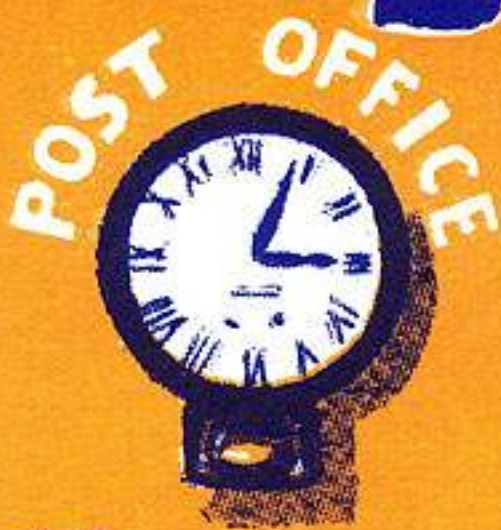


MEET BILLY BUNTER IN AN ENTIRELY NEW ROLE—INSIDE!

The Magnet^{2D}

*Billy Bunter's
Own Paper*



RICH AT LAST!

BUNTER IN FUNDS! By a wonderful stroke of good fortune, Billy Bunter comes into possession of **FIFTY POUNDS**—which provides entertainment, and incidentally a big surprise, for **HARRY WHARTON & CO., of GREYFRIARS.**

BILLY BUNTER'S WINDFALL!



"What's that?" asked Bob Cherry. Kipps grinned, as he held up a Post Office Savings Account Book, with the name of W. G. Bunter written on it.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Good Advice Not Wanted!

"BUNTER, old bean!" Harry Wharton, captain of the Greyfriars Remove, spoke in quite a friendly tone.

He was standing in the doorway of Study No. 1 when Billy Bunter came rolling down the passage.

Billy Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles, and grinned.

"Can't stop!" he answered.

"Hold on a minute!"

"Can't!" said Bunter.

And, like the deep and dark blue ocean in the poem, he rolled on.

Harry Wharton stepped out of the study doorway, grabbed him by the collar as he passed, and twirled him into the study.

Billy Bunter spun round like a very fat, humming-top, stumbled, and sat down on the carpet with a bump.

"Ow!" he gasped. "Beast!"

The captain of the Remove followed him into the study and shut the door. Then he stood looking down at Bunter, who sat gasping for breath, and blinking up at him with an infuriated blink.

"Now, you fat ass—" began Harry.

"Beast!" gasped Bunter. "Wharrer you want? I'm not going to lend you anything out of my fifty pounds! You can't expect it! Only last week you refused to cash a postal order for me, and—"

"Do you want me to boot you across the study?" roared Wharton.

"Ow! No! You keep off, you beast!"

Billy Bunter scrambled up, and backed warily round the study table. He blinked at the captain of the

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Remove across that article of furniture, keeping out of reach of a boot.

"Now, look here," said Harry, "I've got to speak to you, Bunter! As you haven't the sense of a bunny rabbit—"

"You cheeky beast!"

"Listen to me, fathead! You got the reward offered for spotting a smash-and-grab man the other day. No fellow here is allowed to have fifty pounds in his pockets, and the Head only allowed you to receive it, on condition that you put it straight into the Post Office Bank. Otherwise it would have been placed in your father's hands. Quelch went with you to the post office and saw it done. Now—"

"Look here, Skinner's waiting for me downstairs—"

"Let him wait! Now, from what I've heard, you've got a withdrawal form, and you're going along this afternoon to draw out the whole lot!" said Harry.

"Can't I do as I jolly well like with my own money?" demanded Bunter hotly. "You mind your own bizney—see?"

"Do have a little sense, Bunter! Take out a pound or two at a time, as the Head supposed you would do! If he knew you were taking it all out in a lump, he would make you hand it over to be taken care of."

"Are you going to sneak?" sneered Bunter.

Harry Wharton breathed hard and deep.

Since Billy Bunter, by a wonderful stroke of good fortune, had become possessed of the stupendous sum of fifty pounds, it was not easy to deal with him.

It might have got into any fellow's head a little. It had got into Billy Bunter's fat head a lot!

Quite a number of fellows had discovered hitherto unsuspected attractions in the fat Owl of the Remove. He had made quite a number of friends. And friends of that kind were the fellows to advise him to make the fat fly with that windfall.

Not that Bunter needed much urging. He only wanted to get the cash into his fat hands to make it fly right and left.

It had been quite a blow to Bunter when he found that he was only allowed to receive that sum on condition that it was placed safely in the bank.

But there were ways of getting round that.

Neither his headmaster nor his Form-master had supposed that the fat Owl of the Remove would think of withdrawing the whole sum in a lump from the savings bank at the earliest opportunity.

That, however, was what Billy Bunter did think of, and what he was going to do. He had sent for a withdrawal form for that purpose.

Across the study table, he blinked defiance at the captain of the Remove.

"You jolly well mind your own bizney!" he snorted. "'Tain't your money, is it? And if you think you're going to borrow any of it, you're jolly well mistaken—see?"

"You blithering, bloated bloater!" roared Wharton.

He had determined to keep his temper with the fat Owl—if he could. But he came very near to losing it.

"Yah!" retorted Bunter. "You can call a fellow names, but you're jolly well not getting anything out of me, I can tell you!"

"Will you listen to me, you bloated blitherer? Can't you understand I'm trying to advise you for your own good?" asked Harry patiently.

"Keep your advice till I ask for it!" retorted Bunter independently. "Think I don't know how to look after my own money? I'm not letting you have any of it, and chance it!"

"Don't be such an ass, Bunter! Fifty pounds is an awful lot of money——"

"I dare say it is—to you!" said Bunter loftily. "It's not so much to me, you know. Your people ain't rich like mine! Look here, Skinner and Snoop and Fishy are waiting for me——"

"Have a little sense, Bunter! Take out five pounds, or even ten, but don't be such an ass as to blow the whole lot!" urged Wharton. "You'll feel pretty blue when it's all gone."

It was not easy to keep patient. But Harry Wharton spoke quietly and earnestly. He really was concerned for the fat and fatuous Owl. With fellows like Skinner and Snoop and Fisher T. Fish to help him get rid of his windfall, it was not likely to last Bunter long; and there was not a shadow of doubt that Bunter would feel exceedingly "blue" when his riches had taken unto themselves wings and flown away.

But William George Bunter had no use for good advice. He was quite satisfied with his own sagacity.

"You can jaw till you're black in the face!" he remarked cheerfully. "But if you fancy I'm going to lend you anything out of my fifty pounds, you can guess again! He, he, he!"

"You fat idiot!"

"You can't pull my leg!" jeered Bunter. "You're jolly friendly now, ain't you? Quite pally! Only last week you refused to cash a postal order for me, just because I hadn't got one! Now you're fearfully pally, because I've got fifty pounds! He, he, he! Don't I know what you're after! And I can jolly well say—Yaroooo! Keep off, you beast!"

Harry Wharton's patience failed him at that point—which was not, perhaps, surprising. He came round one side of the study table, and Billy Bunter dodged promptly round the other and flew for the door.

He reached it, and grabbed it open as Wharton reached him. A boot landed on the tightest trousers at Greyfriars, and Billy Bunter flew into the Remove passage. He roared as he flew.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry, in the passage, stared at Bunter's sudden exit from Wharton's study. "What's the row?"

"Ow! Wow!" spluttered Bunter. "That beast Wharton's kicked me, just because I won't lend him anything out of my fifty pounds——"

"What?" yelled Bob.

"I say, old chap, you go into the study and punch him, and I'll lend you ten bob out of my fifty pounds!" gasped Bunter.

"Oh, my hat! I'll punch you instead, old fat man!" grinned Bob Cherry.

And he did, and Billy Bunter, with another roar, flew for the stairs.

The fat Owl disappeared down the staircase, and Bob looked in at Study No. 1, and grinned at Harry Wharton's frowning face.

"Tain't safe to speak to Bunter these days!" he remarked. "The fat ass thinks that everybody at Greyfriars is after his fifty quids! Coming down to the cricket?"

Harry Wharton nodded, and came, and Billy Bunter and his windfall were dismissed from his mind. The captain of the Remove had done his best and failed, and the fat Owl had to be left to his own devices.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Nothing Doing!

"I SAY, you fellows!" gasped Billy Bunter.

"Oh, here you are, old man!" said Skinner.

"Waiting for you!" said Snoop.

"I guess we don't mind waiting for Bunter!" remarked Fisher T. Fish.

Three Removites were waiting at the gateway—not very patiently. But they turned friendly smiles on the fat junior as he came rather breathlessly down to the gates and joined them. The three were going to walk down to Courtfield with the Owl of the Remove, see him draw fifty pounds from the post office, and see that he got back safe to the school with that large sum in cash.

Which was very kind and friendly of Skinner & Co.

They were not, as a rule, conspicuous for kindness and friendliness. But Billy Bunter's windfall had made a lot of difference.

"Come on, old chap!" said Skinner. "It's a bit of a walk to Courtfield, you know—the sooner we start the better."

"That beast Wharton stopped me coming out!" gasped Bunter. "I say, I'm rather out of breath. It's rather hot walking, too. What about a taxi?"

Skinner & Co. exchanged dubious glances. A taxi from the other end would have appealed to them—after Billy Bunter had called at the post office! From the Greyfriars end, it had no such appeal, as Bunter was, as yet,

Billy Bunter has always fancied himself as a sportsman, but shortage of cash has prevented him from spreading himself in that line. With fifty pounds in his possession he makes the fur fly with a vengeance!

in his usual state of stony impecuniosity.

"Lovely afternoon for a walk!" said Skinner.

"Ripping!" said Snoop heartily.

"Let's walk it, old chap!"

"I'll say I'd jest enjoy a leetle pasear in your company, Bunter, old-timer," remarked Fisher T. Fish.

Billy Bunter blinked at the three through his big spectacles.

Once at the post office at Courtfield he would be rolling in money. Skinner & Co. were going to share in the gargantuan feed that Bunter was going to stand at the Courtfield bunshop. All three of them were on the make—as Bunter, obtuse ass as he was, knew perfectly well. And the fat Owl saw no reason whatever why they should not stand him a lift to the town.

"Gosling will let you use the phone in his lodge," said Bunter calmly. "I'm not going to walk, I know that."

Again the three exchanged glances. They hesitated. Standing Bunter a taxi to Courtfield was, so to speak, a sprat to catch a whale; but none of the three was keen on parting with the sprat.

Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, came in at the gates. He glanced at the group of juniors, and grinned. Smithy, the millionaire's son, was not in the least impressed by Bunter's windfall; but he was sardonically amused by the new attitude of fellows like Skinner towards the fat Owl.

"I say, Smithy," squeaked Bunter,

"lend me a taxi-fare, will you? I'll settle out of my postal order—I mean, out of my fifty pounds."

"You fat duffer," said the Bounder. "I've heard that you're going to pull out the whole chunk to-day. Take my tip, old fat man, and leave some there for another time."

"I've had that from Wharton!" yapped Bunter. "I don't want any advice from you, Vernon-Smith. I want a taxi-fare."

"Better borrow it of your pals, then!" said the Bounder, with a shrug of the shoulders, and he walked on into the quad.

"Beast!" snorted Bunter.

He gave his "pals" a disdainful blink through his big spectacles, and rolled out of the gateway. As they followed, he blinked round at them, still more disdainfully.

"You fellows can sheer off," he said. "If you can't stand a taxi, I'm going to pick up the motor-bus, and I don't want you."

"Hold on!" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

Fisher T. Fish, the business-man of the Remove, had a long list of articles which he hoped to sell to Bunter for five or six times their value.

"I guess it's O.K., Bunter! I—I'll phone!"

"I'll wait, then!" said Bunter, with dignity.

He leaned on the gate-post to wait. Fisher T. Fish cut into the porter's lodge to borrow Gosling's telephone, and ring up a taxi from Courtfield.

He came back to the group with a troubled and serious face. That taxi was going to "set him back" at least five shillings, which was a dollar and a quarter in what Fisher T. Fish called real money. In the circumstances, it was up to Skinner and Snoop to stand in—but he doubted very much whether they would! It was worth a dollar and a quarter to keep on the right side of a pesky bonehead with fifty pounds to blow; but it gave Fishy a deep pain, all the same.

They waited.

The taxi came buzzing along from Courtfield at last, and they packed into it, and drove off.

Billy Bunter condescended to smile again—Skinner and Snoop were feeling very satisfied—only Fisher T. Fish looked as if he was going to the dentist's.

In Courtfield High Street, they passed the bunshop, and Bunter called to the driver to halt.

The taxi stopped.

"Get down here," said Bunter.

"It's farther on to the post office," said Skinner.

"We can walk the other bit," said Bunter cheerfully. "Don't be such a slacker, Skinner, old chap!"

Bunter rolled out of the taxi.

Skinner and Snoop and Fisher T. Fish followed.

Fishy tried to catch Skinner's eye, and Snoop's eye, as he prepared to pay off the driver. But he failed! They moved off with Bunter, carefully ignoring Fishy and his state of mental distress. Fisher T. Fish almost groaned aloud as he paid; but he did pay, and the taxi whizzed back to the station rank.

Why Bunter had decided to walk the last bit, Skinner & Co. guessed only too easily! A little light refreshment en route appealed to Bunter! He sat down at one of the small tables under the big tree in front of the bunshop.

"I say, come on!" urged Skinner uneasily.

"Lots of time," answered the fat Owl.

cheerfully. "Let's have a ginger-pop to go on with, what? And a cake or two!"

"Let's go to the post office first!" urged Snoop.

Billy Bunter turned a deaf ear to that suggestion. He was going to stand a tremendous spread when he had visited the post office. He saw no reason why he should not have a snack to go on with. And, as the waiter came up, he calmly ordered ginger-beer and cakes.

Billy Bunter enjoyed that ginger-beer and those cakes. His friends did not look as if they were enjoying themselves hugely.

"Five bob!" he remarked carelessly, when the waiter handed over the bill. "You pay the man, Skinner, will you?"

Skinner tried to catch Snoop's eye—but had no more luck than Fisher T. Fish in the eye-catching line. He paid, with deep feelings.

Then the happy party walked on to the post office. Arrived at that building, Bunter's friends took comfort. They walked in with him, and stopped at the counter—and Bunter ran his fat hands through his pockets.

"I say, where's that dashed book?" he asked. "I know I put it in my pocket—my post office book, you know! I went specially up to my study for it before we started! Where the dickens has it got to?"

The fat junior felt in pocket after pocket.

Skinner & Co. watched him with deeper and deeper feelings. If Billy Bunter had left his post office book behind, evidently there was going to be no withdrawal of fifty pounds from Courtfield Post Office that afternoon!

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "That beast! It must have slipped out of my pocket when that beast Wharton bumped me over in his study——"

"Wha-a-a-t?"

"Just before we started!" gasped Bunter. "It was in this pocket—'tain't there now! I say, you fellows, they won't let me have the money without my post office book! Oh lor!"

"You fat idiot!" gasped Skinner.

"Oh, really, Skinner——"

"You pesky bonehead!" howled Fisher T. Fish.

"Oh, really, Fishy——"

"You dummy!" said Snoop.

"Oh, really, Snoop——"

Billy Bunter's pals exchanged glances, expressive of deep feelings, and turned away.

"I say, you fellows, it's all right!" exclaimed Bunter, rolling after them as they headed for the door. "I say, I can get it out to-morrow! That's all right! You fellows lend me a couple of pounds——"

Skinner, Snoop, and Fisher T. Fish walked out.

"I say, you fellows!" yelled Bunter.

But he yelled in vain! His pals had departed. The fat junior rolled out of the post office after them.

"I say, you fellows!" he roared.

Skinner, Snoop, and Fisher T. Fish disappeared down the High Street. Billy Bunter was left blinking after them as they disappeared.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Mysterious!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! What's that?" asked Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five came into Study No. 1 to tea, after cricket practice. With them came Kipps of the Remove.

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Kipps stooped and picked up a buff-covered little book that lay on the carpet near the study table.

He grinned as he held it up for inspection. It was a post office account book with the name of W. G. Bunter written on it.

The Famous Five stared at it.

All the Remove knew of Billy Bunter's expedition that afternoon, to draw out of the Post Office Bank the whole of his available wealth. Minus that little book, however, the fat Owl was not likely to see anything of his unaccustomed riches.

"That's Bunter's book," said Frank Nugent, staring at it. "What the dickens has he left it knocking about this study for?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"He must have dropped it when he sat down there," he remarked.

"Eh? Did he sit on the floor?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Sort of. I invited him into the study by the neck," explained the captain of the Remove. "He thought he hadn't time to stop. I thought he had."

"Then he's gone off to Courtfield without it," grinned Bob Cherry. "What a disappointment for the pals who have gone with him."

"The disappointment will be terrific," chuckled Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar in Study No. 1. The chums of the Remove could guess what Skinner & Co.'s feelings would be like, when they arrived in Courtfield, and found that there was nothing doing.

"The fact is, he's better without it when he calls at the post office," remarked Bob Cherry. "It will be too late to go again when he rolls in. His jolly old wealth will last him a day longer now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll keep this for him," grinned Kipps, and he slipped the post office book into his pocket.

The Famous Five and their guest sat down to tea. After tea Oliver Kipps, who was celebrated in the Remove as a conjurer, entertained the Co. with some of his sleight-of-hand tricks. Kipps really was a wonderful conjurer, and, well as the juniors knew him, he could always surprise them.

He made Billy Bunter's post office book turn up in Frank Nugent's pocket, and then unexpectedly drew it from Bob Cherry's mop of flaxen hair.

At that point the entertainment was interrupted by the hurling open of the study door, and the breathless arrival of William George Bunter.

"I say, you fellows!" gasped Bunter.

The Removites grinned at him cheerily.

Bunter looked warm. He looked tired. His fat face was ruddier than usual, and perspiration trickled down it. Bunter had a long walk back from Courtfield in the hot June sunshine. He did not look as if he had enjoyed it.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Rolling in it?" asked Bob.

"Plastered with quids?" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Got a tenner to lend?" inquired Kipps.

"Oh, no!" gasped Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I went without my book! I—I couldn't get anything at the post office."

"And so the poor dog had none," said Bob sympathetically.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That beast Wharton made me drop it!" gasped Bunter. "Pitching into a

chap because a chap wouldn't lend him any money——"

"You fat Owl!" roared Wharton.

"Look here, I want that book!" howled Bunter. "I'm going to-morrow to get out my fifty pounds—see? Where's that book?"

The Famous Five looked at Kipps. The book was in Oliver Kipps' pocket. But the schoolboy conjurer made no sign.

"I say, you fellows, I know it's here!" yapped Bunter. "I must have dropped it here when that beast pitched me over."

"Well, why not look for it?" asked Kipps.

"Gerrout of the way, then!" grunted Bunter.

The six juniors got out of the way. They stood looking on with smiling faces, while the fat Owl stooped and blinked over the floor through his big spectacles.

The most searching blinks failed to discover the lost book, which was not surprising, as it was in Oliver Kipps' pocket.

Billy Bunter blinked this way, and he blinked that way. Then he put his fat head under the study table to blink there.

Kipps stretched out a foot, and gave him a gentle push on his extensive trousers, and there was a roar from Bunter as he nose-dived under the table.

"Yoop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Beast! Ow!" gasped Bunter.

He wriggled out from under the table, Kipps lending him a kind, helping hand. He gurgled for breath as he resumed the perpendicular with Kipps' assistance.

"Urrgh! 'Tain't there!" gasped Bunter. "Perhaps I dropped it somewhere else. Oh lor!"

"Perhaps you never dropped it at all," suggested Kipps.

"Oh, really, Kippers, it was in my pocket, and it wasn't there when I got to the post office."

"Feel in your pockets again," suggested Kipps.

"Oh, don't be a silly ass!" growled Bunter peevishly. "I turned out all my pockets at the post office, and it wasn't there, I tell you."

"Well, you know what an ass you are," argued Kipps. "Bet you ten to one in doughnuts that it's in your pocket!"

"Eh? Oh, all right!" said Bunter at once. "Mind, I shall jolly well make you pay up, Kippers!"

"You ass, Kippers!" said Johnny Bull. "You'll lose that bet. You jolly well know it isn't in his pocket."

"You shut up, Bull!" exclaimed Bunter. "Kippers can make a bet in doughnuts if he likes. You mean it, Kippers?"

"Quite!" agreed Kipps. "If that book isn't in your pocket, I owe you ten doughnuts. If it is, you owe me one."

Billy Bunter grinned. He was very much annoyed by the loss of his post office book. But there was comfort in the prospect of bagging ten doughnuts.

"Well, I'll jolly well turn out all my pockets, and you can see," he declared.

"Go it!" said Kipps.

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

It suddenly dawned on Bob why the schoolboy conjurer had pushed Bunter under the table, and helped him out again. He guessed what had happened, while Kipps' nimble fingers were in contact with the fat Owl.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle



"What's the row?" Bob Cherry, in the passage, stared at Bunter's sudden exit from Wharton's study. "Ow! Wow!" spluttered the Owl of the Greyfriars Remove. "That beast Wharton kicked me, just because I won't lend him anything out of my fifty pounds." "What?" yelled Bob.

at!" yapped Bunter. "You'll jolly well see that the book isn't here! Look!"

The fat junior began to turn out his pockets. It had dawned on all the Famous Five now, and they watched him with cheery smiles.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter suddenly.

Evidently his groping, fat fingers had found something in a pocket.

The fat hand came out. It held a post office account-book.

Billy Bunter blinked at it, with his eyes almost popping through his spectacles.

"Oh!" he gasped. "Mum-mum-oy bub-bub-book! Oh crikey!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You owe me a doughnut," said Kipps blandly.

Billy Bunter blinked at the book as if he could hardly believe his eyes, or his spectacles.

"I—I say, you fellows, I—I felt in that pocket when I was in the post office, and it—it wasn't there!" he gasped. "I could jolly well swear—"

"Not in this study, please," said Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass, I mean I could swear it wasn't in my pocket then! It jolly well wasn't!" gasped Bunter. "And—and now it—it was—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Famous Five.

