

BUNTER, THE VENTRILOQUIST, ON THE WARPATH! See Inside.

The Magnet ^{2^D}

*Billy Bunter's
Own Paper*



THERE'S A MASTER
WELL-KNONE TO THE SKOOL.
WHO WOLLOPS THE CHAPS
SOMETHING CROOL.
HIS NAME'S KNONE TO YOU,
IT BEGINS WITH A Q,
AND WE AWL OF US
THINK HIM
A PHOOL!

**AWKWARD
FOR BUNTER!**

Want the Latest News? Then Fall In and Follow—

The GREYFRIARS GUIDE

A TOUR OF THE SCHOOL. Inside the Tower.

(1)

A steep and spiral stair will take
You up to see the bell and clock,
So mind your step, for goodness' sake,
For visitors may get a shock
By treading on a stair
That isn't really there!



(2)

The rising-bell will meet your eye
Unless you keep a good look-out,
It's hung where passing heads go by
To give the visitor a clout,
And then its hollow tone
Is mingled with a groan!

(3)

The clock has frequently struck one,
For, as it swings from side to side,
The pendulum is sure to stun
The head with which it may collide,
While danger often lurks
Within the monster's works!

(4)

The bell-rope waits to trip your feet,
The beams will get you in the neck,
Go careful, for the sake of Peto,
Unless you want to be a wreck!
Ah, down the stairs at last,
The deadly peril's past!



A WEEKLY BUDGET OF FACT AND FUN

By
THE GREYFRIARS
RHYMESTER

STRANGE STATISTICS

If all the words spoken by Coker in one year were collected in a book, there would be no sense in it whatever.

If all the money at Greyfriars were put into a heap, Fisher T. Fish would be on it like a bird.

If all the ink used in writing lines for Quelch were poured into a bucket and balanced on Loder's study door, it would serve a much more useful purpose.

If all the sausage rolls purchased from Mrs. Mumble by Greyfriars fellows last week were made of cast-iron, Bunter would weigh 48.625 tons more than he does now.

And if you want a PUZZLE this week, look at these 'ere proverbs—

(1) Where there's no sense there's no feeling.

(2) Bad news carries while good news carries.

(3) A stitch in time saves nine.

(4) Live not to eat, but eat to live.

(5) There's bound to come a rainy day.

(6) Do unto others as you would have them do to you.

(7) Truth and oil come ever uppermost.

(8) Riches take unto themselves wings and fly.

(9) Look before ye leap.

Buried in each proverb is a part of your body. Can you dig them out?

(Solutions at foot of column.)

If all the things Mr. Prout calls "unparalleled and unprecedented" were to happen at once, the result would be unparalleled and unprecedented.

If all the goals scored by the Upper Fourth against the Remove during the season were to be crammed into one match, the Remove would have to score a goal to win.

ANSWER TO PUZZLE

Nose, Leg, Chin, Toe, Ear, Tooth, Hand, Chest, and Eye.

LOWER SCHOOL LAMENT (To be sung with slow music.)

Weep for the brave! Oh, day of wrath!
My tears make heavy splashes!
Bring me a sack of blackest cloth
And on my head pour ashes!
Woe unto Greyfriars, fair and fine;
For thee I weep this bitter brine,
No words can cheer me up;
Oh, reader, join your tears with mine—
We've been and lost the Cup!

Forth, forth we went, so brave and young,

With Rookwood School to battle;
Supported there by many a tongue,
By many a rasping rattle!
And thus we played with "art" and "sole,"

And when we scored a splendid goal,
The Rookwood fellows gasped,
While tongues were heard from pole to pole
And rasping rattles rasped!

Oh, how our hearts within us burned,
We played with skill and science;
Undaunted, our opponents turned
And went for us like giants!
When Silver scored, and scored again,
We set our teeth and tried in vain
To beat the Rookwood skill,
While all the tongues were dumb with pain,
The rasping rattles still!

When Lovell popped in number three
We felt our fungus bristle!
And after that, the referee,
He went and blew his whistle!
We cannot always win, we know,
We're bound to lose at times, although
We're seldom sold a pup!
But now— Oh, join my wail of woe,
We've been and lost the Cup!

THE GREYFRIARS ALPHABET

The Rev. HERBERT HENRY
LOCKE, M.A., D.D.,
the Venerable Headmaster.

L is for LOCKE, the Reverend
Headmaster, who is clever and
A Doctor of Divinity
Of Cambridge (Lower Trinity);
He rules the school judiciously,
Not mildly or officiously,



But with a calm authority
That shows his seniority,
A constant careful tact is his
In all scholastic practices,
As daily he co-ordinates
The work of his subordinates,
Good judgment and ability
He uses with facility,
And muscles strong and sinister
A flogging can administer!

BUNTER ON THE WARPATH! Ever since Arthur Carter has been at Greyfriars he's been continually landing Billy Bunter in the soup! Now comes the fat Removeite's chance of getting his own back! And he seizes it with both hands!

A VENTRILOQUIST'S VENGEANCE!

By **FRANK RICHARDS**



Gurrrrrrgh! The deep and savage growl of a particularly vicious dog seemed to come from under Carter's chair, and the new junior jumped up suddenly. His cup crashed in pieces and tea spread in a flood. "Carter!" rumbled Mr. Quelch. "How dare you?"

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Shirty!

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Quelch.
"Oh!" gasped all the Greyfriars Remove.

Only one fellow in that Form looked unconcerned.

That one was Billy Bunter.

And it was because Bunter, being short-sighted, could not see what every other fellow could see—the paper pinned on the blackboard.

Mr. Quelch had let his Form in for third school that morning. In break no fellow was supposed to enter the Form-room; but it was clear that someone had entered, for a paper was stuck on the blackboard with a couple of drawing-pins, which certainly had not been there in second lesson.

Mr. Quelch gave quite a convulsive start as he saw that paper. His eyes popped at it. So did the eyes of all the Remove—except Bunter's, which blinked unperturbed behind the fat Owl's big spectacles.

"Oh!" repeated Mr. Quelch.

"You fat chump, Bunter!" breathed Bob Cherry.

"Eh? What's up?" asked Bunter.

"You howling ass!" murmured Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Bunter's done it this time!" grinned Smithy.

"The donefulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You ass!" hissed Frank Nugent.

"I say, you fellows, what's up?" asked Bunter, in surprise. "What's Quelch staring at on the blackboard? Is there anything there?"

"You ought to know!" chuckled Carter, the new fellow in the Remove.

"Eh? How should I know?" asked Bunter.

Billy Bunter turned his big spectacles on the blackboard. He could make out a square of paper pinned there. He fancied that there was writing on it, but his limited vision could not make out the writing.

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Quelch. "Upon my word!"

His eyes—and all other eyes but Bunter's—read the lines written on the paper on the board. They were written

A tip top, highly amusing school story of those world-wide favourites—Harry Whar on & Co, of Greyfriars.

in the well-known scrawl of Billy Bunter, and the spelling was Bunter's very own. It was a limerick that was written there, and a dozen fellows had seen Bunter showing that limerick about the Remove studies the evening before. But that even Bunter would be ass enough to pin it up on the blackboard in the Form-room for Quelch to see, no one had supposed for a moment. But there it was. It ran:

"There's a master well-knone in the skool,
Who wollops the chaps something crool.

His name's knone to you,
It begins with a Q,
And we awl of us think him a phool!"

Billy Bunter had made the Remove fellows laugh with that limerick. Bunter thought the limerick fearfully funny. The other fellows thought the spelling fearfully funny.

But Mr. Quelch, plainly, was amused neither by the limerick, nor by the way in which it was spelt. For a long, long moment he stood staring at the paper on the blackboard, as if he could hardly believe his eyes—as, perhaps, he hardly could. Thunder gathered in his brow. His gimlet eyes glittered when at last he turned to his class.

"Bunter!"

"Yes, sir!" answered Bunter, quite cheerfully.

It was amazing to the Removeites to see the fat Owl so cheery and unconcerned. Obviously he was booked for a record row, and if he had pinned that paper on the blackboard he could hardly fail to be aware of it. And as Bunter was known to be the author of the limerick, the fellows naturally supposed that he had put it there.

Mr. Quelch picked up his cane. He pointed with it at the paper on the blackboard.

"Look at that, Bunter! You placed it there!"

"Oh, no, sir!" answered Bunter, still cheerful. "Wharton did, sir."

Harry Wharton jumped.

"I!" he stuttered.

"Wharton!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "You, my head boy! Is it possible—"

"Certainly not!" gasped the captain of the Remove.

"Bunter, how dare you make such a statement!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"But he did, sir!" gasped Bunter.

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blinking at his Form-master. "Don't you remember, sir, in second lesson, you asked him to?"

"I—asked—him—to!" gurgled Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir. All the fellows heard you!" exclaimed Bunter. "You wanted the blackboard in the lesson, sir, and you asked Wharton to place it there. I never touched it, sir."

Mr. Quelch gazed at him.

"Is that intended for deliberate impertinence, Bunter?" he demanded. "You know perfectly well that I am not speaking of the blackboard."

"Ain't you, sir?" asked Bunter. "I thought you were, as you were pointing at it, sir."

There was a chortle in the Remove, instantly suppressed as Mr. Quelch's gimlet eye gloamed round.

"I am speaking of the paper pinned on the blackboard, Bunter!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, are you, sir? I can't read it from here, sir," said the cheery Owl. "If it's for the lesson, sir, may I sit nearer? I'm a little short-sighted, sir, and I can't read it."

"You are well aware of what is written on the paper, Bunter, as you wrote it!" roared Mr. Quelch. "Stand out before the class, Bunter! You placed that paper there, and—"

"I didn't!" howled Bunter. His cheerfulness departed. He realised that there must be something on that paper that had made Quelch shirty. "I—I haven't been near the blackboard, sir!"

"That paper is written in your hand, Bunter, and in your disgraceful spelling!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "Look at it, you disrespectful young rascal!"

Bunter, rolling out before the class, blinked at the paper on the blackboard. On a nearer view he was able to read it. He jumped almost clear of the Form-room floor as he did so. His little round eyes almost shot out of his big, round spectacles.

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

"The blithering owl!" murmured Vernon-Smith. "Did he expect it to amuse Quelch, or what?"

