in the study cupboard. Then the footsteps repassed behind the high back of the armchair to the door.

The door closed.

Gadsby and Vavasour, heavily laden, were gone.

"Oh crikey!" breathed Bunter.

He rose to his feet, and blinked at the door. Then he rolled across to it, opened it a few inches, and blinked out into the passage through his big spectacles.

Gadsby and Vavasour, with their arms full of plunder, were disappearing into Study No. 5, which belonged to Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Monson.

"Oh, the rotters!" breathed Bunter.

The spread, or most of it, was gone! And the raiders counted on Billy Bunter getting the credit of that raid. It was only too probable! When tuck was missing in the Remove at Greyfriars, its owners went to look for Billy Bunter, as a matter of course. Billy Bunter's little round eyes gleamed with indignation behind his big round spectacles.

Gadsby and Vavasour came out again, without their plunder. Bunter saw them grinning in the passage.

"Some spread, what?" Gadsby's voice reached his fat ears.

"Absolutely!" chuckled Vavasour.

"We'll tell the other fellows—and wait for Pon! Pon will be back soon—he's only gone for a ride! Come on! Wait for him at the gates!" said Gadsby.

They went towards the stairs, and disappeared.

Billy Bunter blinked out into a deserted passage.

Then a fat grin overspread his face.

He stepped out of Study No. 3 and rolled along to Study No. 5.

He rolled into that study.

Gadsby and Vavasour were going to wait at the gates for Pon to come in, to join them in the snaffled spread. By the time Pon came in there was not going to be much of that spread left—if Bunter could help it.

Shutting the study door, Bunter blinked round for the plunder. It lay in a heap on the study table.

Certainly, now that the coast was clear, Billy Bunter could have carried that plunder back to the study where it belonged. But it did not occur to his fat mind to do so.

Indeed, had Bunter been aware, when he was in Study No. 3, of what was in the study cupboard, probably he would not have been able to resist the temptation to begin.

Now that the tempting spread was



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before his eyes, and his spectacles, he did not even think of resisting temptation.

He started.

Jam tarts and chocolate eclairs went down like oysters. How many there were of them Bunter did not know—he did not stop to count. There were quite a lot, and the rate at which they performed the vanishing trick was wonderful. Happy and sticky and shiny, Bunter turned to the cake.

Even Bunter slowed down at this stage of the proceedings. But he kept going manfully. It was a big cake—a very big cake! But there never was a cake big enough to beat Bunter. He munched and munched and munched.

There was a sound of footsteps, and familiar voices in the passage. Billy Bunter grinned over the cake as he heard Harry Wharton & Co., on their way to Study No. 3, with Courtenay and De Courcy. The beasts had kept him waiting for tea. Now they could whistle for their tea!

Bunter went on munching.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Smithy Takes a Hand!

GALLOP! Gallop!

Thud, thud, thud!

"Oh gad!" ejaculated Smithy.

He jammed on his brakes.

The Bounder, left behind when Bunter whizzed away on the borrowed bike, had spent some time in doctoring his damages. His hands and knees were in rather a painful state, after his crash on the road. But his temper was in a still more painful state, and he was yearning to get within thumping distance of the fat Owl, with a deep yearning. For that reason he borrowed Tom Redwing's bike and started in pursuit.

He knew where the Famous Five had gone, and that Bunter was on their trail. And though Bunter had had a long start, he had little doubt of running him down before he reached Highcliffe. He put on speed, and came into the bridle-path through Courtfield woods, almost like an arrow from a bow.

But the sight of a wildly prancing horse, with a rider clinging to its neck, caused Smithy to brake sharply and dismount.

The galloping horse was coming straight at him.

Evidently it had run away with its rider.

Vernon-Smith hastily shoved his bike out of the way among the trees by the bridle-path. Then he stood staring at the oncoming rider, with a contemptuous grin on his face.

He recognised Ponsonby of Highcliffe. Pon was not looking now the handsome and natty horseman he had looked when he met the Famous Five a mile farther up the bridle-path. He looked rather like a sack of coke as he sprawled and clung on the runaway horse.

Pon was not in point of fact the finished horseman that he fancied himself to be. He could ride, but he could not handle a horse that took the bit between its teeth. And his mount had taken the bit between its teeth with a vengeance.

Already startled and scared, the horse would have been manageable if Pon had not been the fellow he was. But Pon, in his rage and chagrin, smarting from the lashes Bob Cherry had given him, took it out of the unfortunate animal, lashing him savagely as he rode away for no reason except that he was in a savage temper, and wanted some victim on whom to wreak his fury.

That did it!

The horse rapidly became unmanageable.

Wildly excited, squealing with pain, the frantic animal ran away with his rider, and once he had taken the bit between his teeth, Pon's horsemanship failed him.

The horse careered wildly along the bridle-path, heedless of Pon's wild jerks on the reins. Pon dropped his whip—his hat flew off—he lost his reins, and clung to the horse's neck to save himself from a fall. His rage had changed to terror now.

The Bounder, with contemptuous eyes, noted the terror in Pon's white face. He was more or less friendly with the dandy of Highcliffe; but that did not prevent him from despising Pon from the bottom of his heart.

He backed into the trees after his bike to give the careering horse space to pass. It was hardly safe to remain on the narrow bridle-path with the frantic animal charging by, with dangling reins and thrashing hoofs and wildly tossing head.

Ponsonby saw him and gave a yell—a yell for help! The horse was utterly beyond his control. It was the result of his own reckless cruelty but that was no

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consolation to Pon. The thought of reaching the end of the bridle-path and dashing out among the cars on the Courtfield road filled the dandy of Highcliffe with terror. Better than that was to fling himself from the galloping horse while there was still grass to fall upon; but he lacked the nerve to take the chance.

Smithy set his teeth.

His first thought had been to keep out of the way of the maddened animal. But his second thought was to stop the runaway if he could.

He stepped out of the trees again, watching for his chance as the horse came thundering by.

Another yell—or rather yelp—from Ponsonby. The Bounder sneered. He was going to help the Highcliffe fellow if he could, but he did not take the trouble to disguise his contempt.

The horse careered by, and Smithy jumped. Strong and steady, cool as ice, reckless of danger to life and limb, the Bounder of Greyfriars was the man that was needed. He knew the risk he ran, and he cared nothing for it. His nerve was of iron.

His grip fastened on the dangling reins.

He was jerked off his feet the next second, and rushed along by the galloping animal. But he held on like a vice, and the horse was dragged round almost in a circle, and came to a halt, foaming and trembling.

The Bounder, dragged to his knees, gave a yelp of pain. His knees were still smarting from his fall behind the bike.

But he was on his feet again in a moment, holding the horse. Ponsonby, dizzy and dazed, still clung to the animal's neck.

The Bounder burst into a scornful laugh.

"You're all right now, you funky fat-head!" he snapped. "You can get off! Here's your reins if you're going on riding."

Pon had no intention of going on riding. All he wanted was to get off the horse and get off quick. He had lost his stirrups, and he rolled clumsily from the saddle and bumped in the grass of the bridle-path.

"Ow!" he gasped as he landed.

He squirmed farther away from the horse and sat spluttering. The Bounder eyed him with contemptuous amusement.

"You'd better ride a donkey after this, or a push-bike!" he remarked. "How long do you want me to hold this gee?"

Ponsonby staggered to his feet.

He was winded and breathless and shaken, but he was safe now. He gave the Bounder of Greyfriars a black and bitter look.

Vernon-Smith had saved him, in all probability from a bad accident. But if Pon had thought of gratitude—which he did not—Smithy's contemptuous look and words would have banished it. He was feeling more like punching the Bounder's mocking grinning face than thanking him.

"Not goin' to ride?" grinned Smithy. "Better lead him home then—I'm not lookin' for a job of holding a gentleman's horse!"

He tossed the reins to Ponsonby as he spoke.

Instead of catching them Pon backed away. He did not want to come into contact with his late mount again, even at the length of the reins.

The reins fell and the horse started and shied and dashed away down the path. The Bounder stared and then laughed again.

"You silly ass! You've let him run! You'll have to trot to catch him now, if you want him."

"Hang the horse!" muttered Ponsonby between his teeth. "I dare say he will find his way home—I don't care a bean whether he does or not."

"Some rider!" chuckled the Bounder.

"Oh, shut up!"

"Is that how you thank a fellow for saving your neck?" grinned Smithy.

"Go and eat coke!" snarled Ponsonby.

"Well, your jolly old neck wasn't worth saving," said Smithy, laughing.

"Take my tip and ride a rocking-horse after this. Or a clothes-horse!"

And still laughing, the Bounder walked back to his bike. But laughing as he was, the Bounder wriggled as he went. His arms felt as if they had been nearly jerked out of his body and he had captured several bruises and bumps. Instead of carrying on with the pursuit of the Owl of the Remove, Smithy wheeled his bike back to the Courtfield road. Bunter would keep; and just then the Bounder was chiefly in need of embrocation.

Ponsonby scowled blackly after him, and started in the opposite direction for Highcliffe, limping and panting as he went. Pon had started out that afternoon on the horse brought to the school gate by the man from the livery-stables, spick and span in riding-clothes that fitted him to the last button, and full of beans. He looked and felt quite different, as he trailed wearily home to Highcliffe—on foot, muddy and dishevelled.

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bruised and bumped and breathless. And his temper, as he wearily tramped, was almost homicidal.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Pon Plans Vengeance!

"P
ON!"

"What the dooce—"
"What's up?"

Gadsby, Vavasour, and Monson of the Highcliffe Fourth all ejaculated together. It was quite a chorus.

The three of them were waiting at the school gates for Pon to come in. They were anticipating Pon sharing their glee at having snaffled the spread intended for the Greyfriars visitors in Study No. 3. Gaddy & Co. regarded that as quite a coup—little dreaming of what was happening to the snaffled spread while they waited for Pon at the gates.

But at the sight of Ponsonby they forgot all about the spread; they saw at once that something had happened to Pon.

They had seen him canter off that afternoon merry and bright; the merry brightness was all gone now.

Untidy, muddied, hatless, his face was white with fury, which he did not take the trouble to conceal. Pon's temper was often bitter and often vicious and violent, but seldom or never had his friends seen him in such a rage as this. Something very serious, it was clear, had come between the wind and his nobility.

"Chucked off the gee, old chap?" asked Gaddy. Pon looked as if he had had a fall—though a fall from his mount alone would hardly have accounted for his state of suppressed fury.

"Hang the gee!" snapped Pon.

"But where is it?"

"I don't know—and don't care!"

Ponsonby limped in at the gates. His pals exchanged curious glances as they went in with him.

"I—I say, old bean, pull yourself together," murmured Monson. "You're makin' fellows look at you, with that face."

"Shut up, you fool!"

"Look here—"

There were a good many fellows in the quad, and quite a number of eyes turned on the white, furious face of the dandy of the Fourth. Although he told Monson savagely to shut up, Pon realised that he was drawing rather too much attention. He signed to his friends to come with him and moved away under the old Highcliffe oaks.

"Have those Greyfriars cads come here?" he asked in a low voice that shook with rage.

"Yes, they're here," answered Gadsby. "They've been strolling round with Courtenay and De Courcy. And I'll tell you what, Pon—we've snaffled the spread from their study—"

"Parked it in Study No. 5, old chap!" grinned Vavasour. "They won't know what's become of it—absolutely!"

"Rather a jest on those cads—what?" said Monson.

But Ponsonby was not amused. In his present mood snaffling a spread was too trifling a matter for Pon to heed it.

"Oh, don't talk rot!" he snapped.

"Look here, Pon, you've come in jolly shirty!" grunted Gadsby. "What on earth's happened to you?"

Pon gritted his teeth.

"Those Greyfriars cads!" He almost choked. "I ran into them on the bridle-path, and they—they—I've been lashed—lashed with my own whip

by that ruffian Cherry! Do you understand now?"

"By gad!" Monson whistled. "Well, look here, they're all here now; gone up to Courtenay's study, I believe. Look here, Pon, let's go to Mobby! Mobby won't stand for that sort of thing. Got any marks to show?" he added rather dubiously. Pon's best friends never quite expected Pon to keep to the strait and narrow path of veracity.

"I'm scored with the whip—marked all over my back!" hissed Ponsonby. "You can guess how that hefty ruffian laid it on!"

"The rotten brute!" said Gadsby. "Well, let's go and put it to Mobby! He will put it to their Form-master, Quelch, or the Head of Greyfriars—and glad of the chance, too!"

"Don't be an ass!"

"Well, if the brutes done as you've said—" argued Gaddy.

"Chuck it, Gaddy!" said Monson.

"Pon hasn't told us all yet."

"Oh! What's the rest, Pon?"

Gaddy, on a little reflection, realised that Monson was right. There was more to come.

"Cherry's a dashed ruffian," said Monson, "but he's not the man to bag a fellow's whip and lay into him for nothing. No good tellin' Mobby that."

"Oh!" said Gadsby again.

"It's no good goin' to Mobbs," said Ponsonby. "They'd have their own tale to tell if it came before their headmaster. I was thrashing that fat fool Bunter with my riding whip, when Cherry grabbed it away and pitched into me with it. They'd call that an excuse—at Greyfriars."

Pon's friends looked at him. They understood now what had happened—and that Pon, as usual, had asked for what he had got. Certainly if he had been thrashing the fat and helpless Owl of the Remove with the riding whip it was not much use to complain that he had been thrashed in his turn.

The headmaster of Greyfriars was not likely to see much difference between the thrashing of Bunter and the thrashing of Ponsonby.

But to Pon's lofty and arrogant mind there was a great difference—a tremendous difference.

Thrashing Billy Bunter was a trifle light as air; thrashing Cecil Ponsonby was a fearful outrage.

Billy Bunter did not matter at all! Cecil Ponsonby mattered a lot—at least, in his own estimation.

"Well, if you asked for it like that—" said Gadsby at last.

"Don't talk rot! I was thrashing that fool Bunter for getting in my way and giving me a tumble off the gee; then Cherry—" Pon choked.

"Well, it's no good goin' to Mobbs!" said Monson. "He would back us up all he could, but—"

"I'm not thinkin' of goin' to Mobbs, you fool! I'm goin' to give Cherry what he gave me—and with some interest on it! He's here—"

Pon's friends looked uneasy.

"I—I say, I—I'd think it over, Pon," murmured Gadsby. "That man Cherry is a hefty brute; no end of a scrapper and—"

"Absolutely!" said Vavasour.

Pon laughed savagely.

"I'm not goin' to scrap with the ruffian; I'm going to thrash him as he did me."

"But—but he won't let you, old chap!" urged Gadsby, puzzled.

"You men are goin' to hold him down while I do it."

"Oh crumbs!"

"We've got the chance while they're here," went on Ponsonby.

"But the whole gang's here!" said Gadsby in dismay. "Five of them—and then there's Courtenay and De Courcy! Seven scrapping brutes—"

"Don't be a fool! Where are they now?"

"They went into the House; I suppose they're in Courtenay's study now—the whole gang of them."

Pon's eyes glittered.

"Cherry can be got away by himself. One of you fellows can cut to Study No. 3 and say Mr. Mobbs wants to speak to him—"

"But Mobby doesn't—"

"I know that, you fool! He will come out of the study—and as soon as he's away from his gang we collar him, chuck him into Study No. 5, and lock the door. And then he gets what he's asked for!" said Ponsonby savagely.

"Oh!" said the three.

They did not seem keen. But Pon was undisputed leader, and it seemed a safe proposition.

"We'll get another fellow or two to help," muttered Gadsby. "That man Cherry has a fearful punch! I'll call Drury and Tunstall."

"Yaas, he will want some handlin'—absolutely!" concurred Vavasour.

Ponsonby nodded.

"The more the merrier," he said.

"And, look here, get a fag to take the message to Study No. 3; they might smell a rat if it was one of us. Young Coote of the Third will do it. Let's get into the House."

Pon & Co. walked across to the House. The Co. were not very enthusiastic, but they were going to back up the superb Pon.

Gadsby went to look for a fag of the Third to carry the spoof message from Mr. Mobbs; then he rejoined his friends, and the whole party went up to the Fourth Form passage.

They gathered in a group outside Study No. 5.

That study, as they supposed, was vacant—all ready for Bob Cherry to be pitched in when he came down the passage.

They were not aware that at the sound of their footsteps and voices a fat Greyfriars junior in that study suddenly ceased to munch cake, with a gasp of alarm.

They were not thinking of Billy Bunter, and had, indeed, entirely forgotten his unimportant existence.

They waited in a group outside the door of Study No. 5, while Coote of the Third went to Study No. 3. A fellow coming away from Study No. 3 had to pass Study No. 5 to go to the staircase. Bob Cherry was going to walk right into their hands—and then— Even if his friends learned what was happening, a locked door would keep them off while Ponsonby wreaked his vengeance. It looked a sure thing—and Pon's eyes glittered with vengeful anticipation.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Trapped!

THE Caterpillar suppressed a yawn and grinned.

He liked the chums of Greyfriars, though he was not, perhaps, so keen on their company as his friend Frank Courtenay. He was quite pleased to see them at Highcliffe for a last visit before the two schools broke up for the Easter holidays. But he was bored.

Courtenay, the junior captain of Highcliffe, had many things in common with the Famous Five. Now they were talking about the cricket matches that



Ponsonby reached Bunter, and the riding-whip descended. It curled round Bunter's shoulders, and there was a terrific yell from the Owl of the Remove. "Yoooooop!" Lash, lash, lash! Pon lashed again and again. He did not see the Famous Five racing towards the spot.

were coming along next term. The Caterpillar played games well, but chiefly because Courtenay wanted him to. Football jaw and cricket jaw bored Do Courcy almost to tears. But he manfully suppressed his yawns, as six fellows talked on a topic that, to them, was not in the least boresome.

"What about tea?" asked the Caterpillar presently, when he had listened to as much cricket jaw as he thought that any fellow could reasonably be expected to bear.