Billy Bunter blinked quite dizzily at the book that had turned up so mysteriously in his pocket. Then he blinked at the yelling juniors.

"Got anything else in that pocket?" asked Kipps.

"Eh? No."

"What's this, then?" Kipps dipped his hand into the pocket, and drew it out again, with a black beetle wriggling in his palm.

"Urrrrggh!" gurgled Bunter, in

horror. "Oh crikey! Was—was that filthy beetle in my pocket? Groogh!"

"Not yours?" asked Kipps.

"Eh? No. Think I want a black beetle, you fathead?"

"Well, I do," said Kipps cheerfully, and he slipped the wriggling beetle into his own pocket.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Famous Five.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. He jumped to it at last. He had seen Kipps' mechanical beetle before. "Oh, you beast! Playing conjuring tricks on a fellow! You put that book in my pocket, you beast!"

"He's guessed it!" gasped Kipps. "What a brain!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!" roared Bunter. "I jolly well won't let you have that doughnut! Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Billy Bunter rolled wrathfully out of Study No. 1, leaving the chums of the Remove yelling.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bad News for Bunter!

"ONE for you, Bunter," said Skinner.

It was the following morning in break. Some of the fellows were looking for letters in the rack; but Billy Bunter, for once, was not particularly keen about his correspondence.

With the large sum of fifty pounds at his disposal, Bunter seemed almost to have forgotten that he was expecting a postal order.

However, he rolled up as Skinner called out that there was one for him.

"Another windfall perhaps!" grinned Bob Cherry. "It never rains but it pours, you know."

"Well, the fact is, I'm expecting a postal order," remarked Bunter. "I believe I mentioned it—"

"I believe you did!" agreed Bob. "I seem to remember something of the sort."

"It sounds sort of familiar!" remarked Frank Nugent, with a nod.

"Well, if it's come it will tide me over till I can get down to the post office," said Bunter hopefully. "I can't go till after class."

"Here's your letter, old chap!" said Skinner. And he handed it down to the fat Owl.

Skinner & Co. had been rather shirty the previous afternoon at Courtfield Post Office. The disappointment had been rather too much for them. But they had recovered now, and their friendship for Billy Bunter was going as strong as ever. The fifty pounds, after all, was there; it was only a matter of delay! And so long as Billy Bunter had fifty pounds in prospect he was sure of the loyal and devoted friendship of fellows like Skinner.

Skinner, certainly, did not suppose that Billy Bunter's celebrated postal order had arrived in that letter. The fifty pounds was a windfall from an entirely unexpected quarter; in other respects the fat Owl was as impecunious as ever.

Bunter, however, had a hopeful expression on his fat face as he opened the letter. Bunter had a hopeful nature, and in spite of interminable and inexplicable delays, he was still expecting that postal order.

He opened the envelope by the elegant method of jabbing a fat thumb into it, and drew out the letter.

Unfolding the same, he revealed the fact that there was no enclosure within.

"Oh!" said Bunter. "It hasn't come!"

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"Did anybody guess that one?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh crikey!" ejaculated Bunter suddenly.

As there was no enclosure in that letter from Mr. William Samuel Bunter the fat Owl was not deeply interested in it. But he gave a blink through his big spectacles, and a change came over his fat face.

That fat face grew suddenly long.

"Oh lor!" he mumbled dismally.

Skinner, Snoop, and Fisher T. Fish exchanged quick glances. Clearly there was bad news of some sort in Bunter's letter from home. Skinner guessed at once what it probably was! He whispered to Snoop.

"The old bean's got wind of that fifty quid and put in for it!" breathed Skinner.

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Snoop.

Billy Bunter stood blinking at the letter with a dismal, doleful, disconsolate blink. It was plain that he had had a shock. He blinked round at his friends.

"I—I say, Skinner, lend me a quid, will you?" he asked.

"Glad to, if I had one!" answered Skinner blandly.

"I say, Snoop—"

"Coming!" called out Snoop in response to an imaginary call, and he left the spot hurriedly.

"Fishy, old man—"

Fisher T. Fish faded off the scene promptly.

Billy Bunter gave the letter another blink, shoved it into his pocket, and rolled out dismally into the quadrangle.

Bright June sunshine streamed down on the quad, but it found no reflection in Bunter's fat, dismal face.

Skinner shrugged his shoulders as the

fat Owl went. If Mr. Bunter had heard of that fifty pounds and put in for it, as Skinner expressed it, the game was up, and Harold Skinner's touching friendship for Billy Bunter was doomed to a sudden demise.

"Poor old Bunter!" said Bob Cherry, staring after the fat Owl. "Looks as if he's dished, you men."

"Well, if his father's heard about that reward it stands to reason that he wouldn't let Bunter chuck it away!" said Harry Wharton. "All the better for him, really."

"He doesn't look as if it makes him feel better."

"Um! No! Poor old Bunter!"

The Famous Five followed Bunter into the quad. They did not in the least share Skinner's views on the subject. Having no designs of their own on Billy Bunter's windfall, they could feel sympathetic.

And if Mr. Bunter had weighed in and put the stopper on the fat Owl's extravagance, it was possible to speak to him on the subject without being misunderstood. Harry Wharton, after the reception of his good advice the day before, had made up his mind to give the fat Owl a wide offing so long as his windfall lasted. Now, however, he changed his mind.

He tapped Bunter on the shoulder as he rolled dismally in the quad. The fat junior blinked round at him with a dismal blink.

"Sorry, old fat man!" said Harry.

"The sympathise is terrific, esteemed, fat Bunter!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

Billy Bunter brightened a little.

"I say, you fellows, lend me a pound!" he said. "I—I want one of Mrs. Mimble's big cakes—one of those great big ones with marzipan on top!"

The Famous Five gazed at Bunter. They had no doubt that Billy Bunter wanted one of those "great big" cakes.

Mrs. Mimble, at the school shop, sold a very, very special cake of great size and wonderful flavour, for which she charged a pound—and for which she had few customers in junior Forms! Sometimes the Bounder, or Lord Mauleverer, would grace his study table with one of those magnificent cakes, but a pound for a cake was far beyond the means of the average Greyfriars junior. That Bunter wanted one was not surprising. He always wanted one! But sympathetic as they were, the chums of the Remove did not sympathise to the extent of blowing their combined cash resources in that manner!

"I say, hand it over, will you?" asked Bunter hopefully. "I'll settle, of course—I'm expecting a postal order—I mean, I've got fifty pounds in the bank. I'm not the fellow to leave a debt unpaid, am I?"

"Oh crikey!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Look here, you fat duffer, roll along, and we'll stand you a ginger-pop and a doughnut!" said Bob.

"You silly ass!"

"Wha-a-t?"

"What's the good of a ginger-pop and a doughnut, you fathead? I want one of those great big cakes!"

"Then you can jolly well go on wanting!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled away, leaving the Famous Five staring.

No doubt the fat Owl preferred a big cake—but it was rather surprising for Bunter to refuse a ginger-pop and a doughnut! Generally all was grist that came to his mill. Evidently that letter from home had upset the fat Owl of the Remove—but if the only possible consolation was a cake costing a pound, that consolation had to be deferred until after a visit to Courtfield Post Office!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Fools and Their Money!

"SMITHY, old chap!"

The Bounder grinned.

After dinner that day Billy Bunter rolled out into the quad, blinking to and fro through his big spectacles. He spotted the Bounder loafing under the elms, and bore down on him.

Herbert Vernon-Smith, having no doubt that the fat Owl wanted to raise ready cash on his expectations, was prepared to answer in the negative, with as much emphasis as might be required.

"I say, old fellow, I never got my money yesterday, owing to leaving my book behind," said Bunter, blinking at him through his big spectacles. "I'm going again after class to-day. At the present moment, though, I'm stony, Smithy."

"Fancy that!" said Smithy. "What does it feel like to be stony for the first time in your life, old fat man?"

"Oh really, Smithy! I want a pound!" said Bunter. "Mind, I'm not asking you to lend it to me. I know you're too jolly mean."

"Oh!" gasped Smithy.

"I'll toss you up for it!" explained Bunter. "Heads or tails, and a pound on it—see?"

"Oh gad!"

The Bounder stared at him. Smithy was a good deal of a scapegrace, and he had many shady ways. Most of the Remove fellows knew that he played billiards at the Three Fishers on half-holidays, and that he had played bridge

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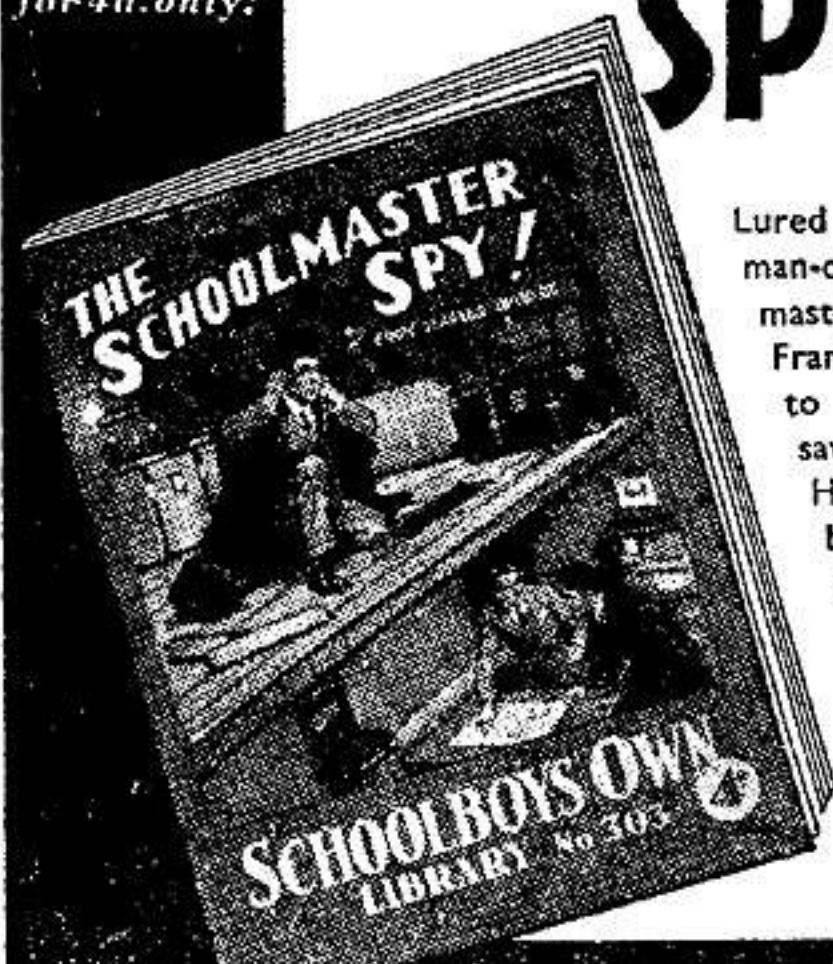
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and poker for quite considerable sums in Ponsonby's study over at Highcliffe. But pitch-and-toss was not the Bounder's game; neither was he, reckless as he was, likely to play pitch-and-toss at a pound a time!

Billy Bunter, hitherto regarded as living, breathing, and having his fat being wholly in tuck seemed to be coming out, as it were, under the influence of unaccustomed wealth!

He seemed bent on exemplifying the truth of the ancient proverb, that fools and their money were soon parted.

"Are you game?" asked the fat Owl.

"Game?" repeated Smithy blankly.

"Be a sport, you know!" said Bunter. "I'll chance it if you will! I've got a penny—"

"As well as fifty pounds?" grinned Smithy. "You're rolling in it, aren't you?"

"I mean, I've got a penny to toss with! What about it?" asked Bunter. "The fact is, I want a pound at once. I can't wait till I go to the post office after class—you see, it's urgent!"

"You want to play pitch-and-toss at a pound a time, and you've got a penny!" ejaculated Vernon Smith. "What about the other nineteen-and-elevenpence if you lose? You might, you know."

"I suppose you can take my I O U when I've got fifty pounds coming this afternoon," said Bunter, with dignity.

"Well, I've heard that the price of waste-paper has risen," agreed Smithy. "But I'm not collecting it, thanks."

"I'll play you at anything you like—poker, or nap, or banker—same as you do with Pon at Highcliffe!" offered Bunter. "I really must have a pound. It's fearfully urgent. I want to get one of those pound cakes at the school shop—"

"That's fearfully urgent, is it?" gasped Smithy.

"Yes, rather! I must get it before class," said Bunter. "Look here, you beast, my paper's good enough when I've got a whacking lot of money coming! Lots of time before class for a game. I'll come up to your study, if you like. Be a sport, you know."

"Fathead!" answered Smithy.

Scapegrace as he was, the Bounder certainly had no idea of playing cards for money with the fat and fatuous Owl. He had plenty of cash of his own, and did not, assuredly, want any of Bunter's.

"Look here, Smithy—"

"Don't be such a silly ass, Bunter!" said the Bounder, with a touch of good nature. "Leave your money in the bank, or spend it on something sensible. If you begin playing the goat like this, I can jolly well tell you that you'll find a good many fellows ready to take your money off you."

Bunter gave him a scornful blink.

"I can get all the pi-jaw I want from Wharton," he answered. "You're a precious fellow to preach at a chap, and no mistake! You'd be jolly well sacked, if the Head knew you played poker with Ponsonby."

The Bounder coloured.

"Perhaps I'm not the fellow to preach, Bunter," he said quietly. "But that's a good tip, all the same. Your fifty pounds won't last you long, if you begin gambling with it."

"Seen Angel of the Fourth?" asked Bunter.

The Bounder did not answer that question. He knew why Bunter wanted to see Aubrey Angel, of the Fourth Form.

Angel of the Fourth was a black sheep, with all Smithy's bad qualities and none of his good ones. It was ex-

tremely probable that Angel of the Fourth would give Bunter all the poker and nap and banker he wanted—and a little over! And as the fat junior was generally known to have a large sum in the post office bank, it was very likely that the black sheep of the Fourth would accept his promises to pay.

Vernon-Smith knitted his brows.

He was not a specially good-natured fellow, and he seldom had any sympathy to waste on lame ducks and silly fatheads. But he had a spot of compassion for the egregious fat Owl, unexpectedly in possession of a large sum of money, and bent on throwing it away with both hands as fast as he could! Bunter's feelings, when it was gone, could be easily imagined.

"Look here, Bunter!" said the Bounder, at last. "If you're determined on this—" He paused a moment. "I'm your man, if you like."

"That's all right, old chap," said Bunter. "Be a sportsman, you know! What shall it be—nap?"

"Any old thing," said Smithy. "Let's go into the Rag! I don't think Quelch would quite like to see us playing nap for quids in the quad."

"He, he, he! Come on!" said Bunter.

"This way, Reddy!" called out the Bounder, and Tom Redwing joined him.

"What's on, Smithy?" asked Tom, glancing from Bunter to the Bounder, in surprise.

"Playing the giddy goat!" explained Vernon-Smith. "Bunter's got a lot of money in the bank, as I dare say you've heard. So he's anxious to get to work at nap!"

"Nap!" repeated Redwing blankly.

"Yes! We're goin' in pretty deep, and if you've never watched a desperate gamble, now's your chance!"

"Smithy!"

"Come on!" said Smithy cheerily, and he walked off to the House with Bunter.

Tom Redwing followed him in a state of great astonishment.

The Famous Five were in the quad, and Vernon-Smith stopped to speak to them on the way.

"You fellows like to come and see fair play?" he asked.

"Scrap?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Oh, no! Gamble."

"Wha-a-t?"

"Bunter and I are going to gamble in the Rag!" explained the Bounder, with perfect coolness. "Bunter thinks he's going to win a pound from me, and I know I'm going to win fifty from him. Like to see it done?"

"Is that a joke?" asked Harry Wharton, mystified.

"Bunter's not joking—are you, Bunter?"

"No fear!" answered Bunter. "I say, you fellows, come in and watch, if you like. Do you good to see a bit of sport! Buck you up, you know—namby-pamby fellows like you."

"You cheeky porpoise—" growled Johnny Bull.

"Do come!" urged the Bounder. "Think of Bunter's face when his quids are gone? Worth watchin', what?"

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter. "I fancy you won't find that easy, Smithy! I'm rather a dab at nap! I'll play you for pound points, and beat you hollow."

"Well, I've got a few quids to pay up if I lose," said Vernon-Smith, "and I'll take your I O U's if you do. Come on!"

He went into the House with Bunter.

"What on earth does this mean, Redwing?" asked Harry.

"Blessed if I know! I suppose

Smithy's pulling that fat duffer's leg somehow," answered Tom. "I know he wouldn't touch his money."

"Well, Smithy's a bit of a corker, but I'm sure he wouldn't do that," agreed the captain of the Remove. "I can't make him out! They'll both be flogged if a prefect spots them at it."

Redwing followed his chum into the House, and the Famous Five, rather interested, and considerably mystified, followed on. There were some Remove fellows in the Rag when they arrived in that apartment—Skinner and Snoop, and Bolsover major, Peter Todd, and Lord Mauleverer, Kipps, and Wibley. They all stared at Vernon-Smith said:

"Wait a tick while I cut up to my study for some cards, Bunter."

"Hurry up, old chap!" said Bunter.

"What on earth—" exclaimed Peter Todd.

"What the dickens are you up to, Bunter?" asked Lord Mauleverer.

Bunter grinned, a fat and fatuous grin.

"Oh, only a little game!" he answered airily. "Look here, some of you fellows join in. Nap at a pound a point—"

"Ye gods!" gasped Peter.

"I can afford it!" said Bunter calmly. "I haven't got my money yet, but I'm getting it after class. Like to take a hand, Mauly? You've got some tin."

"Oh, gad!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Thanks, no!"

"Be a man!" urged Bunter.

"Eh?"

"Like me!" said Bunter.

"A man—like you!" said his lordship faintly. "Oh, my hat! Anythin' but that, old chap!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah!" retorted Bunter.

Herbert Vernon-Smith came back into the Rag. He shut the door, and turned the key in the lock—rather a necessary precaution, if he was going to play cards for money there! Then he laid a pack of cards on the table.

Harry Wharton looked at him.

He opened his lips—and closed them again. He could not believe that the Bounder was serious. But Smithy looked serious enough.

"Sit down, old fat sportsman, and go it!" said the Bounder.

And Billy Bunter, with a happy grin of anticipation on his fat face, sat down and went it—and the juniors gathered round to watch.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Going It!

BILLY BUNTER grinned, an expansive grin.

Bunter's knowledge of card games, and his skill therein, was about as extensive as his knowledge of anything else, and his skill in anything else.

But his confidence in himself was unbounded.

Bunter always had a happy belief that he could do anything—until he came actually to do it! Then he woke up, as it were!

At the present moment he was feeling happy and satisfied at having got the Bounder into a game! Smithy had plenty of money to pay up, if he lost—which was rather an important consideration. So had Bunter—in the bank; and for the first time in his fat career, his I O U was worth more than the paper it was written on! Not that Bunter expected to have to sign any I O U's. He was going to win! At least, he was certain that he was.

Most of the fellows in the Rag looked on with puzzled faces. But Skinner and Snoop looked very disgruntled. They, at least, had no doubt that Smithy was after the loaves and fishes, and that he intended to skin the fatuous Owl—an easy task to Smithy, who had a skill in games of chance that was no credit to him. Skinner's only comfort was the reflection that, judging by the effect of Bunter's letter that morning, the fifty pounds might not be available to honour the I O U's.

Billy Bunter blinked at his cards, through his big spectacles, with a very serious blink.

"Nap!" he announced.

"Get it!" said the Bounder.

Billy Bunter proceeded not to get it! He made three tricks instead of the necessary five.

"Oh!" he gasped.

The happy grin faded off his fat face. Vernon-Smith winked at Tom Redwing.

"Lend Bunter a pencil," he said. "Here's a bit of paper, Bunter."

"Oh!" repeated Bunter, with another gasp.

"You owe me five quids, so far, old man!" said the Bounder genially. "That will leave you forty-five, what?"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter again.

He made out the I O U for the required sum, and the Bounder slipped it carelessly into his pocket.

"Goin' on?" he inquired.

"Yes, rather!" gasped Bunter. "I'm jolly well going to win that back, Smithy."

"Heave ahead, my hearty!" said Smithy.

In the midst of a staring circle, that game went on. That a fatuous ass like Bunter had no chance whatever in a card game with a fellow like Smithy, was clear to every fellow excepting Bunter himself!

Had Bunter started with a win, his confidence, already great, would have exceeded all dimensions, and he would have gone happily on. As he had started with a loss, he was still keener to go on, and win back what he had lost, and some more after it.

That, however, did not prove to be the result!

Billy Bunter's fat face grew longer and longer, as that interesting game of nap proceeded.

I O U after I O U was handed over to Smithy, who stacked the papers in his pocket as fast as he collected them.

As they were playing for pound points, the sums were quite considerable. Billy Bunter very soon lost count of his losses, though he realised that they must make a very deep hole in his post office account when they came to be paid.

His fat face was as long as a fiddle, and beads of perspiration bedewed his podgy brow.

But he went on desperately, lured by that eternal delusive hope of the gambler winning back the losses.

But after ten minutes of it, even the egregious Owl paused.

Vernon-Smith shuffled the cards.

"Fed-up?" he asked. "Be a sport, you know!" Smithy grinned round at the staring circle. "Bit of luck for me, what? Bunter was going to look for Angel of the Fourth, if I refused to give him a game. I thought it a good idea to keep the money in the Remove! What?"

"I—I—I say—" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I say, I—I—I—I'm going on, Smithy! I'm jolly well not going to lose all that money."

"Lots of time before class!" said the

Bounder cheerily. "Go it, old sport! Make the fur fly!"

Billy Bunter went it again and made the fur fly. Again he had to hand the Bounder a promise to pay five pounds.

Then Smithy rose from the table and slipped the pack of cards into his pocket.

Bunter blinked at him.

"I—I say, you're not leaving off, Smithy," he gasped. "Tain't fair! Look here, you've jolly well got to keep on and give a chap a chance."

The Bounder laughed.

"I'll give you your revenge any time you like, when you're in funds again, old fat man!" he said.