"Bunter, I shall punish you with the greatest severity for having written such disrespectful nonsense, and, above all, for having pinned it up in the Form-room!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"I didn't!" yelled Bunter. "I—I never! I never knew it was here, sir! I never put it on the blackboard! I—I never wrote it! I—I've never seen it before! It—it's quite strange to me, sir! I never wrote it, sir, and I never showed it to the fellows in the studies last night! You can ask them, sir—they all saw it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Bunter, bend over that desk! I shall cane you severely, Bunter, and I shall refer in your report this term to your disrespectful impudence. Not a word! Bend over that desk!"

"Oh lor'! But I never—"

"Bend over!" roared Mr. Quelch.

"Oh scissors!"

The fattest figure at Greyfriars School bent over the desk. Six times the cane rose, and six times it fell, and exactly half a dozen times an ear-splitting yell rang through the Remove Form-room. Six was the customary limit, but Mr. Quelch looked strongly inclined to keep on. However, he stopped at six, though reluctantly.

"Go back to your place, Bunter!"

"Yaroooh!"

"You will take five hundred lines! I

shall give you a detention this afternoon. Now—"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

"If you utter another sound, Bunter, I shall cane you again!"

With a great effort, Billy Bunter suppressed the sounds of woe. He crawled back to his place.

Mr. Quelch unhooked the paper from the board, tore it across, and tossed it into the wastepaper-basket. And third lesson began in an atmosphere that was positively electric.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bob With His Back Up!

"NO!" said Bob Cherry.

"Look here, Bob—"

"No!"

"My esteemed and idiotic

Bob—"

"It's no good jawing!" said Bob Cherry. "I've said no, and I mean no! I'd rather chuck Soccer altogether than play in the same team with that cad Carter."

Bob Cherry's friends gazed at him in exasperation. It was utterly unlike the cheery, good-natured Bob, to take a line like this. He was good-tempered, good-natured, tolerant to a fault; he looked on the best side of everybody and everything; he often had a good word to say even for fellows like Skinner and Fisher T. Fish. So his attitude now was all the more disconcerting and exasperating.

All the Remove knew that he barred Carter, the new man in the Form. But carrying a private feud into football was beyond the limit, and quite unlike Bob. And as Tom Merry & Co. were coming over from St. Jim's that afternoon, Bob was wanted. To stand out of the team, simply because he disliked a fellow who was in it, was not a thing that any fellow could do. But Bob, apparently, was going to do it, all the same.

"You know you're wanted in the game!" said Harry Wharton tartly. "Smithy throws his weight about sometimes, because he can't be spared—are you taking a leaf out of Smithy's book, Bob?"

Bob crimsoned.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" he snapped. "I can't stand that man Carter, and I won't! He hacked me, in the Highlife match, and put me out of the game. He didn't care a bean if we were beaten, so long as he scored over me! That's not the man you ought to play for the Remove! I'd never play him, if I were skipper."

"That must have been an accident! Anyhow, you can chance it—are you afraid of a hack?" growled Johnny Bull.

"I tell you, I can't stand him, and won't! He would play the same trick over again, if he got a chance! But that's not all. The fellow's a reptile!" growled Bob. "He's been playing dirty, treacherous trickery ever since he came here. He's up against that fat ass, Bunter—"

"Oh, blow Bunter!" said Frank Nugent.

"For goodness' sake, let that drop!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Bunter and Carter, and their silly squabbles, have got nothing to do with footer."

"I tell you—"

"It's no good telling me what I know! Bunter's gabbled all over the Lower School that old Joseph Carter is turning down his nephew and taking up the fat chump—and I dare say it's all gas, and I don't care a boiled bean whether it is or not! Bother the pair of them,"

exclaimed the exasperated captain of the Remove. "What's all that got to do with Soccer?"

"Well, it's got something to do with it!" grunted Bob. "Carter hacked me in a match and stopped my game because I've stood up for Bunter, and for no other reason. And I tell you, I won't stand by and see that fat fool diddled and done by a cunning rascal."

"Do you feel fearfully concerned where old Joe Carter leaves his money, if he's got any?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"Oh, don't talk rot! That's got nothing to do with me. But you all know that the old ass wrote to Quelch about Bunter's report this term—Quelch told Bunter so, and Bunter told everybody who would listen. Carter's out to get him a bad report, and dish him with the old bean. And he sticks at nothing at all to get by with it."

"And Bunter's so keen on a good report!" said Johnny Bull, still sarcastic. "He slacks in class, slacks at prep, slacks at games, snoops grub in the studies, and writes idiotic limericks about his beak—he doesn't need much help from Carter to get a rotten bad report."

"That's his look-out—so long as Carter leaves him alone! He's going to have fair play!" snorted Bob. "That limerick this morning was another sample—that was Carter's work, as I know jolly well."

"Why, you howling ass!" roared Johnny. "We all saw Bunter showing it off in the studies last night, like the blithering chump he is."

"I know that! But he never meant Quelch to see it—he's not such a fool as that! Who pinned it up in the Form-room?"

"Bunter, I suppose—"

"Well, you're an ass, then! It was Carter."

"You mean to say you saw him?" exclaimed Johnny.

"Of course I didn't!" howled Bob. "Does the rotter ever let anybody see him at his dirty tricks?"

"Then how do you know?"

"Well, I do know! I know Carter did it because it was done to land that fat frump in another row with Quelch, and nobody but Carter is worm enough to do it."

"Oh, my hat! Are you going to say next that Carter made Bunter write the limerick in the first place?"

"Bunter scribbled that rot because he's a fool! Carter put it up under Quelch's nose because he's a rogue."

"You'd make no end of a judge on the bench, old chap—finding people guilty without evidence because you've got a down on them."

"The downfulness on the absurd Carter is terrific!" remarked Hurreo Janset Ram Singh. "But—"

"But it's got nothing to do with Soccer!" said Harry Wharton. "I don't see putting everything on a fellow without any evidence; but even if you're right, Bob, it's got nothing to do with the St. Jim's match."

"Why do you want to play the fellow?" growled Bob. "He's new here—he only came this term. Plenty of good men in the Remove."

"That's rot!" said Wharton at once. "I don't like Carter much personally, and you may be right about him; but is that going to prevent me from seeing that he's one of the best wingers we've got? He's as good as Smithy—and doesn't put on such thumping airs about it, either."

"Well, he's good at Soccer!" admitted Bob. "Not what I should expect of such a cur; but he can play Soccer,

Still, you're not short of wingers! Franky here can play a good game."

"Thanks!" said Nugent, laughing. "I'd be glad, too! But that man Carter can play my head off, and you know it, Bob."

"Redwing's a good man—so is Russell—so is Ogilvy—old Oggy is the man you want. A good winger, and as straight as a string—"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I'll take your advice about any man but Carter," he said. "We've got a prize-packet in that chap! The last few weeks he's come out wonderfully. You know it as well as I do, Bob! There's no reason why he shouldn't play, except that you've got a down on him—"

"Well, that's no reason!" said Bob. "You're skipper! If you're satisfied with him, play him, but leave me out!"

"That's not sense," said Harry, "and if you want it plain, it's not sporting either! You've no right to let the team down."

"I should have to let the team down, if that tricky cad got a chance of crocking me in the game, as he did before."

"Smithy's down on him, too, but he hasn't crocked Smithy."

"No—because Smithy told him that if he had any accidents with him, he'd smash him up afterwards. He won't have any accidents with the Bounder!" said Bob scornfully. "Smithy isn't the man to take it as I did."

"Well, it's no good talking!" said the captain of the Remove. "I can't leave out a good man simply because you bar him. Will you play or not?"

"No!"

"That does it, then!"

The Famous Five were discussing the matter in the Rag after dinner. The Remove football list was posted there.

Harry Wharton crossed over to it, taking a pencil from his pocket.

Bob's name was in the list, as right-half. Wharton had put it there, regardless of Bob's repeated declarations that he would not play in the same team with Arthur Carter. Now, however, he had to take it out.

He drew the pencil through "R. Cherry," and wrote underneath it "T. Redwing." His friends watched him in silence.

Bob Cherry opened his lips—but he closed them again.

It gave him a pang to see his name marked out—though he had asked for it, and indeed insisted on it. Neither was he quite satisfied with the line he was taking. Private rows had nothing to do with Soccer, and ought not to have been carried on to the football field. Still, if it takes two to make a quarrel, equally it takes two to keep the peace. Bob Cherry was willing, and eager, to dismiss personal animosities for ninety minutes, but he knew that Carter was not. The other fellows simply could not get it into their heads that any man could be base enough to crock a man on his own side, to pay out a private score, at the risk of throwing away the game. But Bob, who had been through it, knew.

Still, he was far from satisfied, and it was bitterly unpleasant to realise that he was falling in the estimation of his friends.

Harry Wharton, having finished making the alteration in the football list, looked round at him—a last mute appeal. He was more than willing to erase that alteration, if Bob made a sign.

Bob hesitated.

At that moment, Arthur Carter came into the Rag. At the sight of him, Bob's face hardened, and his eyes gleamed. The mere sight of the new

fellow seemed to have the effect on Bob of a red rag on a bull.

Carter glanced at the Famous Five, and then at the football list. He raised his eyebrows a little.

"Cherry out?" he asked. "What's up?" He looked round at Bob. "Not feeling fit, Cherry?"

Grunt!—from Bob. He did not choose to answer Carter. The new junior stared at him, and then smiled.

"Is it my fault?" he asked. "I've heard the fellows saying that Cherry won't play in the match if I do. Is that the truth, Cherry?"

"Yes!" growled Bob.

"Is that what you call sporting?"

Bob's eyes flashed.

"You know a lot about sporting!" he snorted. "Is it what you call sporting to stick Bunter's silly limerick up in the Form-room for Quelch to see?"

"Did I?" yawned Carter.

"I know you did!"

"You know more than I do, then!" said Carter, laughing. "I'd never even heard of the rot before I saw it where that fat ass stuck it up on the blackboard! As the fat fool is a relation of mine, I'd have stopped him if I could—"

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Bob, in disgust. "Bunter's always been a fool, but he was never incessantly landed for it before you came here!"

"Oh, give Bunter a rest!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "I can tell you I'm fed-up with Bunter!"

"The fed-upfulness is terrific!"