Courtenay glanced at him and smiled. "Good egg!" he said. "Tea, you fellows!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, where's Bunter?" asked Bob Cherry. Tea reminded him of the Owl of the Remove. "Didn't that barrel roll in after all?"

"I haven't seen him!" said Courtenay.

"Too bad!" said the Caterpillar. "We've got a cake—a tremendous cake! Bunter can't have known that we had a cake, or he would be here."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Rupert de Courcy opened the study cupboard. Interested as they were in cricket jaw, the juniors were all, as a matter of fact, ready for tea. But as it happened, tea was not ready for them!

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated the Caterpillar, as he stared into the denuded cupboard. "I fancy Bunter must have blown in, after all."

"Eh, why?"

"The cake's gone!" explained the Caterpillar.

"Wha-a-t?"

"And the jam tarts, too—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"And the eclairs—"

"Great pip!"

"In fact," said the Caterpillar, "there seems to have been a general removal. Think it likely that Bunter

blow in while we were strollin' round the quad?"

"The likefulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

It seemed only too likely to the Famous Five. They knew only too well the manners and customs of the tuck-hunter of the Remove. Harry Wharton coloured with vexation.

Often and often had Bunter been kicked for grub-raiding at Greyfriars. But at Greyfriars it did not matter so much. A grub-raid at Highcliffe was altogether too thick! It made the chums of the Remove feel extremely uncomfortable.

"Mustn't find Bunter guilty in a hurry!" said Courtenay, with a laugh. "Might be a lark of one of the fellows here."

"Oh, we know Bunter!" growled Johnny Bull.

"The knowfulness is preposterous."

"The fat villain!" growled Bob Cherry.

"All serene!" grinned the Caterpillar.

"I'll take a little trot down to the tuck-shop—"

The study door opened, and Coote of the Third Form put his head in.

"Greyfriars chaps here?" asked the Highcliffe fag.

"Here we are!" said Frank Nugent.

"Cherry—Mr. Mobbs wants to speak to Cherry!" said the fag. "Will you go down to his study, Cherry?"

And Coote, his message delivered, walked away. Gadsby had asked him to take the message, which the fag had taken in good faith, quite unaware of the plot that had been plotted by Ponsonby & Co.

Bob Cherry made a grimace. His chums exchanged glances, and the two Highcliffe men looked perplexed.

"Anything up?" asked Courtenay.

"Well, we had rather a row with Pon coming over here," said Harry Wharton

slowly. "Not our fault, honest Injun!"

"I'm sure of that!" said Courtenay quietly. "But do you think it's that that Mobbs wants to see Cherry about?"

"Well, I suppose so—"

"Can't be anything else!" said Bob.

"Of course, he may have sent for me to see me because I'm so nice, but it doesn't seem probable."

"Better go!" said Harry.

"Oh, yes, I suppose I'm bound to go.

If Pon has been telling a tale of woe to his Form-master, I suppose Mobbs wants to jaw. Still, even Mobbs will have to admit that Pon asked for what he got," said Bob. "I'll cut along and see Mobbs. I'd rather he jawed me than jawed to the Head over at Greyfriars. If the little rascal wants to jaw, I don't mind!"

And Bob left the study to go down to Mobbs.

Not for a moment did it cross his mind to doubt that the master of the Highcliffe Fourth had sent for him. If Pon had pitched a tale of woe to Mobbs, it was certain that Mobbs would send for Bob to hear what he had to say—and the juniors concluded that Pon had done so.

It was an awkward happening while they were on a visit to Highcliffe, and the fellows in the study remained in an uncomfortable silence after Bob had left them.

Bob Cherry, nothing doubting, walked down the passage towards the stairs.

A group of the Fourth stood by the door of Study No. 5. They had their backs to him as he came, but he noted that Ponsonby was among them.

He had rather expected that Pon would be in Mr. Mobbs' study, if Mobbs had sent that message, and he was a little surprised to see him standing there with his friends.

However, Bob walked on and passed

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the group; who seemed to be elaborately taking no notice of him.

The moment he had passed them, however, they took notice of him—suddenly and unexpectedly.

As if moved all at once by the same spring, they jumped after Bob Cherry and collared him.

Taken by surprise, Bob was dragged backwards, and went heavily to the floor.

"What—!" he gasped.

"Quick!" panted Ponsonby.

He flung open the door of Study No. 5.

In the grasp of Gadsby, Monson, Vavasour, Drury, and Tunstall, Bob Cherry was whirled into the doorway.

Taken by surprise as he was, and heavy as the odds were, he did not go tamely.

He struggled fiercely, and the Highcliffians clung to him like cats, the whole bunch of them staggering through the doorway into the study, headlong.

There they rolled over in a sprawling heap.

Bob panted breathlessly.

He made a terrific effort to drag himself loose. But there were too many hands on him.

He was pinned down, panting and struggling.

Ponsonby hurriedly closed the door and turned the key in the lock. Then he turned towards Bob, his look gloating.

"Hold the brute!" he said, between his teeth.

"We've got him!" panted Gadsby.

"Absolutely!" gurgled Vavasour.

"You silly dummies!" gasped Bob.

"Let me go! Chuck ragging, you silly asses! Your beak's sent for me to his study—"

"Oh, no, he hasn't!" grinned Ponsonby. "That was a dodge to get you away from your gang, you hooligan! Mobby's not expectin' you!"

"No fear!" chuckled Monson. "Mobby's not in on this!"

"Mobby doesn't want you!" said Ponsonby, gritting his teeth. "I want you, you rotter, and, by gad, I've got you! Stick him across the table, you men—and hold him down! I've got a malacca here somewhere—"

"You cowardly rotter!" roared Bob, understanding now how he had been trapped. "Let me loose! I'll thrash any two of you—"

"Pin him!" said Pon. "Tie a handkerchief over his mouth if he yells! We don't want the rest of the gang here!"

Bob had opened his mouth. Monson promptly crammed a duster into it, and made it secure by means of a handkerchief.

Still resisting, he was heaved over the table face down, and Ponsonby, with gritting teeth and glittering eyes, sorted out a thick malacca cane. And a fat junior, crouching under the table, quaked.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Comes in Useful!

BILLY BUNTER quaked.

The fat junior hardly knew, at first, what was happening.

At the sound of the voices of Pon & Co. in the passage Bunter had taken the alarm, and dived under the table to get out of sight.

The fat Owl had intended to demolish the snaffled spread, and clear before Pon & Co. came.

But when Billy Bunter was occupied with the beatific process of demolishing foodstuffs he forgot time and space.

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He had not yet finished the cake—and until he had finished the cake Bunter's thoughts were concentrated on cake—till he heard the enemy outside. Then, realising only too clearly what was likely to happen to him if Pon & Co. found him in the study, and the spread gone, he hunted cover.

To his surprise and relief, however, they did not enter immediately. He heard the murmur of their voices outside the door, but the door did not open, and he began to hope that they weren't coming in!

He squatted under the table, with the remnant of the cake on his fat knees, listening in trepidation.

But nothing happened, and he ventured to take another bite of cake—though without emerging from his hiding place.

Then, all of a sudden, things happened!

The door flew open, and a struggling bunch of fellows rolled in, and rolled over. The door was shut and locked. And Bunter, quaking under the table, forgot even the cake in his amazement and terror.

It was hearing Bob Cherry's voice that apprised him of what had happened. Somehow or other, the Highcliffe crowd had snaffled Bob, and got him into the study—obviously with hostile intentions.

Squatting in alarm and terror, Bunter had a glimpse of the struggling juniors as they heaved Bob to the table and slammed him down on it. The table was almost surrounded by their legs as they stood there holding Bob.

"Oh crikey!" breathed Bunter.

He was relieved, so far as his fat self was concerned. It was clear that neither Pon & Co., nor their prisoner, knew that he was in the room at all. But as the table creaked and rocked under Bob's desperate struggles, the fat Owl was terrified by the idea that it might overturn and reveal him squatting there!

He gave a longing blink towards the door.

Ponsonby had locked it; there was no admittance for rescuers, if they came! But the key was in the lock; and Bunter debated in his fat mind whether he had a chance of reaching it and getting out before he was collared.

But the chance was slim. No doubt the Highcliffians would have been taken a great deal by surprise by his sudden appearance from under the table. But some of them would have collared him before he reached the door—he realised that.

There was a sound of gurgling and choking above him. Bob, with the handkerchief over his mouth, was striving to shout to his friends in Study No. 3. But he could utter nothing but a gurgle.

Pon stepped to the door and listened. There was no sound from the passage. Evidently the fellows in Study No. 3 had not been alarmed.

"All serene!" said Pon. "We've got him all right—and the other rotters don't even know!"

"But when they do—" muttered Vavasour.

"Oh, chuck it! If a gang of Greyfriars cads kick up a shindy here, we'll have Mobby on the scene at once, and they'll be turned out of the place."

"Yaae, that's so, absolutely!" agreed Vavasour.

"All right for us!" grinned Gadsby. "We'll go down to Hall when you're finished, Pon. I fancy they'll hardly have the nerve to come after us in Hall, what?"

"Hardly!" chuckled Drury.

"I rather wish they would!" said Ponsonby. "I'd like to see them kick up a shindy in Hall—the prefects would handle them fast enough, and those rotters in Study No. 3 would be told not to let them come here again."

Pon took a grip on his malacca cane. He stopped to the table and fixed his gleaming eyes on Bob's face, twisted round to look up at him. Bob was wriggling, but he wriggled in vain. He strove to speak, but only a gurgle came.

"You're for it, you cur!" said Ponsonby between his teeth. "You laid my whip across my back, you hound! Now you're going to have such a thrashing from this cane, you'll hardly be able to crawl afterwards! By gad, I'll take the skin off your back!"

"Draw it mild, Pon!" murmured Gadsby.

"Shut up, Gaddy!"

Ponsonby swung up the heavy malacca.

It came down with terrific force across Bob Cherry's shoulders. The blow rang through the study like a pistol-shot.

That was intended to be the first of many. But the effect of that lash on Bob was rather unexpected.

He made so furious an effort that he rolled bodily off the table, dragging over two or three of the Highcliffians as they grasped him.

There was a heavy bumping on the floor. Bob had an arm loose, and he used it. His clenched fist crashed into Monson's face, sending him rolling across the study.

"Pin him!" shrieked Ponsonby. "You fools, pin him!"

"Collar him!"

"Squat on him!"

Ponsonby lent a hand, and the whole crew collared Bob Cherry, crushing him down on the floor. Bob struggled fiercely, and kept them all busy for some moments.

Billy Bunter blinked at the wild scene, his eyes almost popping through his spectacles.

The fat Owl realised that this was his chance! That terrific scrap was going on between the table and the window. Between the table and the door was empty space—and nothing to stop Bunter. The Highcliffians had no eyes and ears for him.

Bunter crawled out from under the table on his fat hands and knees.

He jumped at the door.

He turned the key, jerked it out, tore open the door, and rushed into the passage before Pon & Co. realised that he had been in the study at all. They were still struggling with Bob, who needed a good deal of holding. Two or three of them stared round as the door flew open—and Pon had a glimpse of Bunter leaping into the passage.

The fat Owl did not linger! Bunter's movements were generally modelled on those of a snail! Now he fairly raced! The bare possibility of being collared from behind by Ponsonby was enough for Bunter. He flew up the passage.

The door of Study No. 3 was hurled open, and Bunter flew in. He crashed into Frank Nugent, sending him staggering.

"What the dickens—" gasped Courtenay.

"Bunter, you fat ass!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Dear old Bunter!" smiled the Caterpillar. "In rather a hurry—what? Anybody after you, old thing?"

"Urrgh!" gasped Bunter. "I say, you fellows—Urrgh!"

"Say it again!" suggested the

Caterpillar urbanely. "I don't catch your meanin'!"

"Bunter you silly fathead—"
"I say, you fellows—gurrgh—I say—
Bob—they've got him—yurrgh—I
say, they've got Bob in Pon's study!"

"What?"
"They're whopping him!"
Harry Wharton stared blankly at the fat Owl for a second. Then he rushed out of Study No. 3. His comrades rushed after him. They tore along the passage to Pon's study.

"What the thump—" exclaimed Courtenay, in amazement. "Cherry has gone down to Mr. Mobbs—"

"He—he hasn't!" gurgled Bunter. "That was only Pon's trick—gurrgh! They've got him—"

"Dear old Pon!" smiled the Caterpillar. "Always so larkish—always up to some little game, and always makin' a muck of it! Shall we stagger along, old thing, and see that the Greyfriars blokes don't quite slaughter Pon! Mobby would make a fuss if they slaughtered his favourite—what?"

Courtenay without answering, ran out of the study after the Greyfriars fellows. The Caterpillar, smiling, sauntered after him.

Billy Bunter plumped into an armchair, and gurgled for breath. It was probable that there was going to be a scrap in Pon's study. Bunter was not keen on it. While the scrapping was going on in Study No. 5, Billy Bunter preferred the calm repose of Study No. 3.

So he sat in the Caterpillar's comfortable armchair, gasped for breath, and grinned at the sounds of uproar that came along the passage.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Painful for Pon & Co. I

PONSONBY slammed his study door. He grabbed at the key. But the key was no longer there. He realised that Billy Bunter had taken the key

That action undoubtedly showed presence of mind on the part of the fat Owl; for, had he left the key in the door, Pon would have locked it promptly, and Bob Cherry's last state would have been no better than his first.

Pon ground his teeth as he failed to grab the key.

"Lock the door, you ass!" panted Gadsby.

"I can't!"
"They'll be on us in a tick!"
"The key's gone!"
"Oh crumbs!"

"Jam the table against it!" gasped Monson. "Quick! We shall have the whole crew on our necks in a minute, and Courtenay and De Courcy, too!"

Pon dragged at the table. Monson lent him a hand, and Gadsby added a push. They were in hot haste to bar out the rescuers.

But that left only three fellows holding Bob, and Vavasour, Drury, and Tunstall were not equal to the task. Bob wrenched an arm loose and hit out, and Drury flew. Then he staggered up, with Vavasour and Tunstall clinging to him. He had got rid of the gag now, and his voice rang along the passage.

"Rescue, Remove! Rescue, Greyfriars!"

"Coming!" shouted back the voice of Harry Wharton.

There was a patter of running feet in the passage.

Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Monson desperately jammed the table against the door. At the same moment the handle turned, and it was shoved from without.

"Ow! Ow! Wow!" yelled Vavasour, as he was hurled headlong to the carpet. "Oh gad! Wow!"

Bob, his face flaming, breathless, but still full of pep, closed with Tunstall, and in a second Tunstall went crashing down on Vavasour.

Then Bob leaped at Ponsonby. "Now, you rotter!" he panted.

Had the door been safely locked, the whole crowd would have rallied and Bob would have been overpowered. But the door was not locked, and it was shoved open from without, pushing the table back. Bob's fierce grasp

Famous Five, but they did not stand many seconds. By the time Courtenay arrived and looked in, the expensive carpet in Pon's study was strewn with sprawling Highcliffians.

Bob Cherry wiped his perspiring brow.

"Oh crumbs!" he gasped. "I'm glad you men barged in! Oh scissors!"

"Get up and have some more, you rotters!" roared Johnny Bull.

"The morefulness is the proper caper, my esteemed and execrable Pon!" chuckled Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh.

But Pon & Co. did not seem to want



GREYFRIARS INTERVIEWS

The Greyfriars Rhymester has undertaken the task of interviewing, in alphabetical order, everyone of any importance at Greyfriars. His first victim is:



AUBREY ANGEL
(Upper Fourth Form)

— 1 —

The office-boy announced the news
(Which made the bad news worse),
"Hi, you! The Ed. wants interviews
With Greyfriars men—in verse!
Go through the alphabet," said he;
"And none will then be missed!"
And that's unfortunate, for see
Who's first upon the list!

— 2 —

If Angel were left out, my eyes
Would not be full of tears;
In fact, I rather think I'd rise
And give three hearty cheers!
Though Angel bears a saintly name,
He's not much like a saint,
And Greyfriars men would say the
same:
"You bet your life he ain't!"

— 3 —

I found him in the Upper Fourth,
He greeted me with glares;
I felt the wind was in the north,
And backed towards the stairs.
"Well, what d'ye want to say to me?"
He snapped. (I thought he'd bite!)
But when I spoke my business, he
Grew rather more polite.

— 4 —

"Sit down," he smiled. "No need to
stand!
How are you, my dear chap?
We'll have some tea, and take a hand
At banker or at nap!
I'll get a few more fellows in,
So take a cigarette!
It's lucky, now I'm out of tin,
That you and I have met!"



— 5 —

I could not quite agree with him,
I saw no luck at all.
I told him so, in accents grim
(That made his features fall!)
I added, "And I hope I'm not
A blackguard or black-sheep,
And what amount of cash I've got,
I rather think I'll keep!"



— 6 —

A glint of wrath in Angel's eye
Persuaded me to leave;
I thought he'd give me something I
Would rather not receive;
I beat the record to the gates
By seconds, so I hear,
While Aubrey Angel's number eights
Were crashing on my rear!

— 7 —

I fear there's very little good
In this especial chap,
I wouldn't fight him if I could,
(He isn't worth a "scrap"!)
Unfaithful to his friends is he,
Not true to anyone;
I'd rather be his enemy
When all is said and done!

dragged Pon away from it as he was trying to jam the edge under the door-handle.

The table rocked away, the door flew open, and Harry Wharton rushed into the study. Fast after him came Nugent and Hurreo Singh and Johnny Bull.

"Back up!" roared Bob.

"Go for the cads!" roared Johnny Bull.

Had there been any exit, Pon & Co. would have been glad to bolt for it. But the Greyfriars fellows were between them and the door, and there was no escape.

Desperately they stood up to the

any more. They seemed to feel safer on the carpet, and they stayed there.