"Wharrer you mean?" howled Bunter. "I've got lots of money—I've got fifty pounds in the bank."

"You haven't," answered the Bounder coolly. "That's mine!"

"Wha-a-at?"

The Bounder chuckled and turned Bunter's collection of I O U's out of his pocket. Evidently he had been keeping a mental account of the sums!

Bunter blinked at them with a blink of utter horror.

He knew that his losses were extensive, but it had not dawned on his fat brain how fast losses could mount up at nap, with pound points. His various I O U's, added together, came to the precise sum of fifty pounds!

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

"Fifty quids, what?" yawned the Bounder. "I'll come along with you, after class, old man, to jerk it out of the bank, what? Debts of honour have to be paid on the nail! What price Bunter as a sportsman, you fellows? Fancy sitting and losing fifty quids, and never turning a hair!"

Billy Bunter sat as if stunned.

It had been a wonderful windfall. Fifty pounds reward was a thing that was not likely to come any fellow's way twice! And even before his fat fingers had closed on it, it was gone—gone from his gaze like a beautiful dream!

It seemed too harrowing to be true!

Bunter could not speak! He could not stir! He could only sit and blink in utter, awful overwhelming dismay and dolour.

Herbert Vernon-Smith looked at his dismal fat face, grinning.

"Who wouldn't be a sportsman?" he inquired. "Look at Bunter! See how he's enjoying life!"

Bunter uttered a sound at last! It was a groan! If ever a festive sportsman repented of his sportiveness, William George Bunter did, at that awful, fearful moment!

Smithy gathered up the I O U's and twisted them together, grinning. Grins were on all other faces—excepting Bunter's!

That the Bounder was pulling the fat Owl's leg was clear by that time to everybody except the fat sportsman.

"Anybody got a match?" grinned Smithy.

Bob Cherry, chuckling, sorted out a match and ignited it. He handed it to the Bounder, who applied it to the bunch of I O U's, and then tossed them into the grate.

There they were speedily consumed to ashes.

"Let that be a lesson to you!" grinned the Bounder. "You wouldn't have got off so cheaply with Angel of the Fourth, Bunter."

"Eh?" gasped Bunter. He did not catch on yet.

"If you've got the sense of a bunny rabbit, you'll leave your money in the post office. Anyhow, don't play nap any more! The next man who collects from you may keep the collection."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter gasped.

"Mim-mim-mean to sus-sus-say you d-d-don't want me to pip-pip-pip-pay up?" he stammered.

"You howling ass!" said the Bounder. "Think I'd touch your money with a barge-pole?"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"I've been giving you a lesson, you fat idiot! Can't you get that into your fat head?"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter again.

His fat face brightened wonderfully.

That fifty pounds in the bank had had a narrow escape. But the fat junior realised that it was still safe and sound there.

He gurgled with relief.

Vernon-Smith walked to the door of the Rag, unlocked it, and went out.

Tom Redwing followed him with a smile.

The other fellows were left laughing. "Oh crikey!" said Bunter. "I—I—I say, you fellows! I—I—I thought it was all gone—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Serve you right if it had been, you fat chump!" said Johnny Bull.

"Have another little game, Bunter?" chortled Bob Cherry. "Pitch and toss at a tenner a time?"

"Oh, no!" gasped Bunter. "N-n-not just now!"

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

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "Oh lor!"

He rolled out of the Rag, gasping with relief, leaving the Removites chortling.

Billy Bunter had had a lesson, and for the moment, at least, he was quite cured of his desire to be a man, a sport, and to make the fur fly! How long the effect of that lesson would last, however, was another matter.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Unexpected!

"MAULY, old chap!"

"Oh dear!" murmured

Lord Mauleverer.

His Lordship was sauntering under the elms, before class, when

Billy Bunter rolled into the office. A moment ago, Mauly had been looking cheery and placid. Now he looked worried. That was the effect William George Bunter produced on him.

Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles.

"Anything the matter, old fellow?" he asked.

"Yaas."

"What's worrying you?" asked Bunter.

"You!"

"Oh, really, Mauly! Look here, old fellow, you know I've got fifty pounds in the bank, don't you?"

"I believe I've heard of it!" admitted Lord Mauleverer.

"Well, then, you can trust me with a quid, can't you? I'll let you have it back out of the fifty. Honour bright!" said Bunter. "You see, I simply must have a pound before class. I was going to win it from Smithy, but—What are you sniggering at, Mauly?"

"Nothin', old bean! Carry on."

"You see, it won't wait till after class!" explained Bunter. "I want to get one of those pound cakes at Mrs. Mumble's. There you go, sniggering again! Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!"

"Better let it wait till after class, old fat man!" grinned Lord Mauleverer. "If you push down a big cake after the dinner I saw you parkin' you may burst all over the Form-room this afternoon!"



I O U after I O U was handed over to Vernon-Smith. Billy Bunter very soon lost count of his losses. His fat face was as long as a fiddle, and beads of perspiration bedewed his podgy brow. But he went on playing cards, lured by that delusive hope of the gambler, of winning back the losses!

Think how it would make Quelch jump if you went off with a pop!"

"You silly ass!" yelled Bunter. "Look here, will you lend me a quid? Think I should forget to pay you when I get my money out?"

"Yaas."

"Beast! I mean, I might forget a trifle like that, but you could remind me. I've got to catch the post, so I simply must have a pound before class."

"Eh?"

"The post!" said Bunter. "I can tip Trotter to take it down to Friardale and post it."

Lord Mauleverer gazed at the fat Owl. These remarks from Bunter simply mystified him. What catching the post had to do with a pound cake from Mrs. Mimble's was rather a puzzle.

"Do you happen to mean anythin', Bunter?" asked Mauleverer.

"Eh?"

"If you do, tell a chap what you mean."

"Oh, really, Mauly! You know jolly well it will be too late after class. It wouldn't be delivered to-day."

"What wouldn't be delivered?" howled Mauleverer.

"The cake, of course!"

"The cake!" said Lord Mauleverer, quite dazedly. "What's the big idea of sending yourself a cake by post? Mad?"

Bunter blinked at him.

"Oh, don't be an ass, Mauly?" he said peevishly. "Think I want the cake for myself, you fathead?"

Lord Mauleverer stared. Certainly, he had thought so! And, as a matter of fact, he still thought so. He was not likely to suppose that Billy Bunter wanted a cake for anybody else!

"You see," explained Bunter, "I had some rather bad news in my letter from home this morning! You needn't

grin, you silly idiot! Nothing to grin at in bad news from home, is there?"

His lordship grinned, all the same. Most of the Remove fellows knew that Billy Bunter had been considerably upset by his father's letter that morning, and the opinion was general that Mr. Bunter had heard of the fifty pounds and weighed in to stop its reckless expenditure. This had quite chilled the friendship of Skinner & Co.

"Well, old ass, it's not such bad news, if you could only see it," said Lord Mauleverer. "Your pater was bound to weigh in and keep you from chucking your money all over the earth, if he knew. Jolly good thing for you, really."

"Eh? My father doesn't know anything about it," said Bunter. "Wharrer you mean?"

"Oh!" said Mauly blankly. "I've heard the fellows sayin' that the old bean's barged in to put the stopper on. Isn't that so?"

"Of course it isn't!" grunted Bunter. "I haven't said anything about it in my letters home. The pater's never heard of it."

Lord Mauleverer's face became grave. As that was not the explanation, he realised that the bad news in Bunter's letter must be really bad news.

"Sorry, old fat man," he said. "I hope nobody's ill, or anythin'."

"It's the mater," explained Bunter. "She's been laid up with influenza, and hasn't got over it yet."

"Oh, gad!" said Mauly; he looked very curiously at Billy Bunter.

Few fellows in the Remove supposed that Billy Bunter bestowed a single thought upon any person in the wide world, except W. G. Bunter.

Certainly, he never displayed any great affection for his brother Sammy,

in the Second Form, or his sister Bessie, over at Cliff House.

"Oh!" said Mauly. "Is that the worry, old man?"

"That's it," said Bunter. "Isn't it simply putrid, when I've got fifty pounds in the bank that I haven't got a single quid in hand? If I don't catch the post to-day, she won't get it to-night."

"But what—"

"The cake!" said Bunter.

"The kik-kik-cake!" stuttered Lord Mauleverer.

"Buck her up no end—what?—to get one of those scrumptious cakes!" said Bunter, his little round eyes glistening behind his big round spectacles. "Marzipan on top, you know—"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Lord Mauleverer.

"Packed with fruit!" said Bunter. "Just melts in your mouth! You know Mrs. Mimble's pound cakes, Mauly! They're better than you can get at Chunkley's, in Courtfield. Just fancy her face when she unpacks it and sees the cake—what?"

"Oh, gad! You—you think that a patient just recovering from influenza would like a big cake, with marzipan on top?" gasped Mauly.

"Eh? I know I should!" said Bunter.

"Oh! Yaas! I've no doubt you would!" grinned Mauly. "But—"

"Only, if I don't catch the post, she won't get it to-day," said Bunter. "So I can't wait till I go to Courtfield, after class. See? Look here, Mauly, I'll settle as soon as I've been to the post office—honest Injun!"

Mauleverer gazed at him. To his mind it seemed extremely doubtful whether a middle-aged lady, recovering from an illness, would be fearfully

bucked by a big, sticky cake, even with marzipan on top! But Bunter had no doubts! In such circumstances, Billy Bunter would have been bucked and delighted! So why shouldn't Mrs. Bunter? Not a doubt entered the fat Owl's mind.

Maully grinned; he could not help it! But he extracted a pound note from a little Russia-leather notecase, that contained a dozen or so.

Whether that sticky gift would be of any use to Mrs. Bunter or not, no doubt she would be bucked, at least, by the spirit in which it was sent. And Bunter, thinking of somebody other than W. G. Bunter, was a new and surprising Bunter, and deserved to be encouraged.

Maully could not help having a lingering doubt whether the fat Owl, once the cake was in his fat hands, might not falter in his intentions, and end by devouring it. Really, it was probable. Nobody who knew Bunter could easily imagine a big cake passing out of his hands uneaten.

However, the pound note was handed over to Bunter, and Lord Mauleverer resumed his stroll, with quite a thoughtful expression on his face.

Billy Bunter, his fat face registering happy satisfaction, cut off to the tuckshop, the pound note clutched in his fat fingers.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter Astonishes the Natives!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Bunter's in funds!" grinned Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five were in the school shop, discussing ginger-beer, which was grateful and comforting on a hot June day.

There were plenty of other fellows there, and all eyes turned on Bunter as he rolled breathlessly in, with a pound note in his fat hand.

Skinner and Snoop exchanged a quick look, and gathered round Bunter at once. That pound note, obviously a loan, looked as if somebody believed that Bunter was still going to get his fifty pounds!

"Looking for you, old fellow!" said Skinner.

"Have a ginger-beer, old chap!" said Snoop.

Bunter nodded.

"I don't mind if I do," he assented. "I say, Mrs. Mimble! I want one of those pound cakes, please."

Mrs. Mimble gave the fat Owl a look. Bunter's wants, in the school shop, were not few; but they were only to be satisfied when Bunter had cash in hand! The good dame knew Bunter too well to trust him with tuck.

But the pound note was reassuring.

Mrs. Mimble's penetrating look was exchanged for a genial smile, and she proceeded to hand over the cake.

Skinner and Snoop smiled cheerfully. Their own funds never ran to one of those special, magnificent cakes! They were glad that Bunter's did!

Bolsover major and Hazeldene and two or three other fellows gathered round. Even Bunter could hardly have disposed of that cake at a sitting; but fellows were ready to help.

Certainly, it occurred to no one that the fat Owl was ordering that cake for anything but immediate consumption.

Bunter mopped up the ginger-beer kindly offered by Snoop. Skinner followed it with a jam tart, which Bunter sent down like an oyster. A whack in that gorgeous cake was well worth it.

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"Don't take it out of the box, please!" said Bunter.

Those scrumptious cakes were supplied in cardboard boxes, and Mrs. Mimble had been about to lift it out to hand it to Bunter.

"You won't want the box, old chap," said Skinner.

"Eh? Of course I shall!" said Bunter. "How can I send a cake through the post without a box?"

"Through the post?" ejaculated Skinner.

"What the thump—" said Snoop.

"Lend me a bob each, will you?" asked Bunter.

"Eh?"

"What?"

"The postage will be a shilling, and I shall have to tip Trotter a bob to post it for me," explained Bunter.

"Is that a joke?" asked Skinner, mystified. "Hand over a knife, Mrs. Mimble; Bunter wants to slice that cake."

"I jolly well don't!" said Bunter. "Put the lid on the box, Mrs. Mimble. Thanks!"

Bunter picked up the box with the cake in it and turned from the counter.

Half a dozen fellows eyed him—Skinner and Snoop almost wolfishly.

"Look here—" said Bolsover major.

"Greedy little fat pig!" said Hazel in disgust. "Taking it to his study, like a dog burying a bone!"

Bunter did not heed those remarks; he blinked at Skinner and Snoop.

"Will you lend me a bob each?" he asked.

"Are you whacking out that cake?" demanded Skinner.

"Eh? No!"

"Then you can borrow your bobs somewhere else, you fat fraud!"

"I say, you fellows—" Billy Bunter blinked round at the Famous Five. "I say, lend me a couple of bob, will you? I'll settle out of my fifty pounds."

"If any!" sneered Skinner.

"Eh? You jolly well know I've got it in the bank," said Bunter. "Wharrer you mean? I say, you fellows, do lend me a couple of bob, or I shan't catch the post."

The Famous Five grinned.

That Billy Bunter had bought that big cake to send away by post wanted some believing. Really it was more probable that Hazel was right, and that he was going to carry it off to his study for a gargantuan feed.

Bob Cherry winked at his chums.

"You're not scoffing that cake, Bunter?" he asked.

"No fear!"

"Sort of present for somebody by post—what?"

"That's it."

"I don't think!" chuckled Bob. "But I'll tell you what we'll do. We won't tip you two bob to blow in ginger-beer—"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"But we'll come and help you wrap up the cake, and hand the two bob to Trotter to take it away and post it," continued Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a chortle from the juniors in the tuckshop.

As nobody believed for a moment that Bunter really intended to post that cake to anybody, or that it had any destination farther off than his study in the Remove, nobody expected him to close on that offer.

To the general surprise, the fat Owl nodded assent at once.

"Right-ho!" he said. "Come on!"

"You fat fooler!" growled Johnny Bull. "Think you can pull our legs?"

"Eh? Who's pulling your leg?" asked Bunter, blinking at him.

"You jolly well are—or you think you are!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Mind, we hand that two bob to Trotter when you hand him the cake."

"That's what I want," said Bunter.

"Oh, that's what you want, is it?" gasped Bob. "You don't want us to hand you the two bob to hand to Trotter—what?"

"What difference would it make?" asked Bunter.

"Oh, my hat! Quite a lot, I think!" Bob stared at the fat Owl. "Is it possible, you men, that Bunter is telling the truth for once?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"The age of miracles is past," said Harry Wharton, shaking his head.

"Beast! I—I mean, hurry up, old chaps; I've got to get this out before class!" urged Bunter.

"You mean you've got to get it in?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No," roared Bunter, "I don't! Look here, are you coming or not?"

"Oh, all right!"

The Famous Five, quite puzzled, followed Bunter from the school shop. Unless the fat Owl, for once, was telling the truth, they could not understand this. And that was a rather startling theory.

Bunter rolled off to the House with the cake under a fat arm. The Famous Five followed him up to the Remove, where he landed the cardboard box on the table in Study No. 7.

"Anybody got a sheet of brown paper?" asked Bunter, blinking round at the juniors in the doorway. "and some string?"

"Do you want to wrap it up?" asked Bob.

"I can't send it through the post without wrapping it up, can I?"

"Oh, no! But you'll have to unwrap it again before you scoff it."

"Beast!"

"Well, I've got some brown paper in my study," said Bob. "I'll fetch it." And he went along to Study No. 13.

Billy Bunter sat down at the table in Study No. 7 and took pen and paper.

Harry Wharton & Co. watched him curiously.

Really they failed to understand Billy Bunter, well as they had supposed that they knew him.

Nobody doubted that the fat Owl had walked off that big cake to devour entirely on his own, and that his yarn about posting it was merely an excuse for keeping it all to himself. Neither did anyone doubt that the two shillings, if provided, would go in ginger-pop to wash down the cake.

But the fat Owl seemed very much in earnest.

His scrawl as he sat at the table was visible to the astonished juniors at the door. It ran:

"Deer Mums,—I am pbeerfully sorry to heer that you have bean so ill, and orfully glad that you are getting well agane. I am sending you a cake wich I hoap you will like. It is a reely skrumptious cake, pact with froot, with marzypan on topp. It just melts in the mowth. I hoap I shall soon heer that you are kwite well.

"Yore affeckshunate Sun,

"WILLIAM."

Bob Cherry came back with a sheet of wrapping paper and a ball of string. He found his chums standing dumb with astonishment.

Bunter proceeded to wrap up the box containing the cake, after placing his scrawl therein. He tied it carefully

with string, and scrawled on it the address of Mrs. Bunter in Surrey.

"Now, you fellows," he said, "we haven't much time before class. Look here, give me the two bob, and I'll go to look for Trotter—"

"Oh!" gasped Nugent. "Blessed if I hadn't begun to believe that he wasn't spoofing!"

"Now we're coming down to brass tacks!" grinned Bob.

"The two-bobfulness will not be terrific, my esteemed spoofing Bunter!" chuckled Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

"If you fellows can't trust me with two bob—" roared Bunter.

"You've got it!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Now you'd better buck up and unwrap that cake again if you're going to scoff it before class!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass!" howled Bunter. "I'm going to post it, so lend me the two bob for Trotter—"

"We'll hand it to Trotter," chuckled Bob, "along with the jolly old cake."

"Oh, all right! Come on, then!"

Bunter put the parcel under his arm and rolled out of the study.

Harry Wharton & Co. followed him down the stairs.

They came on Trotter, the House page, in the lower passage.

"I say, Trotter," squeaked Bunter, "I want you to post this for me in Friardale this afternoon."

"You'll have to give me the postage, sir," said Trotter. Trotter knew Bunter as well as the Remove fellows did.

"Think I want you to pay the postage, fathead?" yapped Bunter.

Trotter grinned. He did not think that Bunter exactly wanted him to pay the postage, but he did think that if

he paid it himself he would have a lot of difficulty in collecting the amount from Bunter afterwards.

"Give him the bobs, you chaps," said Bunter. "One for the post, Trotter, and one for your trouble. See?"

"Thank you, sir!" said Trotter.

Harry Wharton produced a shilling, Bob Cherry another.

They were handed to Trotter, who departed with the parcel and the shillings.

The Famous Five looked at one another. Unless Bunter at the last moment made a desperate effort to get back the parcel and the bobs, the thing was genuine.

The clang of a bell echoed through the building.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's the bell!" said Bob. "Come on, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter, evidently without any further designs on the parcel or the bobs, rolled away to the Remove-room with the Famous Five.

He was looking cheerful and satisfied—indeed, as cheerful and satisfied as if he had devoured that scrumptious cake himself.

The Famous Five looked at him and looked at one another.

They doubted, like Mauly, whether that scrumptious cake would produce the satisfaction at the Bunter home that Billy Bunter evidently expected it to produce. But that did not alter the fact that Billy Bunter, the possessor of a huge cake that made his mouth water merely to look at it, had sent it away without even plucking from it a crumb or a plum.

"Wonders will never cease!" said Bob Cherry at last.

And the astonished Co. agreed that they, apparently, never would!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Pleasant Prospect for Pon!

CECIL PONSONBY, of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe, ran his hands through the pockets of his elegant bags, and then repeated the process with the pockets of his equally elegant jacket. After which he made a careful examination of his waistcoat pockets. After which, again, his hands remained empty.

Not a stray currency note, not an odd coin, had come to light. The dandy of Highcliffe was in as impecunious a state as Billy Bunter of the Greyfriars Remove, or even more so. Bunter had a penny!

Pon's friends, Gadsby and Monson, were in his study, and they watched Pon going through that process with hopeful interest. They had already gone through it themselves with similar result—or want of result.

"Nothin' doin'?" asked Gadsby.

"Nothin'."

"Same here," said Monson. "Gad! What are we goin' to do to tide us over till somethin' turns up?"

"Blow that rotten gee!" sighed Gadsby.

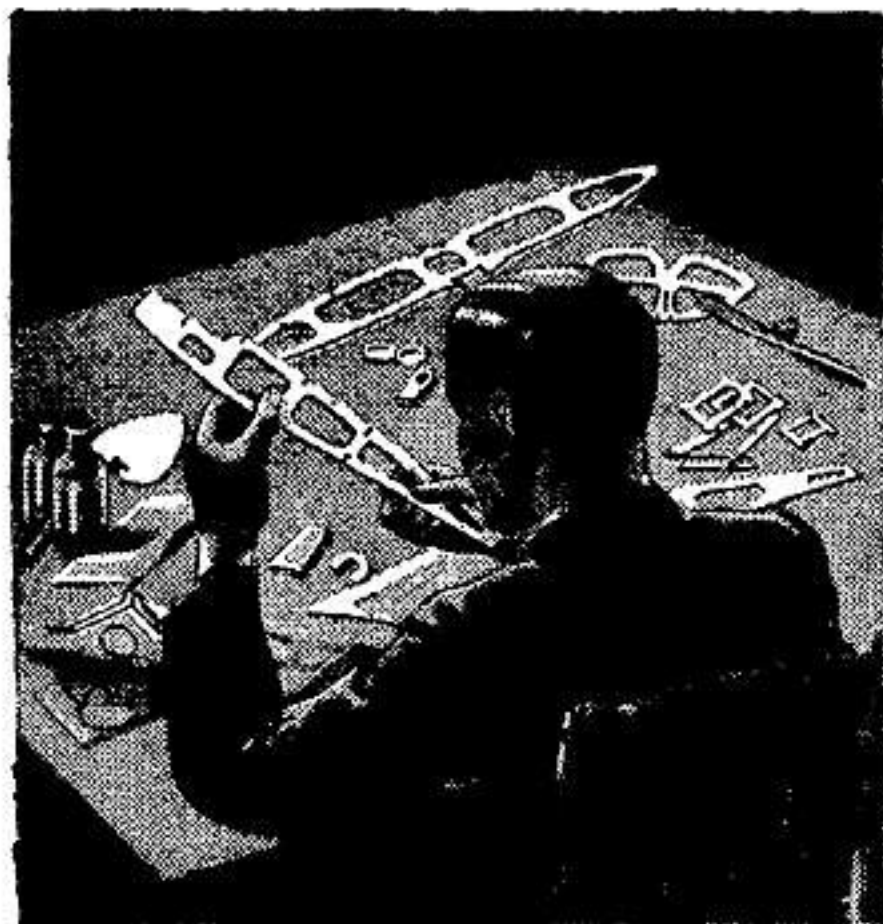
Ponsonby lighted a cigarette. Fortunately—or perhaps otherwise—he still had some smokes left.