"Let's get out!" growled Johnny Bull. "Bob can row with Carter without our help."

"But I'm not going to row," said Carter. "I think it's rather hard lines that I'm to be held responsible for every silly trick played by the biggest fool at Greyfriars! If Cherry's so fearfully concerned about Bunter, he might have taken that silly limerick away from him and chucked it in the fire."

"So I would have if I'd known you had an eye on it and intended to pinch it to stick up in the Form-room!" grunted Bob. "You've not been so jolly successful as you fancy, though. You've landed that fat ass, but I'm going to Quelch about it. I'm going to square it for Bunter if I can."

Carter stared at him, and laughed.

"Best of luck!" he said. "Quelch may possibly want something in the nature of evidence if you mention my name."

"I'm not going to mention your name, as you jolly well know. But I'm going to tell Quelch that Bunter never stuck that cheeky rot on the blackboard as he believes. Quelch knows he wrote it, but it was sticking it up in the Form-room that got his goat; and I believe I can clear that up, anyhow."

And with that, Bob Cherry stalked out of the Rag, leaving Carter shrugging his shoulders. And the football list remained as it was.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Not Pally!

"Be a pal, Toddy, old man!" Peter Todd of the Remove grunted. Peter was feeling merry and bright that afternoon. It was a half-holiday, and he was in the team to play St Jim's when they came. And he was sorry for Bunter—under detention, and with an imposition of five hundred lines hanging over his fat head. Still, he did not want to cash Billy Bunter's celebrated postal order, which was always expected, but never came. He groped in his pocket for a "bob"

"If a bob's any use—" he said.

"Oh, yes! Rather!" said Bunter. He held out a fat hand. All was grist that came to Bunter's mill. "Thanks, old chap! I say, can you make it two?"

"No!" grunted Toddy.

"I shouldn't like to be close with money, like you are, Toddy!" said Bunter, shaking his head. "Open-handed generosity—that's my way! Still, if a fellow's stingy, I suppose he can't help it!"

Having thus expressed his thanks to Toddy for the loan of a shilling, Bunter slipped the same into his pocket.

"I say, don't clear off Toddy!" he added. "I haven't said what I was going to say to you. Be a pal, old chap!"

Peter stared at him. He glared at him. He had taken it for granted that Bunter was after a little loan. But it was, apparently, some other matter in which the fat Owl of the Remove wanted him to be a pal. That bob was a sheer waste, in the circumstances.

"It's about my detention," explained Bunter. "You know that awful beast Quelch has given me a detention this afternoon! I say, Toddy, don't walk out of the study when a fellow's talking to you! I say, old chap, I want you to be a pal. Quelch thinks I wrote that limerick—"

"He knows you did, you fat ass!"

"Well, he thinks I did because it was jolly clever, and he knows I'm a clever chap!" admitted Bunter. "But that ain't proof, you know."

"Oh crumbs!" said Toddy.

"I mean to say, putting down a clever thing to me because I'm clever ain't fair, any more than putting down silly things to you because you're a fool, old chap! You see that?" argued Bunter.

"Fan me!" murmured Toddy.

"Well, I want you to be a pal," said Bunter. "You go to Quelch, and tell him that I never wrote that limerick, and—"

"But you did!" yelled Peter.

"I wish you'd keep to the point, Toddy! What I want is to get off detention," explained Bunter. "You tell Quelch that I never wrote that limerick, to your certain knowledge—see? Ten to one he will believe you. If he doesn't there's no harm done. It's only just the trouble of walking to his study. I'd do more than that for a pal."

Peter Todd glanced round Study No. 7, as if in search of something.

Billy Bunter blinked at him impatiently through his big spectacles.

"You're not paying attention, Toddy!" he exclaimed. "What the thump are you looking for?"

"The cushion!"

"I'm sitting on it! You don't want the cushion now, Peter. What the dickens do you want the cushion for?" exclaimed Bunter irritably.

"All right! This book will do!" said Peter. "I only want to chuck it at you, old fat man! Here you are!"

Bang!

"Ow! Beast! Ow!" roared Bunter, as the volume banged on a fat chin. "Why, you rotter! Wharrer you chucking things at me for? Beast!"

Peter, chuckling, left the study without lingering to explain why he was chucking things at Bunter.

The fat junior was left rubbing his podgy chin and grunting with wrath.

There was a step in the passage, and Bob Cherry looked into Study No. 7.

Bunter gave him a ferocious glare.

"Get out, you beast!" he hooted.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What—"

"Oh! Is it you! I thought it was that other beast come back! I say,

Bob, Toddy's just gone down the passage! Go after him and kick him, will you?"

"Why?" asked Bob, laughing.

"Chucking a book at a chap, just because I asked him to go to Quelch's study!" said Bunter. "Lazy, you know! Rotten slacker! But I say, old chap, you can do it for me, if you like. Will you?"

"Yes, when I go down. What is it you want me to say to Quelch?"

"Tell him I never wrote that limerick, and—"

"But you did!" said Bob, staring.

"That's just what Toddy said when I asked him!" exclaimed Bunter, in great exasperation. "His very words! You seem to be just as fatheaded as Toddy! Can't you talk sense for once?"

"You fat, flabby, frabjous freak!" growled Bob. "I've a jolly good mind to boot you round your study! You ask me to go and tell Quelch lies again, and I'll do it, too!"

"Beast!"

Bob, who had stepped into the study, made a step back towards the door. He was strongly tempted to leave the fat Owl to his fate, but he stopped.

"Look here, Bunter, I came to speak to you," he said. "You've said that you did not stick up that limerick in the Form-room. Is that the truth?"

"If you're going to hint that I tell lies, Cherry—"

"You fat chump!" roared Bob. "Did you or not?"

"No, I didn't!" howled Bunter. "As if I'd get Quelch down on me like a ton of bricks! Some cad sneaked it from my study and stuck it up there!"

"Who do you think?"

"That cad Carter, I expect!" snorted Bunter. "Isn't he always playing rotten tricks to land me with Quelch? He wants me to get a bad report this term. If I do, I lose my chance with old Joe Carter. That's what he wants. I believe he'd be glad if I got sacked—and me his relation, too! You'd expect a fellow to be proud to find a relation like me at his new school, wouldn't you? But is he? No fear!"

"Well, you're such a fearful fibber, no fellow can believe a word you say!" growled Bob. "But I believe you never put that cheeky rot up on the blackboard, and I'm going to Quelch to tell him so. It may get you off."

Billy Bunter brightened.

"Good!" he exclaimed. "Now you're talking sense! Tell him at the same time that I never wrote it, won't you?"

"No!" roared Bob.

"I mean to say, you may as well do the job thoroughly!" urged Bunter. "What I want is to get off detention. That's important."

"I'm going to tell him the truth, you fat idiot—just that, and no more and no less!"

"You keep on wandering from the point, Cherry! Keep your mind on the main point—that's getting me off detention! And the lines, too, you know! If Quelch believes I never had anything to do with that limerick, he will let me off detention and lines! Dash it all. I think that's worth the trouble of going to his study and jawing for a few minutes!" said Bunter warmly. "Tell him that you know, for a fact, that I never had anything to do with it! Just go into his study and say—yaroooh! Leggo, you beast!"

Billy Bunter roared as his fat neck was grabbed and his fat head banged against the back of an armchair. He roared frantically.

"There!" gasped Bob, and with a final bang, he released Bunter's fat

neck and walked out of Study No. 7.

"Beast!" roared Bunter. "Yah! Rotter! Beast! Wow! Beast!"

He rolled to the doorway, and shook a fat fist after Bob as he tramped away to the stairs.

Herbert Vernon-Smith came out of Study No. 4 and stared at him.

"What's that game?" he asked.

"I say, Smithy, hold on a minute, old chap!" said Bunter eagerly. "I say, think it would be any good if you went to Quelch and told him that I never wrote that limerick? I'd rather Cherry did, because Quelch knows you tell lies—"

"Eh?"

"Still, it's worth trying on," said Bunter. "Cherry makes out that he can't go and tell lies, but I know you don't mind, old chap—it's in your line, ain't it? A few more won't hurt you, Smithy! I'd ask Mauleverer, but, of course, he's not the sort of chap I could ask to do it—but you are, old fellow. Go to Quelch and say that I never—yoo—hooooop!"

Why Smithy cut along to his study door, and kicked him, Bunter did not know. But he knew that Smithy did—quite a hefty kick! The fat Owl bounded back into the study and slammed the door! It looked as if Bunter was booked for detention that afternoon, unless the truth could save him! And that was not a resource on which William George Bunter was accustomed to place much reliance!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

All! for Bunter!

BOB CHERRY stopped at the door of his Form-master's study, and hesitated. But he had made up his mind, and he tapped at the door.

"Come in!"

Bob entered.

Mr. Quelch was seated at his table, with a pile of Latin papers before him. He had about thirty papers to go through that afternoon before he was at leisure. It was a half-holiday for the Remove, but not for their Form-master. No doubt that was the reason why Quelch gave Bob a glance of impatient inquiry. Interruptions were not welcome.

"What is it, Cherry?" he rapped.

Bob stood before the table, with the colour deep in his cheeks. He had determined to speak to Quelch—but it was not an easy task. Exasperating as Billy Bunter was, he was going to have fair play, if Bob could help. For the rivalry between the two relations of old Mr. Carter, Bob did not care a straw—it had not the slightest interest for him. But in that peculiar contest between a rogue and a fool, Bob was on the side of the fool!

"It's about Bunter, sir!" blurted out Bob. "I think I ought to tell you, sir, that Bunter never put up that silly paper in the Form-room this morning."

"Nonsense!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "It was in Bunter's hand, and was certainly his work, Cherry! What do you mean? I have no doubt that many boys in the Form had seen it before. I judged so by their looks!"

"I know, sir! Bunter did it, but he never put it up on the blackboard! He never meant you to see it."

"Oh!" said Mr. Quelch.

He laid down his pen and sat looking at Bob's flushed face, very attentively, across the table.

The limerick was, of course, extremely disrespectful, and ought never to have been composed by the fatuous fat Owl.