"You rotters!" said Courtenay, his brow dark and his eyes glinting. "Ponsonby you cad—"

Ponsonby half-rose. Then, as Bob Cherry made a movement, he dropped on his elbow again.

"Get out of my study!" he snarled.

"Get out, and take your crew of Greyfriars cads with you!"

Bob Cherry grinned.

"Yes; let's get out!" he said. "Awfully sorry to kick up this shindy

"Acree, Courtenay; but it wasn't a matter of choice."

The Caterpillar looked in, smiling.

"Tired, dear boys?" he asked. "Nice soft carpet to take a rest on—what? I should prefer a sofa myself; but every man to his taste."

The hapless knuts blinked at him dismally. Ponsonby gave him a glare of concentrated fury, which only made the Caterpillar's smile broaden.

"You look a moulting lot!" he remarked. "You'll want a beefsteak for that eye, Gaddy!"

"Ow! Wow!" moaned Gaddy, caressing his eye.

"Is that your nose, Vav?" continued the Caterpillar. "Or have you been stickin' a tomato on your face?"

"Ow! Wow!" mumbled Vavasour. "You fool, Pon! Owl! Wow!"

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances. Such a shindy at a school where they were visitors was disagreeable enough. They had not had any choice in the matter, but they were anxious for the scene to end.

"Let's get out!" said the captain of the Remove abruptly.

"Look here," said Courtenay, "we can't let it go at that! Those rotters want a thumping good hiding all round!"

"It's all right!" said Bob. "They've had a few knocks! Chuck it!"

Courtenay and the Caterpillar stepped back from the doorway. The Famous Five left the study. Pon & Co. were glad enough to see them go. But Courtenay looked in before he went.

"You won't get away with this, Ponsonby!" he said quietly. "I'll see you again about it—later!"

"Get out!" snarled Ponsonby.

Courtenay gave him a scornful look and walked away after his friends. Not till he was gone did the hapless knuts of the Fourth pick themselves up from the carpet.

They looked, as the Caterpillar had remarked, a moulting lot. The scrap had been brief, but it had been hard. Dusty and dishvelled, with damaged eyes and noses, the Highcliffians looked at one another dismally.

"Look here, we're not goin' to be handled like this in our own school!" moaned Vavasour. "Let's go down to Mobby or the Head!"

"Oh, shut it!" snapped Ponsonby. "Are we going to tell Mobby that we got Cherry in here, six to one, to thrash him?"

"It was your rotten idea!" groaned Vavasour. "Ow! My nose! It will be a sight for weeks! Wow!"

Vavasour tottered out of the study. Drury and Tunstall, giving Pon black looks, trailed dismally after him.

Ponsonby gritted his teeth.

"If you fellows had backed me up, I—" he muttered.

"Oh, chuck it!" snarled Gadsby. "You took jolly good care to keep on the floor while they were here! Don't gas?"

"You silly fool, Pon!" groaned Monson. "Look at my eye! It's goin' to be black! That brute Wharton got his right into it! Ow! It was a rotten stunt—like all your silly saunts! Ow!"

Ponsonby's eyes burned.

"I'll make them sorry for it, especially that hound Cherry!"

"Oh, cheese it! Precious lot of luck you've had, haven't you?" sneered Gadsby. "Leave me out next time, anyhow!"

"Me, too!" snarled Monson.

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And they tramped out of the study, leaving Ponsonby alone. Pon's leadership in the happy band of knuts seemed rather at a discount now.

He looked in the glass, and dabbed his nose, which was streaming crimson. He rubbed a darkening eye. His rage was too deep for words. Everything had gone well—but for the utterly unexpected and inexplicable presence of Billy Bunter hidden in the study. That certainly was a thing that no fellow could have foreseen.

Pon left the study himself at last; his eye and nose needed bathing. The study was left looking rather as if a hurricane had struck it—table and chairs overturned, furniture sprawling about all over the room. The study was wrecked, though not so badly wrecked as Pon & Co.

In Study No. 3, however, there was quite a cheery party.

The Caterpillar had fetched in fresh supplies, and the chums of Highcliff sat down to tea with their Greyfriars friends.

For once Billy Bunter failed to do full justice to a spread. He eyed the good things on the table through his big spectacles, and toyed with a few of the most attractive items. But even Bunter had little room for more.

"Lost your appetite, old bean?" asked the Caterpillar sympathetically. "What a coincidence! We've lost a cake!"

"Oh, really, De Courcy—"

"You fat villain!" growled Johnny Bull. "You snaffled the tuck from this study!"

"Nothing of the kind!" hooted Bunter indignantly. "That beast Gadsby said you fellows would think it was me! As if I'd touch anybody's cake!"

"By gad! Was it Gaddy?" asked the Caterpillar, in surprise.

"Yes, it jolly well was!" grunted Bunter. "He bagged the stuff and carted it off to his study. I went to fetch it back, and—and that's how I happened to be there!"

"The right man in the right place!" said the Caterpillar gravely. "Thank you for fetchin' the tuck back, Bunter!"

"Eh—I haven't—"

"I think you have!" insisted the Caterpillar. "I'm sure the tuck's back in this study this very minute! You only packed it inside for safe carriage—what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" said the Owl of the Remove warmly. "If I hadn't happened to be in Pon's study—"

"Try these doughnuts, old bean!" said the Caterpillar hospitably.

Billy Bunter eyed the doughnuts longingly. He liked doughnuts, but there was no room in Bunter even for a single doughnut! Cake filled all the available space within William George Bunter's extensive circumference.

"Thanks, old fellow, I won't!" said—or, rather, sighed—Bunter. "It's not much I eat at any time, you know!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated the Caterpillar involuntarily. "I—I—I mean, try these jam tarts, Bunter! Do!"

"Well, perhaps one!" conceded Bunter. "But after that cake, you know—I mean, I never touched the cake—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle!" snorted Bunter, with a glare at the Famous Five. "I can tell you it's jolly ungentlemanly to doubt a fellow's word! I never touched the cake! And there weren't enough plums in it, either—not like the cakes I got from Bunter Court. Oh, cackle!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Try another jam tart, Bunter, old bean!"

"Well perhaps one more!"

Billy Bunter's movements were slow, if not stately, when he left Highcliff at last, and rolled after the Famous Five to the gates. Bunter was generally regardless of the Plimsoll line when he was taking on cargo. Even Bunter felt that he had rather over-done it with that cake! He paused at the gate with his fat hands on Smithy's bike.

"I say, you fellows, what about a taxi home?" he asked. "We can stick the bikes on top, or leave them here! What? I'll stand the taxi."

"Any fellow here rich enough to let Bunter stand him a taxi?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I mean, one of you fellows would have to lend me the money! But that's all right! I'm expecting a postal order—don't start while a fellow's talking to you!" roared Bunter.

But the Famous Five did start. And Billy Bunter, with a grunt, clambered on Smithy's bike and trundled after them.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Smithy's Way!

MR. QUELCH called the roll in Big Hall at Greyfriars.

He glanced rather severely at a fat junior who rolled in breathless, just in time before the door was shut. Billy Bunter was on time—just on time! He gurgled for breath as he squeezed into his place in the Remove.

"You've got in alive?" grinned Bob Cherry. The Famous Five had got in an hour ahead of Bunter. What with a bike too high for him, and an enormous cargo of cake to carry, Bunter had had difficulties on the homeward route. He was quite winded, and red as a beet-root.

"Beast!" grunted Bunter. "I think you might have free-wheeled me home! After I rescued you from those Highcliff cad—"

"Oh, my hat! Couldn't shove a ton so far!" said Bob. "I'll rescue you when Smithy begins on you! I fancy he's rather annoyed about his bike."

"Oh, lor'!" gasped Bunter. "I wish I'd never borrowed the beastly bike! I've had two tumbles coming home, and the mudguard's twisted, banging into a tree. If you'd had that taxi—"

"Silence!" called out Wingate of the Sixth.

The Remove master was calling the names. Billy Bunter blinked rather anxiously at the Bounder through his big spectacles. He had had enough trouble with Smithy's bike and he did not want any more with Smithy! But after the feast came the reckoning.

"I say, you fellows," murmured Bunter, when the Remove went out after roll. "I say, you stand by me, you know, if that beast Smithy kicks up a fuss—"

"The fussfulness will probably be terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed Bounder is infuriated."

"It was all your fault, Bob—"

"Mine!" ejaculated Bob.

"Well, if you'd mended that puncture for me, I shouldn't have had to borrow Smithy's bike!" argued Bunter. "I asked you a dozen times."

"You want jolly well kicking for bagging a fellow's bike!" grunted Johnny Bull. "I'd kick you, if I were Smithy!"

"Beast!"

The Famous Five went into the Rag. Billy Bunter rolled into that apartment



As the horse came careering by, with the helpless Ponsonby clinging to its neck, Vernon-Smith jumped, reckless of danger to life and limb! His grip fastened on the dangling reins, and he was jerked off his feet! But he held on like a vice!

with them. He felt safer in their company. Smithy had slipped out of the House, no doubt, to have a look at his jigger. Bunter could not expect that he would be pleased when he found the mudguard twisted. Of course, it was not Bunter's fault—he had not run into a tree on purpose. Still, it was very likely that Smithy would be shirty about it.

When Vernon-Smith came in, Billy Bunter dodged behind the Famous Five. The Bounder glanced round the Rag.

"Bunter here?" he asked.

"Puzzle—find Bunter!" remarked Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say, you fellows, keep him off!" gasped Bunter. "I say, Toddy, you're going to stand by a pal, ain't you?"

"You shouldn't bag a fellow's bike, old fat bean!" answered Peter Todd, "It was your fault—"

"Eh?"

"I should have borrowed your bike, old chap, only you'd taken it out—"

"Oh!" gasped Peter. "Well, if you'd borrowed my bike, fatty, I should kick you instead of Smithy! In fact, I think I'll kick you, anyhow."

"Beast!" howled Bunter.

"Oh, there you are!" The Bounder came across to Bunter. "You had my bike out this afternoon, you fat rotter?"

"I—I didn't!" gasped Bunter. "I mean—keep him off!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bob Cherry, you beast, keep him off!" roared Bunter indignantly. "You'd have got a fearful whipping at Highcliff if I hadn't rescued you! Keep him off, you beast!"

"Smithy, old man!" Bob Cherry interposed. "Look here—"

"Don't barge in!" snapped the Bounder, "I'm going to burst the fat villain all over the Rag."

"Well, he deserves it," admitted Bob. "But—look here, I'll repair any damage the silly fathead has done. Let him off, like a good chap."

Vernon-Smith stared at him. He did not look like letting Bunter off—and did not feel like it.

"What the thump does it matter to you, you ass?" he snapped. "What are you butting in for?"

"Bunter did me a good turn at Highcliff this afternoon," explained Bob. "If he hadn't been there, I should have gone through it."

"Had a row at Highcliff?" asked Hazeldene.

"Yes, rather!"

"Pon?" asked the Bounder with a grin. "I fancied he'd be in a rather ratty state when he got in."

Bob Cherry told what had happened at Highcliff. There was no doubt that it had been very fortunate for Bob, that Bunter had been there! The fat Owl's presence had, as it chanced, saved him from a terrific whipping at the hands of Cecil Ponsonby. Nobody, however, expected that to weigh very much with the incensed Bounder.

Smithy, however, seemed to allow himself to be placated.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, I won't kick him," he said. "More than one way of killing a cat, besides choking it with cream."

Which remark rather alarmed the fat Owl, as it hinted of trouble to come! However, the Bounder let the matter drop where it was; and nothing more was said about the bagged bike.

The following morning, Bob Cherry was as good as his word. He repaired the damaged mudguard, and cleaned the bike; which Bunter, of course, had left muddy and dusty. After which, Bob supposed that the matter was at an end.

Bunter, by that time, had dismissed it from his fat mind. Such trifles were not likely to linger long in the memory of the Owl of the Remove. The Bounder, whose hands and knees were still sore from his tumble behind the borrowed bike, had a longer memory. He had said that he would not kick Bunter—and he did not kick him. But there were, as he had remarked, more ways than one of killing a cat.

After class that day, Billy Bunter joined the Famous Five in the quad. Bunter was rather anxious for something definite to be fixed up about the Easter holidays. As usual, that magnificent residence, Bunter Court, did not seem to attract him homeward.

"I say, you fellows, about the hols—" began Bunter.

"Hook it!" said Bob Cherry.

"Hold on, you men!" The Bounder came up, and the Famous Five hold on.

"I say, are you booked for tea?"

"No—open to offers!" said Bob, with a cheery grin.

"I was thinking of a spread at the bunshop in Courtfield," said Smithy. "Nice afternoon for a walk across the common, what?"

"Fine!" agreed Bob. "But we've got some boxing on, in the gym, you know. After that—"

"I thought of that. I'll ask a fellow to go down first, and book a table for us—there's always a crowd at tea-time. I daresay Skinner would do it—"

"I say, Smithy!" gasped Bunter.

"Eh?" The Bounder glanced at him, apparently noticing the fat Owl's presence for the first time.

"I say, I'll go, Smithy, old chap!" said Bunter eagerly. "Leave it to me, old fellow! I—I'd be glad to oblige you."

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(Continued from page 13.)

Whereat the Famous Five chuckled. There was no doubt that Billy Bunter would be glad to oblige a fellow who was standing a feed at the Courtfield bunshop! Bunter, not usually very obliging, was very obliging indeed on such occasions as that.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" grunted Bunter. "I'd do more than that to oblige a pal like Smithy."

"Well, if you mean it, I won't ask Skinner," said the Bounder.

"Yes, rather, old fellow."

"Bag the table in the bay window," said Vernon-Smith. "The one behind the palms at the end of the counter. That's the one I like. Tell them a dozen fellows may be coming."

"What-ho!" said Bunter.

Five minutes later, Billy Bunter was rolling up the road across Courtfield Common. It was a long walk, and Bunter did not like long walks! But it was worth a long walk to bag one of the Bounder's magnificent spreads! Bunter grunted and gasped, but his fat face was very cheery as he rolled onward.

Meanwhile, the Remove fellows went into the gym for the boxing. After that was over it was near tea-time, and the Famous Five expected the Bounder to be ready to start for Courtfield.

Smithy, however, went to his study.

A little later he came to look for the Co.

"You fellows ready for tea?" he asked.

"Quite; but," said Harry Wharton, "we've got to walk to Courtfield first."

The Bounder raised his eyebrows.

"Tea in my study!" he answered.

The Famous Five stared at him.

"But Bunter's gone to Courtfield to book a table at the bunshop!" exclaimed Nugent.

"Let's hope that the walk will do him good!" remarked Smithy. "Exercise is good for Bunter! Walking will do him as much good as borrowing a fellow's bike."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "You're not going to Courtfield?"

"Not at all!"

"But Bunter—"

"Dear old Bunter!" said the Bounder cheerfully. "He'll have had rather a grind, but he can get a rest in the bunshop while he's waiting for us to turn up. Let's hope he will enjoy the walk back!"

"It's too bad!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"As bad as borrowing a fellow's bike and bringing it home muddy and busted?" asked the Bounder.

"Well, perhaps not; but—"

"Tea's ready in my study. Coming?"

There was tea in the Bounder's study, while Billy Bunter, at the bunshop in Courtfield, sat at the table he had booked, and waited. The fat Owl had a long wait before him.

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THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Pon's Latest!

CECIL PONSONBY sat in his study at Highcliffe after class that afternoon.

Pon was not looking his usual natty, handsome, supercilious self. Pon's nose was red and swollen, and there was a dark shade under one of his eyes. He was still feeling severely, the effects of the scrap of the previous day—and still more the effects of an interview he had had with Courtenay after the Greyfriars visitors had gone.

Altogether, Pon had had a very strenuous time, from which he might have learned that the way of the transgressor was hard! As he sat, he caressed his eye and nose alternately, and his look was black and bitter. That fatuous ass, Bunter, had spoiled his scheme of vengeance the previous day; but Pon's thoughts were still running on vengeance. Least of all, could he forget or forgive the thrashing he had had from his own riding-whip, in Bob Cherry's hand. Every time he thought of that, Pon's eyes glittered with rage. His lofty pride had been too bitterly humiliated for Pon to forget or forgive.

On the study table at Pon's elbow lay a letter, torn in halves.

It was a brief letter, in a firm, clear hand, and was signed "Your affectionate father, R. Cherry."

It was, in fact, a letter to Bob from his father, Major Cherry, and it had dropped from Bob's pocket in the wild struggling and scuffling in the study the day before.

Bob had not noticed it, neither had anyone else, in the state of wreckage and confusion in the study, with furniture overturned, and books and papers scattered about.

It was not till later, when Pon & Co. had put the study to rights, that the dandy of Highcliffe had picked it up, and, glancing at it, discerned that it belonged to the Greyfriars junior.

On which, Pon had torn it in half, to throw it into the wastepaper-basket.

The date on the letter was several days old, and more likely than not, Bob had already answered it, and very likely forgotten that it was in his pocket at all.

There was nothing of importance in the letter, which only referred to the coming Easter holidays.

Still, Pon tore it in halves, and threw it into the wastepaper-basket, which was more satisfactory to him than returning it to its owner.

But later on Pon retrieved the torn letter from the wastepaper-basket. The thought came into his cunning mind that use might be made of it.

It was of that that he was now thinking. And slowly, but surely, a scheme had formed in his unscrupulous mind.

The door opened, and Gadsby and Monson came in.

Both of them, like Ponsonby, showed sign of having been through tough times lately. Both looked bad-tempered. They were feeling bitter enough against their old foes of Greyfriars; but almost as bitter against Pon, who had landed them in that awful scrap.

"What about tea?" grunted Gadsby.

Pon looked round at them.

"Never mind tea," he said. "Shut the door! I've got somethin' to say to you fellows."