"We're up against it!" he remarked. "Drury and Merton and old Vav are the same. Never was such a ghastly famine in cash all round."

"And you thought that Bright Boy would win!" said Monson, with deep sarcasm.

Ponsonby shrugged his shoulders. Pon rather prided himself on his knowledge of horses. Often and often

(Continued on next page.)



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he spotted winners, though they did not often win.

But spotting Bright Boy at the Wapshot Races had been the disaster of his career as an amateur blackguard.

Bill Lodgey, at the Three Fishers, had taken extensive bets from Pon & Co. They had backed Bright Boy at four to one, which would have been glorious had Bright Boy come in first. Unluckily he had come in ninth! Instead of "romping home," as Pon had confidently expected, he had rocked in almost like a rocking-horse, at the tail of the field. Badly as he had run, he had run off with all the available cash of the Highcliffe knuts.

Pon had been up against it before when his sporting speculations had let him down, but never so severely as now.

Broke to the wide, with all his knutty friends in the same dilapidated condition, Pon saw a stony period stretching bleakly before him, with not even the possibility of a loan to break the bleak outlook.

He sat down, blowing out a puff of smoke from his cigarette, and looked at his sad pals.

"We've got to do somethin'," he remarked.

"Or somebody!" said Monson flippantly.

"What about Bunter?" asked Ponsonby. "That fat Greyfriars ass."

"Eh?"

"What?"

Gadsby and Monson stared at Pon in surprise. The Bounder of Greyfriars might have been "touched" for a loan, had they still been on pally terms with him, which they were not. But Bunter was the last fellow they would have thought of.

"Is that a joke?" asked Monson.

"No, ass! We've been a bit rough on that fat chump at times, but it's always easy to pull his leg," said Ponsonby. "He would be fearfully bucked at bein' taken up by fellows like us."

"I dare say," said Gadsby. "I'm not takin' up that fat frog, I know that! What would be the good, anyhow? He's got nothin'."

"He borrows up and down his own school, and never lends anythin' that I've ever heard of," said Monson.

"What do you mean, Pon?"

"Do you think I'd borrow of the fat cad, even if he would lend anythin'?" asked Ponsonby contemptuously. "There's a limit. I happen to know that that hard-up fathead has got a lot of tin, for once."

"Swank, I expect," said Monson. "He never has any tin."

"If you used your eyes and ears, old man, instead of your chin, you'd know more than you do!" retorted Ponsonby. "You heard of that smash-and-grab raid in Courtfield a little while back? Man got away with a bagful of stuff from Chunkley's Stores, and there was a reward of fifty pounds for anybody putting the police on him."

"What about it?"

"Well, from what I've heard it turned out that that fat ass Bunter did the trick. It seems that the smash-and-grab gang travelled about in a furniture-van, and Bunter was stranded somewhere one night, and sneaked into the van for a free ride, and so he happened to spot them. I don't know the details, but it's a fact that Bunter knew enough to put the police on them, and they were snaffled, and the loot got back. And fifty pounds reward was paid to him."

"Oh, my hat!" said Gadsby.

Monson whistled.

"Wish we'd spotted them, instead of that dead cert at Wapshot!" he sighed.

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"What a windfall for that fat, frowsy frump!"

"Well, that was some days ago," said Pon. "But he can't have blown it all yet. That frowsy frump must be loaded with cash. See?"

"Not quite," said Gadsby. "You say yourself that you wouldn't borrow money off him, and I'm dashed if I would! No use to us, that I can see."

"To-morrow's a half-holiday," drawled Ponsonby. "We were goin' down to the Three Fishers if we'd had any tin. We haven't. But Bunter has. If we could get him to join up for a jolly little time—"

"Oh!" said Monson. His eyes glistened as he caught on. Gadsby, on the other hand, frowned.

"Well, what?" asked Gadsby gruffly.

"That fat ass fancies he can play billiards and things," said Ponsonby. "You remember him—that time we stayed at Smithy's place at Easter, and Bunter was there. If he'd had any money we could have made a fortune out of him. He's got money now. How long would it take us to relieve him of it in the billiards-room at the Three Fishers—a quid on the game?"

"By gum!" said Monson.

"And if Bunter happened to win, how'd you pay him, without even a threepenny-bit in your pockets?" asked Gadsby.

Pon laughed.

"Can you see him winnin'?" he asked.

"That's not the point. You can't play a chap for money if you're not prepared to pay if you lose!" said Gadsby hotly. "It's jolly near swindlin'."

"You've always had a soft streak in you, Gaddy," remarked Pon. "May I request you not to be a silly ass, an' not to give me any pi-jaw? If I want that I can go along to Courtenay's study and get it in large quantities. But I've no use for it, thanks!"

"What would you do if Bunter happened to win?" demanded Gadsby doggedly.

"In that extremely unlikely case, old bean, I should owe him the money, and might possibly pay him some day," answered Ponsonby. "But it's not likely to happen."

"It's a go!" said Monson.

"Leave me out of it!" snapped Gadsby. "I wouldn't stop at much to raise the wind, but I bar swindlin' a fat chump!"

And Reginald Gadsby walked out of Pon's study, and shut the door after him with a bang.

Pon shrugged his shoulders again and laughed.

"We can do without Gaddy," he remarked. "Two of us will be enough to share what Bunter's got left—what?"

"Yes, rather!" said Monson, with a chuckle.

"The fat cad ought to be bucked by makin' himself useful to his betters," said Pon. "If we get hold of him to-morrow, we're all right. The question is—how are we goin' to rope him in?"

"Can't walk into Greyfriars, and tell him we've heard that he's got some money, and we want it!" chuckled Monson.

"I'll drop him a line, I think," said Pon. "I can get a note taken over to that casual ward they call a school. Hardly safe in the post. His beak might know my fist, and old Quelch don't like me, for some reason. I rather wish now that we hadn't ragged the fat cad so often; it may make him suspicious. Still, he's every kind of a silly idiot, and I fancy I can pull his leg. Where's my fountain-pen?"

Pon sat down to write. Monson, reading over his shoulder, grinned.

"Dear Bunter,—We're getting up a picnic party on the river to-morrow afternoon, and we should all be glad if you'd join up. I hope you'll be able to come. If you walk up the tow-path to Popper's Island, about half-past three, you'll find us there. We'll wait for you, so come if you can."

"Always yours,

"C. PONSONBY."

Pon laid down the pen.

"That ought to fetch him," he remarked. "The word picnic will be enough for that guzzlin' fat pig. If this doesn't work we'll try again. But I fancy it will work all right."

"What-ho!" grinned Monson.

And Ponsonby, having folded that note in an envelope, left the study and the House to look for a messenger.

After which, the dandy of Highcliff hoped for the best. If Billy Bunter accepted that genial invitation, Pon's financial troubles looked like being tided over. And it did not even occur to the superb Pon that he was an unscrupulous young rascal.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Shanks' Pony!

BILLY BUNTER watched the clock in the Remove Form Room that afternoon.

Lessons always seemed long to Bunter. But lessons had never seemed so long as they seemed that day.

They really seemed as if they would never end.

But Mr. Quelch dismissed the Remove at last, and the fat Owl rolled out. There was time, after class, to get to Courtfield, get through his important business at the post office, and get back for lock-up.

The fact that Courtfield was out of school bounds, except on half-holidays, did not worry Bunter.

Plenty of fellows disregarded that circumstance, at one time or another, and Billy Bunter was quite prepared to disregard it on this urgent occasion, as he had done the previous day.

Bunter was not worrying about that at all. All he worried about was the distance to walk, which was about three miles.

Three yards was really more in Bunter's line, for a walk.

For which reason, Billy Bunter blinked round for his friends. Friendship, if it meant anything, meant that a fellow could rely on a pal to stand him a taxi, if he needed one!

But Bunter's friends seemed to have lost a lot of their loyal devotion.

Since that letter from Mr. Bunter, they were not so sure that the fat Owl was going to have the undisputed disposal of his celebrated fifty pounds. But they were sure, quite sure, that they did not want to stand him a taxi, or light refreshment on the way.

If Billy Bunter came back loaded with currency notes, Skinner & Co. were prepared to rally round him, with a display of loyal and devoted friendship that would have made Damon and Pythias look quite small beer in comparison. But they rather wanted to see the currency notes before they expended all that noble devotion.

It was, in fact, a case of once bitten and twice shy.

Fisher T. Fish was feeling quite ill over that taxi fare on Monday. It had set him back a dollar and a quarter, and no citizen of the United States could envisage the loss of a dollar and a quarter with equanimity. Skinner felt



Wingate slipped his ashplant from under his arm into his hand. "You've got plumbago in the left leg—what?" he said. "We'll see what we can do for you." Whack! "Yaroooh!" roared Bunter, as the cane came down on his left leg. "That better?" asked Wingate.

quite savage every time he thought of the little bill at the bun-shop. Snoop had escaped expenditure so far, and he intended to go on escaping it.

So when Bunter looked for his friends, they were not to be found. The previous day they had been anxious to accompany him to Courtfield. Now they were only anxious to keep out of sight till he had gone.

Harry Wharton & Co. were going down to cricket practice, when Billy Bunter, after a vain search for his pals, rolled up to them.

"I say, you fellows," squeaked Bunter.

"Coming down to the nets, old fat man?" asked Harry.

"I'll watch it!" grunted Bunter. "I'm going down to Courtfield!" He tapped his pocket. "I've got my book all right this time. I say, will one of you fellows lend me a taxi fare?"

"No!" said five voices in unison.

"You needn't be afraid I shan't settle!" said Bunter scornfully. "I'm coming back with fifty pounds in my pockets."

"More fool you!" said Johnny Bull, with a grunt.

"Beast! I say, you fellows, seen Skinner anywhere?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I think he went out on his bike, with Snoop," he answered.

"Seen Fishy?"

"He went out on shanks' pony."

"Blow 'em!" said Bunter. "Looks to me as if they're keeping out of the way. Can I have your bike, Wharton?"

"No!"

"Can I have yours, Nugent?"

"No!"

"I shan't ask you fellows to my spread when I come back," said Bunter.

"I shall leave you out! You can come

hanging round, and I shall just laugh, see?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! You'll look pretty green when I've got half the Remove to a spread and you're left out!" yapped Bunter. "I say, Bob, I'll ask you, if you'll lend me your bike?"

"Why can't you ride your own, fathead?"

"How can I ride it when it's got three punctures and a twisted pedal, and the chain broken. Don't be an ass! I'll take yours—"

"And bring it back, with three punctures, a twisted pedal, and the chain broken?" grinned Bob. "Not good enough, old fat bean!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled away, heading for the bike-shed. He was not going to walk three miles in a hot sun, if he could help it. He was going to borrow Peter Todd's bike, to which he considered he had some sort of a right, as Toddy was his study-mate in No. 7.

It was inadvisable to mention it to Peter, however, as Toddy would very probably have refused to acknowledge that right!

But when he rolled into the bike-shed, the fat Owl made the disagreeable discovery that Toddy's bike was not there.

With the selfishness that Bunter might really have expected, Toddy had gone out on that bike himself, regardless of the possibility that Bunter might want to borrow it.

"Beast!" grunted Bunter.

There was quite a nice bike on the stand belonging to Oliver Kipps. It was a case of any port in a storm, and Bunter decided on that jigger.

It was rather unfortunate that he met Kipps of the Remove, as he wheeled it out.

Kipps had come down for his machine—and he stopped, and stared at the bike Bunter was wheeling.

"Is that my jigger?" he asked.

"Oh, no!" said Bunter hastily. "Your jigger's on the stand, old chap. This is—this Newland's—he's lent it to me."

"I didn't know that Monty Newland had two!" remarked Kipps.

"Eh? He hasn't," said Bunter, blinking at him. "Wharrer you mean, Kippers?"

"I mean, that Newland's gone out on a bike," grinned Kipps.

"Oh! I—I mean, this is Smithy's," stammered Bunter. "Smithy's lent it to me to go down to Courtfield—"

"So Smithy's got two, has he?"

"Eh? No! Smithy hasn't gone out—he's gone down to cricket!" Bunter felt he was safe there.

He only wanted to get safe past Kipps! Once in the saddle, he did not mind if Kipps discovered whose bike it was.

"He must have two, though," said Kipps gravely. "Smithy's jigger is a Sunbeam. That's a Raleigh! So if it's Smithy's—"

"I—I—I mean, it—it—it's Ogilvy's," stuttered Bunter. "Oggy lent it to me specially." The fat Owl tried to push past. "I—I say, you—you'll find your jigger in the shed, Kippers—just go in and look. This is Russell's—I mean Ogilvy's—"

Kipps chuckled.

He grasped the bike with his left hand, and with his right he grasped a fat ear. He pulled at both.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter.

He let go the bike, and Kipps jerked it away. Then Kipps let go the ear.

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BILLY BUNTER'S WINDFALL!



(Continued from page 13.)

Bunter clapped a fat hand to it, and yelled.

"And now," said Kipps, "as you're going to Courtfield, start! You're not going to bag anybody's bike, you fat fraud! Get going!"

"I'm not going to walk!" roared Bunter.

"What about running, then?"

"I'm not going to run, you silly ass!"

"I fancy you are," said Kipps cheerfully, "because I'm going to boot you till you do. Like that!"

"Yaroooooh!"

"And that!"

"Yoo-hooooop!"

Bunter ran.

Kipps, grinning, followed him out at the gate.

With deep feelings, Billy Bunter started to walk to Courtfield.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Out of Bounds!

"MASTER BUNTER, sir?"

"Eh, what?" grunted Bunter.

Bunter was half-way to Courtfield.

Now he was sitting on one of the wayside benches erected by a thoughtful and considerate rural district council for the accommodation of weary wayfarers.

Bunter was tired. He was warm. He was peevish. He was exasperated. With fifty pounds waiting to be collected at the post office, he had to go foot-slogging in a hot June sun, just like a common mortal, who could not afford a taxi fare.

Having carried his weight for a mile and a half, Bunter needed a rest. It was a consolation to reflect that he could afford a taxi back. But the other mile and a half to Courtfield was dismaying to contemplate.

Sitting on the wayside bench, fanning himself with his hat, the fat Owl of the Remove noticed a lad coming from the direction of the town, without taking any interest in him, however.

As the lad came nearer, he remembered that he had seen him before; but did not remember where, or care to remember.

The lad, as a matter of fact, was employed by the gardener at Highcliffe School, and had been selected by Ponsonby to carry his note to Bunter.

Spotting the fat junior on the bench, the lad came across to him, touched his hat, and addressed him. Anyone who had seen Bunter once, was not likely to forget him. His circumference was too unusual for that.

"Note for you, sir!" said the lad.

Bunter blinked at him.

"I was going to take it to your school, sir!" explained the gardener's boy. "It's from Master Ponsonby, sir."

"Oh!" said Bunter.

He took the letter.

The Highcliffe gardener's boy

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lingered a moment or two, possibly in expectation of a tip. Then he turned round and walked back towards Courtfield, tipless.

Bunter blinked at the letter in his fat hand.

Why the dandy of Highcliffe should send him a note, was quite a mystery to him. Generally, a meeting with Pon meant trouble for the fat Owl; for Pon was the man to rag any fellow who could not protect himself. He disliked the dandy of Highcliffe; and Pon disliked him, so far as his lofty nature could allow him to feel anything but contemptuous indifference towards a fellow like Bunter. So it was quite surprising to receive a note from Pon, specially sent over by a messenger.

But as he blinked at that letter, a grin overspread Billy Bunter's fat face.

Bunter was not bright, but he was bright enough to guess the reason for this unexpected communication. Pon had heard of the fifty pounds!

That was natural enough, as the affair of the smash-and-grab raid had been reported at great length in the local paper, and it was common knowledge that a Greyfriars fellow had received the reward of fifty pounds for putting the police on the track of the crooks.

Bunter grinned—an expansive grin.

Fascinating fellow as he was, Bunter had never been sought after for his own charming qualities. He was quite well aware why Skinner & Co. had developed cordial friendship all of a sudden. Now there was another development—from a much superior quarter. Skinner & Co. were mere nobodies, in comparison with the superb and supercilious Pon!

The fat Owl jammed a podgy thumb into the envelope and opened it. He grinned more expansively than ever over Pon's letter.

A picnic on the river, as the artful Pon had anticipated, was quite an attractive idea to Billy Bunter!

Neither was he blind to the fact that the tow-path near Popper's island, was quite near the Three Fishers; a favourite resort of the Highcliffe knuts on a half-holiday.

He had no doubt that the black sheep of Highcliffe were going "on the spree," and asking him to join up because of that fifty pounds!

It was quite an exhilarating prospect, to the fat and fatuous Owl. Billy Bunter rather fancied himself as a sportsman! Shortage of cash, hitherto, had prevented him from spreading himself in that line. But shortage of cash was a thing of the past now.

The lesson he had had from the Bounder had not worn off. Bunter's fat mind was made up not to play cards for money. So far, at least, Smithy had done him good.

But there were plenty of other ways in which a fellow could make a fool of himself! Bunter was, for instance, a "dab" at billiards—at least, he believed that he was! The idea of "playing the goat" with a svanky party like Pon & Co. of Highcliffe was immensely attractive to the fat Owl. He grinned over that letter from ear to ear.

However, he put it into his pocket, at last, and rose from the bench, to roll on to Courtfield.

He did not observe a tall and angular figure coming up the road from the direction of Greyfriars School.

That angular figure was behind him, as he rolled towards Courtfield; and Mr. Quelch's long legs covered the ground about six times as fast as Billy Bunter short, fat ones.

Quelch's gimlet-eye was fixed grimly

on the fat junior's back, as he rapidly overhauled him.

"BUNTER!"

Billy Bunter jumped almost clear of the ground at that sharp bark in the rear.

"Oh crikey!" he gasped.

He spun round, his eyes, and his spectacles, fixing on the Remove master in dismay.

Mr. Quelch frowned grimly.

"You are out of bounds, Bunter!" he rapped.

"Oh crumbs! I—I—I wasn't going to Courtfield, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I was just tut-tut-taking a walk, sir! I—I—I'm so fond of—of walking!"

"School bounds are extended beyond Oak Lane, only on half-holidays, Bunter. You are out of bounds here, and obviously intended to go farther out of bounds," said Mr. Quelch sternly. "You will take a hundred lines, Bunter."

"Oh lor'!"

"And you will walk back to the school this instant."

"Oh crikey!"

"Report yourself to a prefect immediately you reach the school! I shall inquire!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh jiminy!"

Mr. Quelch waved his hand towards distant Greyfriars.

"Go at once!" he rapped.

Billy Bunter stood blinking at him! He had his post office book safe in his pocket this time—and fifty pounds awaiting him in Courtfield! But it might as well have been at the ends of the earth! Really, this was rough luck on a fellow who had a windfall! It really looked as if Billy Bunter never would get his fat hands on those pounds!

"Do you hear me, Bunter?" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I say, sir, c-c-can I have leave to—to go to Courtfield! I—I want to see a man about—about my bike, sir! It—it's in want of—of repair—"

"You should have asked leave before starting, Bunter! Neither do I believe your statement!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Only a few moments ago, you stated that you were not going to Courtfield."

"Oh! I—I—I mean—"

"For what reason, Bunter, do you desire to visit the town, in this secret and surreptitious manner?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

Bunter gasped! He dared not tell Quelch the reason! Quelch did not know, so far, that the fat Owl was going to draw fifty pounds out of the post office at one fell swoop. Had he known, he would undoubtedly have put a stopper on that proceeding instantly. No fellow was allowed to have anything like such a sum in his possession, if the beaks knew anything about it.

"Answer me, Bunter!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I—I—I don't want to go to Courtfield, sir!" gasped Bunter. "N-not at all, sir!"

"You have just asked me for leave to go!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "What do you mean, Bunter?"

"I—I—I mean I—I want to go b-b-back to the school, to tut-tut-tea!" stuttered Bunter.

Mr. Quelch gave him a searching, suspicious look. Then he pointed in the direction of Greyfriars again.

"You will take another hundred lines, Bunter, for untruthfulness. Now go back to the school at once."

"Oh lor'! I mean, yes, sir!" mumbled Bunter.

He rolled dismally off towards Greyfriars.

Mr. Quelch, with a grim brow, watched him out of sight, before he resumed his walk to Courtfield.

When Bunter rolled, tired and dismal, warm and breathless, in at the school gates, Skinner & Co. met him, with smiling faces. But they received no smile from Bunter.

"Beasts!" he grunted.

And he rolled on wearily to the House, tired, peevish, and cash-less. That fifty pounds still reposed safely in the bank—so near, yet so far!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Quick Cure!

BILLY BUNTER had recovered his spirits the following morning.

Most of the Greyfriars fellows were looking merry and bright that day.

It was a glorious June day; it was a half-holiday; and fellows were thinking of cricket, or of the river, or spinning on jiggers, or rambling in shady woods.

Bunter was thinking of none of these things, but his fat face was the merriest and brightest of all.

Even Quelch could not stop him from going to Courtfield on a half-holiday. At last—at long last—he was going to handle that fifty quids! Then he was going to roll down to the towpath on the Sark, and meet the Highcliffe knuts! and there was going to be a glorious, gorgeous time! No wonder Billy Bunter smiled over his lessons that morning, as if he enjoyed lessons!