But Mr. Quelch was no fool—he was an experienced schoolmaster. He knew perfectly well that jokes and jests were constantly being made about the "beaks." They ought not to have been, doubtless; but they were! The fact that Bunter had written the limerick was a small matter, in comparison with his having posted it up in the Form-room. That was the head and front of his offending, so to speak. That was a direct insult and defiance, for which hardly any punishment could be too severe. If Bunter had not done that, the case was very much altered.

"Are you sure of this, Cherry?" asked Mr. Quelch, after a long pause.

"I'm quite sure of it, sir!" answered Bob. "I know Bunter never meant that silly thing to be seen outside the Form; and I know that he would never have had the nerve to put it where you saw it."

"Someone put it there!" said Mr. Quelch dryly.

"I know, sir—but not Bunter! Some other fellow picked it up in his study, and made that use of it."

Mr. Quelch's look grew sharper.

"If that is the case, Cherry, such a boy must have known that the blame would be laid on Bunter!" he said.

Bob shifted uncomfortably. He could not mention Carter; that was sneaking, and sneaking was barred! Moreover, he had no atom of proof! He was certain; but his certainty was nothing to anyone but himself.

"I know it wasn't Bunter, sir!" he stammered. "I'm sure of that! I thought you ought to know."

"Certainly, I should be glad to know, if it is the case! But—"

"It was put up in break this morning, sir! Bunter was in sight of plenty of fellows most of the time. I saw him in the school-shop for quite ten minutes out of the fifteen."

"Can you state positively, Cherry, that Bunter had no opportunity, during break, of slipping away unobserved to the Form-room?"

"Well, I couldn't say so as a fact, sir, but I'm sure of it," said Bob. "I know he was under my eyes for two-thirds of the time, and he never went near the House at all. And I remember that when the bell went, he came cutting across the quad—he wasn't in the House."

Mr. Quelch drummed on the table for a moment or two, with his fingers. Bob could see that he was impressed.

"Unfortunately, Cherry, it is impossible to trust any statement made by Bunter," he said, at last. "And only Bunter can know for certain. However, there is certainly something in what you say. If Bunter was not guilty of that act of insolence in pinning the paper up in the Form-room, I shall certainly remit the remainder of his punishment."

He reflected for a moment.

"Break was at ten-forty-five this morning," he said. "You say that you saw Bunter for ten minutes—"

"Yes, sir—he cut across to the tuck-shop at once, and was there when I went in. It was only four or five minutes to eleven when he left. And third school was at eleven."

Mr. Quelch smiled faintly.

"I rely upon your word absolutely, Cherry! What you tell me of your own knowledge I take as a fact. If you can find some equally trustworthy boy who can account for Bunter's time until third school, you may ask him to come to my study and speak to me."

"Very well, sir!"

Bob left the study, and Quelch resumed Latin papers.

Bob's brow was thoughtful as he went.



"I say, can't you make it two, old chap?" said Bunter, as Peter Todd placed a shilling in his fat palm. "No!" grunted Toddy. "I shouldn't like to be close with money, like you are, Toddy," said Bunter. "Open generosity—that's my way. Still, some fellows can't help being stingy!"

He walked across to the changing-room, where many of the Remove had already gathered.

"Oh, here you are, Cherry!" said Tom Redwing, with a cheery grin. "If you've changed your mind, I'm ready to stand down."

Bob shook his head.

"No—you go in and win, Reddy! I say, did you happen to see Bunter in break this morning?"

"Yes, in the shop—"

"That's no good—I saw him there!" Bob looked round over a crowd of fellows. "Any of you see Bunter this morning after he got out of the grub-shop, and before the bell went?"

"What the dickens does it matter?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"It matters a lot to Bunter!" answered Bob. "That putrid limerick was stuck on the blackboard in break Bunter was in the shop till five minutes to eleven. If he did it, he did it in those minutes. I want to find some fellow who saw him at the time."

"Setting up as a detective?" asked Carter, with a sneer.

Bob gave him a glare.

"I'm setting up to stop your rotten tricks!" he snorted. "When it's proved that Bunter never put that paper there, I'll leave it to all the fellows to guess who did!"

"Sing out, you men!" grinned Squiff. "Anybody see a fat pig rolling about just before third school?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, I jolly well did!" said Ogilvy. "Bunter was trying to borrow a bob from me, just before the bell went."

"Bet you he never got it!" grinned Skinner.

"No he didn't! But he jawed about his postal order," said Ogilvy. "He would have got one, if the bell hadn't rung."

Bob Cherry gave a chuckle.

"That does it!" he said. "Was Bunter talking to you for five minutes, Ogy, old man?"

"Quite! It seemed more like fifty."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on, old man—Quelch wants to see a man who saw Bunter during that five minutes, and can say that he never went to the Form-room!" exclaimed Bob.

"He might have gone before I saw him—"

"No, he didn't; he was in the shop. I was there. This is a jolly old alibi for Bunter—clears him all along the line!" chuckled Bob. "Come on—you've got to tell Quelch that!"

"Oh, all right!" said the good-natured Scottish junior; and he left the changing-room with Bob.

Carter cast a dark and bitter look after Bob as he went. Bob Cherry was about the last fellow in the Remove who might have been expected to put in detective work like this! Not for the first time Bob had put "paid" to the schemer of the Remove! The thing had been landed on Bunter, without a spot of doubt in Quelch's mind—and Bob Cherry had knocked it completely on the head! For it was clear that, with Bunter's time all through break accounted for, he could not have been the fellow who had slipped into the Form-room and pinned that disrespectful paper on the blackboard!

Harry Wharton gave Carter a sharp, searching look.

"So it seems that it was not Bunter, after all!" he said slowly. "Was it you, Carter?"

"Thanks for the question!" drawled Carter. "Was it you?"

"Wha-a-t?"

"Well, you asked me! Can't I ask you?"

"Sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander!" grinned Skinner. "Answer up, Wharton! Was it you?"

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Harry.

Ogilvy came back to the changing-room a few minutes later.

"Bunter's all right," he said.

"Quelch has sent for him to let him off detention! Lucky old porpoise!" He glanced round. "But who the dickens found Bunter's silly paper and stuck it up in the Form-room? It was a dirty trick, whoever did it!"

Many eyes turned on Carter. He walked out of the changing-room with an air of indifference, but with bitter chagrin and rage in his heart.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Knows How!

"I SAY, Bob—"

"Oh, don't bother!" grunted Bob.

Bob Cherry was not in the best of spirits.

His usually sunny face was clouded, and he was walking aimlessly under the elms, his hands driven deep in his pockets.

It was a fine, cold, clear afternoon, glorious for football. Bob fairly yearned to be in his place in the Remove eleven. There were few things he would not have given to line up with his friends when Tom Merry & Co. arrived.

Instead of which he was strolling aimlessly about, keeping a distance from the cheery crowd in the changing-room. It was seldom that Bob felt "out of it" in matters of games; but he was utterly out of it now. Three members of the Co. were in the team; Frank Nugent was with them, and Bob was left on his own.

He was wondering, rather dimly, whether perhaps he had not made a mistake in standing out.

More than his own keen desire to play, there was the fact that he was wanted in the eleven. And Carter, after all, was not likely to play the same treacherous trick twice—it would

look a little too palpable. Bob realised that he had allowed his intense loathing for the cunning trickster to overcome his judgment. He was needed in the side, and he ought to have played, and that fact dawned on him as he thought it over—too late to be of any use. Wanted or not, he could not barge in now and claim the place that had been given to Redwing.

In that dismal frame of mind, he was far from pleased to see Bunter. He was feeling solitary; but there were worse things than solitude, and Bunter's company was one of them.

That, however, did not occur to Bunter. Bunter knew, if Bob did not, that his company was a boon and a blessing.

"Anything up, old chap?" asked Bunter affably.

"Oh, yes! No! Roll off!"

"I say, I've got off detention and the lines, too!" grinned Bunter. "You were rather a beast in the study, Cherry; but it was jolly decent of you to go and put it to Quelch. He's let me off with the licking I had in the Form-room. He said that that was sufficient punishment for having written disrespectful nonsense—and that he was satisfied that I never put it up in the Form-room! It's a bit odd that he took your word when he wouldn't take mine, ain't it?"

Bob laughed.

"I mean to say, a Form-master ought to take a fellow's word," said Bunter. "It would make things so much easier, you know. A chap could get by with anything. But the fact is, Quelch is no gentleman!"

"Ass!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, ain't you playing football?"

"No!"

"Oh! Because Wharton's put that cad in the team! I know," said Bunter. "Quite right, old chap! I wouldn't play in the same team with him, either! No good Wharton asking me—I should refuse!"

"Fathead!"

"I say, I'm going to make that cad Carter sit up!" went on Bunter confidentially. "I've been thinking it out, and I know how, too! He keeps on landing me with Quelch, to get me a bad report. Well, sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander! I'm jolly well going to land him, see? I say, don't you mention to him about me being a ventriloquist."

"Bother you and your ventriloquism!"

"I mean, as he's new here, he doesn't know anything about it," explained Bunter. "I can pull his leg all right. You know what a wonderful ventriloquist I am, Cherry—"

"I know what a thumping ass you are!"

"Beast! I say, you seem in a jolly bad temper this afternoon," said the fat Owl, blinking at Bob's moody face. "You've done me a good turn, old chap! I'd like to cheer you up. I say, come over to Cliff House with me and see my sister Bessie!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob.

It did not seem to him that a view of Bunter's sister Bessie would have a fearfully cheering effect on his spirits.

"I'll take you, if you'll stand a taxi!" said Bunter. "I don't want to walk. Might see Marjorie Hazeldene. You can talk to Bessie, while I talk to Marjorie. She'd like that! What about it?"

"Chump!"

"Those St. Jim's chaps will be blowing in before long," remarked Bunter.

"I want to see that fellow D'Arcy—

rather an old pal of mine. I'll tell you what, Cherry—you'd like to play—"

"Of course I should!" grunted Bob.

"Don't be an ass!"

"Well, suppose Carter stood out—"

"He won't, ass!"

"Well, he might!" said Bunter. To Bob's surprise, the fat Owl gave him a sly, fat wink. "I might manage it!"

"You! You ass!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Give us a rest, for goodness' sake!"

growled Bob, and he walked away, more than satisfied with what he had had of the pleasure of Billy Bunter's company.

"Beast!" squeaked Bunter.