"More of your jolly old schemin'?" sneered Monson. "Well, you can leave me out! I've had enough hammerin'!"

"There won't be any hammerin' this time," said Pon quietly. "I've been thinkin' it out, and this time I've got it out and dried."

"Rot!" grunted Gadsby. "You're always schemin', and you always make a muck of it! Look at my nose!"

"I told you yesterday," went on Pon, unheeding, "that that ruffian, Cherry, laid into me with my own ridin'-whip! I told you that he was goin' to have the thrashin' of his life, to even up."

"And it was all gas!" said Gadsby. "We got the thrashin'. I'm not huntin' for any more, thanks."

"Thinkin' of goin' over to Greyfriars, and tacklin' the brute there?" jested Monson.

"So long as he gets the hiding, never mind who gives it to him!" said Ponsonby. "A floggin' from his head-master would suit me."

Pon's friends stared at him.

"Mad?" asked Gadsby. "Think Dr. Locke is goin' to flog the brute just to please you?"

"I think so!" assented Pon.

"Oh, you're ravin'!" grunted Monson. "Talk sense!"

"I'm talkin' sense, if you'll shut up and listen. Suppose that old fool, Quelch, at Greyfriars, got something by post—somethin' fearfully insultin', and fancied that it came from Cherry."

"Why should he?"

"Well, suppose he did! Suppose he got a string of insults, with proof that Cherry had sent it along. What?"

"I suppose he would be as mad as a hatter," said Gadsby, staring. "But if you think you can work a scheme like that, you're a fool."

"Look at that!" said Pon, tapping the torn letter on the table with his slim forefinger.

"Well, what about that?"

"That's Cherry's—a letter from his pater. He dropped it scrappin' here yesterday. Suppose a bit of that letter got mixed into the parcel for Quelch. What would it look like?"

"As if a fellow would be as enough—"

"I've thought it out!" said Pon coolly. "It's Easter now—well, suppose a fellow sent an Easter egg—"

"An Easter egg!" repeated Gadsby blankly.

"Yes! One of those cardboard eggs that have chocolates and things stuffed inside them. Naturally, a fellow larking with Quelch wouldn't send him choccs. He would stuff the egg full of rubbish—old torn-up papers, for instance. A bit of an old letter might get mixed in by accident—but if it was found, it would give the sender away."

"Oh!" gasped Gadsby. He began to glimpse the scheme that had formed in Pon's cunning brain.

"All the writing on the parcel, of course, would be in capital letters, to—to disguise the hand," pursued Ponsonby. "Cherry would do that, if he sent the parcel—and one fellow's capital letters are the same as another's. You know what Quelch is like—with his temper up, he will root and root over the thing to find out who sent it. And—"

"I don't see anythin' in it!" snapped Monson. "Rotten silly joke, I call it, to send a man an egg stuffed with rubbish. And I don't see that it would make Quelch fearfully waxy, either."

"There would be a message in it, written in capital letters!" said Pon. "I fancy I can think of a few things that would make any Form-master wild."

"Oh!" said Monson.

Pon rose from his chair, and put the torn letter in his pocket.

"Lots of time to cut down to Courtfield before lock-up," he remarked. "We can get an egg at the bunshop. They sell them there."

Gadsby and Monson exchanged glances.

"Look here, it's rather thick!" muttered Gadsby. "A whipping is all right, but a fellow might get sacked!"

"All the better!" said Pon coolly. "Well, you can leave me out!" said Gadsby tartly. "I'm fed-up with your dashed schemin'! I dare say you'll make a muck of it, too."

"You always do!" remarked Monson. "My advise to you is to chuck it, Pon, and chuck that letter away!"

Pon gave his pals a bitter look. Generally they backed him up through thick and thin. But their recent experiences had evidently damped down their keenness.

"Funkin' it?" he sneered. "It's as safe as houses!"

"Oh rats!" said Gadsby. "I'm not havin' a hand in it, I know that! Come on, Monson—let's go and tea with Vav!"

And the two fellows left the study, evidently determined to have nothing to do with Pon's latest scheme of

vengeance—safe as it looked! Ponsonby shrugged his shoulders contemptuously.

Leaving his friends to their own devices, the dandy of Highcliffe left the House and wheeled out his bike. Pon's mind, at all events, was quite made up.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter at the Bunshop!

BILLY BUNTER grunted with impatience.

Sitting at the table in the bay window at the bunshop in Courtfield, the fat Owl of the Remove was growing more and more impatient with every passing moment.

It was past tea-time! Bunter was hungry! His walk across Courtfield Common had made him hungrier. He was hungry enough to have devoured with satisfaction tea in Hall at Greyfriars—though it was generally described by the juniors as "doorsteps and dish-water."

Why hadn't the fellows come?

Bunter had booked the table. He had told the waiter that a dozen fellows might be coming! He sat at the table and waited.

He waited in vain!

There was the usual teatime crowd in the bunshop, which was always well patronised. Table after table was taken. Bunter, in solitary state, kept possession of the one in the bay window, which gave a view of the High Street, and was pleasantly cut off by palms in tubs from the rest of the establishment—quite a nicely placed table!

The bunshop filled more and more, and the band discoursed sweet music. Bunter's waiter came hovering round the table several times, with looks that grew more and more expressive.

If a large party of Greyfriars fellows were coming, that waiter was more than willing to keep the table for them.

Bunter had mentioned Vernon-Smitli's name, and the millionaire's son was well known at the bunshop. But it began

(Continued on next page.)



Does the fellow who gets paid for playing football think more of the money than the game? Read what "Linesman," our special contributor, has to say on this matter.

HEROES OF THE GAME!

MANY are the stories from the football fields this season which have thrilled us through and through.

There have been cases of players going on playing although suffering so badly from concussion that at the end of the game they haven't even known the result of the match. I have known cases of players insisting on going back to the field to play their part in the interests of their side even though trainers and doctors have tried to keep them back.

These things are, of course, the plainest and most emphatic answer to the suggestion that the fellow who gets paid for playing football thinks mostly of the money. I am led to mention them because one letter to hand from a reader contains the suggestion that the player who gets paid for playing cannot have such a deep love for the game as the amateur, who is actually out of pocket through playing football.

We have had one case this season—not many weeks ago—which reads more like a chapter from a fiction story than actual fact. The fellow who played the part of hero was Frank Moss, the goalkeeper of Arsenal. Early in the match against Everton, on the Everton ground, Moss dislocated his shoulder in falling, after saving a high shot. Another player had to don the goalkeeper's jersey, of course; but after Moss had received the attentions of the trainer he went back to the field to help his side, playing at outside-left with one arm strapped to his side so that he could not move it.

Even the story thus far has its thrill: we admire the pluck of the man. But the best part of the story is that the wounded goalkeeper so far scorned his hurt that during the second half of the game he dashed in and scored a goal for his side, and that goal

made the victory certain. Having done it, Moss had to be taken to hospital.

THE ONLY WAY OUT!

THE first obvious comment on such an heroic act is that a club which has players in it who display such a spirit on behalf of the side may be said to be worthy of winning the championship. But there is also another side to the story, to which I must refer because the question is raised by a Liverpool reader of the MAGNET who happened to be present at the match.

Like the rest of us, this player was thrilled with the pluck shown by Moss, but then he puts the following question: "Do you think that sort of thing ought to be allowed? I have a feeling that the Everton players deliberately refrained from giving the attention to Moss which they would have given to a fit man, and that it was largely because he was injured, and playing with his arm strapped to his side, that he was able to score a goal."

We do run up against some funny problems in this game of football, don't we? My thoughtful correspondent certainly raises a new point, and I have to confess that there is reason in his letter. Opponents who would have had no qualms of conscience in tackling a fit man would obviously hesitate in going wholeheartedly for a player who was clearly in considerable pain. Carrying such an argument to its logical conclusion, it can be suggested that, in certain circumstances, an injured player would have a better chance of scoring a goal for his side than a fit man.

Frankly, however, I don't see what can possibly be done to meet a case like this.

It would not be right to make a football rule which debarred an injured player from taking any further part in a game. The one possible way out, as I see it,

would be for the laws to permit a substitute going on the field to take the place of an injured man. And the authorities have always set their faces firmly against substitutes being allowed in big matches.

PLAYING A PART!

AT many of the big football grounds nowadays they have specially reserved pens for the exclusive use of boys who support the club, and I never lose the opportunity of urging the clubs which have not given the lads the special facility to do so. There cannot be the slightest doubt that the boys, thus banded together, are most enthusiastic. When I visited the Bolton Wanderers' ground not long ago, I was struck with the encouragement to the Bolton players which came from a particular corner of the arena. Before the Wanderers had scored a goal, and each time the forwards attacked, there was a loud chorus of cries in unison: "We want one!" And after one goal had been scored the chorus changed just slightly: "We want two!"

Those encouraging cheers came from the boys' "pen." I was thrilled by them, and I came away from the ground feeling quite convinced that the enthusiasm of those lads may have had something to do with the success of the Bolton team this season.

There cannot be the slightest doubt that footballers thrive on enthusiastic support, and these lads who gathered together in the "pen" at Burnden Park were more enthusiastic than the grown-up spectators in other parts of the arena.

"In a game in which I played the other day," writes William Saunders, from Shrewsbury, "I took a penalty kick for my side and banged the ball against the upright of the goal. It came straight back to me, and I then put it into the net. I was disappointed, however, because the referee did not allow the goal. My pals said the referee was right, as I was offside when I played the ball from the rebound. What is your verdict?"

In reply, I have to say that the referee was right; but the pals of my reader friend were wrong as regards the reason for the goal being disallowed. It was not a case of offside. The goal could not be allowed, however, because the taker of the penalty kick had played the ball twice without any other player having touched it between the two kicks.

"LINESMAN."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,418.

to look, to the waiter, as if that party wasn't coming, and he did not want his best table bagged for nothing.

Bunter certainly would have been glad to gratify the waiter by beginning. But there was a difficulty in the way of that. Not for the first time Billy Bunter had been disappointed about a postal order!

He was in a stony state! That did not matter if the Bouncer arrived with his unlimited supply of cash. But until he arrived Bunter was out of action. He was not at all sure that Smithy would settle a bill that he ran up in advance—indeed, he was fairly sure that Smithy wouldn't! And he was beginning to wonder whether Smithy was going to turn up at all!

He blinked through the palms at the people in the bunshop. Near the window alcove was one end of the long counter, on which were piled boxes of chocolate and Easter eggs in great and endless variety. People came and went and made purchases. But no Greyfriars fellow appeared among them.

Bunter blinked almost despairingly from the window. He had waited an hour! Were the beasts never coming?

Blinking from the window he spotted a fellow getting off a bike, which he leaned on the tree outside the shop.

But it was not a Greyfriars fellow. It was a Highcliffe fellow! And Bunter gave a start of alarm as he recognised Cecil Ponsonby!

"Oh crikey!" breathed Bunter.

Leaving his bike against the tree, Pon walked to the entrance. He was coming into the bunshop.

Bunter quaked.

Certainly, Ponsonby was hardly likely to kick up a shindy in the crowded tea-shop. But the recollection of yesterday's happenings was fresh in Bunter's mind. The state of Pon's eye and nose was an indication of the probable state of Pon's temper. Even if he did not "go for" Bunter on the spot, it was only too likely that he would wait outside for the fat Owl to emerge. And if the other fellows did not turn up—

Fortunately, Bunter was in cover. The window alcove was rather secluded from the rest of the place, with the screen of palms between. Bunter shifted his position a little, so that a palm completely hid him from the rest of the place.

But if Pon had come in to tea, and if he selected that table—Bunter hoped that the waiter would bar him off.

But Pon had not come in to tea, and he did not approach Bunter's table. He passed by the palms and went to the counter.

Bunter hardly breathed.

Pon had stopped at the counter, where the Easter eggs were stacked, and he was not six or seven feet from Bunter! Only a palm in a tub separated them.

Blinking uneasily through his big spectacles, Bunter had a partial glimpse of the Highcliffe fellow's elegant form. He was thankful that Pon was standing with his back to him.

Pon evidently had not come in to tea! He was going to buy something! Bunter hoped that he would not be long about it.

"Easter egg, sir?" It was the voice of the young lady in attendance.

"Yes, please!" said Ponsonby. "One of the cardboard ones, empty."

"Certainly, sir! This one is two-and-six—this three-and-six. The blue one is three shillings."

"The blue one will do!" said Pon carelessly.

Bunter's uneasy blink glimpsed the Highcliffe fellow, taking up the cardboard egg in his hands.

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It was coloured a bright blue—more brilliant than artistic to look at.

Bunter was not in the least interested in Ponsonby's purchase; but he rather wondered that Pon had picked that article—when he was able to afford the pick of the whole stock.

Ponsonby took the two halves of the cardboard egg apart, and glanced into it. He put them together again, and handed the Easter egg to the young lady behind the counter.

"Please put it in a box for me!"

"Certainly!"

The Easter egg was placed in a cardboard box, wrapped, and tied, and Pon paid for it, and walked away.

Billy Bunter breathed more freely.

Not once had the Highcliffe fellow glanced towards the window alcove where Bunter sat. Evidently he had come to the bunshop only to buy the Easter egg, and, having bought it, he departed immediately.

Blinking from the window, Bunter saw the Highcliffe fellow tie the parcel on his handlebars, mount the bike, and ride away.

Bunter was glad to see the last of him.

He forgot Pon's existence the next moment. His fat thoughts were concentrated on tea! But tea was as far off as ever! There was no sign of Vernon-Smith and his party arriving.

"Beasts!" groaned Bunter.

Time was getting short now. He had a long walk before him to return to the school—none too much time to get in for calling-over. But the thought of leaving the bunshop without having had his tea, and trailing home across the common famished, was too dismaying to be entertained. Bunter sat tight—and still hoped!

The waiter hovered and hovered. At last he came up to Bunter.

"If your friends are not coming, sir—"

"They're coming!" gasped Bunter.

"The table is wanted, sir, if you do not want it!" said the waiter, with less civility than was due to an important personage like William George Bunter. "But if you desire me to serve you, sir—"

Bunter did desire the waiter to serve him! He desired it very much! But the sordid question of cash intervened, like a lion in the path! The fat Owl of the Remove had to give an order, or go! As his total wealth consisted of a threepenny-piece, and that a bad one, Bunter did not venture to give an order!

"I—I suppose something's delayed my friends!" he stammered. "I—I—I don't think I'll wait any longer."

The waiter looked quite unpleasant.

Bunter was rather glad to get out of the bunshop.

He groaned as he started to walk.

Even yet he entertained a faint hope of meeting Smithy and his party on the way. But that hope proved delusive.

The fat junior tramped wearily by the long, long road over Courtfield Common. He was hungry—fearfully hungry! In those awful moments Bunter realised what it was like to be shipwrecked, and in an open boat at sea! Bunter had often been hungry—indeed, he was generally hungry! But never so hungry as now. It seemed to the hapless fat Owl that he would never reach the school.

However, he reached it at last, and tottered in. He tottered across the quad. It was close on time for calling-over, and fellows were going into the House. Among them, Bunter spotted Vernon-Smith.

"I say, Smithy—" he gasped.

The Bouncer looked round, with a grin.

"Had a good time?" he asked.

"I say, you never came!" gasped Bunter. "I say, why didn't you turn up, you beast? I waited hours and hours!"

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

"Beast!" howled Bunter. "I've had no tea! I got nothing at Courtfield, and I've missed my tea here!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—you beast!" gurgled Bunter. The whole dreadful truth dawned on his fat mind at last. "You were only pulling my leg all the time!"

"Guessed it!" said Smithy. "My hat! What a brain!"

"Owl! Beast! Oh lor'!" groaned Bunter.

"You'll think twice before you bag my bike another time, what?" asked the Bouncer genially. "I told you there was more than one way of killing a cat! The same applies to pigs!"

"Beast!" groaned Bunter.

The Bouncer walked into the House, laughing. Billy Bunter tottered after him, with a dismal face of woe. It was likely to be a long time before the fat Owl borrowed Smithy's bike again!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Quelch's Easter Egg!

"ABSURD!" said Mr. Quelch. It was the following day, in break. While the Remove fellows went out into bright April sunshine in the quad, the Remove master repaired to his study. On the table stood a parcel that had arrived by post that morning. Mr. Quelch had leisure to attend to it now.

He cut the string, unwrapped a sheet of brown paper, and revealed a cardboard box. Somewhat puzzled, he removed the lid.

Then an Easter egg was revealed, and Mr. Quelch, with a stare of astonishment, pronounced that it was absurd.

Someone, it seemed, had sent him an Easter egg! Mr. Quelch was long past the age when gifts of that kind caused gratification. No doubt there had been a time in his career when an Easter egg, arriving, caused him great satisfaction. But that had been a very, very long time ago.

It was an Easter egg of painted cardboard—the kind that is usually crammed with chocolates, sweets, or small toys for children. Chocolates and sweets had no appeal whatever for Mr. Quelch—and certainly he had no desire for small toys!

Indeed, as he stared at the bright blue egg, decorated with a bright red rose, he wondered whether the parcel had been misdirected. It was so extraordinary that anyone should have sent it to him.

He examined the label. There was no mistake—it was directed in "print" letters to "H. S. Quelch, Esq." Undoubtedly it was intended for Henry Samuel Quelch, master of the Greyfriars Remove.

"Nonsensical!" repeated Mr. Quelch. "Absolutely nonsensical!"

He could only suppose that some member of the Form, with more kindness of heart than brightness of intellect, had sent him that extraordinary present. If there was, within, any indication of the sender, Mr. Quelch was going to send for him at once and hand back that absurd present, with a



Squatting in alarm and terror, Billy Bunter had a glimpse of the struggling Highlife juniors as they heaved Bob Cherry to the table and slammed him down on it. "You're for it, Cherry, you cur!" said Ponsonby, between his teeth. "You laid my whip across my back, you hound—now you're going to have such a thrashing, you'll hardly be able to crawl afterwards!"

few caustic words. He was going to make it clear that he had no use for painted cardboard eggs, and the chocolates or sweets, or whatever it was inside.