After class he rolled in the quad, feeling rather like that ancient classical gentleman who came near striking the stars with his sublime head!

Skinner & Co. gave him friendly smiles; but he had no use for Skinner & Co. now. He gave them lofty, distant blinks, in quite the supercilious style of his new friend Ponsonby.

At dinner, Billy Bunter was anxious, for once, for a meal to be over! When it was over, he rolled out, his fat face wreathed with happy, anticipatory grins. In the quad, the captain of the Remove called to him:

"Half-past two, Bunter!"

The fat Owl blinked round at him.

"Eh? Wharrer you mean—half-past two?" he demanded.

"Games practice!"

Bunter gave a sniff of scorn! He had something much better on that afternoon, than games practice!

"I'm going out, you ass!" he answered.

"After games practice, old fat man!" said Harry. "Not before! Have you forgotten that it's a compulsory day, fathead?"

Bunter had!

The happy grins ceased to wreath his fat visage! Really, it began to look as if that fifty pounds was always going to remain just beyond his reach, like the tempting viands that tortured Tantalus.

"I—I—I say, I shall have to cut to-day, Wharton!" he gasped. "I say, it's important. You can let a fellow off. If the games master wants to know, you can tell him I'm ill—see?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"You can go to Lascelles and tell him all the whoppers you like," he said. "If Larry lets you off, all right."

"He—he mightn't believe me!" mumbled Bunter. "I say, old chap, do be a sport! I—I went to the post office on Monday, you know, and found I'd left my book in your study! Then I went on Tuesday, and that beast Quelch sent me in, making out that I was out of bounds! And now——"

"Well, there's lots of time after games

practice," said Harry. "You can get off at four."

"Four's too late!"

"Fathead! The post office is open till eight!"

"Yes, but——" Bunter stammered.

"I—I've got an appointment at half-past three! I—I really must go, old chap! Let me off this time!"

"Don't be an ass!" said the captain of the Remove. "I can't let a man off, unless he's sick or gives a jolly good reason! I'm not going to have old Wingate combing my hair because you're a lazy slacker."

"Tell him I've sprained my ankle!" suggested Bunter.

"You go and tell him," said Harry.

"There he is, with Gwynne."

"Beast! I—I say," gasped Bunter.

"There will be some chaps waiting for me on the towpath at half-past three! I—I really must go!"

Harry Wharton stared at him.

"What rot!" he answered. "All the Remove will be at games practice till four."

"I'm meeting some Highcliffe chaps!"

"Highcliffe chaps!" repeated Wharton.

"Pon's asked me to a picnic!" said Bunter loftily. "I'm rather pally with Pon, you know."

"I don't know!" answered Wharton grimly. "First I've heard of it. Has Pon got wind of your windfall? Is that it?"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Look here, Bunter, you awful duffer," said Harry quietly. "Steer clear of that Highcliffe gang. That fellow Ponsonby, with all the side he puts on, is nothing but a sharper. The less you see of him the better!"

"I'll ask you for your advice when I want it!" answered Bunter, with lofty scorn. "Until then, you'll oblige me by keeping it to yourself!"

Harry Wharton breathed hard.

"Very well; but turn up for cricket practice at half-past two!" he said. "If you've not changed for cricket by then, look out for a cricket stump on your bags!"

The captain of the Remove walked away with that, leaving Billy Bunter breathing fury.

Cricket practice at such a time was, to Billy Bunter's mind, rather like fiddling while Rome was burning! Bunter was not keen on games at the best of times; he loathed games practice; and it was simply exasperating to think of slogging at the nets while Pon & Co. were waiting for him—and perhaps giving him up, and going their own way without him.

Obviously, games practice that afternoon was impossible! On the other hand, it was compulsory; and "six on the bags" was the probable penalty for cutting without leave.

Billy Bunter was prepared, as a last resource, to risk even that painful penalty, rather than give up going on the "razzle" with Pon & Co. that afternoon. But that was a very last resource. There was a chance, at least, of getting leave.

Three persons were entitled to give him leave to cut—the captain of his Form, Wingate of the Sixth, and Mr. Lascelles, the games master.

Wharton, evidently, was not going to do so—less than ever, since he had learned Bunter's reason for wanting to cut.

Bunter resolved to try it on with Wingate; and if Wingate failed him in his hour of need, to put it to Larry Lascelles. He had great faith in his powers of prevarication.

He rolled over to Wingate of the

Sixth, who was in the quad talking to Gwynne of that Form.

The captain of Greyfriars glanced at him.

"I—I say, Wingate, can I cut games this afternoon?" asked Bunter, screwing up his fat features into an expression of suffering. "I've got a pain."

Wingate smiled. He could not have computed how often he had heard that from Bunter, without going into very high figures.

Gwynne chuckled.

"What sort of a pain?" asked the Greyfriars captain.

"Like—like a burning dagger!" said Bunter. Bunter was not the fellow to understate the case. "It—it's awful!"

Wingate nodded gravely.

"If you've got an awful pain like a burning dagger, Bunter, you're no good for games practice," he said. "You can certainly cut, in that case."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Thanks!"

"Don't thank me yet, Bunter—I want to know a little more about that awful pain! Where have you got it?"

"In—in—in the leg!" gasped Bunter. "I—I think it's a touch of plumbago, Wingate! Plumbago runs in our family a lot."

"Oh crumbs!" Wingate slipped his ashplant down from under his arm into his hand. "Which leg?"

"The—the left——"

"Well, we'll see what we can do for you," said the Greyfriars captain. "I fancy I can cure it, Bunter."

Whack!

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter, as the ash came across the leg in which, according to the fat Owl, he suffered from that extraordinary complaint, plumbago. "Ow! Wow!"

Bunter had stated, untruthfully, that he had a pain in that leg. Now he might have made the same statement truthfully!

"All right now?" asked Wingate genially.

"Ow! No!" howled Bunter. "That's made it worse! Ow!"

"We'll try again!" said the Greyfriars captain.

Whack!

"Yoo-hooop!"

Bunter hopped wildly.

"That better?"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow! Wow!" roared Bunter. "No—I—I mean, yes! Keep that cane away! It—it—it's all right now! Yow-ow!"

"Good!" said Wingate, tucking the ashplant under his arm. "Glad I've been able to help! If you feel it coming on again, come to me again, Bunter."

Billy Bunter rolled away, with feelings too deep for words.

He left the two Sixth Form men grinning. Bunter was not grinning! And he was not likely to come to Wingate again! He had had enough of Wingate and his quick cures for pains like burning daggers!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

There's Many a Slip!

GROAN!

Mr. Lascelles, the games master, gave quite a start!

He was coming away from his study, to go down to the cricket ground, when that painful, hair-raising groan fell on his ears, and startled him.

A fat figure was visible in the passage.

Billy Bunter was leaning on the wall. He turned towards the startled games

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master a fat face that was almost ghastly in its pallor.

Bunter's face was generally as ruddy as the cherry. Now it was quite white. In the dusky passage, it looked almost like the face of a ghost.

"My dear boy!" exclaimed Mr. Lascelles, coming quickly towards the fat Owl. "What is the matter? Are you ill?"

"Ow! Yes!" groaned Bunter. "I—I was coming to—to tell you that I—I felt too ill for games practice, sir! Oh dear! O-a-a-can I o-o-out, sir?"

"Certainly, if you are ill!" answered Larry Lascelles. "You certainly look very ill, Bunter! I have often spoken to you about eating so much pastry and sweets. Are you feeling sick?"

"Fuf-fuf-fearfully s-s-sick, sir!" moaned Bunter. "I could hardly drag myself here, sir! But I—I thought I'd better come and tell you, sir! I—I shouldn't like you to think that I was slacking, sir!"

"I will take you to the matron at once, Bunter," said Mr. Lascelles. "Come with me!"

"Oh crikey!"

"What? What did you say, Bunter?"

"I—I mean, d-d-don't trouble, sir!" gasped Bunter. "The fellows will be waiting for you. I—I can go to Mrs. Kebble by myself, sir. I—I don't want to waste your time, sir."

"Never mind that, Bunter."

"But—but I do mind, sir!" gasped Bunter.

He did, indeed. In the dusky passage in which the artful fat Owl had selected the duskiest spot, his pallid face looked as if he was ill. But in a clearer light Bunter was afraid that it might look as if chalk had been rubbed on it.

"I—I'll go to Mrs. Kebble at once, sir, and—and ask her for some medicine," squeaked Bunter. "D-d-don't you trouble, sir."

"Very well, go immediately, Bunter," said Mr. Lascelles, and he passed on down the passage.

Billy Bunter grinned after him as he went.

That beast, Wharton, had refused to let him off. That brute, Wingate, hadn't believed that he had plumbago in his leg. But he had got by with the games master—so that was all right. That pallid face in the dusky passage had worked the oracle.

The fat Owl grinned cheerfully.

He did not head for the House dame's room. He waited till Mr. Lascelles had disappeared, and then, with a grubby handkerchief, wiped that sickly complexion from his fat face as well as he could, and then rolled away for a wash. After which, he repaired to the Remove passage to get ready for his afternoon's trip.

Not as a rule very particular about appearances, Billy Bunter felt that he had to put on a little style for the distinguished company of the knuts of Highcliffe. Having, contrary to custom, had an extra wash, he looked unusually clean, and a clean collar belonging to Peter Todd, a necktie borrowed from Smithy's study, and a handsome straw hat from Lord Mauleverer, added to the effect.

Bunter was feeling very bright as he rolled down the stairs. By that time Mr. Lascelles was safe on the cricket ground, too busy there to give Bunter a thought—and the coast was clear. Larry, no doubt, might have been surprised had he seen Bunter going out for the afternoon, a quarter of an hour after seeing him look so

awfully ill. But he was not going to see Bunter going out—so that was all right.

Leaving the House, the fat junior rolled away to the bike-shed, and, like Iser in the poem, he rolled rapidly.

With all the Remove, except himself, at games practice with the games master, he had his choice of bikes, and he was going to take the jigger belonging to the fellow least likely to kick him for having done so. So Frank Nugent, as the best-tempered fellow in the Remove, was going to have the pleasure of lending Bunter a bike.

He lost no time in getting to the bike-shed. Arrived at that building, he rolled in, with a cheery grin on his fat face.

The next moment he halted in dismay. Two Sixth Form men were in the bike-shed. Gwynne of the Sixth was repairing a puncture; Wingate sitting on a bench, and chatting with him as he did so.

Both of them looked at Bunter.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped the fat Owl.

It had not occurred to him that Wingate might be going out on his bike that afternoon. Really, that was a thing that no fellow could have foreseen. He blinked through his big spectacles at the captain of Greyfriars in dismay.

"Hallo!" Wingate stared at him. "Why aren't you at games practice, Bunter? Got that pain again? Come here, then!"

"Oh, no!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say, Wingate, I—I've got leave! Lascelles has let me off."

"Because of the plumbago in your leg—what?" asked Wingate genially.

"Oh, no! Because—because I—I—I'm ill!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say, Wingate, it's honest Injun! Lascelles really let me off—"

Wingate rose from the bench.

"How long will you be, Gwynne?" he asked.

"About five minutes."

"I'll be back by then. Come along, Bunter!"

"I—I say, Wingate," stuttered the fat Owl, "I—I—I don't want to go to Lascelles—"

"Probably not," agreed Wingate.

"Come, all the same!"

"Oh lor'!" groaned Bunter.

He rolled away dismally with the Greyfriars captain.

On Little Side games practice was going on, under the eyes of Mr. Lascelles. The games master glanced round in surprise at Bunter, and looked inquiringly at Wingate. He had last seen Bunter looking as white as a ghost. Now the fat junior was ruddier than the cherry. The change was startling.

"This young sweep says that you let him off, sir," said Wingate.

"That is the case, Wingate," said Mr. Lascelles, with a puzzled stare at Bunter. "He looked so pale that I sent him to the matron. Did you go to Mrs. Kebble, Bunter?"

"Oh, yes! No—I—I was just going!" stammered Bunter.

"By way of the bike-shed?" asked Wingate.

"I—I—I mean—"

There was a chortle from the Remove cricketers.

Mr. Lascelles frowned. He was not a suspicious young man; but it dawned on him that his leg had been pulled somehow. So sudden a recovery was altogether too surprising.

"Bunter, what does this mean?" he exclaimed. "You are certainly not ill, though you made me believe so."

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—

I'm awfully ill, sir! You—you saw how pale I looked, sir, didn't you? I—I hope you don't think I—I was pulling your leg, sir! It wasn't chalk—"

"What?"

"I—I mean—" stuttered the hapless Owl.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You young rascal!" exclaimed Mr. Lascelles. "Wharton, hand me a cricket stump!"

"Oh crikey! I—I say, sir, I—I really was—was fearfully ill!" gasped Bunter. "As for rubbing chalk on my face, sir, I—I never thought of such a thing! And I haven't washed it off, sir! I—"

"Touch your toes, Bunter!"

"Oh crikey!"

Whack!

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Whack!

"Yarooooop!"

"Now, Bunter, go and change for cricket! If you are not back here in five minutes, I will report you to your Form-master for severe punishment!"

"Oh lor'!"

Billy Bunter rolled away and changed for cricket in the lowest of spirits. Nearly—very nearly—had he got by with it, only to discover that there was many a slip 'twixt cup and lip.

He was back on Little Side under five minutes, and as he slogged in the June sunshine, he could only wonder dismally whether Pon & Co. were still waiting on the towpath.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Kipps Takes a Hand!

KIPPS of the Remove grinned as he came up to Harry Wharton in the quad, after cricket practice was over.

There was a frown on the face of the captain of the Remove. Evidently he was worried. He looked rather like a fellow with a problem on his mind that he did not quite know how to deal with, and Kipps grinned cheerfully at his wrinkled brow.

"What's the jolly old trouble?" asked Kipps. "You look as if you'd lost a fiver and found a threepenny-bit."

"That ass," growled Wharton, "that fathead! That blithering bloater! That pernicious piffler! That jabbering jabberwock!"

Oliver Kipps chuckled. By the description, he guessed that the captain of the Remove was thinking of William George Bunter.

"He's gone?" he asked.

"Yes. That tick Skinner's lent him his bike, and he's cleared off to Courtfield," growled Wharton.

"Well, what's the worry?" asked Kipps. "The silly owl is bound to plaster the tuckshop with his quids, so long as they last. They won't last long, when he's once got his paws on them."

"I know; but"—Wharton knitted his brows—"he tried to get off games practice this afternoon, and let out that he was going to meet that cad Ponsonby, and some of his pals from Highcliffe. You know as well as I do what that means."

"Pon's got wind of the quids," grinned Kipps. "My hat! Bunter won't have a lot left for tuck if that gang of sharpers get hold of him."

"I suppose it's not my bizney," said Harry. "But that fat fool is going to get his money out of the bank, and go on to meet that crew. They're



Struggling and wriggling and yelling, Ponsonby and Monson were rolled down the bank into the river. Splash! "Sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander!" said Harry Wharton. "You were going to duck Bunter, weren't you?" "He, he, he!" gurgled Billy Bunter.

about as scrupulous as a racecourse gang. It's no good talking to the ass; and I suppose I couldn't hold him back by his ears. But that gang will swindle him, and that's not all—they'll land him in trouble as likely as not. I haven't the slightest doubt that they're taking him to some den out of bounds—the Three Fishers, most likely—that's Pon's favourite spot on a half-holiday. All very well for Highcliffe swabs, but a Greyfriars man gets sacked for that kind of thing. I hate letting the blithering idiot run on, but I don't see what I can do."

Kipps whistled.
"The blithering chump!" he said. "Fools and their money are soon parted!" He grinned. "Bunter isn't grateful for good advice," he added. "If you say a word to the fat chump, he fancies you're after his quids!"
"I know. But even that bloated bloater has his good points," said Harry.

"Has he? He doesn't keep them on view, then!" said Kipps.

Harry Wharton laughed.
"Perhaps not; but he has. That cake yesterday—all the fellows thought he had walked it off to scoff on his own, because he didn't want to whack it out—"

"Well, so he did."
"He didn't," said Harry. "He sent it home to his mater."

"His mater? What the thump would his mater want with a sticky cake?" exclaimed Kipps, in astonishment.

"Nothing at all, of course; but she's been ill, and that fat chump thought a whacking cake would buck her up—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Kipps.

"Well, it's funny," agreed Wharton. "But it was pretty decent of Bunter, all the same. That cake must have made his mouth water, and he packed it up and posted it home. We thought it

was all gammon, of course; but it went. Trotter walked it off to Friardale and posted it."

"Well, my hat!" said Kipps. "Blessed if I ever thought that Bunter bothered about anybody but himself!"

"And now," said Harry, "I suppose a fellow can't do anything. But I hate to see him plundered by that Highcliffe gang. He's going to meet Ponsonby, with the whole bag of tricks in his pocket. The fat fool's his own master, but—"

"How long has he been gone?"

"About half an hour. Why? No good going after him and talking sense to him. He's got no use for sense."

"I fancy I could catch him on my bike," said Kipps thoughtfully.

"No good if you did."

"Well, look here," said Kipps, "Bunter's bound to blow all that cash, but if he blows it on tuck there's no great harm done. But I don't see letting him be robbed of it—and that's what it comes to if that gang of sharpers get hold of him. Fancy his feelings when it's all gone! You know how he looked when Smithy pulled his leg at nap."

"He will feel worse this time. Pon won't pull his leg to give him a lesson like Smithy. Pon will walk off with the loot!" growled Wharton.

"He ought to be stopped. Suppose Bunter handed over his money to be taken care of before he met Pon?"

"He wouldn't, fathead!"

"He might be persuaded to," said Kipps. "I fancy he'd be jolly glad to find it safe at Greyfriars when he got back after meeting his Highcliffe pals."

"Not much doubt about that!" said Harry, laughing.

"And he couldn't fix up another meeting with that gang till Saturday," went on Kipps. "Only on half-holidays, you know. We've plastered it over

the tuckshop by then. Might have sense enough to buy himself a new bike, too; he needs one. Might even square a few of the little sums he owes up and down the school. If he gets it safe here, most likely there won't be much left by Saturday to make him worth Pon's while—what—"

"Yes, ass; but he won't listen to reason," said Harry. "I tell you it's no good talking to him."

"Might persuade him without talking!" said Kipps. "You agree that his cash ought to be saved from those hawks, if possible?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Then I'm jolly well going to see what I can do!" said Kipps. "Might be able to work the giddy oracle."

Oliver Kipps walked away to the bike-shed, leaving the captain of the Remove considerably puzzled.

That it was useless to talk sense to Billy Bunter, Wharton knew by his own experience, and he did not see any likelihood of Kipps having better luck.

But Oliver Kipps had a cheery grin on his face as he pushed out his bike and rode away towards Courtfield.

He put on speed, and covered the ground at a good rate. But he did not sight Bunter. The fat Owl had had a good start, and no doubt he had put on unusual speed in his eager haste to finger his fifty pounds, and get off to keep that appointment with Pon & Co.

Not till he arrived in Courtfield High Street did the schoolboy conjurer see sign of Bunter. Then he spotted Skinner's bike lodged on the kerb outside the post office.

Bunter, evidently, had arrived at that building and gone in.

Kipps dismounted, and waited. A minute or two later a fat figure came rolling out of the post office.

Kipps grinned at the fat face. That
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fat face was irradiated by happy grins. Bunter clearly was in possession at last of his wealth. After so many delays and obstructions, he had got through. He seemed to be walking on air as he rolled out of the building.

"Hallo, old fat bean!" said Kipps genially.

Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles. His fat grin took on a sarcastic expression. It was Bunter's happy way to judge other fellows by himself, and at the sight of Oliver Kipps he had no doubt why Kipps was there. Kipps was after the loaves and fishes! Bunter guessed that at once.

"Oh, hallo!" he said carelessly. "Can't stop! I've got an appointment to keep!"

"You've put it through?" asked Kipps.

The fat junior tapped his breast pocket.

"Fifty of the best!" he grinned. "Three tenners, three fivers, and five in pound notes! He, he, he! You can buzz off, Kippers! I'm not lending you anything!"

"You fat idiot—"

"Yah! Think I don't know what you're after!" said Bunter scornfully. "Did you happen along here by chance—what? He, he, he!"

Kipps' good resolutions nearly failed him. He was taking a lot of trouble to save the egregious Owl from his own obtuse folly. This was his reward!

For a moment he almost decided to bang Bunter's fat head on the post office wall, and leave it at that.

But the thought of the fathead of the Remove going to meet the young rascals of Highcliffe, with three tenners, three fivers, and five pound notes in his pocket, disarmed him. Bunter at the moment was immensely bucked. But his feelings after Pon & Co. had done with him could be easily imagined. The mental picture of the dismal fat Owl crawling dispiritedly home, with all his money gone, touched Kipps' kind heart. He relented, and Bunter never knew what a narrow escape his fat head had had.

"Come and have a ginger, old fat bean," said Kipps, "and a jam tart or two—what?"

"No time!" said Bunter. "I've got to get off! I'm late already, owing to that beast Wharton and that rotten games practice!"

"It's only a few minutes to the bunshop."

Bunter sniggered.

"Wash it out!" he said. "I'm not keeping my friends waiting while I stand you a feed, Kippers!"

Again Bunter's fat head had a narrow escape.

"My treat!" said Kipps. "This way, old bean!"

Bunter hesitated a moment; but the lure of eatables and drinkables was one that Bunter never could resist. He nodded.

"Buck up, then!" he said.

They wheeled the machines along to the bunshop.

Billy Bunter was, perhaps, still suspicious; but Kipps, in the most cheery manner, stood him a ginger-beer and a plate of tarts, which the fat Owl disposed of rapidly, and paid the waiter for the same. Bunter had no doubt that it was a sprat to catch a whale; still, he disposed of the light refreshments with great satisfaction. As they rose from the table to leave, the schoolboy conjurer stumbled and fell against Bunter, grabbing hold of him to save himself.

"Owl! Look out, you fathead!" gasped Bunter, as he staggered in the

grasp of Oliver Kipps. "Don't barge me over, you dummy!"