The fat junior rolled away to the changing-room. There was a grin on his face and a sly twinkle in his little round eyes behind his spectacles.

Bunter was on the warpath!

He had been thinking this over! In dealing with Carter, he was about as useful as a fat rabbit dealing with a fox. But there was one weapon in Bunter's fat hands of which Carter knew nothing.

The Remove fellows generally knew all about Bunter's ventriloquism. They were, in fact, fed up with it. They admitted that it was an extraordinary gift, and that Bunter did it well—but they had heard enough of it, in fact, a little too much, and did not want any more.

But Carter, the new junior, had no knowledge of it. Carter was the only man in the Remove on whom Bunter could hope to play ventriloquial tricks without getting spotted! But Carter was an easy victim! Now that this idea had occurred to Billy Bunter's fat brain, he saw ahead of him a chance of scoring over the fellow who was continually landing him in the soup.

He blinked in at the doorway of the changing-room.

"I say, you fellows, is Carter here?" he asked.

"He was—but he's gone!" answered Harry Wharton. "It's not time to change yet! Roll away!"

"But, I say, where is he?"

"I don't know—or care, either! Cut!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled away in search of Carter. Quite a masterly scheme was outlined in Bunter's podgy brain—founded upon the circumstance that Arthur Carter did not know that he was a ventriloquist! That weird and wonderful gift was—Bunter hoped, at least—going to land Carter in the soup, in which he had so often landed Bunter that term.

He found Carter in his study—No. 1 in the Remove. The new junior was sitting by the window, looking over a newspaper, when Bunter opened the door and blinked in.

He put the paper hastily out of sight, as the door opened. It was a pink paper, devoted to "gee-gees" and the activities of bookmakers. That was a subject in which Arthur Carter was deeply interested. With all his cunning, and all his knavery, he was, in actual fact, one of the "mugs" on which that noble profession subsists! Since he had fallen from his old uncle's good graces, his pocket-money had been strictly limited; but, such as it was, most of it ran away on "dead certs" that came in tenth or eleventh!

But the fellow who had been sacked from St. Olaf's for "blagging" was very careful to keep up appearances, so far as he could, at Greyfriars. Only when he was alone did Carter's sporting papers or cigarettes come into view.

Now he was almost caught, as the study door opened suddenly, without a knock, and Billy Bunter's spectacles glimmered in.

But the pink paper vanished on the instant, and with the same movement Carter picked up a "Caesar."

Billy Bunter blinked across the study at him. He favoured him with a fat sneer, as he saw the school-book in his hand.

"Swotting?" jeered Bunter.

Carter suppressed a grin! That was exactly the impression he had wanted to give, if Bunter had only known it.

"Get out, you fat lout!" he said.

"Cheeky beast—"

Whiz!

Caesar's "Gallic War" flew across the study, and landed on Bunter's fat little nose! No schoolboy ever found the "Gallic War" grateful or comforting; but never had Billy Bunter found it so disagreeable as at that moment.

"Ow!" roared Bunter.

He tottered back into the passage.

"Shut that door!" snapped Carter. He was anxious to get back to the gee-gees and the odds.

The next moment, Carter gave a jump. From the passage, barking through the half-open doorway, came a familiar voice—the voice of Henry Samuel Quelch, master of the Remove—or else its twin!

"Carter! Are you in your study, Carter?"

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Carter.

He jumped to his feet, deeply thankful that the pink paper was safely out of sight!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Ventriloquial Vengeance!

"CARTER!"

"Yes, sir!"

"I have discovered who pinned that insolent paper in the Form-room this morning!"

"Oh!" gasped Carter.

He stood staring towards the doorway of the study. As Mr. Quelch was addressing him, he naturally expected his Form-master to step in.

But Mr. Quelch did not step in!

As Mr. Quelch, at that moment, was sitting in his own study, busy with Latin papers, he was not likely to step into a junior study!

Billy Bunter was alone, outside the door. That imperative bark, which any Remove man could have sworn was Mr. Quelch's voice, proceeded from the fat ventriloquist of the Remove!

Bunter was quite an adept in that kind of thing. Any voice that had any distinctive quality, Bunter could imitate like a parrot; and there was no doubt that Quelch's voice was distinctive.

"It was not I, sir!" gasped Carter, "I—"

"Silence, Carter!" came the bark, "I am perfectly well aware that you abstracted that paper, and pinned it up in the Form-room."

"I—I assure you, sir—"

"I repeat, silence! You will remain in detention this afternoon, Carter. Take your French books, and go to Class-room No. 10. You will report to Monsieur Charpentier that I have sent you."

"But, sir—" gasped Carter in dismay.

"Enough!"

"I'm in the football team, sir—the St. Jim's men will be here in half an hour, and—"

"Silence, Carter!"

The door slammed, pulled shut from outside.

Carter stood staring at it in blank surprise and rage.

How Mr. Quelch had spotted him, as the fellow who had pinned up the limerick, he could not begin to guess; but it seemed that Quelch had no doubt about it! Anyhow, he was booked for the detention class, and there was no help for that!

In deep and concentrated fury, the schemer of the Remove sorted out his French class-books, to take down to Class-room No. 10.

Billy Bunter rolled down the passage to the stairs, grinning.

He had a pain in his fat little nose; but he hardly heeded it, in his satisfaction at having pulled Carter's leg so completely.

Carter had been completely taken in! No doubt that he was surprised that his Form-master had barked at him, without looking into the study. But he could hardly doubt that Quelch was there, when he heard Quelch's voice. So far from suspecting Bunter of tricking him, he would hardly have believed that Bunter could have done it, had he been told. Without a doubt in his

mind, Carter gathered his French books for the detention class.

Bunter was loafing at the foot of the staircase, when Carter came down. Carter gave him a scowl in passing. Bunter blinked at the books under his arm, and grinned from ear to ear.

He rolled after Carter, as the new fellow cut away hastily to the changing-room. He had to let his captain know that he would not be playing that afternoon.

Some of the footballers were changing now. Others were talking together

(Continued on next page.)

LEARN TO PLAY FOOTBALL!

BY OUR INTERNATIONAL COACH

NOW that we have dealt with all those players whose job it is to look after the defensive side of a football team, it is time we carried on to talk about the attackers. That is not to suggest that the attackers and defenders in a football side are separate, and have nothing to do with each other.

I have tried to make you realise, in these lessons, that the success of a football team depends upon the way all the players work together, and help one another. The attack and the defence are really closely linked. But for the sake of simplicity we usually divide footballers into two classes—attackers and defenders. I propose to tell you all I know about the work of the attackers.

Before we start, let me get something off my chest which I feel may be bothering you. I have an idea that some of you think a great deal of this fairly advanced stuff about football which I am passing on to you is not much good for the sort of football you are playing.

It is true that some of the things I tell you about football may not be necessary for you just yet. But I imagine that every boy who plays football wants to keep on playing when he grows up, and yearns to be really good at the game. Hence I tell you of things which may seem a bit difficult, because I think that if you try to do things in the right way now, you will find it much easier to do them right when you get to the higher standard of football. You see the idea? I am not content just with making you into good schoolboy footballers. I want to make you into Internationals. And I shan't do that if I leave out some of the most important lessons about the game just because they seem a bit unnecessary for the class of football in which you are playing now.

ALWAYS IN THE WARS

SO to progress with attacking ideas. We'll deal with the centre-forward first. To be a centre-forward you have certainly to be a tough 'un—big, strong, and able to stand a lot of buffeting. You need only read the reports of first-class football matches to realise what some centre-forwards have to put up with.

To be a star centre-forward, chum, you've got to be a real tough 'un—able to take plenty of knocks and bruises. Our special reporter's had some and knows!

It is a fact that three of the best centre-forwards in the game to-day have been badly in the wars more or less all through this season. Ernest Glover, of Grimsby Town, hasn't played since the first day of the season. Ted Drake, one of the strongest fellows you could imagine, has been in and out of the Arsenal team with injury after injury, and Fred Steele, of Stoke, has been the same. Oh, yes, you must be tough to be a centre-forward.

You want to know why centre-forwards get hurt more than other players. I think I can explain fairly easily. The centre-forward is looked upon as the spear-head of the attack. He is the man who is expected to turn the good play of his colleagues into goals—the point of the attacking arrow. You know that if the point of an arrow gets blunted, the arrow doesn't do its job properly. Defenders of football teams know that, too. They realise that if they can shut the spear-head out of the game, the rest of the attack won't be nearly so effective, however well it plays.

I am not saying that it is the fault of the defenders that centre-forwards get hurt. Don't think for a moment that halves and full-backs set out to "blunt" the centre-forward by injuring him. What they do is to concentrate on seeing that the centre-forward doesn't get the ball, or be given much room to work it in. Perhaps, in order to make sure he doesn't get a look in, two or three defenders go for him at the same time. Is it any wonder that groggy knees and strained muscles are the result?

It is because of this desire to blunt the spear-head of the attack that the stopper centre-half, whom I told you all about a week or two ago, has been

invented. I mentioned that the instructions the centre-half gets when he goes out to play a game, are that he must stop the opposing centre-forward. So it comes about that the chief job of the centre-forward is to prevent himself being "blunted" by the stopper centre-half. And, believe me, that is no light job.

QUICK OFF THE MARK

PERHAPS the first essential for a centre-forward, after his strength and toughness, is that he should be quick. By that I don't mean that he must be able to run fast—do a hundred yards in ten seconds, or anything like that. He must be quick in his movements, and "quick off the mark." When footballers are running races they don't have them over long distances. They have races over twenty yards. You see, it's pace over the first few yards which matters in football. The man who starts quickest will get there first. So a centre-forward must be quick.

He must, of course, be a good dribbler—but that goes for all footballers, whatever position they play in. The ability to use both feet goes for all footballers, too; but the centre-forward must be specially good at it. He must be able to shoot accurately with either foot. If he has to change the ball over on to his best foot when he gets a chance to score, the odds are that the ball won't be there by the time he is ready. It is also important that a centre-forward should be specially good at heading, but we have agreed that there shall be none of that in our games for the time being, because somebody might get hurt.

Even with all these things in his favour, however, there can be no guarantee that the centre-forward will overcome the fellows who try to blunt him. To do this he will probably have to think out all sorts of dodges, and have secret plans with his colleagues, to change positions, and that sort of thing. But I will have some more to say next week about how the centre-forward can make himself a nuisance to the stopper centre-half, and how he can be helped to do this by his forward colleagues.