He removed the upper half of the cardboard egg.

Within, it was stuffed full—not of sweets or chocolates, however, or even of children's toys! Its contents consisted chiefly of torn paper—old newspapers, and such stuff, torn small, evidently for the purpose of filling up the egg. In addition, there was half an old boot, and a lump of coal, added, doubtless, to give the egg weight.

But it was not this rubbish that fixed Mr. Quelch's attention. His eyes gleamed at a strip of cardboard lying inside.

On that card was a message written in capital letters, which gave no clue to the writer. It was such a message as, perhaps, some few Remove fellows might have liked to send to their Form-master—but which, certainly, no Remove fellow had hitherto dreamed of sending him. In clear capitals, the following stared Mr. Quelch in the face:

"DON'T COME BACK AFTER
EASTER!
WE'RE FED-UP WITH YOU!
TOO MUCH JAW!
TOO MUCH CANE!
EVERY MAN IN THE REMOVE IS
SICK OF YOUR GARGOYLE
OF A CHIVVY!
GET OUT!
AND STAY OUT!"

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes had never looked so much like gimlets. They

seemed almost to bore into that complimentary card.

"Bless my soul!" he ejaculated.

He stared—and stared—and stared! Black wrath gathered in his brow! But along with the wrath there was a look of pain.

Mr. Quelch was a somewhat stern and severe master. His word was law in the Lower Fourth, and he never stood any nonsense in the Form-room.

But, on the whole, his Form liked him.

Even the Bounder, who gave him more trouble than anyone else, respected him. Even Skinner & Co. admitted that he was better than Hacker—not such a noodle as Capper—or such a pompous ass as Prout!

Beaks were beaks; but, on the whole, the Remove considered that they had, in Quelch, the pick of the bunch at Greyfriars.

That any member of his Form could think of him like this was rather a revelation to Henry Samuel Quelch. Once, when he had been away for rather a long time, and a temporary master had replaced him, the whole Form had rejoiced in his return. Was there really one fellow in the Remove who was rascal enough, disrespectful enough, to think of him like that? Was there more than one? Did the boys of his Form really wish that he would not return after the Easter vacation?

It was a painful thought!

Mr. Quelch shook his head! This was not the work of a number of fellows—it was a disrespectful insult from a single member of his Form—one, no doubt, whom he had had occasion to punish lately.

That it was not the work of a member of his Form at all was not likely

to occur to Mr. Quelch. Who but a member of the Remove could be "fed-up" with him, "sick" of his "chivvy," not caring a straw whether he came back or stayed away after Easter? That insulting message bore, or seemed to bear, internal evidence that it came from a Removeite.

Mr. Quelch's lips set hard.

He was pained—he was hurt! But he was more angered than either! He was going to discover who had sent that string of insults, hidden in the Easter egg, and he was going to make an example of the culprit. The offender was going to be reported to the Head, whether for a flogging, or for the sack, Mr. Quelch had not yet decided. One—or both!

But who had sent it?

Vernon-Smith? He was wild and reckless enough. Indeed, he was the only Remove fellow wild and reckless enough for such an action. Or Skinner? It was more like Skinner—if Skinner had the nerve! Skinner, lately, had been caned for smoking. The Bounder had been given detention for breaking bounds. Was it one of them?

It was unfair, and Mr. Quelch felt it so, to suspect without proof. He was going to have proof.

He examined the message with sedulous attention. But the capital letters gave no clue to the writer's hand. The rest of the card was blank. He turned to the label again. But it bore nothing but the "print" address, and the Courtfield postmark.

Breathing hard, Mr. Quelch turned over the contents of the Easter egg.

The remnant of an old boot afforded no clue. It was not even a remnant of a boy's boot—it was a wretched relic

picked off some dust-heap. The lump of coal was, if possible, still less easy to be identified.

Mr. Quelch cleared a space on his table and emptied the contents of the Easter egg. A heap of torn fragments of paper lay before him. With a grim brow, and a gleaming eye, he went through that heap.

Whoever had crammed the Easter egg with those fragments had used up quite a lot of paper. Possibly he might have torn up some old exercise along with old newspapers.

If so the handwriting would give a clue. Or even some fragment of a newspaper might be traced to the owner. Unless there was some clue to be found in the heap of rubbish the Remove-master was at a loss.

Two or three old "Daily Mails" seemed to have been used. But among the newspaper fragments Mr. Quelch sorted out sections of a weekly paper—the "Modern Boy."

There were readers of that periodical in his Form, he knew. He had seen Harry Wharton & Co. gathered round a copy of that paper, reading it over one another's shoulders. Still, it was not much of a clue, and he was not likely to think of Harry Wharton & Co. as the possible senders of that disrespectful, insulting message to their Form-master.

Suddenly he gave a start, and his eyes glittered.

He pounced on a fragment of written paper, among the countless printed fragments.

He snatched it up and glared at it. It was a torn fragment of an old letter, and bore the words, "Your affectionate Father, R. Cherry."

He knew the handwriting of Major Cherry.

A strange, startled expression came over the Remove-master's face. That letter had belonged to a member of his Form—Robert Cherry.

Was it possible?

Was it not, rather, certain?

With set lips he searched through the fragments. Two or three more small pieces of notepaper came into his hands—parts of the same letter.

He sat staring at them.

There never was a crime without a clue. The most experienced crook always leaves a trail behind him. Much more a careless and thoughtless school-boy. Evidently—or so it seemed—the fellow who had crammed this Easter egg with torn paper had inadvertently torn up an old letter along with old newspapers, and an old number of his weekly paper.

What else was Mr. Quelch to think?

He could think nothing else—and he did think nothing else. Bob was almost the last fellow in the Remove that he would have suspected of that dastardly insult. But proof was proof.

Bob Cherry had done this.

Mr. Quelch rang the bell, and sent Trotter with a message to Bob Cherry to come to his study at once.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

An Unexpected Accusation!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

"Bow-wow!"

"About the hols—"

Five voices answered in unison:

"Shut up, Bunter!"

But Billy Bunter was not disposed to shut up. The matter was important. Break-up was awfully near at hand now, and Bunter was not yet "fixed" for the holidays.

The Famous Five were discussing that very matter when Bunter ran them down. But they did not appear to want to discuss it with Bunter.

"I say, you fellows, be serious!" urged Bunter. "Mauly's very keen for me to go to Mauleverer Towers with him this Easter—"

"Jump at it, old fat man!" advised Bob Cherry.

"Well, I'm not fearfully keen on Mauly," said Bunter, shaking his head. "He's a bit of a bore, you know. Toddy wants me to go home with him—but I can't stand Bloomsbury—"

"And Bloomsbury can't stand you!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull! Smithy's rather

keen on my going abroad with him, but he's hardly my class, really. The fact is, I'd rather stick to my old pals this Easter!" declared Bunter.

"Jolly good idea!" remarked Frank Nugent. "Go and tell them so and give us a rest."

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Give us a rest, anyhow!" suggested Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"There's Smithy over there!" said Bob. "Go and fix it with him, Bunter, as he's so keen. Put him out of his painful doubt on the subject."

"Well, after the rotten trick he played on me yesterday, I'm not going to have anything to do with Smithy!" said Bunter. "I can tell you I was fearfully hungry, waiting in the bunshop at Courtfield—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I might have got into a scrap with that Highcliffe cad, Ponsonby—he came in while I was there. Of course, I should have thrashed him—"

"I can see you doing it!" agreed Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, stop cackling!" roared Bunter. "Look here, about the hols—"

"Bow-wow!"

"To tell the truth," said Bunter, "I've turned a lot of fellows down, as it was practically settled that I was going with you chaps. Now—"

"Go and turn 'em up again!" suggested Bob Cherry.

"Beast!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, here's Trotty!" said Bob, as the House page came towards the group in the quad. "Looking for somebody, Trotty?"

"Yes, Master Cherry—"

"I hope it's Bunter! You can have him at a gift!"

Trotter grinned.

"It's you, Master Cherry! Mr. Quelch wants you in his study at once."

"Oh blow!" said Bob. "What the dickens does Quelch want? Beaks oughtn't to worry fellows in break. Go and tell him I'll see him in third school. Trotty, and advise him to be patient till then."

Trotter chuckled. He was not likely to deliver that playful message to a Form-master at Greyfriars.

"Does he look waxy?" asked Bob.

"Well, yes, sir, he does rather!" said Trotter. "I'd hurry up if I was you, sir. He was looking very black, sir." And Trotter departed.

"What have you been up to now, Bob?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Blessed if I know," answered Bob. "Let's see—I was shuffling my feet in the Form-room this morning—or Quelch fancied I was, and he bit. Can't be that! He doesn't bite twice for the same thing. I knocked Coker's hat off when we came out—but—"

"Better cut in!" said Harry.

"Might be a complaint from Highcliffe," said Nugent. "But if that's the case, we're all in it."

"Well, I'd better go and see, I suppose," sighed Bob, and he left his friends and went into the House.

His face was grave as he approached Mr. Quelch's study. No fellow liked being called up by his boak. It so often portended trouble.

Still, Bob's conscience was quite clear so far as that went. Unless he was to be called to account for knocking Coker's hat off he could not guess what was wrong. And what did it matter if a fellow knocked a hat off the fat head of Coker of the Fifth?

He tapped at Quelch's door and entered.

He stared a little at the sight of two

TWENTY DOLLARS REWARD!



"You'll pony up the twenty dollars reward like you offered," said Mesquite, "or you'll get what's coming to you!" "Oh yeah?" drawled the headmaster of Packsaddle. "I guess I've got a pair of six-guns that'll say different!" Here's one of the many exciting

moments in Frank Richards' latest gripping yarn of the Packsaddle pals, the cow town schoolboys of Texas. Every "Magnet" reader will simply revel in this super story. It appears in to-day's issue of

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The GEM

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halves of an Easter egg on the study table, and a heap of rubbish.

But his glance fixed almost at once on the face of Mr. Quelch.

Trotter had said that he looked black—and he had not over-stated it. Mr. Quelch's brow was black as thunder. Bob felt rather an unpleasant jump at his heart. Why Quelch was so deeply, bitterly angry he could not begin to guess; but there was no doubt about the fact. It leaped to the eye. The Remove master was angrier than Bob had ever seen him before.

"You sent for me, sir," said Bob. In spite of himself, his voice faltered a little. What was the matter with his Form-master?

"Yes, Cherry, I sent for you!" said Mr. Quelch in a grinding voice. "No doubt you did not expect to be sent for."

"No, sir!" said Bob, in wonder. "I—I hope I haven't done anything—"

"You are found out, Cherry!"

"I—I don't understand—"

"I will make it clear," said Mr. Quelch quietly and bitterly. "It was you that sent me that Easter egg by post."

Bob jumped.

"I, sir!" he ejaculated.

"You, Cherry!"

"But—but I didn't, sir!" exclaimed Bob, bewildered. "I—I certainly have sent you an Easter egg, sir, if I'd thought you wanted one—"

"What!"

"But—but I didn't! Never thought of it, sir!"

"How dare you deny it, Cherry, when I have absolute proof in my hand?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

Bob blinked at him.

"I never did, sir! But—but if I did, I—I don't see any harm! I—"

"You see no harm in this, Cherry?"

"No, sir. I never sent you an Easter egg, but there's no harm in sending one that I know of."

"I will not listen to false statements, Cherry! You wrote that insulting message to your Form-master! You sent it under cover of an Easter egg!"

Mr. Quelch held up the strip of card with the message on it. Bob's eyes almost started from his head as he stared at it. He understood now why the Remove master was so bitterly angry.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob. "Did—did someone send you that, sir?"

"You sent it, Cherry!"

"I did not!" gasped Bob. "As if I'd write any such silly rot as that! Why should I? You've no right—"

"What!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"You've no right to suppose that I sent it!" exclaimed Bob indignantly. "Whoever wrote that message is a rotter and a blackguard! I'd have cut off my hand sooner. You've no right—"

"Silence!" almost roared the Remove master. "I have proof here of your guilt, Cherry! Is that your father's hand, or is it not?"

He held out the fragment of note-paper that bore the signature of Major Cherry. Bob stared at it.

"Yes, that's my father's signature," he answered blankly. "But I don't see—"

"No, you do not see!" said Mr. Quelch bitterly. "You were not aware that when you crammed this Easter egg with fragments of paper you tore up an old letter among the rest."

Bob jumped.

"You don't mean that you found that bit of my father's letter in—in that egg, sir, along with that message?" he stammered.

"I mean exactly that, Cherry, and I

found several other fragments of the same letter!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "They are here! No doubt you are surprised! You were unaware that you had inadvertently betrayed yourself!"

Bob felt as if his head was turning round. Someone—apparently a Remove man, to judge by the tenor of the message—had sent Quelch that Easter egg! Some out-and-out cad! But how had Bob's letter got mixed up in it? He remembered that he had had a letter from his father in his pocket. This was the letter—what was left of it! How had it got out of his pocket and into that Easter egg?

He stood rooted to the floor. By what horrible, inexplicable accident had that letter got there? He understood what it had caused Quelch to think and believe! How had it happened?

"Have you anything more to say?"

Mr. Quelch's bitter voice broke in on his confused thoughts.

"I—I never did it, sir!" stammered Bob. "I'd never have dreamed of writing such an insulting message to you! I can't understand any man in the Remove doing it!"

"The message, obviously, comes from a boy in my Form!" said Mr. Quelch. "And that boy, Cherry, is yourself!"

"It is not!" gasped Bob. "I never—never—"

"I hardly expected you to confess!" said Mr. Quelch dryly. "But no confession is needed. I have here proof of your guilt! You may go now, Cherry! After class I shall take you to the Head—"

"But, sir—" gasped Bob.

"I shall lay the whole matter before Dr. Locke. It is for him to decide whether to administer a flogging, or to expel you from the school, as you richly deserve for your insolence and effrontery!"

"But, sir!" gasped the unfortunate Bob. "I never—"

"Silence! Leave my study!"

"I give you my word, sir—"

"Go!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

And Bob Cherry, almost dizzy, wondering whether he was on his head or his heels, left his Form-master's study!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Up for a Flogging!

"BOB!"

Four voices uttered the name together, as Bob Cherry came back into the quad, almost tottering, his face white as chalk.

The bell was ringing for third school; but at the sight of Bob's face the chums of the Remove forgot the bell.

They ran to him, with startled and concerned looks. Bob stared at them, seemingly incapable of speech.

Harry Wharton caught him by the arm.

"Bob! For goodness' sake, what's happened?"

"Bob, old man—" gasped Nugent.

"My esteemed and idiotic Bob—"

exclaimed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"What on earth—" said Johnny Bull.

Billy Bunter blinked at Bob Cherry through his big spectacles in blank wonder. Bunter forgot even the Easter holidays at that moment.

"I say, old chap, licked?" he asked sympathetically.

"Shut up, Bunter, you ass!" muttered Johnny Bull.

The chums of the Remove could see that, whatever the matter was, it was something a great deal more serious than a licking.

"Oh, really. Bull—"

"Shut up! Bob, old man, what—"

"I—I—I—" Bob Cherry found his voice. "I—I'm going to be flogged—or sacked—I don't know which yet!" He burst into an almost wild laugh. "You see, Quelch has got positive proof that I did something I've never done—so that's that!"

"Keep cool, old chap!" said Harry quietly. "Quelch is a bit of a Tartar; but he's a just old bird. You will get fair play."

"I tell you I'm up for a flogging—or the sack!" roared Bob. "The old ass thinks I've insulted him!"

"But how—what—"

"Some blithering idiot has sent him an Easter egg, with an insulting message inside! He thinks I did it!"

"Why the dickens should he?"

"It was stuffed with bits of paper, and among the bits were bits of a letter I had from my father the other day!"

"Bob!"

All four voices uttered the name again in unison. The four juniors gazed at Bob Cherry incredulously.

"Some Remove chap's got his back up and taken it out of Quelch by sending him a string of insults in the post!" said Bob. "He packed up a lot of rubbish in an Easter egg, and put in the message. And somehow or other—goodness knows how—that old letter of mine got mixed up with the rubbish."

They looked at him silently.

"He thinks, from that, that I did it!" said Bob.

His friends did not answer. They could only have asked him—what else was Quelch to think?

"Ho, he, ho!" came from Billy Bunter. "I say, Bob, old chap, you are a careless ass! You should have asked me to help you, old chap."

"What!" roared Bob.

"Well, I'd have seen that you didn't make a bloomer like that!" said Bunter. "I may be short-sighted, but I'm not a fool! I can jolly well tell you that I shouldn't have mixed up any old letters in it—"

"I never did it!" yelled Bob.

"He, he, he!"

"You fat, frabjous, footling idiot—"

"Oh, really, Cherry! Of course you did it!" said Bunter. "Sorry you're up for a Head's whopping and all that. But what's the good of spoofing among friends, you know?"

"I tell you I know nothing about it!" shrieked Bob.

"He, he, he! If you didn't stuff the Easter egg, how did your old letter get into it?" grinned Bunter. "Draw it mild, you know!"

The Co., silent, were looking at one another. The bell ceased to ring; the rest of the school had gone in.

"Rotten waste, though, sending Quelch an Easter egg!" said Bunter. "You could have sent it by hand, if you'd liked, without wasting money on a— Whoooooop!"

Bob, utterly exasperated, grasped the Owl of the Remove by the collar.

Bang!

Bunter's head came into contact with one of the ancient Greyfriars elms. Bunter's yell rang from one end of Greyfriars School to the other.

"Yaroooh!"

"Now do you think I did it?" roared Bob.

"Ow! Wow! You know you did—"

Bang!

"Yoo-hooooop!"