"Sorry, old bean!" gasped Kipps.

"You clumsy ass!"

Kipps, grinning, remounted his bike and rode away towards Greyfriars.

Bunter, gasping, clambered on Skinner's machine, and headed for the shortest cut to the towpath on the Sark.

He grinned happily as he went. Not for a moment did it occur to his fat brain why the schoolboy conjurer had stumbled against him, and still less did he dream that his fifty pounds was now in safe keeping. He might have been enlightened had he witnessed Oliver Kipps' proceedings when that cheery youth arrived at Greyfriars.

Kipps went at once to Study No. 7 in the Remove, where Peter Todd and Tom Dutton were at tea. He laid on the study table a post office account book, inside which were packed bank-notes and currency notes. Peter Todd stared at it blankly.

"What's that?" he asked.

"Bunter's!" explained Kipps. "Lock it up in your desk for him, Toddy, old man, and hand it to him when he comes in, will you?"

Peter blinked in astonishment.

"Mean to say that Bunter's had sense enough to hand you his quids to be locked up safely?" he asked.

"Sort of!"

"Well, my only hat!"

In quite a dizzy state of astonishment, Toddy locked up the bank book and the notes in his desk.

Oliver Kipps left the study with a cheery grin on his face.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Bad Lad!

CECIL PONSONBY compressed his lips hard.

Monson, leaning on a tree by the towpath, grunted.

Prompt at half-past three, the two young rascals had been at the place of appointment.

It was now nearly five o'clock.

They had seen nothing of Bunter, so far. Pon had had hardly a doubt that the fat and fatuous Owl would turn up—that he would, indeed, be greatly bucked and happy to do so. He had fully expected to see Bunter waiting on the towpath opposite Popper's Island when he arrived there with Monson.

But he had not come!

Many things, of course, might have caused delay. The fat junior might have had a detention, for all Pon knew; or there might be games practice, which was not so easy to wriggle out of at Greyfriars as at Highcliffe.

Ponsonby decided to wait—but his temper did not improve while he waited! And by the time he had waited an hour, he was feeling more inclined to greet Bunter with a punch on his fat nose, than with a friendly smile, if he did turn up at last.

"Look here, Pon, better chuck it!" said Monson for the fifth or sixth time.

"The fat brute ain't comin'."

Ponsonby shook his head.

"He'll come if he can!" he snapped. "The podgy porpoise will jump at the chance."

"Well, lots of things might have stopped him!" grunted Monson. "I don't see hanging about all the afternoon for a fat Greyfriars cad."

"Nothin' better to do, as we're stony!" snarled Pon. "Not much good turnin' up at the Three Fishers without a red cent in our pockets, is it? Like

to go back and play cricket with Courtenay and his crew?"

"Oh rats!"

They continued to wait—Pon growing more and more savage, Monson more and more sulky.

Pedestrians passed them from time to time, and an occasional cyclist—but no Bunter. But at five o'clock, a fat figure on a bicycle loomed into view. It came from up the river, instead of from the direction of Greyfriars, which looked as if Billy Bunter had gone round by way of Courtfield. But it was Bunter—at last!

"Here he comes!" muttered Pon.

"I've a jolly good mind to barge him off that bike, and dip his fat head in the river!" growled Monson.

"Shut up, you ass!"

Pon—with some effort—adopted his friendliest smile, as the fat Owl of Greyfriars pedalled up.

Monson, with a still greater effort, banished his sulky scowl, and did his best to grin.

Bunter jumped down, and grinned cheerily at the Highcliffians.

"Sorry I'm late, old beans," he remarked breezily. "Rotten games practice this afternoon, and I couldn't get off."

"Better late than never, old bean," said Pon cordially.

"You see, we can't cut games as you fellows do!" explained Bunter. "Greyfriars ain't a slack school like Highcliffe."

Billy Bunter was on his best behaviour, intending to be very agreeable to the Highcliffe knuts. This was his way of being agreeable!

But Ponsonby's friendly smile remained fixed.

"Oh, quite!" he agreed. "Well, here we are! We've got rather a decent spread in this lunch-basket, Bunter."

"Oh, good!" said Bunter.

His little round eyes, behind his big round spectacles, glistened at the lunch-basket which lay in the grass under a shady tree. Pon, though suffering from a severe shortage of cash, had good credit at the Highcliffe school shop, and he had not failed to provide a supply of the things that were nearest to Billy Bunter's fat heart. There was going to be a picnic; though if Bunter fancied that that was all, he was labouring under a misapprehension.

The bicycle was stacked against a tree-trunk, and the fat Owl selected a shady spot to sit down. Monson was still sulky, though he was trying to put on a friendly grin; but Pon was all cheery cordiality. Judging by Pon's expression, all he really needed to make him happy was William George Bunter's fascinating society.

The basket was unpacked, and Bunter beamed over the contents. There were ham sandwiches, and chicken sandwiches, and egg sandwiches, and tomato sandwiches. There were jam tarts, and cream tarts, meringues, eclairs, and a cake. There was lemonade, and there was ginger-pop!

Billy Bunter was soon busy.

"I say, you fellows, this is all right!" he remarked.

"Glad you like it, old chap!" said Ponsonby.

"A jolly good spread," said Bunter. "Not like the spreads I give in my study, of course—but jolly good!"

"Oh! Ah! Yes!" gasped Ponsonby.

Bunter gobbled.

He was too busy for some time for much in the way of conversation. But when he had made a deep inroad on the foodstuffs, and eaten about twice as much as Pon and Monson together, he slowed down.

"Glad you fellows waited for me," he

said. "I suppose you had nothing to do—you Highcliffe chaps don't play cricket, what? He, he, he! I'd have cut, but Lascelles—he's our games master—made a point of my turning up. The fellows pick up tips from watching me, you know."

"They would!" agreed Pon. "I suppose you're going to be in the Remove eleven this season?"

It was quite safe to be sarcastic with Bunter! Bunter did not dream of spotting the sarcasm.

"Well, by rights, I should be," the fat Owl explained. "But there's a lot of jealousy in cricket, as I dare say you know. Wharton hates to be put in the shade by a better man than himself."

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Monson.

Bunter blinked at him, and Pon gave him a warning look.

"I could play Wharton's head off, of course," said Bunter. "He can keep up his wicket, more or less, but look at his style! Nothing like mine."

"Nothing, I'm sure!" agreed Ponsonby.

"Of course, you fellows wouldn't know much about it," went on Bunter. "Cricket's not in your line, what? He, he, he! I'm rather a demon at it! I really would have cut games this afternoon, knowing that you fellows were waiting for me, but I couldn't tear myself away, to tell you the truth. Then I had to go to the post office, you know, in Courtfield."

Bunter grinned cheerily.

"Did you fellows hear anything about that smash-and-grab man, a week or two ago?" he asked.

"I saw it in the papers," said Ponsonby. "Some Greyfriars man got mixed up in it, I heard, and bagged a reward, or somethin'."

"That was me!" announced Bunter.

"Not really?" asked Pon.

"Yes, rather! Didn't you know?" asked Bunter, blinking at him. "I thought you knew, when you asked me to this picnic."

"Oh! Ah! Er—" gasped Pon.

"Well, it was me!" said the fat Owl. "Me all right! I got the fifty pounds reward! He, he, he! That brute, Quelch, made me put it in the post office bank, so I wasn't able to touch it—"

"Wha-a-t?"

Pon and Monson gazed at Bunter!

"But I jolly well drew it all out to-day!" chuckled Bunter. "That's why I went to the post office, see?"

"Oh!" gasped Pon, in great relief.

Bunter tapped his breast-pocket.

"Three tenners, three fivers, and five pound notes," he said. "I've got 'em here, in my post office book! What do you fellows think of that?"

Pon and Monson did not state what they thought of that! It would rather have alarmed Bunter for the safety of his wealth!

"Gratters, old chap!" said Pon.

"Ripping!" said Monson. "That's a lot of money."

"Not much to me," said Bunter carelessly. "I dare say you fellows think it an awful lot! A trifle to me."

"Oh!"

"Any more cake?" asked Bunter, blinking round.

"N-n-no—"

"Oh, never mind!" said the fat Owl graciously. "Not a bad spread—as good as you could afford, I dare say. Got any smokes?"

Pon and Monson exchanged a glance. Their rascally game was to lead the fat Owl astray; but Bunter, it seemed, did not need much leading. Ponsonby promptly produced the cigarettes.

Billy Bunter lighted a cigarette with

(Continued on next page.)

The STATELY HOMES of GREYFRIARS

POPPER COURT

By

The Greyfriars Rhymester



This week's verses by our long-haired poet are written around Popper Court where dwells Sir Hilton Popper, a crusty old baronet and Chairman of the Greyfriars Board of Governors.

(1)

Sir Hilton Popper of Popper Court
Is a tyrant fierce and awful;
If you trespass on his land,
He will shoot you out of hand,
Or he would, if to shoot was lawful!
For the person who encroaches
On his game preserve, and poaches
Must expect to hear reproaches
When Sir Hilton finds him out.
With a blunderbuss he'll bang him,
With a bitter tongue he'll slang him,
And I'm fairly sure he'd hang him
If policemen weren't about!

(2)

For Popper Court is a big estate
Quite near to Greyfriars College;
And, of course, we never dare
To go anywhere near there
Without his full consent and knowledge.
If we do, we are expected
To be painfully ejected
And perhaps to be corrected
With a fearful walloping.
And if rabbits we have looted,
We'll be quickly prosecuted,
For he seems to have a rooted
Disapproval of the thing!

(3)

Sir Hilton's Chairman of the Board
And he thinks he makes us shiver,
Particularly so
When he sees a fellow row
To his island in the middle of the river.
But although his rage is frightful,
On the island it's delightful,
And we say he has no rightful
Claim to own the place at all!
So we go there for an outing
And a picnic, nothing doubting
That the curious sound of shouting
Is Sir Hilton "on the bawl"!

(4)

He raves upon the river bank
As he listens to our laughter!
When at last we leave the place
In our sculler, there's a chase
With the gamekeeper following after.
He is shouting: "I'll report yer!
Jest as soon as I have caught yer!"
And he tells us all the torture
That Sir Hilton will inflict!
We'll be caught and soundly rated,
We'll be flogged and spiculated,
For Sir Hilton, as I've stated,
Is uncomfortably strict!

(5)

The house itself is fairly old
And the gardens make it handsome;
Though Skinner always says
That to pay the mortgages
Would have cost a prince's ransom!
While Sir Hilton has the leisure
To indulge in idle pleasure,
He has not, alas, the treasure
That a Popper should possess.
It's a theory of Coker's
And of other lively jokers
That at Popper Court the brokers
May be found in footmen's dress.

(6)

Sir Hilton Popper's a Baronet
And as snappy as they make 'em!
He's a proper autocrat,
But none the less for that.
If a fellow knows how to take 'em.
Though these autocrats are crusty
They are not so very dusty,
For they're usually trusty
When the bigger things go wrong.
So our verdict must be proper,
Here's good luck to Hilton Popper;
(Yes—but if he comes a cropper
I shan't weep for very long!)

Next Week: A PLACE OF WOE.

an air of great enjoyment. He hoped that the Highcliffians would fancy that he was thoroughly accustomed to smoking.

The egregious Owl rather fancied himself as a "bad lad." There was not much scope in the Greyfriars Remove for his bad laddishness; but he was in more congenial company now, from a bad lad's point of view.

He smoked that cigarette with what he fondly believed was quite the air of a man of the world.

"You fellows ever play nap?" asked Bunter.

Pon and Monson exchanged another greedy glance! This fat fly seemed to be walking into the spider's parlour of his own accord!

"I had no end of a game with Smithy yesterday," went on Bunter. "You know the old Bounder? We went in rather deep! Pound points! I lost rather a lot of money! What do I care?"

Bunter did not look as if he cared! In fact, he had no reason to care considering how that game of nap had ended.

Ponsonby felt in his pocket.

"As it happens, I've got some cards," he remarked. "Monson and I can't go in so deep as a wealthy fellow like you, Bunter—"

"He, he! I fancy not!"

"Still, if you'd care for a game—"

"No fear!" said Bunter promptly.

"Eh?"

"I've chucked it," said Bunter. "It's not my game! No cards for me, thanks. Once bit, twice shy, what? He, he, he!"

Ponsonby breathed rather hard.

"Well, let's stroll along," he said.

"I've got to speak to a man at the Three Fishers."

Bunter heaved up his weight from the grass.

"I'll drop in with you, if you like," he said. "What about a hundred up, if we can get the table?"

Ponsonby smiled again.

"Let's!" he said.

And they did, though the outcome of that game at billiards was quite unexpected, both by Billy Bunter and the dandy of Highcliffe.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Sauce for the Gander!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"Look!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Famous Five.

They sat in their boat and roared.

After tea, the chums of the Remove had pushed their boat out on the Sark for a pull on the shining river till lock-up. They were rowing up the stream at a leisurely rate, when Bob Cherry's eyes fell on a figure on the towpath. And all the crew of the Remove boat stared at it and roared.

Billy Bunter, at that moment, was worth watching.

It was a hot afternoon. Bunter, of his own accord, would probably have moved at the pace of an old, tired snail. But he was moving now as if electrified.

With Lord Mauleverer's straw hat on the back of his head, and Smithy's handsome necktie streaming out of Toddy's torn collar, the fat junior was racing down the towpath from the direction of the Three Fishers.

His face was red as red ink—perspiration streamed down it, and dripped from his fat little nose.

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Bunter clearly was in a hurry! He was in a terrific, tearing hurry! He was running as if for his life!

The cause—or, rather, the two causes—showed up behind Bunter in the shape of Ponsonby and Monson of the Highcliffe Fourth!

They were running as hard as Bunter—in pursuit of the fleeing fat Owl! Hence the fat junior's pressing haste.

In ordinary circumstances, either Pon or Monson could have run Bunter off his feet in a few minutes. But desperation seemed to lend Bunter wings! Even with all the weight he had to carry, he was keeping ahead! He had to go all out, and a little over, to do it; but he was doing it.

The Famous Five gazed at the chase in great merriment.

Bunter had left Greyfriars on Skinner's bike. But he was on foot now. It seemed that he had not been given time to get on a bike. It looked as if he had been driven to a sudden bolt! Streaming with perspiration, glowing with heat, puffing and blowing for breath, he raced along the towpath, and the two enraged Highcliffians raced after him.

"Poor old Bunter!" gasped Harry Wharton. "This looks a bit like a rift in the lute!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They've got him!" gasped Johnny Bull.

"The gotfulness is terrific!" exclaimed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Bunter is getting the bootfulness."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ponsonby, putting on a spurt, reached Bunter. His foot shot out, and landed on tight trousers.

Bunter uttered a gasping howl and pitched forward. He rolled headlong in the grass of the towpath.

"Urrrrrgh!" came a spluttering gurgle, floating out across the water to the Remove fellows in the boat.

They pulled towards the bank at once. Obviously Billy Bunter was on the worst of terms with the Highcliffe pals he had gone so gaily to meet. Equally obviously, he was booked for rough handling, if rescue did not reach him.

The Famous Five shot shorewards.

Neither Bunter nor the Highcliffians had observed the boat on the river. Bunter's attention had been concentrated on escape; Pon and Mon's on getting hold of Bunter. Now they had got him.

As Bunter rolled and spluttered, Pon stood panting for breath, winded by the hot chase.

Monson came panting up, and joined him.

Bunter sat up dizzily. He groped at his spectacles and jammed them straight on his fat little nose.

"I—I—I say, you fellows," he gasped. "I say, you keep off! I tell you I lost it—"

"You fat rotter! Bag him, Monson! Duck the fat brute!"

"You bet!" panted Monson.

"Yaroooh! Leggo! Oh crikey! Help! I say—yaroooooooop!" roared Bunter, as the two Highcliffians grasped him and rolled him over towards the water's edge.

Bunter howled and yelled, and struggled and kicked. But he had not the ghost of a chance, and he would infallibly have gone into the Sark had not help been at hand.

But the Remove boat shot to the bank like an arrow.

Frank Nugent held on with a boat-hook, while the other four fellows

leaped ashore and rushed up through the rushes to the scene of action.

By the time Pon and Monson realised that they were coming, they had come! Swinging smacks landed on the Highcliffians, and sent them sprawling, and Billy Bunter was released.

"Oooooogh! I say, leggo! Help! Rescue! Gerraway, you beast!" yelled Bunter, as Bob Cherry stooped to give him a hand up. "Beast! Rotter! Highcliffe cad! Ooogh!"

"You fat fathead!" roared Bob, dodging a frantic punch from a fat fist. "It's me, you blithering Owl!"

"Oh! Oh crikey! Ow!" Bunter sat up. "I say, you fellows, keep those beasts off! I say—Groogh—ooogh!"

The fat Owl gurgled with relief at the sight of the Famous Five. He gasped and panted for breath.

Ponsonby and Monson picked themselves up, and stood scowling at the chums of the Remove. Evidently they wanted to give Bunter more—a lot more! But the fat Owl was safe from them now.

"Let's see; I think you were going to duck Bunter, weren't you?" remarked Harry Wharton pleasantly. "I think I heard you mention something of the sort, as we came up. Sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander."

Pon and Monson backed away.

"Mind your own bizney!" snarled Ponsonby. "That fat scoundrel has been pullin' our legs, and makin' fools of us—"

"Let's get out of this!" muttered Monson.

"Hold on!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Highcliffe cads ain't allowed to chase Greyfriars men, and duck them."

"Hardly!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Whoever is saucy to the goose must be saucy to the gander, as the esteemed English proverb remarks!" observed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Pon and Monson exchanged a look, and made a sudden rush to escape. But they were collared at once.

Exactly what had happened between Bunter and his Highcliffe pals, the Famous Five did not know. But clearly there was a rift—a very serious rift—in the lute! Billy Bunter would have been rather badly damaged by his knutty friends, had the Famous Five not been on hand. That, no doubt, was no more than he deserved; but, as the captain of the Remove remarked, sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander. Pon and Monson had been going to duck the helpless fat Owl! There was no reason that the Famous Five could see, why they should not have some of their own medicine.

And they had it!

Struggling and wriggling and yelling, the two Highcliffians were rolled down the bank to the water.

Splash! Splash!

The Highcliffians sat in shallow water under the bank. Close under the bank there was more mud than water—oozy and sticky! Ponsonby and Monson had the benefit of it.

"He, he, he!" gurgled Billy Bunter.

He grinned at the two Highcliffians, sitting spluttering in the oozy mud.

The Famous Five went back to their boat.

Bunter made a hurried jump after them.

"I say, you fellows, give me a lift in that boat!" he gasped. "I say, d-d-don't you leave me here—"

"Tired of your pals?" asked Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lemme get into that boat, you beast!" gasped Bunter.

And he plumped in, in a great hurry.



Billy Bunter withdrew a number of notes from his note-case, and spread them out on the table under the astonished eyes of his parents. "That's forty-four pounds!" he said. "Is that enough to pay for mums to go to Bournemouth?" "My dear old boy!" said Mrs. Bunter, with a fond look at the fat Owl. "It's just like you!"

Clearly, he did not want to be left with his Highcliffe pals, when they got out of the mud.

The looks of Pon and Monson, as they crawled out, showed what would have happened to him had he remained at their mercy.

Bunter, safe in the boat, gave them a disdainful blink.

"Yah! Highcliffe cads!" he jeered. "Yah! Rotten billiards-sharpers! I say, you fellows, shove them in again!"

"You get out and shove them in," suggested Bob. "We'll watch you do it!"

"I—I think perhaps they've had enough—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ponsonby and Monson, with their elegant trousers dripping mud, tramped away up the river. And the Famous Five, grinning, pushed off in the boat.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Not Lost, But Gone Before!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. regarded Billy Bunter rather curiously as they pulled down the river to Greyfriars, and the fat Owl sat gasping for breath in the stern.

It was clear that the fat junior was no longer pally with the Highcliffe knuts—that was quite clear! That, certainly, was so much to the good; but it was a little perplexing. He had been extremely keen to keep that appointment, and if he had turned up with his windfall in his pocket Pon might have been expected to keep on his very best behaviour—for there could hardly be any doubt as to Pon's motives. So that hectic scene on the river bank was rather surprising.

The fat Owl gasped, and gasped, for

breath, and mopped his perspiring fat brow with a grubby handkerchief.

For some minutes Bunter's chief feeling was relief at having escaped the vengeful clutches of the Highcliffians. But less happy thoughts supervened. He gave the juniors a dolorous blink through his spectacles.

"I say, you fellows, it's awful!" he mumbled.

"Have those cads snaffled your quids, old fat man?" asked Bob. "Serve you jolly well right, if they have. But they didn't look as if they had been enjoying your company."

"It's lost!" groaned Bunter.

"What's lost, fathead?"

"All my money!" groaned the fat Owl. "I—I never missed it till I was going to pay Pon, and then—oh crikey!"

"You howling ass!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "How the dickens did you lose it?"

"I—I don't know." Bunter gave a dismal groan. "I put the banknotes inside the bank book at the post office. I put it in my breast pocket! I—I thought it was still there, of—of course! I know it was there when I met Kipps outside the post office—"

"Kipps?" repeated Harry.

He remembered that Oliver Kipps had gone after Bunter to Courtfield.

"Yes, I told him about it, and tapped the pocket—see, and it was there then," said Bunter. "Then we had a ginger at the bunshop, and that fool Kipps fell over me and nearly knocked me down, and I think I may have dropped it then—"

"Oh!" exclaimed Harry.

"Must have been then, I think," said Bunter dismally. "The clumsy ass nearly knocked me over, you know, and it might have dropped out of the pocket, though I don't see how it could."

"Oh!" repeated Wharton.

A glimmering of suspicion came into his mind. Kipps had gone after Bunter with the intention of persuading him, if he could, to leave his wealth in safe custody. Wharton wondered whether the schoolboy conjurer had "worked the oracle," as he had expressed it, by means of one of his sleight-of-hand tricks.

"I hadn't the faintest idea that it was gone," went on the dismal Owl. "I—I thought I had fifty pounds in my pocket when I went into the Three Fishers with Pon and Monson!"