—and all of them looked round, at the sight of Carter's angry savage face.

"You've got to leave me out, Wharton," said Carter curtly.

"What the dickens do you mean?" asked the captain of the Remove, testily.

"I've got a detention.

Wharton stared at him.

"A detention! You were here a quarter of an hour ago—have you gone round collecting detentions since then?"

"That old fool Quelch came up to my study and told me!" snarled Carter. "He's got it into his head that I pinned up that paper in the Form-room this morning—you can thank Cherry for it; I've no doubt he worked it."

"Rubbish! I'm sure Bob never mentioned your name to Quelch."

"Looks as if he did!" sneered Carter. "I've got a detention, anyhow—and I've got to get to Mossoo's class-room! I thought I'd tell you."

"Well, my hat!"

Carter slouched savagely away. He was disappointed, as well as enraged. It was a redeeming point in his character that he was keen on Soccer, and played a good game. He was still keener, perhaps, on keeping Bob Cherry out of the game; and it was only his presence in the team that kept Bob out. He was in his blackest mood, as he tramped away to the detention-room.

Harry Wharton drew a deep breath.

"Well, this puts the lid on!" he said.

"Another man gone from the team—thank goodness you're here, Oggy! You'll play?"

"Like a bird!" grinned Ogilvy.

"And Bob——" said Frank Nugent.

"Redwing's put in—we can't chop and change like that!" grunted the

captain of the Remove. "All right, Reddy—you play."

"All wrong—I don't!" said Tom Redwing with a smile. "I'll go and find Cherry——"

"Look here——" began Vernon-Smith. The Bounder was keen to see his chum in the St. Jim's match. "Look here, Reddy, don't be an ass——"

"Exactly!" agreed Tom. "I'm not ass enough to take Cherry's place, if he will play—and he will now! You want him, Wharton?"

"Well, yes, only it's not fair on you," said Harry, slowly.

"That's all right!"

Tom Redwing left the changing-room, to look for Bob. He found him "mooching" dismally in the quad, and dragged him along, explaining matters on the way.

Bob was looking rather bewildered, as he came into the changing-room, but his face was much brighter.

"Reddy says you want me——" he began.

"Yes; Reddy's standing out!" answered Harry. "So is Carter," he added, rather acidly, "so don't begin on that again."

Bob coloured.

"I'm ready and willing," he said.

"I've been thinking it over, and I don't think I ought to have stood down."

"Glad you can see it!"

"But I can't understand Carter standing out," said Bob. "What the dickens is he chucking the match for? The only decent thing about him is that he's keen on footer."

"He's got a detention. Quelch thinks he played that silly trick with the limerick this morning. Carter thinks you put it into his head!"

"I never mentioned him to Quelch!" roared Bob.

"Well, Quelch seems to have jumped on him, anyhow—whether he's got it right or wrong."

"He's got it right!" growled Bob. "It was Carter! If Quelch has spotted him, serve him jolly well right! I'd like to see him spotted every time he plays a dirty trick."

"He, he, he!"

Billy Bunter, blinking into the changing-room through his big spectacles, chuckled gleefully. Quelch, in his study, was blissfully unconscious of the fact that he was supposed to have sent Carter in to detention! Bunter found that reflection fearfully amusing.

Bob Cherry glanced round at him.

"Did you know that Carter was going to be detained, Bunter?" he asked.

"Eh? Oh, no! Not at all, old chap! How should I know?"

"You told me in the quad that he might stand out," said Bob. "Now he's got to stand out. Have you been to Quelch?"

"Oh, no! I had nothing to do with it!" said Bunter hastily. "Besides, one good turn deserves another, you know."

"What?"

"I mean to say, you got me off with Quelch!" said Bunter. "Well, now you're going to play football. See?"

"What the dickens had you to do with it?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Oh, nothing!"

"Then what do you mean, you fat ass?"

"Oh, nothing at all, old chap!" said Bunter; and he rolled away, leaving the footballers staring.

Certainly, no fellow in the changing-room had the faintest suspicion of Bunter's part in the affair.

There was general satisfaction in the team. Carter, good winger as he was, was little liked personally, and every fellow was glad to see Bob Cherry back in the eleven.

That satisfaction was far from being shared by Arthur Carter. While the footballers were changing Carter was presenting himself at Class-room No. 10, where the French master had his detention class—a dozen hapless juniors who had extra French for their sins.

Monsieur Charpentier looked at him as he came in.

"Vat is it, Cartair?" he asked. "Vy you come here?"

"I'm in detention, sir!" grunted Carter sulkily.

"Mais, but Meester Quelch he have not given me your name!" said Mossoo.

"He's just told me to come here."

"Oh! Verree vell! You may take ze place, Cartair!"

And Carter took his place in the detention class, and had the pleasure—or otherwise—of absorbing additional knowledge of the beautiful French language, while the Remove footballers were playing Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Pulling Smithy's Leg!

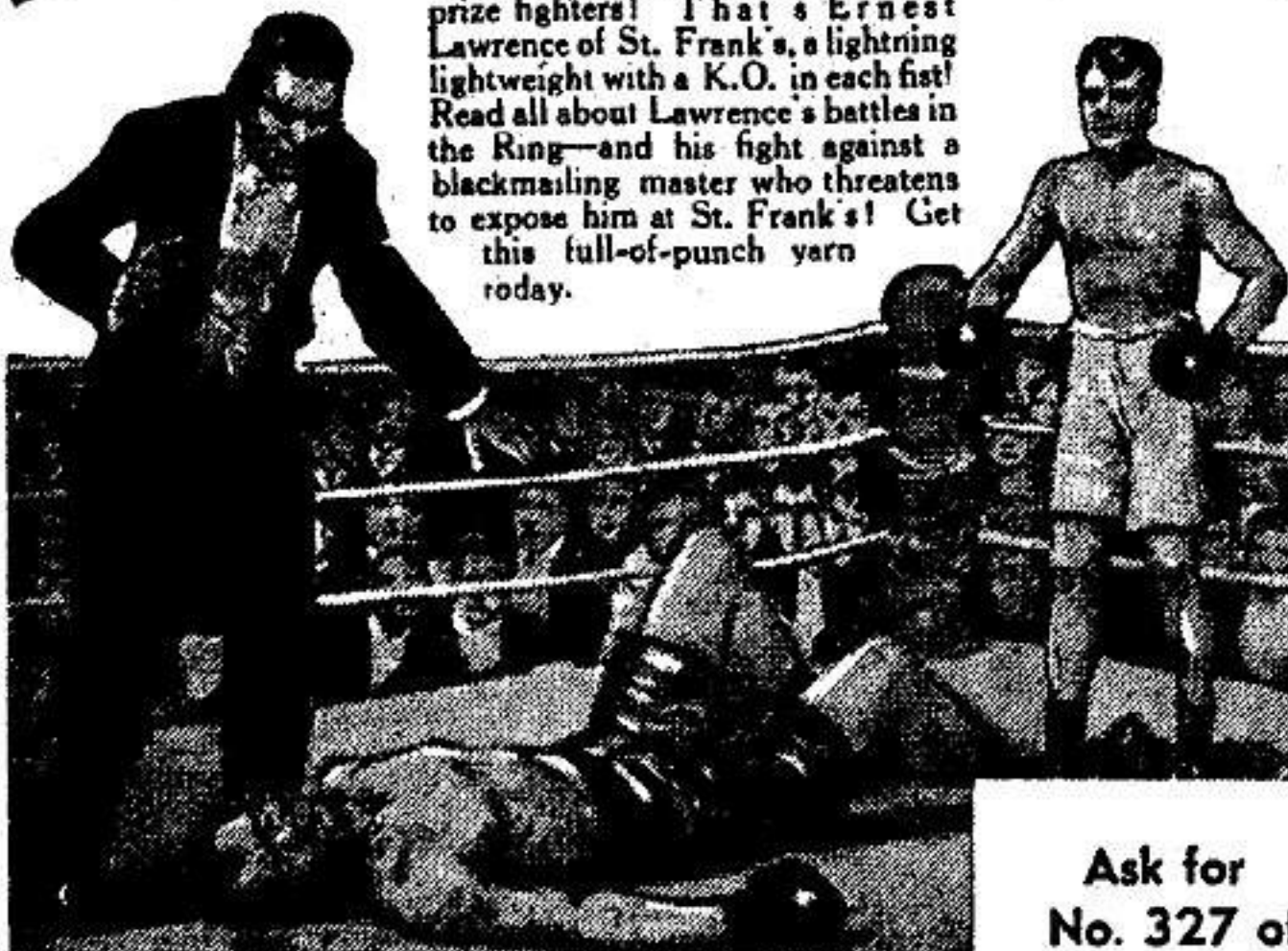
HERBERT VERNON-SMITH came up the Remove passage, with a black scowl on his face.

Billy Bunter, loafing in the doorway of Study No. 7, grinned at him.

Why Smithy was scowling so savagely Bunter did not know, but it rather amused him. When Smithy was in a

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bad temper every fellow who had a view of him was made aware of the fact. Greyfriars follows generally regarded a display of temper as one of the things that were "not done," but in such matters the Bounder was a law unto himself, which was one of the reasons why he had received his nickname.

Smithy had cause to be annoyed. Like other fellows in the Remove team, he had looked forward keenly to the St. Jim's match. Quite aware of his own quality, Smithy knew his value to the team, and he liked that value to be made quite clear in every match in which he played. On this occasion, the Bounder had not been at the top of his form, and the game had been anything but a triumph for him.

Not only had he failed to score, but he had lost his temper at a perfectly fair charge from Figgins of St. Jim's, which had washed out a promising chance, and he had dropped into some rough play, which had caused his captain to call him to order. So, when the game was over, Vernon-Smith got away from the changing-room as quickly as possible, instead of lingering with the cheery crowd there, and stalked away to his study with a black brow. And that black brow did not lighten, in the very least, at the sight of Billy Bunter's fat face grinning at him. In fact, it darkened still more.

"Bag any goals, Smithy?" squeaked Bunter.

He knew quite well, from the Bounder's look, that Smithy hadn't.