"Still think so?" yelled Bob furiously.

"Ow! Wow! No! Leggo! Yaroooh!"

Not at all! Never!" howled Bunter. "Ow! No, no, no! Leggo! Wow!"

Bob with a swing of his arm sent the fat junior hurtling.

Billy Bunter sprawled and roared; but he picked himself up very quickly and bolted for the House.

Bob, with a crimson face, turned to his friends. Something in their faces drew a gleam of anger to his eyes.

"I've banged that fat fool's head for saying that I did it," he began. "If you fellows think the same—"

"Don't be an ass, old chap," said Harry quietly. "If you say you did not that's good enough for any fellow that knows you."

"Well, I say I did not!" growled Bob gruffly.

"That settles it, then," said the captain of the Remove. "But it's a jolly old mystery, and you can hardly blame Quelch—"

"How the thump did your letter get torn up and packed in the egg?" asked Frank Nugent. "You might have left it about your study, but the fellows in your study wouldn't—"

"Of course they wouldn't!" growled Bob. "I can't imagine any fellow in the Remove cad enough to send that message to Quelch, unless it's that worm Skinner—and I don't believe he'd have nerve enough."

"Skinner never comes to your study. He's never had a chance of getting hold of your letter, even if you left it about—"

"I know that!"

"Besides, he's not rotter enough to do such a thing on purpose!" said Harry. "He might send Quelch a rotten message to make him sit up—but he's not cur enough to put in evidence against another fellow."

"I know!"

"That letter must have got mixed in by accident, then," said Harry Wharton musingly. "Quelch thinks that you did it by accident, but it's clear that somebody did. Smithy—" He broke off.

"Smithy's got the nerve to land that insulting message on Quelch," said Johnny Bull. "But how could Bob's letter have got into his hands—without his knowing it, too? If Smithy did it, it was accidental."

"I can't make it out," said Bob. "All I know is that I never did it, and never knew that Quelch had got an Easter egg at all until I saw it on his study table. Even then I couldn't make out why he was so wild—till he showed me the message in it, of course. I'm just flummoxed! But I never did it! And Quelch says I'm up for a flogging!"

"We'll speak to Smithy after class," said Harry. "Better go in now; the bell's stopped. No good making Quelch wilder. If Smithy did it, he's the man to own up when he knows it's landed on another fellow."

That was a crumb of comfort to Bob Cherry as he went to the Remove Form-room with his comrades.

The chums of the Remove were ten minutes late. Mr. Quelch's gimlet-eye glittered at them as they came into the Form-room.

"A hundred lines each!" he rapped. "Go to your places!"

The Famous Five went quietly to their places.

All the Remove stared at them. The whole Form could see that something unusual had happened, and Billy Bunter was already whispering information to the fellows nearest him.

Before third school was over all sorts of rumours were whispered up and down the Remove. A plentiful crop of lines, and even raps from Mr. Quelch's

pointer, could hardly keep the whispering in check.

Bob Cherry sat in almost a dazed state during that class. Mr. Quelch passed him over as if he was not there. That was fortunate, for certainly Bob was in no state for attending to his Form-master. He was trying to think out the mystery of that mysterious Easter egg, but the more he thought about it the more bewildered he became.

After school he was to be taken before the Head. Unless the fellow who had sent the egg owned up, he was booked for a public flogging—perhaps the sack. Who had done it? Would he own up? He could think of no Remove man who could have done it, unless it was the Bounder. But how could the Bounder have mixed up that old letter with the rubbish packed in the Easter egg? It seemed impossible. Who could have done that but Bob himself, if it was accidental? And that it had been done intentionally to land him in trouble was unbelievable; there was no fellow in the Remove capable of such baseness as that.

The Remove were dismissed at last.

As they went out into the quad Harry Wharton touched the Bounder on the arm.

"Was it you, Smithy?" he asked.

Vernon-Smith stared at him.

"Was what me, ass?" he asked in his turn.

"Did you send that Easter egg to Quelch?"

"Great pip! Has anybody sent Quelch an Easter egg?" ejaculated Smithy.

"Then it wasn't you?"

The Bounder laughed.

"No fear! Not such a goat! Is that what the row's about?"

"Yes. And Bob's up for a flogging!" Wharton explained, and Smithy listened attentively. "Whoever did it was a dashed, bungling idiot, mixing in bits of an old letter—"

"Cut that out!" said the Bounder in his incisive way. "That was no accident! No fellow's fool enough for that. Bob might have had the letter at hand and done it without noticing; but if he didn't—"

"He knew nothing of it."

"Looks as if he did!" grinned the Bounder. "Still, I'd take his word, of course. But if he didn't, somebody else did—and it was no accident that Bob's letter got mixed in."

Wharton caught his breath.

"But—but who—who could be rotter enough—villain enough—"

"Ask me another! Somebody who had his knife into Cherry, that's all. It was no accident, unless Bob did it himself. In fact, I'd lay you ten to one that the blighter, whoever he was, only thought of sending an Easter egg at all as camouflage for landing that string of compliments on Quelch, and getting it put down to Bob," said the Bounder coolly.

"But—but there's no man at Greyfriars such a rotter—such a beast. And Bob's got no enemies. You can't be right, Smithy; it must have been an accident that that old letter got mixed in."

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Wisdom of the Beak!

DR. LOCKE leaned back in his chair, at the tips of his slim fingers together, and gazed thoughtfully at Mr. Quelch across his writing-table.

Mr. Quelch's look was troubled and agitated.

What had happened that day had disturbed him deeply. That any fellow in his Form could think of him as was implied in the message he had received in the Easter egg was very painful for him to realise, and that that fellow was one whom he had always liked and trusted was more painful still.

On the Head's table lay that card bearing the string of insults that so disturbed Mr. Quelch; beside it stood the Easter egg, its bright blue and red catching the April sunshine that gleamed in at the window—a prominent if not a beautiful object.

There was silence in the Head's study. Dr. Locke was reflecting on what the Remove-master had told him.

In Mr. Quelch's mind there was no doubt. It was only a question of what punishment should be meted out to the offender.

But the sage old headmaster was reflecting in the calm and quiet way he had. Evidence was evidence certainly, and conclusive evidence was conclusive evidence. Nevertheless, the headmaster of Greyfriars was weighing the matter with calm and undisturbed judgment.

"Cherry denies this?" he asked at length.

"He would hardly admit it, sir," said Mr. Quelch.

"True! But I believe that you have always found him a truthful boy."

"I have always believed so."

"Has he ever given any indication of feeling the disrespect, the dislike, that is expressed in this rascally message?"

"Never. Sometimes careless and hasty, perhaps. But I should never have dreamed of this. I have been cruelly deceived in him."

"Let us hope not," said the Head gently. "Let us not abandon even a remote possibility that the boy is innocent, Mr. Quelch. Certainly the evidence appears conclusive enough. And yet—"

Mr. Quelch suppressed a movement of impatience.

"Some other boy in your Form, Mr. Quelch, may know something of the matter," said the Head. "Indeed, if Cherry is innocent, that would appear to be a certainty. Some boy, under cover of an Easter egg, has sent you a tirade of miserable insults. But—" The Head spoke slowly. "No boy in the Remove has a study to himself. Is it not probable that whatever boy had this Easter egg in his possession, packed it with rubbish, and wrapped it up for the post, may have been observed? Is it likely, indeed, that he can have done so entirely unobserved by all other members of his Form?"

"Very improbable, I should say, sir."

"In that case, the matter must be known to other boys in the Remove?"

"It is very likely." Mr. Quelch paused, and bit his lip. "Very probably, indeed, this—this article was seen in Cherry's possession. But I cannot believe that more than one boy had a hand in this—this outrage. It is hardly uncommon, sir, for a boy to have an Easter egg in his possession at this time of the year, and anyone who saw Cherry with it would not be likely to guess what his intentions were."

"If Cherry's denial is to be believed, Mr. Quelch, the egg, if seen at all, may have been seen in possession of another boy."

"Oh, no doubt, sir! But—"

"I think," said Dr. Locke quietly, "that no stone should be left unturned in investigating the matter, Mr. Quelch, before adjudging a boy, hitherto of good character, guilty of such an offence as this. It is impossible to be too careful in such a matter, sir."



Dr. Locke made a sign to Mr. Quelch, who removed the duster from the Easter egg. "Any boy who has seen this Easter egg before will speak!" said Dr. Locke in a deep voice. There was a moment's silence. Then one fellow spoke. It was Billy Bunter. "Oh crikey!" gasped the Owl of the Remove.

"Oh, quite!"

"I think, therefore, that the whole Form should be questioned," said Dr. Locke. "I will undertake the matter personally when the Remove assemble in your Form-room; and you will have this Easter egg there."

"Very well, sir!" said Mr. Quelch.

At dinner that day there were worried and troubled faces at the Remove table.

Mr. Quelch, at the head of the table, sat looking rather like a gargoyle, silent and grim and unbending.

Bob Cherry had quite lost his usual sunny and care-free look. His face was darkly clouded.

His comrades did not look much brighter.

Two or three fellows—Skinner and Snoop and Bunter—were grinning. All the Remove knew the whole story now, and Quelch's Easter egg was the one topic in the Form, even banishing the Easter holidays as a matter of interest. Banging Bunter's head had not convinced him that Bob Cherry was not the sender of that Easter egg, and Skinner took the same view. The silly ass had given himself away, Skinner told Snoop; and Snoop agreed that the silly ass had.

Indeed, better fellows than Skinner and Snoop found it rather hard to believe Bob. They took the Bounder's view that, if the fragments of Bob's old letter had been accidentally mixed in the rubbish packed in the Easter egg, it must have been Bob who packed the egg.

The alternative was to believe that somebody had got hold of that old letter and intentionally put it where it was found, to land Bob for a flogging.

And that, they all agreed, was sheer rot!

Few fellows in the Remove disliked the cheery Bob, and certainly he had no enemy in the Remove capable of such treachery. Skinner, perhaps, liked him least, and Skinner would never have dreamed of such an action.

Even Bob's own special chums were sorely troubled in mind. They took Bob's word on the subject; but that only made the affair more puzzling and bewildering.

Somebody had done it—somebody, it was taken for granted, in the Remove. But who? It was hardly possible to suspect a fellow in another Form. Who but a Remove fellow would want to "slang" the Remove master? And who outside the Remove could have got hold of a Remove fellow's old letter?

As for suspecting a fellow outside the school, that crossed nobody's mind. The chums of the Remove had almost forgotten the row at Highcliffe, and certainly they were not thinking anything about Highcliffe now. Even if they had thought of Pon, which they did not, they could not have imagined him in possession of a letter belonging to a Greyfriars junior. Sheer chance had put it in Ponsonby's power to lay this scheme, and that such a chance had occurred was not likely to occur to anyone.

The whole thing was a hopeless puzzle—unless Bob was the sender of that Easter egg!

The Remove were still buzzing with it when they went into their Form-room again. Some of them noticed that some object was standing on Quelch's desk, covered by a duster. They did not yet know what it was.

Mr. Quelch's face was as grim as ever. His gimlet eye glittered for a moment at Bob Cherry, and then passed him by.

"I say, you fellows, here comes the Head!" whispered Billy Bunter. "I say, Cherry, you're for it now, old chap!"

Bob glared at the Owl of the Remove.

"You fat idiot! If you want your silly head banged again—"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Silence in the Form!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

And there was silence as Dr. Locke entered the Form-room.

Bob Cherry breathed hard.

He was wondering whether the Head's arrival meant that the flogging was to take place now in the Remove Form-room.

There was deep silence as the Head stood before the Form, scanning the many faces with his old but very keen eyes.

"My boys"—the Head's quiet voice broke the tense silence—"you are all, I believe, aware of what has happened. A message—a very disrespectful message—has been sent to your Form-master, enclosed in an Easter egg. It has apparently been sent by a Remove boy. Cherry!"

"Yes, sir!" breathed Bob.

"You still deny—"

"Certainly I do, sir!" said Bob Cherry steadily. "I knew nothing whatever about the Easter egg till I saw it in Mr. Quelch's study this morning."

Skinner winked at Snoop, who grinned.

"Oh crikey!" murmured Billy Bunter.

The fat Owl was wondering where Bob found the nerve to pitch such a yarn to the Head.

"Silence!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

The Head resumed in his quiet tones:

"This matter is serious—so serious that I have to consider whether a flogging will meet the case, or whether the offender shall be expelled from Greyfriars. In view of this, I ask any Remove boy who knows anything about this matter to speak out."

Silence.

"The Easter egg in question," went on the Head, "now lies on your Form-master's desk. It is the duty of any boy here who may have seen this Easter egg in Cherry's possession, or in the possession of any other boy, to speak out, and thus establish the truth."

The Head made a sign to Mr. Quelch, who removed the duster from the object on his desk.

The bright blue Easter egg was revealed—a conspicuous object.

All the Remove stared at it.

One fellow in the Form not only stared at it—he gazed at it spellbound, his little, round eyes almost popping through his big, round spectacles.

"Any boy who has seen that Easter egg before will speak!" said the Head in a deep voice.

There was a moment's silence. Then one fellow spoke. It was Billy Bunter. And what Bunter said was:

"Oh crikey!"

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter to the Rescue!

"Oh crikey!" gasped Billy Bunter.

Dr. Locke's eyes turned on the Owl of the Remove. Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes turned on him. The eyes of all the Remove turned on him.

Bunter still blinked at the Easter egg.

He blinked at it as if he could hardly believe his eyes or his spectacles. He seemed unaware for the moment that he was the cynosure of all other eyes—that he had, so to speak, brought down the house!

"Bunter!" said Dr. Locke in a very deep voice.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Yes, sir!"

"I conclude, Bunter, that you have seen that Easter egg before?"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"By gum!" breathed Skinner. "Was it Bunter, after all? If it was Bunter, where did he dig up the nerve?"

"Bunter, did you send that Easter egg to your Form-master?" demanded the Head.

Billy Bunter jumped.

"Oh! Eh? No fear! I—I mean, no, sir!"

"But you have seen it before?"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Did you see it in the possession of Cherry of this Form?"

Every ear hung on Bunter's reply.

"Hardly, sir," answered Bunter—"I mean, no, sir!"

"It was not in Cherry's possession?"

"No, sir."

"You did not see it in Cherry's study?"

"No, sir."

Bob Cherry breathed hard and deep. It had seemed to him impossible to get out of this fearful scrape. It had seemed impossible that any fellow could help him out of it. But if any fellow

could, Bunter was the last one he would have thought of.

Yet here was Bunter, giving evidence that was clearing him! How Bunter knew anything about it was an utter mystery.

The effect of Bunter's statements was already very perceptible. Mr. Quelch's grim brow was already less grim. Fellows who had made up their minds that Bob Cherry had "done it" were now wondering who on earth really had done it. The Head, it could be seen, was pleased at this success, so far, of his investigation.

"Now, Bunter," said Dr. Locke, "you must tell me where, and in whose possession you saw that Easter egg."

"I don't mind, sir," said Bunter.

"Where did you see it, Bunter?"

"In the bunshop, at Courtfield, sir."

"Wha-a-at?" stuttered the Head.

"Oh, you blithering idiot!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"You ass!" gasped Nugent.

Anybody, of course, might have seen the Easter egg in the shop at Courtfield! The question was, where had it been seen after it had been bought at a shop? For the moment Bunter's hearers had the impression that the fatuous Owl was, as usual, talking out of the back of his fat neck.

"Bunter!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir!" said Bunter cheerfully.

"It was in the bunshop at Courtfield, sir, yesterday afternoon—"

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"The question is not whether it was seen in a shop before it was purchased, you stupid boy!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, really, sir—"

"One moment!" said the Head gently.

"Is it your meaning, Bunter, that you saw who purchased that Easter egg in the shop?"

"Oh!" gasped all the Remove.

"That's it, sir!" said Bunter. "I saw the beast—"

"The—the who?"

"The beast, sir—the rotter—the cad!" gasped Bunter, his eyes gleaming through his spectacles. "I wondered what he wanted an Easter egg for, but, of course, I never knew—"

"You are sure, Bunter, that you saw that actual Easter egg purchased in the bunshop at Courtfield?"

"Yes, rather, sir! I'd know it again anywhere. The rotter gave three shillings for it; and if you ask the girl behind the counter, sir, she'll remember him all right. It was only yesterday that—"

"But who—?" gasped Bob.

"The awful cad!" said Bunter. "It was because Bob whopped him, of course—laid into him because he whacked me with his riding-whip—"

The Famous Five jumped, as if moved by the same spring.

"Bunter," said the Head, "give me the name, at once, of the Remove boy whom you saw purchase that Easter egg yesterday!"

"It wasn't a Remove chap, sir."

"What? Do you mean that it was a boy of another Form at Greyfriars?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"No, sir. Not a Greyfriars chap, at all!" said Bunter.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Head. "Bunter, you are wasting time. Give

me the name at once, if you know it!"

"Ponsonby, sir!"

"Ponsonby?" repeated the Head, blankly. "Who is Ponsonby?"

"Ponsonby!" roared Bob Cherry.

"That Highcliffe cad!"

"That Highcliffe rotter!" yelled Johnny Bull. "Pon—Pon, all the time!"

"Ponsonby!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Mr. Quelch, do you know—"

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "Ponsonby is a Highcliffe boy, with whom, I fear, some members of my Form have quarrelled at times. I know him to be a very bad and unscrupulous boy."

There was a buzz of excitement in the Remove. Billy Bunter grinned. He realised what an important fellow he was, at the moment. Billy Bunter liked to be important.

"Good old Bunter!" gasped Bob Cherry. In his excitement and glee Bob forgot the majestic presence of the Head and gave Bunter a hearty smack on the back.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Silence!"

Silence was restored. Billy Bunter wriggled. Bob's hearty smack had been intended to convey his appreciation. But it had rather winded the fat Owl.

"Cherry!" said the Head.