"You footling, fat frump!" growled Johnny Bull. "So that's what you wanted to cut cricket practice for."

"But didn't you beat Pon at billiards?" asked Bob Cherry sarcastically.

"Matter of fact, I did," said Bunter. "We had a quid on the first game, and I beat him hollow! Pon never paid up, though; he said let it stand over till we'd finished—and we had a tenner on the second game."

"Oh crumbs!"

"And—and Pon won that game!" mumbled Bunter. "So—so I owed him nine pounds, see? Of—of course, I thought I was going to walk all over him, after beating him so easily in the first game, you know."

The Famous Five gazed at Bunter.

"You frabjous, footling fathead!" said Johnny Bull, in measured tones. "Can't you see that that young sharper let you win the first game to egg you on to playing for higher stakes?"

"Oh, rot!" said Bunter. "I'm rather a dab at billiards! I ran him out quite easily, and, of course, I thought it was going on, so I didn't mind when he suggested a tenner. But—but I had bad luck. Pon ran me right out—"

"You blithering idiot!"

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"Beast!"

"I wish we'd given those rascals a little more," said Harry Wharton, knitting his brows. "This is rather thick, even for those Highcliffe cads! A regular billiards-sharping game!"

"Oh, you fellows don't know much about billiards," said Bunter. "I expect I should have won it back, and a lot more, if we'd gone on."

"You howling ass!"

"But—but when I felt in my pocket for the money, it was gone!" groaned Bunter. "And—and you should have seen Pon's face! He never believed that I'd had it at all—see?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! Up to that very minute Pon had been as friendly as anything," said Bunter. "Butter wouldn't have melted in his mouth! But when he found that I hadn't any money—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Famous Five.

"They could easily picture Pon's feelings at that happy moment!"

"I offered him my I O U," went on Bunter. "and he didn't even answer! What do you fellows think he did? He hit me a crack across the head with his billiards-cue!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cackle!" said Bunter. "He gave me an awful whop! He jolly well knew that I'd had that fifty pounds reward, because he saw it in the paper. But, you see, I'd told him that Quelch made me put it in the bank, so I suppose he thought it was still there, and that I couldn't touch it! He actually didn't believe that I'd taken it out of the bank this afternoon and lost it—"

"Sounds rather steep, doesn't it?" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Well, that's how it was," said Bunter. "I did take it out of the bank, and I had it in my pocket all right when that fool Kipps pushed me over at the bunshop. Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! But that cad Ponsonby didn't believe a word of it! He thought I'd been pulling his leg, you know, making out that I was rolling in oof, when I hadn't a bean—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He was simply wild!" said Bunter. "We'd been as friendly as anything over the picnic, and right up to that moment! Then all of a sudden he got fearfully shirty and whopped me on the napper with his billiards-cue—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Famous Five.

"I decided to go!" said Bunter.

"I fancy you did!" agreed Bob. "And I've no doubt that you decided to do it quick!"

"The quickfulness was probably terrific."

"They came after me," said Bunter. "Both of them seemed fearfully wild—I don't quite know why. I never had a chance to get at my bike. I just bolted—with those two cads after me—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Skinner will have to get his bike back somehow," said Bunter. "I dare say they'll mind it for him at the Three Fishers till he calls for it. I know I'm jolly well not going back for it. But I say, you fellows, ain't it awful? All my money lost—"

"Not quite so lost as it would have been if you'd had it in your pockets at the Three Fishers!" grinned Bob. "Pon wouldn't have left you much."

"No wonder he was wild!" chuckled Nugent. "He's wasted a half-holiday and a feed on that fat chump and found that Bunter was only pulling his leg all the time—"

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"I wasn't!" howled Bunter. "I tell you—"

"Pon thought you were, and it jolly well looked like it!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Hallo, there's old Kipps!"

The boat bumped on the school raft; and Oliver Kipps gave the juniors a nod and a grin as they landed.

The Famous Five looked at him curiously. After what Bunter had said, they had a strong suspicion that the schoolboy conjurer could have explained how it was that Bunter's windfall had been so fortunately missing at the Three Fishers.

"I say, Kipps, I've lost all my money!" groaned Bunter.

"How jolly lucky that I found it, then!" remarked Kipps.

Bunter jumped.

"Fuf-fuf-fuf-found it!" he stuttered.

"Just that!" agreed Kipps. "Toddy's got it locked up in your study for you."

Billy Bunter gave him one blink, with his eyes almost popping through his spectacles—then he raced! He disappeared towards the House, with a speed even exceeding that he had put on when the Highcliffians were on his track! He fairly whizzed!

The Famous Five chuckled as he disappeared.

"Where did you find it, Kipps?" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Same place that Ponsonby expected to find it—in Bunter's pocket," answered Kipps cheerfully. "I thought it would be safer in his study than in his pocket, when he went round blagging with those Highcliffe rotters! Must have been rather a disappointment for poor old Pon, though."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

When the chums of the Remove went in, a happy squeak greeted them from Study No. 7.

"I say, you fellows! Look!"

They looked!

Billy Bunter sat at the study table, with banknotes and currency notes before him. His fat face beamed over them. His little round eyes glistened through his big, round spectacles. He gloated.

"Gratters, old fat bean!" said Bob.

"I say, you fellows, ain't it gorgeous!" gasped Bunter. "I say, fifty quids! I say, I'm going to stand a big spread—a tremendous spread—sort of spread you've never heard of before! I say, we'll have it in the Rag to-morrow—and I'm going to ask all the Remove—every man in the Form! I say, I want you fellows to come! I want everybody to come! I say, it's going to be spiffing! Fifty quids, you know! I say, ain't it gorgeous!"

And the Famous Five, grinning, agreed that it was undoubtedly gorgeous!

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Homeward Bound!

"POOR old porpoise!" murmured Bob Cherry, when the Remove came out in break the following morning.

"Poor, old, silly ass!" remarked the Bounder.

Billy Bunter had not come out with the Form. For some reason of his own, Bunter had stayed behind, in the Form-room, to speak to Mr. Quelch.

Quite a number of fellows were waiting for him to emerge.

Skinner & Co's doubts on the subject of that fifty pounds had quite vanished now. It was known far and wide, in the Remove, that Billy Bunter had his

windfall in his actual possession. A study sapper in Study No. 7 the previous evening had been proof of it.

It was known that he had repaid the "quid" Lord Mauleverer had lent him to purchase that big cake—no doubt to the great astonishment of his lordship. He had expended at least a couple of pounds on that study supper, at which Study No. 7 had been crowded. Fisher T. Fish had already sold him a clock that wouldn't go, and a pocket-knife warranted not to cut. Snoop had borrowed a ten-bob note. Sammy Bunter, of the Second Form, had walked off with a whole pound note—and probably intended, like Oliver Twist, to ask for more. Bunter, on the rare occasions when he had cash, was not the fellow to let it burn a hole in his pockets. It was a case of going—going—gone! At the present rate, even such a sum as fifty pounds was not likely to last very long.

Bunter's friends waited for him to come out. Skinner—apparently not in the least annoyed that he had to fetch his bike back from the Three Fishers—watched for him with a beaming eye. Snoop and Stott were with Skinner—Fisher T. Fish hovered in the offing. Bolsover major, Hazeldene, and several other fellows hung about. They expected Bunter, when he emerged, to make a bee-line for the tuckshop—and they were prepared to follow him there and back him up loyally in the further expenditure of his windfall.

That day, after class, there was to be a tremendous feed in the Rag—a record spread, at which Bunter was going to entertain the whole Form. It was going to run into pounds and pounds and pounds. In the meantime, all was grist that came to the mill. The number of fellows that waited for Bunter to come out in break showed what a popular man he was in the Remove—temporarily, at least!

But Billy Bunter did not emerge.

Why he had stayed behind to speak to his Form-master, nobody knew; but it was very awkward and annoying for his friends. Break lasted only a quarter of an hour, and the minutes were going.

Skinner & Co wondered impatiently what was keeping the fat Owl. They were not likely to guess!

Certainly they would have been surprised had they heard what the fat junior was saying to Mr. Quelch. Probably the Remove master was a little surprised.

Bunter had requested permission to use his telephone. On urgent occasions, for urgent reasons, permission to do so was given; but Mr. Quelch, naturally, wanted to know the reason. And he gave Bunter quite a curious look when he heard the fat Owl's reason.

"There isn't a letter for me this morning, sir!" Bunter explained, blinking at his Form-master. "And the mater's been ill, and I'd like to ask if she's any better."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Quelch. "In that case, Bunter, you may certainly go to my study and use the telephone for a call to your home."

"Thank you, sir!"

Bunter rolled out of the Form-room, and Mr. Quelch's glance followed him curiously, for a moment, before he resumed work on a pile of papers.

Bunter's pals, in the quad, waited impatiently—but they did not see Bunter. The fat junior rolled off at once to Mr. Quelch's study, where he rang up Bunter Villa, in Surrey—Mr. Bunter's detached villa, which, in Bunter's descriptions of it at Greyfriars, was always referred to as Bunter

Court. Skinner & Co. were not likely to guess that the cause of Bunter's non-appearance was concern for a person other than W. G. Bunter!

The fat Owl sat at Mr. Quelch's telephone, and waited for the call to come through. He was surprised, when it came, to hear Mr. Bunter's voice.

Mr. Bunter was generally in the City at that time of day. Apparently his departure for the City had been delayed that morning.

"Hallo! Is that you, pater?" asked Bunter. "Billy speaking from school. I say, did mums like the cake?"

"Oh, is that you, William?" came a snap. Mr. Bunter did not seem in a good temper that morning. "Have you rung up to ask a ridiculous question about your absurd cake?"

"Eh?"

"You are an absurd boy, William?"

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Your mother was pleased to receive the cake, attributing it to an affectionate impulse on your part. No doubt your intention was good, but if you imagined for one moment that an invalid could possibly touch such an indigestible comestible—"

"Oh lor'!"

"However, the cake has been sent to Bessie, at Cliff House, and no doubt she will be very pleased to receive it, and—"

"Oh crikey!"

"It looked to me," went on

Mr. Bunter, "an expensive cake. If you obtained it on credit, William, kindly do not expect me to pay the bill! I cannot possibly afford to do so."

"Oh! No! I—I—"

"Very good! I will take this opportunity of cautioning you, William, not to incur debts of any kind. Last week I received a letter from you requesting something in addition to your allowance. Such requests are extremely inopportune at the present time, and cannot be complied with."

"Oh, yes, that's all right! I don't want it now. You see—"

"I am glad to hear it, William! I have to meet doctor's bills, and nurses' bills, and certainly cannot afford anything for a schoolboy's extravagance. I have no idea, so far, how I shall meet my income-tax in July."

"Oh! Yes! But—"

Bunter really had not rung up Bunter Villa to hear his pater on the subject of income-tax. He heard more than enough on that subject in the holidays.

"Probably you know, William, that income-tax is now five shillings in the pound—"

"Is it? But, I say—"

"Oh, yes, but—"

"If you have rung me up, William, with any idea of asking for even the smallest sum—"

"No! Oh, no! I say—"

"You may dismiss the idea at once! Completely!" said Mr. Bunter in a tone

that left no doubt on the subject. "The doctor has ordered a change for your mother, William—and in other circumstances she would go to Bournemouth for a few weeks. Now it is impossible."

"Oh crikey!"

"Quite!" said Mr. Bunter. "I cannot pay for visits to Bournemouth out of the heavy losses I have lately incurred on the Stock Exchange, William. I am in difficulties."

"Yes; but I say—"

"I trust I have made myself clear, William! Good-bye!"

"But I say—" howled Bunter.

Whir!

Mr. Bunter had rung off.

"Oh crumbs!" said Bunter.

He sat and blinked at the telephone. He had rung up Bunter Villa to speak himself—but Mr. Bunter had done all the talking!

The fat Owl was considering whether to ring up again, when the school bell rang. Break was over.

"Oh lor'!" said Bunter.

He rolled out of Mr. Quelch's study, with a clouded fat brow. Mr. Bunter had quite misunderstood his object in ringing up—which was not really surprising, as Bunter's communications with home generally, if not always, dealt with the subject of a shortage of cash!

Mr. Bunter was evidently very much disturbed in temper that morning. No

(Continued on next page.)

Science gave us the AEROSTAT



The earliest balloons and flying machines were known as "aerostats." The first known flight was made in France, in 1783, by the brothers Montgolfier's balloon of paper filled with hot air. Here you see a novel combination of helicopter and aeroplane planned in 1809 by Sir George Cayley, the father of British flying.

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2^d



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doubt he was worried by the fact that Mrs. Bunter could not have the change ordered by the doctor, owing to income tax and losses among the bulls and bears in the City.

Billy Bunter rolled along to the Remove Form Room—not looking at all like a fellow who had recently come into a wonderful windfall. For the moment he drew no comfort from the fact that he still had forty-four pounds ten shillings in his pocket. He did not heed the expressive looks that Skinner & Co. gave him when he joined the Remove in the Form-room passage.

In third school that morning there was a worried frown on Billy Bunter's podgy countenance. Mr. Quelch glanced at him two or three times. Bunter, it was clear, was in deep thought—but it was equally clear that he was not bestowing all that thought on his lessons.

In fact, when Mr. Quelch asked him where William the Conqueror had landed in 1066, Bunter answered "Bournemouth"—a reply that made the Remove stare. But, rather to the surprise of the Form, Mr. Quelch let that extraordinary answer pass without comment, and gave Bunter a rest for the remainder of the lesson.

When the Remove were dismissed Bunter once more stayed behind to speak to his Form-master. Once more his friends had to wait for him in the quad—completely forgotten by Bunter.

"What is it, Bunter?" asked Mr. Quelch in a very kindly tone.

"I—I—e—e—can I have leave this afternoon, sir?" stammered Bunter. "I—I—I want to g—g—go home, sir."

"You may have leave, Bunter, if you return in time for calling-over," said the Remove master.

"Thank you, sir!" gasped Bunter.

Skinner & Co. had to wait! When Bunter came out of the House at last they gathered round him; but the fat junior pushed through and headed for the gates. They followed him in surprise.

"Going out, old man?" asked Skinner.

"Yes; got to catch a train!" answered Bunter over a fat shoulder.

"It's dinner in a quarter of an hour!" exclaimed Skinner.

"Blow dinner!"

"Wha-a-a-t?"

Bunter rolled away, leaving his friends staring.

When Billy Bunter "blowed" dinner it was really time for the skies to fall.

Harry Wharton & Co. met him on his way to the gates. They were as surprised as Skinner to see him outward bound with a meal in the offing.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Whither bound, old fat man?" asked Bob.

"Can't stop!" gasped Bunter.

"But what's the game?" asked Bob, puzzled. "You can't go out now, Bunter."

"I've got leave home! Don't jaw—I've got to get to Courtfield to catch the two train!"

"You'll never do it, fathead!" said Harry Wharton. "Gosling will let you ring up a taxi—"

"Eh? I can't waste money on a taxi, you ass! I've only got forty-four pound ten left."

"Eh?"

"What?"

The Famous Five stared blankly as Billy Bunter rolled out of gates and started up the Courtfield road—his fat little legs whisking! Evidently he was going to catch that train if he could. They blinked after him. Really, a fellow who had got rid of five pounds ten shillings in one evening might have been expected to be able to stand himself a taxi to catch a train out of the forty-four pounds ten shillings that were left! It was quite amazing, in the circumstances, to see Billy Bunter foot-slogging in the blazing sun.

"Well, my hat!" said Bob.

Billy Bunter disappeared in the dusty distance, and the Famous Five were left wondering.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Plays Up!

"WILLIAM!" ejaculated Mr. Bunter.

If Mr. Bunter were pleased to see his son home from school, his looks belied him. He was surprised—that was clear! But it would have been difficult to discern any sign of pleasure in his plump countenance.

Probably Mr. William Samuel Bunter considered that he had worries enough on hand without the addition of a schoolboy unexpectedly home.

Bunter rolled in, tired and dusty. He had walked from the station—which, considering that he had forty-four pounds in his pocket, was amazing. It would also have amazed any fellow who knew Bunter to learn that, with so much cash available, he had taken a third-class return ticket for his journey. But he had—and forty-four pounds were still safe in his pocket.

Probably every buffet at every station on the way home had tempted Bunter—especially as he had left Greyfriars before dinner! Amazing to relate, he had not fallen to those temptations—even when he had had to change trains and had time to spare for a feed!

"William!" repeated Mr. Bunter grimly.

He stared at his son. But the plump lady who was seated in an armchair, with a tired face, gave William a smile.

"I—I say—" gasped Bunter.

"Why are you home from school?" asked Mr. Bunter coldly. "I trust that this means no trouble at Greyfriars, William?"

"Oh, no!" gasped Bunter. "Quelch gave me leave to come home."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Bunter. "I am glad, in present circumstances, that you have the necessary funds to expend on railway fares, William."

"It was only ten bob return, third class," said Bunter.

"Only!" said Mr. Bunter grimly.

"My dear boy," said Mrs. Bunter gently. "Your father is very much disturbed at present over money matters, and—"

"Yes, I know, mums," answered Bunter. "That's why I've come—see?"

"That is why you have come, William?" asked Mr. Bunter in the same grim tone. "Is it your idea to relieve my financial embarrassments by the unnecessary expenditure of money on railway fares?"

"Yes—no—I—I mean—"

"Well," said Mr. Bunter, "what do you mean, William?"

Plainly Mr. Bunter was cross. Mrs. Bunter, who was accustomed to bow her head to the storm when her lord and master let off steam, was silent—only encouraging Bunter by an affectionate smile.

"You—you see," explained Bunter, "it was because of what you said on the phone this morning, dad—"

"I fail to see why that should have caused you to leave school and to incur unnecessary expenditure—"

"About mums going to Bournemouth!" said Bunter hastily. "You see, if the doctor says—I mean, if mums can go—I say, how much would it cost? I say, could it be done on forty-four pounds?"

Mr. Bunter blinked at him.

"I have no doubt," he said, with grim sarcasm, "that it could be done on a less sum than forty-four pounds, William. Am I to understand that you

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have saved that amount out of your allowance at school?"

"Oh, no!" gasped Bunter. "I—I c-e-couldn't out of a half-crown a week, of—of course! How could I?"

"Then for what reason, William, do you mention that particular sum?"

"I've got it."

"Wha-a-t?"

"Look!" said Bunter.

He groped in his pockets.

Mrs. Bunter gazed at him in astonishment. Mr. Bunter stared at him blankly.

"Are you out of your senses, William?" inquired Mr. Bunter.

"Nunno!" gasped Bunter.

"Then tell me at once what you mean by your utterly ridiculous observations?" thundered Mr. Bunter.

"Look!" gasped Bunter.

His fat, grubby hand came out of his pocket with a tattered notecase in it. The Owl of the Remove opened that notecase.

From the interior he drew three ten-pound notes, two five-pound notes, and four pound notes.

He spread them out on the table under the astonished eyes of his parents.

Mrs. Bunter opened her eyes wide; Mr. Bunter gasped like a fish out of water.

Billy Bunter blinked at both of them through his big spectacles.

"That's forty-four pounds," he said. "See? I—I say, if mums can do it on forty-four pounds, that's all right. That—that's all I've got left out of the fifty."

"Upon my word!" gasped Mr. Bunter. "William, whose is this money?"

"Mine!" gasped Bunter.

"Where have you obtained such a sum? How can you possibly have obtained such a sum as forty-four pounds?" almost shrieked Mr. Bunter. "You cannot possibly have come honestly by such a sum of money, William!"

"Oh, really, father——"

"Tell me at once where you obtained this money!" thundered Mr. Bunter.

"I'm going to!" gasped Bunter. "You see, there was a smash-and-grab raid in Courtfield a few weeks ago——"

"A—a what?"

"A smash-and-grab raid," explained Bunter. "Smash-and-grab at Chunkley's Stores, in Courtfield——"

"You obtained this money by a smash-and-grab raid?" shrieked Mr. Bunter.

"Yes. You see——"

"Unfortunate boy!" exclaimed Mr. Bunter. "Is it possible—is it even remotely possible that a son of mine——"

"You—you see——" gasped Bunter.

"Grant me patience!" exclaimed Mr. Bunter. "You dare to stand in my presence and confess that you have obtained money by a smash-and-grab raid—an act of lawless dishonesty! Upon my word! That a son of mine——"

"You don't understand!" shrieked Bunter. "I don't mean that I did the smashing and grabbing; I mean, a man smashed in Chunkley's window with a brick—and got away with a lot of stuff, and—and I got fifty pounds out of it——"

"Out of the plunder?" roared Mr. Bunter.

"Oh, no! Nunno! Nothing of the sort! It was a reward!" yelled Bunter.

"A reward!"

"Yes. You see, they offered a reward of fifty pounds for information leading to the arrest of the smash-and-grabber and the recovery of the loot," gasped Billy Bunter, "and I—I spotted the man——"

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 Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

I HAVE received quite a bunch of letters from readers this week, making various suggestions for the type of stories they prefer. I have made a list of all these suggestions, and will do my utmost to carry them out in the near future.

Many of them I have handed on to Mr. Frank Richards, who has written another splendid cover-to-cover yarn of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, for next Saturday. It's entitled:

"THE 'BAD HAT' OF THE REMOVE!"

The title alone will give you an idea of what to expect, but the story itself will certainly exceed your expectations. The main character in the yarn is Peter Hazeldene, who is about as weak-willed as they make 'em. Hazeldene's reckless folly has led him into many a scrape, but none so bad as the one he finds himself in next week. Backing winners and raking in the cash is as easy as pie—at least, so thinks Hazeldene, until he plunges heavily on a loser. Then the fat's in the fire! Saddled with a debt he cannot pay, the scapegrace of the Remove takes the worst possible course, and finds himself deeper in the mire than ever. Fortunately, Hazeldene has a good friend in his sister—Marjorie Hazeldene, of Cliff House School—who is ever ready to save her wayward brother from the consequences of his

"Nonsense!"