"Find out!" snarled the Bounder.

"He ho, ho!"

It was rather injudicious for Bunter to cackle, with the Bounder glaring at him, in the mood to punch the first head that came to hand!

Smithy passed his own study and came up the passage to Study No. 7. He grabbed the fat Owl's collar, slowed him round, and planted a boot on the tightest trousers at Greyfriars.

Bunter roared and sprawled

Feeling a little better—though leaving Bunter feeling a good deal worse—Smithy tramped back to Study No. 4, went in and slammed the door after him.

"Beast!" gasped Bunter

Bunter really had asked for it! But, like many people in this unreasonable universe, he did not like getting that for which he had asked.

He blinked out into the Remove passage, his eyes gleaming behind his spectacles.

The Bounder's slam had rung the length of the passage. So Bunter knew that he had closed his door.

He crept on tiptoe to that door and stooped to the keyhole. Through the keyhole he emitted a howl.

"Yah! Cad! Swanking cad! You can't play footer for toffee! Marbles is your game! Yah!"

There was a sound of a chair scraping in the study as Smithy bounded up.

Bunter did not wait for him

He fairly shot into Study No. 3, which belonged to Ogilvy and Russell. They were down in the changing-room, and the study was empty. Bunter popped in, behind the door.

The next moment Smithy's door opened, and he tramped furiously out into the passage. Had Bunter been there something painful would undoubtedly have happened to Bunter. As Bunter was not there, Smithy supposed that he had cut back to his own study, and he tramped up to Study No. 7 after him.

Bunter, in a state of mingled glee and trepidation, grinned. Listening

intently with his fat ears, he heard the Bounder stamp into Study No. 7

He peered out into the passage. Smithy had gone into Study No. 7, and the coast, for the moment, was clear.

Bunter cut along to the next study, reached round the door, and extracted the key of Study No. 4 from the lock. Key in hand, he shot back into Ogilvy's study.

From Study No. 7 the Bounder's voice could be heard:

"You fat rotter, where are you? I'll burst you all over the Remove! Where are you, you fat pig?"

Bunter, safe in Ogilvy's study again, made no sound. He heard Smithy come back, a few moments later, and go into his own study. Another angry slam rang the length of the Remove passage.

Bunter did not need telling that Smithy had shut the door again.

He waited a couple of minutes, to give Vernon-Smith time to settle down. Then, on tiptoe, he crept along to Smithy's study and inserted the key into the outside of the lock.

Click!

The key turned.

Bunter suppressed a gleeful giggle. He heard an angry exclamation in the study as the Bounder heard the door locked on him.

Tramping feet came across the study to the door. There was a wronch at the door-handle from within.

"By gad!" The Bounder's voice came in concentrated tones of rage. "Is that you, Bunter? Is that you, you fat fool? I'll smash you!"

Bunter made no answer to that.

Softly, on tiptoe, he crept away to Study No. 1, where he laid Smithy's key on the table. There was a sound of sharp rapping on Smithy's door. The Bounder, a prisoner in his study, was raging. Whether it was Bunter or some other fellow who had played that trick on him, he did not know; but he wanted to get at the fellow, whoever he was.

Bunter grinned as he emerged from Study No. 1.

There was no one else up in the Remove at the time: the footballers had not come out of the changing-room, with the exception of Smithy. The Remove ventriloquist had a clear field.

He walked along to Study No. 4, and at the sound of footsteps Vernon-Smith shouted from the interior of the study.

"Hold on, will you? I'm locked in!"

Smithy could not, of course, see who was in the passage, but he knew that it must be a Remove fellow

Bunter gave a little, fat cough, and answered, and his answer was in a voice quite unlike his own fat squeak. It was a rather high and sharp voice—the nearest imitation he could make of Carter's!

"Hallo! What's up?"

"Some fool's locked me in!" called back Smithy. "Bunter, I think! Is that fat fool there?"

"I saw Bunter downstairs a minute or two ago," answered the sharp voice, which Smithy never dreamed of guessing came from Bunter.

"Somebody else, then! Is the key in the lock?"

"No."

"Is that Carter?" asked Vernon-Smith.

He thought that he recognised the sharp voice.

"You know it is!" answered the sharp voice.

"How should I know, you ass, when I can't see you?" snapped the Bounder.

"Think I can see through an oak door?"

"You know my voice, I suppose,"

came the answering snap. "Why have you locked yourself in?"

"I haven't, you fool! Somebody bagged the key when I went out of the study and locked me in. Look here, see if you can find it."

"Likely!"

"Perhaps it was you locked me in!" snarled the Bounder.

"Perhaps it was."

"You cheeky fool——"

"Same to you, with knobs on!"

"By gum, if I could get at you, Carter, I'd wipe up the passage with you!" hissed Vernon-Smith. "Will you let me out or not?"

"No, I won't! Stick where you are!"

There was a savago wronch at the door-handle, and an enraged thump on the door.

"You cheeky rotter! I'll smash you for this!" yelled Vernon-Smith.

"You can't smash a fellow with your mouth, and you can't use anything else. I'd knock you spinning with one hand!"

"Open the door and try it on!" yelled the Bounder furiously.

"I expect you'd hide under the table if I did."

In Study No. 4, Herbert Vernon-Smith was almost foaming with rage. He had been in a bad temper to begin with. His temper was now the worst ever. He had no doubt, by this time, that it was Carter who had locked him in, any more than he doubted that it was Carter talking to him from the other side of the door. He hammered furiously on the oak.

"Will you unlock this door, you cur?" he yelled. "I'll boot you up the passage and back again! You rotter! You're doing this because I paid you out for the dirty trick you played on me at the Three Fishers a week or two ago. By gum, I'll make you sorry for this!"

"Rats!"

"You funky worm, let me get at you!" roared the Bounder.

"You can come along to my study whenever you like. You'll find me at home if you want to go out at the end of a boot."

Bunter, grinning, walked away. Loud and furious hammering on the inside of Smithy's door followed him. Unheeding, the fat ventriloquist rolled away down the stairs.

Smithy was left a prisoner in his study, raging. How long it would be before he got out, Bunter did not know. Neither did he care. But he had no doubt that when Smithy did get out there would be a hectic time in store for Carter. He chuckled at the prospect.

The schemer of the Remove regarded Billy Bunter with too much contempt to dream of fearing any hitting back from the fat Owl. But, in view of his peculiar methods, there was no doubt that Bunter was quite a dangerous man when he was on the warpath.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Row With the Bounder!

"CARTER!"

The new fellow in the Remove set his lips as he heard his Form-master's voice. But his manner was quite respectful as he turned round to Mr. Quelch. He disliked that gentleman extremely, but it was not his game to let Mr. Quelch become aware of that fact.

Carter was in a most unpleasant temper. The detention class had been dismissed at half-past four, by which

time Carter, as well as the rest of the class, had had more than enough of extra French.

The football match was over, and there was the usual noisy crowd in the changing-room. Carter heard that Greyfriars had won by three goals to two; but he was not much interested in a game in which he had not played, and he was not in a mood to join a cheery crowd.

He was disturbed deeply by the fact that Mr. Quelch had spotted him as the trickster in the Form-room that morning. How Quelch had spotted him he could not begin to guess, for he was certain that he had been unobserved when he crept into the Remove room in break to pin Bunter's absurd limerick up on the blackboard. But in the circumstances he could not doubt that Quelch had, and it was a blow to him.

His peculiar game at Greyfriars required caution and secrecy. It was as good as done for if Mr. Quelch came to know, or even suspect, that he was aiming to get Bunter a bad report for the term.

To his surprise, Mr. Quelch's expression was quite kindly. Carter was lounging moodily in the quad when Quelch called him. Certainly Mr. Quelch did not look as if he had been quite recently very displeased with the junior.

"Yes, sir!" muttered Carter.

"You are unoccupied at the present moment, I think, Carter. I should like you to go down to the post office."

"Oh, certainly, sir!" said Carter.

He had not the slightest desire to oblige Mr. Quelch, but his manner was quite meek and respectful.

"Thank you, my boy!" said Mr. Quelch, quite amiably. "It was my intention to walk to the village, and I promised Mr. Hacker to bring back a postal order from Friardale. I am unable to go, however, and I should be obliged, Carter, if you would do so."

"I shall be glad, sir!" said Carter, not very truthfully. "I was thinking of a spin on my bike."

"Very good!" said Mr. Quelch. "Take this pound note, Carter, and bring a postal order for one pound, and take it to Mr. Hacker when you come back."

"Yes, sir."

Carter took the pound note and the odd coppers to pay for the postal order, and went away to get his bicycle.

His eyes gleamed under his knitted brows as he went.

It was a relief to see that Quelch appeared to be no longer incensed with him. Still, Quelch had, as he believed, given him a detention that afternoon, and now he had the check to use up what was left of his half-holiday. Carter had a malicious nature, and the thought occurred to his mind of letting that pound note blow away by accident—in which case, his Form-master would have had to indemnify Mr. Hacker for the loss.

But, malicious as he was, he did not allow malice to get the upper hand of caution. He wheeled his bike out, mounted it, and rode sullenly away to the village.

He was back in half an hour with the postal order in his pocket. Having put up his bike, he went into the House.

"Hallo, here he is!" called out Skinner, as he appeared.

Carter looked round. Half a dozen fellows were looking at him and grinning.

"Anything up?" asked Carter, puzzled.

"You ought to know!" grinned Skinner.

"Smithy's as mad as a hatter!" said Hazeldene. "When are you going to let him out, you ass? Guard with your left when you do!"

"What the dickens do you mean?" exclaimed Carter impatiently. "Is anything up with Smithy? Not that I care."

"You don't know?" chuckled Skinner.

"How should I know? I've just been down to Friardale. Anything happened since the match?"

"Look here, wasn't it you?" asked Snoop. "Didn't you lock Smithy in his study?"

"Of course I didn't, fathead! Did anybody?"

"Somebody jolly well did, and Smithy thinks that it was you."

"What rot!"

Carter went on his way to the study of the master of the Shell to deliver the postal order, leaving Skinner & Co. chuckling.

He tapped at Mr. Hacker's door and opened it.

Mr. Hacker and Mr. Capper were in the study, deep in talk.

Hacker glanced round impatiently at Carter.