"Yes, sir!" gasped Bob.

"Have you lately been concerned in any quarrel, or dispute, with the boy Ponsonby, at Highcliffe School?"

"Yes, sir. The day before yesterday he pitched into Bunter with a riding-whip and I took it away from him and gave him a whopping with it," answered Bob. His eyes gleamed. "And I jolly well know that he put that letter of mine in the Easter egg on purpose, too! It's just one of his rotten tricks!"

The Head coughed.

"Can you explain, Cherry, how a letter belonging to you may have fallen into the hands of a boy at a school some miles distant?"

"We went there that day, sir, and Pon and his friends dragged me into their study, to rag me," answered Bob. "I had my letter in my pocket at that time. I suppose Pon got hold of it then."

"Might have dropped it in the scrap," said Harry Wharton. "We went there to see our friends, sir, Courtenay and De Courcy, and Ponsonby and his set got hold of Bob—"

"And there was a row, sir," said Nugent. "And—well—"

Dr. Locke held up his hand.

"It would appear, then, that this boy, Ponsonby, had an opportunity to obtain possession of a letter belonging to Cherry?"

"Oh, yes, sir," answered Bob. "I was rolled and hustled all over the place, and might have dropped anything. I never thought of it, but if I'd known that Pon bought that Easter egg I'd have thought of it fast enough."

"Yes, rather!" said Harry.

"It was Pon, sir!" said Billy Bunter, anxious to get back into the limelight. "I jolly well kept out of his sight in the bunshop in case the beast started ragging, but I saw him! And if you ask them, sir—"

"That will do, Bunter!"

"It was all through Smithy that I was there, sir. He made out that he was going to stand a spread, and I waited—hours and hours—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!"

"Mr. Quelch, perhaps you will take

(Continued on page 28.)

THE SEA SPIDER

By GEORGE E. ROCHESTER



WHAT'S GONE BEFORE.

Ulverst, the greatest U-boat commander Germany ever had, accompanied by a competent crew, sets out aboard the *Sea Spider*, a deadly underwater craft, to wage war against the world. Following the sinking of the bullion-carrier *Minneapolis*, from which is transferred bullion to the value of £200,000, the *Sea Spider* reaches the lost city of Atlantis where treasure worth more than £1,000,000 is discovered. Boarding a plane, Ulverst leaves for the mainland with a view to making arrangements for the disposal of the treasure. He is forced down in the Arctic Ocean, and later picked up by the Russian whaler *Nordyck*, and taken to Pava, on the White Sea. After saving the villagers from a murderous attack by Red Russians, Ulverst boards the *Nordyck*, and, ably assisted by five sturdy youngsters, succeeds in rejoining the *Sea Spider* to find a gunboat prowling within the vicinity.

"We must destroy her," says Ulverst, "if we want to save our necks!"

[(Now read on.)

Mr. Boyne!

ULVERST turned to Second Watch-keeping Officer F'alze.

"Order the crew back aboard the *Spider*," he said. "Tell every man to be at his post within fifteen minutes. You, Wesel, take command. If they send a landing party ashore I will dispatch Zutloss to you down in the cavern. You will then take the *Spider* out and sink this vessel off shore. Do you understand?"

"Yes, quite," assented Wesel. "I will get aboard now. She's coming up fast."

The fishery protection vessel was coming up fast, water creaming away from her sharp bows as her powerful engines drove her through the oily sea.

A mile from shore she slackened speed and proceeded more slowly, a leadsmen in the bows; and when within a quarter of a mile of the black and beetling cliffs, she lost way altogether, and her anchor ran out with a rattle and sullen plunge.

"They're going to land all right!" said Ulverst to Zutloss, who had joined him. "There go the boat davits!"

Through his glasses he watched the boat being swung outboards, and as it was rowed towards the flat and natural jetty of rock at the base of the cliffs, Ulverst slipped his glasses into their case and turned to Zutloss.

"Tell Schauer to stand by with an armed party to take these fellows prisoners!" he said. "Then get aboard the *Spider*, and tell Wesel to sink the vessel! Schauer will not act until he receives the signal from me, which will be at the same moment as Wesel's first torpedo explodes!"

Zutloss departed, and when he had gone, Ulverst strolled down to the jetty of rock for which the boat was making.

He was there to meet it as it came smartly alongside, and a young officer seated in the stern sheets leapt ashore.

"Good-afternoon!" said the latter. "We were not aware this rock was inhabited."

"No?" said Ulverst coolly. "Well, now you are!"

The officer stared at him.

"Just what are you doing here?" he demanded.

"Is that any business of yours?" returned Ulverst.

The officer looked somewhat taken aback.

"We may make it our business!" he answered sharply. "We are on patrol in these northern waters in the interests of the British Government. It is our duty to learn who you are and what you are doing here."

Ulverst smiled.

"Come, and I will show you!" he said.

The officer hesitated.

"I have asked you a reasonable question, and I require an answer to it!" he said stiffly.

"You have asked me what I am doing here," retorted Ulverst, "and I have told you I will show you! If you do not wish to be shown, perhaps you will be good enough to return to your ship!"

The officer turned to the seamen in the boat.

"You, Jones, and you, Foster, come with me!" he said.

Petty-officer Jones and the muscular seaman, Foster, stepped ashore and stood by the officer.

"Now if you will lead on!" said the latter to Ulverst.

"Certainly!" replied Ulverst; and, as he turned towards the path which led upwards to the caves and cliffs, he added: "It would perhaps be as well for me to introduce myself. My name is Ulverst. And yours?"

"Lieutenant Boyne!" replied the other shortly. "You are a German, I take it?"

"I have no country at all," replied Ulverst casually. "But during the War I fought for Germany. I was a U-boat commander, and had the pleasure of sinking one of your cruisers and fifty or more of your merchant vessels! The death-roll was in every case extremely heavy, I am afraid!"

The corners of Lieutenant Boyne's mouth tightened.

"Are you endeavouring to be deliberately offensive?" he snapped.

"Not at all, my dear young sir!" exclaimed Ulverst. "You said you wished to know who I am and what I am doing here. I am informing you at the moment who I am. As to what I am doing here, that I intend to show you!"

"You have a lot of men here?" said Boyne, staring at the rough-looking and muscular men who, under the orders of Schauer, were lounging about by the entrance to the main cave.

"Yes, quite a lot," nodded Ulverst. "More than a hundred, I think. Yes; certainly more than a hundred."

Boyne looked at him, seemed about to say something, checked back the words, and kept his lips ominously and tightly closed.

"Here," said Ulverst, leading the way into the cave, where the turbines steamed and hummed, "is my powerhouse. I make my own electricity, you see."

"I don't see!" snapped Boyne. "Why do you want electricity?"

"For lighting purposes, as I've told you," smiled Ulverst; "also to drive my lathes and machines."

"Your lathes and machines?" repeated Boyne. "What the devil are you talking about?"

He looked flushed and angry, for he had the feeling that he was making a fool of himself, or, rather, that Ulverst was making a fool of him. He didn't quite know how to handle this clean-featured, suave, and smiling man. He wished some one older than himself had been sent ashore to investigate.

"What machinery are you talking about?" he repeated.

"This in here," replied Ulverst, leading the way into the cave, where the lathes were turning, tended by grimy and sweat-streaked men.

Boyne and his two men stared about them in astonishment.

"What are these men doing?" demanded Boyne, wheeling on Ulverst, who was standing watching him, a smile on his thin, firm lips.

"They are making spare parts," said Ulverst.

"Spare parts!" burst out Boyne. "Spare parts for what, confound you? Will you tell me what game's going on here, or shall I put you under arrest?"

"No, not under arrest," said Ulverst; and deliberately he glanced towards the entrance of the cave.

Boyne followed the direction of that glance, and felt vaguely uneasy; for lounging in the doorway was Schauer and a dozen tough-looking ruffians.

"No," repeated Ulverst; "I wouldn't advise you to attempt putting me under arrest!"

This time there was no mistaking the threat in the quiet words.

The impertinence of it infuriated Mr. Boyne. Was not the gunboat lying just off shore? If it did become necessary to put this fellow Ulverst under arrest, and he resisted, he would pay dearly for it.

However, there was nothing to justify putting him under arrest at the moment, so Boyne contented himself by repeating his question.

"What spare parts are they making?" Deliberately Ulverst had been playing for time. He knew to a minute almost just how long it would take the Spider to get under way and reach the gunboat, and he reckoned she would be now approaching her prey. So he answered Boyne's question without hesitation, but with the same faint smile on his lips.

"They are making spare parts for the Spider. Ah, yes, you don't understand, eh? Well, I will explain. The Spider is the finest submarine in the world. We built her here—at least, we assembled her here—and this is her base."

"But for what do you use her?" demanded Boyne.

Ulverst took him by the arm. "Come," he said, leading him out of the cave. "I will show you!"

The Sinking of the Gunboat!

THE gunboat was lying riding at anchor a quarter of a mile from shore. By this time Ulverst knew that the Spider must be approaching her unconscious prey.

He turned to Lieutenant Boyne.

"That gunboat of yours," he said. "Watch it!"

"What do you mean?" demanded the lieutenant sharply.

"Just what I say," replied Ulverst. "I think something interesting is due to happen at any moment!"

"Look here," began the lieutenant angrily, "I've had enough of this tomfoolery—"

Boom!

He broke off suddenly as there came the sound of a sullen explosion, and to his horror he saw the gunboat reel drunkenly as though struck by some giant, but invisible hand.

"What's happened?" he cried. "What's wrong with her?"

"She's sinking," said Ulverst, with brutal directness. "That explosion you heard was a torpedo fired by my Spider. It will have blown the keel plates out of her!"

Before the lieutenant could answer, and before Petty-officer Jones and the able-seaman realised what was happening, Schauer and his men closed on them with a swift rush.

Desperately the trio struggled, but the lieutenant's revolver had been snatched from his hand by Ulverst himself, and before the other two men could fire their weapons, they were disarmed and overpowered.

The men in the ship's boat were also being attacked, and, hopelessly outnumbered as they were, they were quickly taken prisoners, resistance being merely futile as one of them discovered to his cost, his arm being stabbed deeply with a knife.

By this time the gunboat was going down fast. Already the port and starboard boats had been lowered. But, as Lieutenant Boyne watched, helpless in the grip of his captors, he saw the oily surface of the sea broken by the sudden uprising of a squat conning-tower, followed by the huge sleek bulk of the Spider.

"Yes, that is my submarine," said Ulverst, in response to the lieutenant's hoarse question. "Look!"

The leather-jacketed form of Wesel had appeared in the conning-tower along with one or two other men, and as the lieutenant watched with horrified eyes, he saw a machine-gun stutter into vicious life, the steel-coated bullets sweeping the boats.

"You villains!" screamed Lieutenant Boyne, struggling again with a berserk fury.

But remorselessly his captors held him until, at a word from Ulverst, they released him and the two unarmed seamen, for there was nothing now that the trio could do.

The boats by this time were drifting aimlessly, piled with their dead and dying. Some of the men had jumped into the sea, and these Wesel calmly picked off one by one, with a long-barrelled rifle.

The gunboat was going down fast by the bows, and suddenly the stern lifted, and with a terrific roar of bursting boilers, she slid beneath the sea to her doom.

There were no survivors save those who had been taken prisoners upon the island.

His face hard and set, Ulverst turned to the lieutenant.

"You call that wanton murder, I suppose?" he said harshly. "Yet it was their lives or ours. I couldn't have kept them here as prisoners, for I couldn't spare the men to

guard them, apart from the stores they would require, nor could I have let them return to some port with word of what was going on here."

There was stark truth in the words. In the grim and deadly game of piracy which Ulverst was playing, such an occurrence as this was inevitable should a ship come to Ice Rock.

There had been no other way out for Ulverst. As he had said, it had been the lives of him and his men, or the lives of those aboard the ill-fated gunboat.

There could be no compromise, and it was only the iron will of Ulverst which had forced him to see the ghastly thing through and send those gallant men to their deaths.

"You are unarmed," he said to Lieutenant Boyne and the rest of the prisoners. "There is no way in which you can escape from this island, and no harm, that I can see, that you can do us. Therefore, it is not my intention to lock you up so long as you behave yourselves and give me and my officers no cause for complaint."

"Are you asking us for our parole?" demanded the lieutenant shakily.

"It amounts to that," returned Ulverst calmly.

"Then let me tell you, you scoundrel," burst out Lieutenant Boyne, "that I will give no parole! You can do your worst, but as long as there remains breath in my body, I will do my utmost to bring you and these pirates of yours to the gallows!"

"Is that so?" said Ulverst. "And do you speak for your men in this refusal to give your parole?"

"Yes, I speak for my men," replied the lieutenant.

"I think," said Ulverst, "that they had better speak for themselves."

"We're with Lieutenant Boyne," growled the prisoners.

"Well, you are all acting very stupidly," said Ulverst, "but you can have your own way. Refusal to give your parole means close confinement for you. I even wonder why I should bother to keep you alive."

"Yes, shoot them and have done with it!" growled Schauer.

Ulverst glanced at him.

"When I wish for your advice I will ask for it," he said. "What I will eventually do with these men I have yet to decide. In the meantime, take them to the cave which we use as cells, and lock them in!"

The Officers' Quarters!

THAT night there was wild carousal on Ice Rock to celebrate the sinking of the gunboat.

Neither Ulverst, Wesel, Falze, or any of his officers took part, but they interfered in no way with the men's feasting and drinking.

"Poor devils, they get little enough fun," said Ulverst, with a shrug of his shoulders, as he and Wesel looked in at the main living cave which was foul with the mingled odours of tobacco, liquor, and humanity. "Let them celebrate if they want to!"

Together, he and Wesel walked on to their quarters, for there was much to discuss, as Ulverst wanted the Spider ready for sea at the earliest possible moment.

"I tell you frankly, Wesel," he said, when the pair of them had gained his quarters, "I couldn't spare the men to

(Continued on next page.)

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quarters, "I do not like the coming of that gunboat to-day."

"No?" said the stolid Wesel inquiringly.

"No," said Ulverst. "She will soon be reported missing. What will happen? They will send vessels in search of her. Those vessels may come into these waters."

"Why should they?" asked Wesel. "She was farther north than they would expect to find her."

"The fisheries are being pushed farther north every year," said Ulverst. "That has worried me a lot. Another thing—suppose the gunboat had wireless her position? She must be in touch with the mainland once in forty-eight hours, I should imagine."

"Yes, it seems likely," nodded Wesel thoughtfully. "Still, I see little to worry about. Even if she had wireless her position an hour or so before reaching here, and ships come here, we can deal with them."

"No; that is where you are wrong," pointed out Ulverst. "Ships come and we attack them. That means more disappearances. The British Admiralty will never rest until those disappearances are cleared up. No, Wesel, I don't like it, and the sooner the Spider is ready for sea the better."

He broke off as the curtains of his ave parted and Dubowsky entered. The thin, frail form of the professor looked more fragile than ever, and his thin, bony hands were shaking as he kept rubbing them over each other as though washing them.

"Tell me, Ulverst," he said, "what happened this afternoon. I was asleep in my quarters, but my servant tells me you sank a gunboat."

"Yes, that is correct," replied Ulverst stiffly. "A British Fisheries Protection vessel arrived here, put a landing party ashore, and wanted to know who we were and what we were doing."

"So you sank the ship—eh?" said Dubowsky. "I think it was unwise—very unwise. The British are not fools. They will want to know where that ship has gone to. They will look for it."

"I know that," snapped Ulverst; "but there was nothing else I could do."

"And what do you intend to do now?" whined Dubowsky. "If we remain here we will be caught. I am an old man, Ulverst, and sometimes I get presentiments which are very strong. No, do not laugh. I feel the sinking of that gunboat to-day means the beginning of the end for us. What are you going to do? Are you going to stay on here?"

"I am having the Spider made ready for sea with all possible speed," replied Ulverst. "There is a night shift working on her now. I have had to promise them an extra share of our loot as they wanted to join in the carousing."

"And you are going to abandon Ice Rock—eh?" asked Dubowsky.

"I am not going to abandon it until I am forced to," replied Ulverst. "As you know, we have an alternative base, but it is one I do not wish to use unless compelled to. However, I am having everything made ready for a swift departure should the necessity arise."

"And what of the men?" pressed Dubowsky. "We can't take them all aboard the Spider, and they will not suffer the Spider to sail without them should you decide to abandon this base."

"I have made plans to deal with such a contingency," said Ulverst coldly.

"You have?" asked Dubowsky. "What plans are they, Ulverst? Tell me!"

"I will not tell you!" snapped Ulverst. "Get back to your quarters, and if you breathe a word to your



"Your gunboat's sinking!" said Ulverst, with brutal directness. "That explosion you heard was a torpedo fired by my Spider. It will have blown the plates out of her!"

servant or any of the men that we have in our minds the possibility of having to abandon this base, you will not live another hour!"

"But, Ulverst—"

"Get back to your quarters, I tell you!" thundered Ulverst.

And Dubowsky shrank from the fury in the man's face.

That fury was sufficient to show Dubowsky that Ulverst was in no mood to be crossed, and, turning on his heel, he shuffled from the cave.

"He's dangerous, the old fool!" growled Ulverst. "It would suit his purpose to stir up the men against us. It's me he wants to down, Wesel. Just see that he has returned to his quarters."

Obediently Wesel departed, to reappear a few minutes later, the shadow of a grin on his lips.

"Yes, he's gone back, and is now turning in," he reported. "I dropped him a hint that if he didn't want his throat slit he'd mind his own business and keep his mouth shut!"

"And what did he say?" asked Ulverst.

"He started to cry," replied Wesel, "and said that it was he who had designed the Spider, and that you weren't treating him fairly. I told him he'd be fairly enough treated so long as he kept his mouth shut and minded his own business."

Ulverst made no rejoinder to that.