"I—I did really! I—I happened to get a lift in a furniture-van they used and spotted them," gasped the fat Owl, "and I—I got the reward! Quelch made me put it in the post office bank, and I—I got it out only yesterday——"

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Bunter. "And why was I not acquainted with the matter, William?"

"I—I—I——" Bunter stammered.

"Was it because you intended to expend this money, William, in reckless extravagance, and guessed that I should allow you to do nothing of the sort?" demanded Mr. Bunter.

"Oh, I—I—um—er—you—you see——" Bunter floundered.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Bunter had hit the right nail on the head first shot.

"It was very clever of Billy to discover the man and to earn the reward," said Mrs. Bunter warmly. "A dear, good, clever boy——"

"I—I've got this left," said Bunter. "I—I wish it was the fifty. But—but I had to square a chap who lent me a quid for that cake, and Sammy had a pound, and—and some went—— But it's forty-four pounds, father, and if that is enough to see mums through at Bournemouth——"

The thunder faded from the plump brow of Mr. Bunter. Whatever Billy Bunter had intended to do with that windfall, there was no doubt about what he was now going to do with it.

"Well," said Mr. Bunter, "I should certainly have been informed of the matter at once; but this is very dutiful of you, William"

folly. When I tell you that this is one of the best schoolboy adventure yarns Frank Richards has given us, you'll know that it's something extra good!

A reader who signs himself "Magnetite," of Bolton, says that he has often heard the expression

"AS MAD AS A MARCH HARE"

and asks me to tell him how it originated. The term is used when referring to a certain person who is of a reckless nature and inclined to "kick over the traces." It is said that hares are unusually shy and wild in March. Another explanation is that the word should be "marsh," owing to the fact that hares which live in marshes are wilder than others

MODEL FLYING!

Lots of fellows I know are Model Flying enthusiasts, and I expect there are many of you who have already taken advantage of the coupon on page 11. If not, you should lose no time in sending for the "Frog" coloured leaflet with particulars of the "Frog" Flying Club, and how to obtain handsome enamelled "Frog" Pilot Badges.

In nearly every district there is a model flying club, which holds competitions under proper regulations, and for those of you who find as much interest in building your own machine as flying it, there is a large range of "Frog" scale model construction kits at prices as low as half-a-crown.

Acknowledgments and thanks to the following readers who have written me this week: W. Allpress (Mile End, E.3); "A Congletonian" (Congleton); George Miller (Maida Vale, W.); Jean Rogers (Leeds); A. Henderson (Liverpool); V. Hammond (Ilford MAGNET Club).

YOUR EDITOR.

"My own dear boy!" said Mrs. Bunter, with a foad look at the fat Owl. "It is just like him! But nothing would induce me to——"

"Nonsense, Amelia!" said Mr. Bunter decidedly. "This sum will meet the difficulty. The boy shall have his way."

"Oh, yes, mums!" said Bunter anxiously. "I came specially to bring it here before I spent any more of it——"

"No, no!" said Mrs. Bunter.

"Yes, yes!" said Mr. Bunter.

"I won't touch it again," declared Bunter; "not a shilling—not a sixpence! But, I—I say, I—I came away without any dinner. I—I'd like some tea——"

Billy Bunter enjoyed that tea.

Perhaps, later, when he sat in the train for Courtfield and thought of that tremendous spread in the Rag, destined now never to come off, he felt a pang; but if so, he drove it resolutely away. It was a tired, dusty, but cheerful Bunter that arrived at Greyfriars School just in time for calling-over.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

Something Like a Surprise!

"I SAY, you fellows——" Billy Bunter rolled into the Rag after call-over; many curious glances from the Remove fellows greeted him there.

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Every fellow in the Form had agreed to attend that tremendous spread, and it had been generally expected that it would take place at tea-time.

Bunter had been absent at tea-time, and had not turned up till roll was called in Hall.

There was time before prep for the great celebration to take place, but there seemed to be no signs of it. That celebration was, as a matter of fact, off—very much off!

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Better late than never, old fat man!" said Bob Cherry.

"O Willie, we have missed you!"

"The shop's not closed yet, Bunter," remarked Skinner. "Like a fellow to come and help you get in the stuff!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "No!"

"I guess I been wanting to see you, old-timer," said Fisher T. Fish. "I got a camera I been keeping for you; I sure want you to give it 'he once-over. I'm letting you have it for fifteen bob—"

"Oh, all right!" said Bunter. "Shove it in my study, Fishy! I—I'll settle on—on Saturday—"

"Eh?"

"I'm expecting a postal order on Saturday—"

"What?"

"From one of my titled relations—"

Fisher T. Fish gazed at him. Fisher T. Fish had given no less than four shillings for that camera, he was not likely to sell it to Bunter with payment depending on the arrival of Bunter's celebrated postal order.

"What about that spread?" grinned the Bounder. "Fishy missed his tea, specially to make room for it."

"Oh! I—I forgot that!" gasped Bunter. "Sorry—it's off! I—I—I've spent all my money!"

"Oh, my hat!" roared the Bounder. "Ha, ha, ha! Where have you been? Wapshot Races were on to-day! How many losers did you back?"

"I—I haven't been to Wapshot," stammered Bunter. "But, the fact is—is—is—"

"You fat, frowsy frump!" said Harry Wharton. "Have you been blagging with those Highcliffe cads again—"

"Eh? I haven't seen Pon—"

"All gone?" chuckled the Bounder. "Well, fools and their money are soon parted. After I gave you a lesson at nap, too—"

"Poor old Bunter!" said Bob Cherry. "Of all the blithering idiots, you take the cake, old fat man! You prance off with the Peek Frean, and no mistake! You bag the Huntley and Palmer! Why didn't you leave it safe in the bank?"

"You—you see—"

"What a bold, bad, Bunter!" chortled Smithy. "Pulling Quelch's leg, getting leave to go home and going on the jolly old razzle, and losing the whole bag of tricks at one fell swoop! What a jolly old plunger!"

"The plungefulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I—I say, you fellows, I—I'm standing that spread, all the same!" declared Bunter. "I'm expecting a postal order shortly—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But, just at the moment, I'm rather short of tin," explained Bunter. "If you can square that ten bob, Snoopey—"

Snoop strolled out of the Rag! He was not, apparently, prepared to square that ten bob.

"I say, Fishy, I'll let you have that clock and pocket-knife back, if you like—"

"Guess again!" grunted Fisher T. Fish, and he walked after Snoop.

"I—I say, you fellows, I've had nothing since tea, and that was hours ago," said Bunter pathetically. "I can't wait till supper. Anything in the study, Toddy?"

"Not that I know of!" said Peter.

"Oh, crikey! I say, you fellows, who's going to lend me ten bob till my postal order comes?" asked Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

RATTLING FINE YARN OF SCHOOLBOY RIVALRY!

"THE FAMOUS FOUR'S GREAT JAPE!"

By Frank Richards

dealing with the early adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, in the

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There was a roar of merriment in the Rag. Only that morning, Billy Bunter had been rolling in banknotes and currency notes. Now he was back to his accustomed state of impecuniosity—with nothing left, but the extremely doubtful expectation of a postal order.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at," said the fat Owl. "I can tell you I'm jolly hungry. I've had nothing since tea at home—"

"Then you've been home?" asked Harry.

"Eh? Oh, yes! I say—"

"Gammon!" grinned the Bounder. "You didn't lose your windfall at home."

"I haven't lost it, you silly ass! I mean—"

"You haven't lost it, but you haven't got it?" chuckled Smithy. "Have you given it away?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes! I—I mean—exactly! You see, the mater's been ill, and the doctor said she was to go to Bournemouth. Not that that has anything to do with it,"

added Bunter hastily. "My pater isn't short of money, or anything of that kind. The fact is, he's simply rolling in it! Lo's and lots!"

The juniors gazed at Billy Bunter. "What the thump—!" said the Bounder blankly. "What has your mater being ill got to do with it?"

"Nothing!" answered Bunter promptly. "Nothing at all! The fact is, she's off to Bournemouth in the Rolls, and I—I went home to—to see her off! That wasn't why I took my forty-four pounds home! Forty-four pounds wouldn't make any difference at Bunter Court! We pay our gardeners more than that!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Harry Wharton. "I never left it at home, and it wasn't to pay for the mater to go to Bournemouth," explained Bunter. "Nothing of the kind! You needn't fancy that she couldn't go because the pater was hard up! In a wealthy home like ours—"

"Great pip!" said Bob Cherry.

"Money is nothing to us," further explained Bunter. "The pater isn't hard up, and he isn't kicking up a row about the taxes. He wasn't in a bad temper when I got in—jolly as anything! Of course, he would be having lots of money, and not a care in the world! If I'd thought of it, I'd have asked him for a tenner while I was there, but I—I never thought of it. As for my—my money, I'm not going to tell you fellows what I've done with it."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"There's not much need to tell us now, old fat man!" he said. "Did you say you were hungry?"

"Yes, rather, old chap! I had a jolly good tea at home—the mater saw to that, though things are a bit dicky now—I mean, they ain't dicky at all! But that was hours ago—I could eat the hind leg off a mule!" said Bunter, with deep feeling. "What I mean is, I couldn't stay for the usual twelve-course dinner, as I had to get back for the roll—"

"We've got a supper for five in the study," Harry Wharton glanced round at the Co. "What about making it a supper for one, you fellows?"

"Hear, hear!" grinned Nugent.

"The hear-hearfulness is terrific."

"Come on, Bunter!" said Johnny Bull.

"What-ho!" said Bunter.

He came on!

Supper for five, turned into supper for one, was almost enough for Billy Bunter!

For once—Billy Bunter did not know why—the fat Owl of the Remove was a fellow whom the Famous Five delighted to honour. Which was one satisfactory result, at least, of Billy Bunter's windfall.

THE END.

(There will be another super story of Harry Wharton & Co. in next Saturday's MAGNET, entitled, "THE 'BAD HAT' OF THE REMOVE!" Don't miss it, whatever you do!)

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MISS MOLLY'S MISTAKE!

By DICKY NUGENT

"Unhand me, villain!" Frank Fearless jumped. It was Wednesday—a half-holiday at St. Sam's—and Fearless was on his way to the River Ripple for a swim.

His pals, Jack Jolly & Co., had gone on ahead of him and Fearless was hurrying to catch up with them.

But at the sound of a maiden in distress, he very quickly came to a stop.

"Unhand me, villain!" The girlish cry tinkled out again, and a gasp of recognition escaped Frank Fearless.

"Molly Birchmall!" he cried.

He would have reckoned that tinkling, bell-like voice anywhere. It belonged to Molly Birchmall, the Head's dawter—a winsome young lady who had won Frank's heart right from the day he had first come to St. Sam's.

The Fourth Former's eyes fairly flashed fire, as he stared at the hedge that divided the school grounds from the Head's garden. His fists clenched.

"My hat! If some cadd is insulting Miss Molly—"

He broke off, his sentence unfinished. Another voice was speaking from the Head's garden—a deep, masculine voice that contained a menacing ring.

"Ho, ho, my proud beauty! So you resent my attentions, huh? All the same, ere I go, I shall snatch a kiss from those pretty lips—"

"Never!" trilled Miss Molly. "Rather would I die first! Go—before you force me to shout for the help of some chivalrous passer-by!"

A peal of mocking laughter followed.

Frank Fearless gritted his teeth and made a move forward. He had heard enough! Some awful cadd was forcing his attentions on Miss Molly and that was sufficient for Fearless!

Running to the side-gate that led to Doctor Birchmall's garden, he vaulted lightly over it.

The two whose voices he had heard on the other side of the hedge were standing under a tree near the gate. Fearless recognised Miss Molly's slim, girlish figure; then, without delay, his eyes turned to the elegant figure of a somewhat overdressed young man who was standing beside her.

Frank Fearless did not hesitate. One grating bound took him across to the tree; the next instant, he dealt the overdressed young man a terrific punch on the jaw.

"Biff!"

"Yarooooo!"

It was a sore knock-out! Frank's victim whirled back-

wards, turned a duble- summersault and hit the hard, unsimpering earth with a bump that knocked every ounce of breath out of him.

"Take that, you cadd!" roared Frank Fearless. "Perhaps that will teach you not to go about insulting young ladies!"

The hero of the Fourth turned round with the intention of calming Molly Birchmall's fears.

And it was then that he received a very severe shock.

He had quite expected that Miss Molly's limpid eyes would be full of gratitude and admiration for her rescuer.

But, to his utter surprise and dismay, they were not. On the contrary, they were full of ingratitude and annoyance.

"Fearless! How dare you?" she trilled, with a stamp of her dainty foot. "How dare you attack a friend of mine in this brootal fashion?"

"Eh?" gasped Fearless.

"What right have you in pop's garden, I should like to know?" rippled Molly Birchmall, with a toss of her head. "And, in any case, what right have you to punch my dramatick tutor, Mr. Boardman, right in the middle of my lesson in acting?"

The junior's jaw dropped. He gave a violent, spasmodic start.

"Y-your dramatick tutor?" he stuttered.

"Y-your lesson in acting?"

"What explanation have you to offer for such scandalous behaviour?" asked Miss Molly, her musical voice simply throbbing with indignation.

Frank Fearless turned scarlet.

"Oh, crums! I'm awfully sorry, Miss Molly! There has been a garstly mistake. You see, I thought—"

"FEARLESS!"

It was a deep, majestic voice from the garden path; and, at the sound of it, Frank Fearless gave a groan.

"The Head!"

"Fearless! What is the meaning of this here?" wrapped out Doctor Birchmall, in his refined way. "What do you think you're doing of, invading the privacy of my garden and treating my distinguished visitor as a punchball?"

"It's all a mistake, sir!"

groaned Frank Fearless.

"Miss Molly was merely



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SHOULD SCHOOLBOYS LEARN LATIN?

"Yes!" Says HARRY WHARTON

It's quite the thing nowadays to condemn Latin as a school study because it happens to be a dead language. But, in my humble opinion, there's a lot to be said for it. Latin itself may be dead; but there's a live lesson to be got out of it!

The modernists who want Latin abolished forget that we in Great Britain owe many things to the johnnies who spoke it thousands of years ago. For one thing, we owe them half of our own language. We owe many of our ideas to them, too; and a great many of our institutions. And, in studying Latin, we get a view of our language and ideas and institutions which cannot be acquired in any other way.

In the opinion of a great many people who should know, education should aim at giving us a grasp of the origins of things rather than a smattering of the things themselves. Latin gives us that. What's more, it has the logic and simplicity of ancient things. And logic and simplicity are valuable qualities to meet in our illogical and complex world!

I think we should still learn Latin!

"NO!" SAYS H. VERNON-SMITH.

I might have known it! Dear old Wharton would prefer Latin!

It's true that a great many people who should know still advocate Latin. Old customs die hard, you know. They were brought up on it themselves, and "What was good enough for me is good enough for you, my boy!" You've all heard it!

A few lessons in roots and prefixes and suffixes give you all you want to know of Latin for language purposes. As for the ideas and institutions part of the argument, you need only read through a short Roman history to know the lot!

Wharton tries to imply that the brainiest people are on the side of Latin. Don't believe him! Some of the smartest people in the country are dead against it.

I'm pretty smart myself. And you can count me with them!

"GERROFF MY CHEST!"

You'll never need to yell out those agonised words again if you wear one of Professor Kipps' Patent Chest Shields! Hidden pins flash out like lightning and jab the anatomy of any chap who sits on you! No Removite can afford to be without one!—Apply early while the stock lasts, to PROFESSOR KIPPS, Study No. 5, Remove Passage.

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For Cliff House Midsummer Ball. Good price paid for well-fitting costume of Satan, complete with cloven hoofs, horns and forked tail.—Apply, AUBREY ANGEL.

LEARN MUSIC

Claude Hoskins teaches the piano at the absurdly low fee of 10s. 6d. an hour. Money returned if you can't play in 20 years.—Apply, Claude Hoskins, Music Room, Greyfriars.

LIFE-SAVING CLASS

H. Coker regrets that the Senior Swimming Club have cancelled his advertised demonstration of Life-Saving in the swimming pool. They are afraid he may get out of his depth.

WARNING

The next chap who says that Chunkley's Tailoring Department pay me half-a-crown each time my new pet bulldog tears the seat out of a customer's trousers will be rendering himself liable to an action for slander. (Signed) Geo. Tubb (Third Form).

THE PLEASURE HAS PASSED OUT OF PUNTING!

Sighs Lord MAULEVERER

Time was, dear men, when poling down the Sark in a punt was a peaceful and pleasurable pastime!

I have the happiest memories of those good old days of yore. A chappie could hire a Third Form kid to do the poling and then stretch himself out on the cushions, secure in the knowledge that nothing was likely to disturb him for the rest of the afternoon!

I can assure you, my dear old sportsmen, those lazy afternoons on the river were a dream of bliss to me! All a chappie had to do was lie back and idly watch the overhanging trees patterned against the blue sky or make dream-castles out of the clouds. When a chappie grew tired of this, he could just close his eyes!

Eventually, one would moor by the island and get out the jolly old picnic-basket and crown the afternoon with a sumptuous feed. And one could honestly say, on arriving back at Greyfriars, that there was nothing to compare with the joys of poling a punt on the Sark!

But now!

The other day I tried to recapture some of those youthful joys.

Dear men, you can take it from me, I didn't stand an earthly!

To begin with, there are no longer Third Formers who, for a small fee, will pole a punt for a fellow. You have to do it yourself.

Even this wouldn't be so bad. With other chappies in the punt, you can take it in turns, and there's always an odd chance they'll overlook you. But it's only the first of many troubles!

The one-time joy of lying back and watching the trees patterned against the sky has gone completely. Every time I tried to do it there seemed to be a fog with a peashooter in one of the trees—and my nose seemed to be the target!

As for having a snooze—well, I did attempt it once or twice, but on each occasion some humorist in a passing boat emptied a pot of jam over my head or played some other playful little trick calculated to remove all my desire for rest!

FAIR PLAY FOR FARE PAYERS!

Bilker in Court

WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER, professional scrounger, was charged before Judge Brown at the Woodshed Sessions with obtaining a ride in the Remove charabanc to St. Jim's under false pretences.

Prosecuting for the Committee of the Remove Cricket Club, who hired the vehicle, Mr. Peter Todd, K.C., alleged that Bunter obtained his ride by a very cunning ruse.

Just as the charabanc was about to start some fags, led by Bunter minor, deposited a barrel in the back of the charabanc and said it had been presented to the players with good wishes

from Lord Mauleverer. As it was labelled "GINGER-BEER," it was allowed to remain on board, and during the journey some of the chaps tried to tap it. They did not succeed; and when they reached St. Jim's they soon found out why. The barrel did not contain ginger-beer. It contained Bunter!

Out of consideration for prisoner, the players allowed him to return by the charabanc. But as it was obvious to the Committee that it was a flagrant case of bilking, they had decided to prosecute. Mr. Todd concluded by asking that Bunter should receive ex-

"Help! Reskew! Mr. Boardman, stop him! He's taking my handbag!"

Fearless started. Was it play-acting this time, after all? Could it be possible that Miss Molly had been confronted by some footpad—that she needed his help in grim reality?

With a sudden resolve, Fearless broke into a run. He came round the bend of the path—and an amazing sight met his eyes.

Molly Birchmall was struggling desprittly with a villainous-looking ruffian for her handbag; and her one-time hero, Mr. Boardman, was running away as fast as his legs could carry him!

"Leave that young lady alone!"

The Fourth Former's voice rang out feverishly, as he raced to the rescue.

The footpad looked round at the sound of it, and a look of relief came into his grimy face when he saw that the newcomer was a mere boy.

With a leering luff, he turned to look him sense-

less to the ground. But before he had the chance of carrying out that intension a battering-ram seemed to land between his eyes.

Thud!

"Ow-ow-ow!" shrieked the footpad.

He rolled over on the grass, completely knocked out!

Frank Fearless flicked a speck of dust from his trowis and retrieved Miss Molly's handbag from the path where it had fallen.

"Your handbag, Miss Molly!" he murmured.

"My hero!" trilled Miss Molly.

"And to think!" she twittered, a few minutes later, as Fearless escorted her back to St. Sam's, "that I got you into trouble with pop because of that coward, Mr. Boardman!"

"Oh, that's all right, Miss Molly," laughed Fearless. "We all make mistakes sometimes. I made one myself when I bidd him earlier in the afternoon."

"I'm jolly glad you did, now I know what he's really like," rippled the Head's dawter.

And she flashed a dazzling smile of admiration at the Fourth Former.

"And Frank Fearless felt, taking it all round, that he couldn't complain, after all, of the consequences that had followed Miss Molly Birchmall's mistake!

in need of exercise, judging by the harty way he was weeding his birch. But, even if he exercised his arms, he exercised no restraint over the dusting he was giving to Fearless' trowis.

Thwack, thwack, thwack! "Yarooooo!" Help! Stop it! Woooooop!"

Frank Fearless was taking his grool heroically, apart from a few howls and shrieks of aggerny. But it took a bit of taking, with the Head wading in with his birch like some avenging spirit.

Even Doctor Birchmall's arms were not entirely tireless, however, and the time came at last when sheer fizical eggshastion compelled him to give in.

"There! I hoap that this will teach you a lesson, Fearless!" he gasped, as he flung away the worn-out stump to which his birchrod had been reduced. "Bear in mind that this is only a fourtaste of what you will get next time!"

"Oh, crums!"

"You may go!" gasped the Head, mopping the perspiration from his heated brow, as he collapsed into an armchair.

Fearless went.

It was a mild afternoon; but he was in a bitter mood, as he tramped down to the gates.

Frank Fearless was not a jellus kind of fellow, as a rule; but somehow he couldn't help feeling a pang of jollus shoot through him when he thought of Mr. Boardman. It was pretty clear that Miss Molly had a high opinion of her dramatick tutor. But Fearless didn't think much of Mr. Boardman.

He couldn't help feeling that Miss Molly had made a mistake.

Fearless went out of the gates, still pulling a long face. He took the short cut to the River Ripple, intending to join Jack Jolly & Co. there.

"Help! Reskew!"

Fearless stopped suddenly. His back straightened.

It was Molly Birchmall again—but Frank Fearless was not going to be caught this time!