"And now that the point's been raised," said Wesel, "just how do you intend to evacuate the island, taking the men with us, if we find ships coming here?"

Ulverst faced his second in command squarely.

"I cannot tell you," he said. "I can see no way of getting the men away in case of sudden attack."

"But you told Dubowsky you had a plan."

"I told him so, I know," admitted Ulverst. "That was to keep him from alarming the men. Even if our oil-tanker was here, it would make no difference. She'd never escape!"

"No; we couldn't suddenly embark them aboard her with a couple of war-ships in the offing," remarked Wesel grimly. "This is a devil of a problem!"

"Is it?" asked Ulverst.

Wesel looked at Ulverst sharply.

"What do you mean, is it?" he demanded.

Then as he continued to look at Ulverst, the latter's meaning dawned on him.

"Donnerwetter, but you would not desert them?" he said hoarsely.

"Tell me the alternative," said Ulverst grimly.

"I cannot," groaned Wesel, "and that's a fact! We cannot take them all aboard the Spider, and even if we had a ship here now, a tanker, they wouldn't get a mile on her before she'd be sunk."

"Exactly!" nodded Ulverst. "We're not in this for our health, Wesel. Heaven knows I do not want to abandon these men, but what else can we do with them?"

(Ulverst has been in tight corners before, and come out best. Will fortune favour him this time? Be sure you read next week's exciting chapters of this popular adventure story, chums.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,418.

QUELCH'S EASTER EGG!

(Continued from page 24.)

a taxicab to Courtfield, taking this Easter egg with you, and inquire at the luncheon—"

"Certainly, sir."

"A description of the purchaser—"

"Quite so, sir."

"When the facts have been ascertained, the matter will be placed before the headmaster of Highcliffe!" said Dr. Locke.

The Remove were taken by Monsieur Charpentier, in extra French, during the absence of their Form-master. But Mossos got even less attention than usual from his class that afternoon. Every fellow in the Remove was discussing the mystery of the Easter egg—now happily elucidated—and wondering what was going to happen to Ponsonby of Highcliffe.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER. All Right for Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows!"
Billy Bunter rolled into Study No. 1, at tea-time.

Five fellows were there—getting tea; a spread of unusual magnificence. Not a voice told Bunter to roll away, or blow off, or to go and wash his neck! Five voices, in unison, said:

"Trot in, Bunter!"

Bunter trotted in.

Bunter, just then, was a fellow whom the Famous Five delighted to honour!

Bunter was the goods.

Bunter had done the trick—worked the oracle! Bunter had put paid to Pon—confounded his politics, and frustrated his knavish tricks, so to speak!

Some philosophers declare that even the bad things, in this world, work out in the long run to good results! That certainly seemed to be so in this case! Had not Bunter borrowed Smithy's bike without leave, Smithy would not have sent him on that fool's errand to the luncheon—in which case, Bunter would not have spotted Ponsonby there—and it seemed probable that Pon would have got away with his cunning scheme.

As it was, Pon had not succeeded, after all, in avenging that thrashing on the bridge-path; and it seemed likely that he was booked for another!

Never had the Famous Five been so merry and bright! And never, certainly, had they made so much of Bunter!

"Like poached eggs, old chap?" asked Harry Wharton.

"What-ho!" said Bunter.

"And ham?" asked Frank Nugent.

"You bet!"

"And tomatoes?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Shove 'em this way!"

"And toast?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Lots!" said Bunter.

"Leave a little absurd space for the ridiculous cake, my idiotic Bunter," said Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "There are also jam tarts and meringues."

"That's all right!" said Bunter cheerfully.

Anyone who did not know Bunter, seeing him tuck into the poached eggs and ham and toast, might have doubted whether he had left space for the cake, the jam tarts and the meringues.

But there was, it seemed, plenty of space available.

Bunter sat and gobbled.

He had the lion's share of the spread in Study No. 1, and then some! And then some more!

When every available inch of stowage capacity had been crammed, Bunter beamed on the chums of the Remove.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Have another tart?"

"No, thanks, old chap! I never eat much, you know," said Bunter. "I say, you fellows, about the hols—"

"Oh!"

"We're just on break-up—"

"Oh!"

"And we haven't settled about the hols, yet—"

"Oh!"

"I've decided," went on Bunter, blinking at the Famous Five, "not to go with Mauly, and I've turned down Smithy, and I've told Toddy not to count on me. I'm sticking to my old pals."

"Oh!"

"We'll settle it now, shall we?" said Bunter breezily. "Is it a go?"

There was a moment's pause in Study No. 1. Then the chums of the Remove, grinning at one another rather ruefully, answered:

"It's a go!"

And a "go" it was! Billy Bunter

rolled out of Study No. 1 in a happy and satisfied frame of mind—"fixed up" for the Easter holidays, at last!

Remove fellows wondered what was going to happen to Ponsonby—whose treacherous trickery had been proved, to the satisfaction of Greyfriars.

But nothing happened to Ponsonby, at Highcliffe.

Mr. Mobbs, his Form-master, listened to what Mr. Quelch had to tell him, and declined to be convinced. Dr. Voysey, his headmaster, took the same view as Mr. Mobbs. And Mr. Quelch returned to Greyfriars with a very grim expression on his face—wishing from the bottom of his heart, that Cecil Ponsonby was in his Form—in which case, Pon would assuredly have suffered severely for his sins.

But the rascal of Highcliffe did not escape without punishment. Greyfriars broke up for Easter on the same day as Highcliffe. Harry Wharton & Co. arrived at Courtfield Station—and found Pon & Co. on the platform there—waiting for the same train.

Pon & Co. did not take that train.

Gadsby, Monson, and Vavasour were put to flight—but Pon, who would gladly have shared their retreat, was collared. For the next ten minutes, Pon had the time of his life.

When the train went, with the Famous Five in it, the chums of the Remove looked back from the window, and Billy Bunter blinked back through his big spectacles, at a deplorable object sitting on the platform.

It was Pon—but scarcely recognisable; with his coat split, his hat smashed, his collar and tie gone, and his hair a wild mop!

Pon sat and blinked at the train, and gasped for breath. He shook a feeble fist, and a roar of laughter came back.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

That was the last Harry Wharton & Co. saw of Pon! And they were glad to see the last of him.

THE END.

(Watch out next week for the opening story in a grand new series of Greyfriars yarns, featuring Jack Drake, who left Greyfriars to assist Ferrera Locke, the famous Baker Street detective. The yarn is entitled: "JIMMY THE FOX!" and it's a real corker!)

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By George Bulstrode—for hiking and adventure. Share expenses. MUST BE FOND OF SCRAPS.
(Any good sending along Mrs. Kibble's cat, old sport?—Ed.)

WANT TO BE A WEIGHTLIFTER?

Then lend me a quid—and you'll lift an awful weight from my mind!—"HARD UP," Study No. 11, Remove.



THE NEW Greyfriars Herald



GREAT EASTER COMPETITION

The Editor of the "Greyfriars Herald" offers a Prize of Two Doughnuts a Day for a Month in the school tuckshop for the cleverest answer to the question "Where should Billy Bunter spend his Easter vacation?"
N.B. On account of its being too obvious, the answer "The Writs Hotel" will not count.

No. 133 (New Series.)

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

April 20th, 1935.

GREYFRIARS HIKER'S STRANGE TACTICS

By PETER TODD

Tom Dutton, our champion hard-of-hearing specialist, got a lamming from Quelch last Wednesday morning for punching Brown on the nose. I was going hiking in the afternoon, but I thought I'd wait to cheer Dutton up as he came out of Quelch's study before setting out.

"Never mind, old sport," I said consolingly. "Why not come out with me for a hike?"
"My hat! That's what I call a jolly good wheeze!" said Dutton enthusiastically. "Are all these fellows joining in, too?"

"What ho!" answered my fellow-hikers. "Then I'm with you," said Dutton. "Just wait a minute, will you?"

He dodged off to the Remove passage. Two minutes later, to my astonishment, he reappeared, carrying a big suitcase in one hand and a cricket stump and a peashooter in the other.

"First port of call—the tuckshop!" he grinned. "Sorry to delay things. I suppose you chaps have already done your shopping!"

We stared, wondering what shopping could be necessary for an afternoon's hike. When we got down to the tuckshop, we stared harder, for Dutton, who happened to be in funds, laid in enough tuck to last him for a month at least.

"Well, that's that!" remarked Dutton brightly, after stuffing the foodstuffs in the suitcase. "Now let's get on. What about a banner?"

"Banner?" we repeated, blankly.

"I should have thought we'd needed a banner," said Dutton, with a frown. "Still, I suppose there hasn't been time to make one. Anyway, people will soon know what we're out for. Let's pelt the first master we meet, and then there'll be no doubt about it!"

"WHAT!" we shrieked.

"Be rather a lark to bump the Head," Dutton rattled on cheerfully. "Well, let's make a move. Where are we going? To the school tower?"

We looked at each other dizzily. A hiker who laid in enough grub for a siege, wanted to carry a banner, seriously suggested bumping the Head, and thought of hiking to a place which was only twenty yards away from him, was a new phenomenon to us. The same thought occurred to all of us simultaneously. Tom Dutton must be potty!

A moment later ample confirmation of that theory seemed to be forthcoming when Dutton spotted Wingate of the Sixth, and rushed at him with upraised cricket-stump, yelling: "Down with tyranny!"

I decided that the joke had gone far enough. Making a sign to the rest to follow me, I dashed after Dutton. Luckily, I was able to chip in before that cheery hard-of-hearing merchant had had a chance to do any damage.

It was only when we had got Dutton in a quiet corner of the quad, that something in his ravings gave us the clue to the mystery. Dutton had imagined that my invitation to come out for a hike had been an invitation to COME OUT ON STRIKE!

DICK RAKE asks— DO HOT CROSS BUNS EVAPORATE?

This is a jolly serious question to any fellow who supplies the ingredients for the making of hot cross buns. We're very fond of hot cross buns in Study No. 6, and when Bunter came along and offered to make us some, we thought it a rattling good idea. By eliminating middleman's profit, we argued, we could get at least twice the number of buns for the money. Furthermore, Bunter being a real dab at cooking, they would undoubtedly be a good deal better than shop buns.

So we gave Bunter the stuff and I told him to get on with the job.

What we gave him was four pounds of flour, one pound of sugar, two ounces of yeast, one quart of milk, one pound of butter, two pounds of currants, and a tin of spice—well over ten pounds of ingredients, in all.

Now mark the result.

After mixing and making and waiting in the kitchen while cook kindly superintended the actual baking, Bunter brought us the buns. There were five of them. They weighed nine ounces the lot.

We tackled Bunter about it. We asked him by what strange process ten pounds of ingredients had been converted into nine ounces of hot cross bun. And Bunter unhesitatingly explained.

It was all caused, he explained, by evaporation.

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?



Coker and Bunter would dead-heat for the honour of being the worst speller at Greyfriars. When Bunter spelt "postal" as "postel," Coker said it was "postall"—and it was left for Dicky Nugent of the Second to put them right! Bob Cherry says they ought to take lessons by "post."



Lord Mauleverer was quite annoyed when his study-mate, Sir Jimmy Vivian, taught his pet parrot to say: "Lazybones!" every time "Mauly" stretched himself on the sofa! Mauly soon got used to it, though. Sir Jimmy says his chum wouldn't miss his "forty winks" if there was an air raid!



Mr. "Larry" Lascelles, the popular Maths and Sports master, advocates a hiking and camping holiday for fellows who have a study economy. "Larry" ought to know—he can be seen out for a long tramp every half-holiday. He thinks nothing of covering twenty or thirty miles. And he has often camped.



"Babs" Redfern, a cousin of the well-known St. Jim's fellow, is the junior swimming champion of Cliff House School. Using a powerful backstroke, she narrowly defeated Marjorie Hazeldene and Phyllis Howell in the school sports. Bunter has indignantly refused "Babs" offer to teach him to swim!



Richard Hilary, the tennis champion of the Remove, is a left-handed player, though this has no effect on his slashing service! Hilary says tennis is one game at which you can literally beat your opponent "with one hand"! Against Hilary, Scott of the Upper Fourth "got left"!



Mark Linley, the lad from Lancashire, is by no means ashamed of the fact that his father has worked in a mill. When "Marky's" pater visited Greyfriars, Harry Wharton & Co. entertained him in Study No. 13. Skinner sneered—but wished he hadn't later, when Linley gave him a "prize" nose!

The PAWPER of the FOURTH!

By DICKY NUGENT

"Master Fearless wanted in the 'Ead's study!"

Binding, the St. Sara's page, popped his head into Jack Jolly & Co's apartment in the Fourth Form passidge and made that announcement. Jolly and Merry and Bright gave Fearless-simper-thetic looks.

"Sounds like trubble, old bhap," said Jack Jolly. "Take my tip and stuff exercise-books in your trowis!"

"Thanks, old fellow, but my conscience is clear enuff!" larfed Frank Fearless. "Perhaps the Beak only wants a taborrow half-a-crown!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Seeing that you're one of the wealthiest chaps at St. Sam's, he couldn't apply to a better man!" grinned Jack Jolly. "But let's hope it's not that, for you want stand an earthly of getting it back if it is! Don't be long, Fearless!"

"Back in a jiffy!" promised Frank Fearless, as he went off, wissling cheerfully, blissfully unaware of the dark cloud that was destined soon to overshadow his yung life!

Dr. Birchmell, the revered headmaster of St. Sam's, was awaiting him in his study, and Fearless quickly sensed that something was very much wrong with the works. The Head had a pair of knitting-needles in his hands and was knitting his brows in quite an alarming way.

"Ah, Fearless, you have some!" he eggscrambled. "Squatty-woo, may boy! I'm afraid I have grave news for you!"

He buried his face in his hands for a moment, then went on:

"Hitherto, Fearless, you have lived in the lap of luxury. The son of a wealthy father, you have been used to handling walth in a large way. Your pocket-munny, I believe, has been in the nay-bourhood of a shilling a week."

"Trew, sir," mormered Frank Fearless, wondering what was coming.

"Well, Fearless," said the Head with a deep sigh, "I'm afraid that nappy state of affairs no longer eggists. Your father's walth has molted away like snow before the summer sun. The wolf now chammers at the door of your ancestral home. The fact is, Fearless, that overnite you have become a pawper!"



Dr. Birchmell that he was no longer wanted at St. Sam's, and being the kind of fellow who wouldn't dream of staying on where he wasn't wanted, he had come to the conclusion that the best thing to do was to buzz off. The result was that when he returned once more to the Fourth-Form passidge, he was all ready to go.

Jack Jolly & Co. stared at him in distonishment.

"Going for a hollerday, old chap?" Jack Jolly asked.

"Yes—for a long one, I'm afraid!" answered Fearless, with a siltoly bitter smile. And he eggspalined what had happened.

"Grate pip!" breathed Jack Jolly, when he had finished. "This is rotten and no mistake. What ever are you going to do?"

"Earn my own living, I hope, in some honest job as a shoebblack or a crossing-sweeper. It's the only course open to me," said Fearless, with a sigh. "Well, good-bye, you fellows!"

"What about that half-crown I lent you yestorday?" asked Merry, in sudden alarm.

But Jack Jolly, who thought it would be rather bad form to mention such a thing during a chap's last minnits at St. Sam's, mannedged to drown Merry's words with a harty:

"Good-bye, Fearless, old sport—and good luck!"

And with those words ringing in his ears, Frank Fearless quitted the Skool House and marched down to the gates.

Outside, Fearless took a last, lingering glarso at the grey pile of buildings where he had spent so many happy days, then turned on his heel and went out into the world. But he hadn't gone more than a cupple of yards before an eggscited voice shouting: "Wait a minnit!" caused him to stop again.

It was Jack Jolly who rushed breathlessly out of the gates, and there was a gleem of hope in Jack's eyes as he joined his old pal.

"It's all right, old chap!" he gasped. "I've just thought of a wheezo. There's no need for you to leave St. Sam's after all!"

"How do you make that out?" asked Frank Fearless, in scripize.

"Lisson," said Jack Jolly. "In a fortnite's time there's an eggssam-

ination for the Sir Gouty Greybeard Skollarship. The winner of that skollarship is entitled to receive his education at St. Sam's free, grattis, and for nothing. I didn't think of it till you'd gone, but as soon as I did think of it I could see it was the very thing for you. Fearless, old chap, you're going to enter for that skollarship—and what's more, you're going to win it!"

"My hat! That's something like an idea!" cried Frank Fearless. "Dashed if I don't have a jolly good try, anyhow!" And he returned to St. Sam's, determined already to win the Sir Gouty Greybeard Skollarship or perrish in the attempt!

(Don't miss the next yarn in this staggering series—"A Skoolboy's Resolve!" It's a yell!—Ed.)

HINTS FOR FORM-MASTERS

By BOB CHERRY

Always get your boys into a healthy glow before you start the lesson. This can be done by allowing them to play leapfrog over the desks for the first ten minutes.

Don't start asking your boys questions about the previous evening's prep. It only looks as if you doubt whether they've done it properly, and this betrays a nasty suspicious mind.

Speak softly and soothingly when teaching. If you find that this causes the boys to fall asleep, tip-toe silently out of the room and leave them to it.

Pass a bag of sweets round the class at frequent intervals. If you carefully follow these hints, nothing can stop you from becoming a really popular Form-master!

The Difference

Skinner complains that many fellows are so nervous that they become utter rabbits when they tell a Form-master a fib. Skinner himself, of course, can tell fibs by the hundred without turning a "hare!"

Can You Untie Knots?

If so, trot along and help Temple. His eyebrows have got tangled up with his hair, and he's in an awful mess!

Denial

I hereby deny the fatheaded rumour that I'm shortly going to explode. The truth is simply that in order to keep fit I'm giving up ginger-beer, in other words, I'm "going off" pop.—BOLSOVER MAJOR, Study No. 10, Remove.