"What is it?" he snapped. Hacker generally snapped.

"The postal order, sir. Mr. Quelch asked me to fetch it from Friardale for you as he was not going out."

"Oh, very well! Place it on the table, Carter; put a paper-weight on it," said Mr. Hacker, and he turned back to his conversation with the master of the Fourth.

Carter did as bidden and left the study.

He went up to the Remove passage, rather wondering what had happened there during his absence. There was a crowd of Remove fellows in the passage, mostly collected outside the door of Study No. 4.

Carter stared at them as he came up the passage from the stairs.

Thump, thump, thump! came from Study No. 4.

Following the thumps came the enraged voice of the Bounder.

"Will some of you get that key and let me out of this?"

"Nobody knows where the key is, Smithy!" called back Tom Redwing.

"That cad Carter's got it!" roared the Bounder. "Can't you find that rotter and get the key off him, you dummy?"

"I think he's gone out of gates. I've looked for him."

"Why on earth did the mad ass play this silly trick?" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You'll have to wait till Carter comes in, Smithy."

"I'll smash him!" yelled the Bounder.

"I say, you fellows, here he comes!" squeaked Billy Bunter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Carter!"

"Carter, you ass, where's that key?" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "What the dickens do you mean by locking a fellow in his study and taking the key away?"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" snapped Carter. "I've done nothing of the sort! I haven't been up here at all since I came out of detention!"

"Is that Carter?" Vernon-Smith, in the study, heard the new junior's voice. "You rotten cur! Unlock that door! Do you hear me?"

"Is it locked?" asked Carter.

"Is it locked?" repeated Harry. "Yes, it's locked, and Smithy's been locked in for an hour or more. Didn't you?"

"No, I didn't!"

"Smithy seems to think you did!" said the captain of the Remove dryly. "If you've got the key, you'd better let Smithy out before he brings the prefects up here with that thundering row!"

"Where's the key, Carter?" asked Redwing.

"How should I know where it is?" snapped Carter. "I know nothing at all about it."

"Will you make him hand over that key?" came the Bounder's fierce yell. "Take it away from him, Reddy! Are you afraid to handle that cur?"

"Oh, don't be a fathead, Smithy!" said Redwing. "Carter says he knows nothing about it."

"Fool! Idiot! He locked me in!"

"I did not!" snapped Carter. "What the thump's put that silly idea into your head, you ass?"

"I'll smash you! Give Redwing that key!"

"I haven't got any key, you dummy!" Thump thump, thump!

"You'll have Quelch up here soon at this rate, Smithy!" said Peter Todd.

"I don't care! I'll have the whole school up if that cur doesn't unlock the door! Think I'm going to stay locked in this room?" yelled Vernon-Smith.

"He, he, he!"

"Make that cad hand the key over! I tell you he's got it! He slanged me from outside the study after he'd locked me in! He dared not do it with the door open! He locked me in, and told me to stick here! I tell you he told me so through the door! Now do you believe he's got the key?"

"I didn't!" yelled Carter.

"You did!" yelled back the Bounder.

"You're dreaming!"

"I'll smash you!"

"Look here, Carter, if you've got the key——" said Harry Wharton impatiently.

"I haven't, and I don't know anything about it! Don't be a fool!" snarled Carter.

And he went away to his own study, went in, and slammed the door.

The juniors in the passage looked at one another. They could not make this out.

From Study No. 4 came the sound of the Bounder's furious banging.

Thump, thump, thump! Bang! Thump!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Wingate Takes a Hand!

WINGATE of the Sixth came up the Remove staircase, with his ashplant under his arm and a grim frown on his face.

A "row" in the Remove was far from uncommon. But the row that was going on now was rather outside the limit. The Bounder, in his rage, did not care who heard him banging on the locked door; he would not have cared if it had brought the headmaster on the scene. He banged and banged.

Bang, bang, bang! rang from Study No. 4 as Wingate came striding into the passage.

The buzz of voices died away at the sight of the prefect.

"Ware pre's!" murmured Nugent.

Bang, bang! on the door.

"Stop it, Smithy! Wingate's coming!" called out Redwing anxiously.

"I don't care!"

Bang, bang, bang!

"Stop that row!" roared Wingate, as he strode up the passage. "You noisy young sweeps! Do you know you can be heard all over the House? Who's banging on that door?"



Click! Billy Bunter heard an angry exclamation in the study, as Vernon-Smith heard his door locked on him. "By gad!" The Bounder's voice came in concentrated tones of rage. "Is that you, Bunter? Is that you, you fat fool? I'll smash you!" The fat Removite made no answer.

"Smithy!" said Wharton. "He's locked in."

Bang, bang!

"Stop that at once, Vernon-Smith!" And at the voice of the captain of the school even the reckless Bounder ceased to bang. "Now, what does this mean, Wharton? Is Vernon-Smith locked in his study?"

"Yes, Wingate."

"Some silly lark, I suppose. Who's got the key?"

"Nobody here," said Wharton. "We heard Smithy yelling and banging when we came up, that's all."

"Vernon-Smith! Do you know who has the key?"

"Yes! Carter!" howled the Bounder.

"Did Carter lock you in?"

"Yes."

"Where's Carter, Wharton?"

"In his study—my study," answered the captain of the Removite. "He says he doesn't know anything about it."

"Well, I'd better see him. If you make another sound from that study, Vernon-Smith, I'll give you six when the door's open!"

Wingate walked down the passage to Study No. 1, and the crowd of Removites followed him.

The Greyfriars captain throw open the door.

"You here, Carter?"

"I'm here."

"Vernon-Smith says you locked him in his study."

"Vernon-Smith's a fool!"

"An excitable ass, at any rate!" agreed Wingate. "Didn't you lock him in?"

"No!"

"Queer that he should think you did if you didn't!" said Wingate, with a sharp look at Carter. "You've not got the key!"

"No!"

"I say, you fellows, there's a key on

the table!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "I say, is that Smithy's key?"

Wingate glanced at the study table. He had not noticed a key lying there, but he noticed it now. He picked it up.

"Is this yours, Carter?" he asked.

"No!"

"How did it come here, then?"

"I don't know! I suppose it belongs to Wharton or Nugent; they share this study," answered Carter.

"Is this yours, Wharton?"

Wingate held up the key for inspection by the crowd of Removite fellows outside the doorway.

"No," answered Harry.

"Yours, Nugent?"

"Not mine."

Wingate's brow set grimly.

"So there's a key lying in your study, Carter, which appears to belong to nobody. We'll see whether it fits Vernon-Smith's door. It looks as if it might."

Carter stared at the key in Wingate's hand, breathing hard.

"I never put the key there," he said. "I never saw it in the study at all. I don't know anything about it."

"How did it get here, then?"

"I don't know, unless Wharton or Nugent left it there."

"We haven't been in the study," said Harry at once. "We heard Smithy kicking up a shindy when we came up, and went along there. Neither of us has been in the study at all."

"Well, I know nothing about the key," said Carter.

Wingate looked at him, and, without speaking again, walked out of the study, key in hand. He pushed it into the lock of Study No. 4 and turned it. Obviously, it was the right key. The door opened.

Vernon-Smith, red with rage, was revealed. He made a swift step to the open doorway, his hands clenched.

"Where's Carter?" he breathed.

"Hold on, Vernon-Smith!" said Wingate quietly. "Never mind where Carter is. I found this key in his study, but he says he never put it there. What made you think he had locked you in?"

Smithy made no reply to that. He wanted to get at Arthur Carter and hit out right and left, but he did not want to drag a Sixth Form prefect into the matter. But it was too late to think about that. Now that Wingate was on the scene, the matter was in official hands.

"I asked you a question, Vernon-Smith!" said the Greyfriars captain. "I'm waiting for an answer."

"I don't want a prefect to take it up!" muttered the Bounder.

"You should have thought of that before you kicked up such a hullabaloo! I've taken it up now! Answer my question at once!"

The Bounder stood silent. It was not the first time that he had had cause to regret the outbreak of his uncontrollable temper. He was now placed in the position of "telling" on Carter or refusing to answer a prefect—the first extremely disagreeable; the second hardly possible.

"Well?" rapped Wingate.

"I—I'd rather not—"

"You can cut that out! You told me Carter had the key, and I found it in his study. How did you know it was Carter—if it was?"

"He slanged me through the door, after locking me in!" muttered the Bounder at last.

There was no help for it.

"That settles it, then!"

And Wingate walked back to Study No. 1, slipping his ashplant down from under his arm into his hand.

(Continued on page 16.)



(Continued from page 13.)

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Quite a Mystery!

ARTHUR CARTER eyed the Greyfriars captain furtively and uneasily as he came back into Study No. 1.

Behind Wingate came a crowd of the Remove—the Bounder's red and angry face among the others.

Smithy's only desire just then was for Wingate to get off the scene so that he could begin on Carter! But even the reckless Bounder could hardly think of beginning the punching while the prefect was present.

Billy Bunter, wedged in the crowd in the passage, was grinning cheerily. All from Bunter's point of view was going well.

Carter was going to get six! Serve him right! Smithy was going to thrash Carter when Wingate was gone! Serve him right again! Smithy would collect some damages in the process! Serve Smithy right! Altogether things looked good to the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove. Both of them were beasts, and both of them were going to get teco—so that was all right!

Wingate swished his ash.
"It seems that you locked Vernon-Smith in his study, Carter! I dare say it was meant as a joke, but you can't play jokes that cause a row all over the House! Bend over that chair!"

Carter set his lips.
"I never did anything of the kind," he said. "If Vernon-Smith says I did he's either dreaming or lying."

"I found the key here—"
"I don't know who put it there—I hadn't been in the study!"

"Vernon-Smith says you slanged him through the door after locking him in."
"He must have dreamed it!"

Wingate looked quite perplexed. He was there to "whop" the cause of the uproar in the Remove; but he did not want to whop the wrong man. Carter's angry denials puzzled him.

"Well, one of you seems to be a regular young Ananias!" he said. "But I'm going to get at the truth! Step in here, Vernon-Smith!"

The Bounder pushed into the study, his eyes gleaming at Carter. It was only Wingate's presence that kept his knuckles away from Carter's features.

"You said that Carter slanged you through the door, Vernon-Smith?"

"Yes, he did!" grunted the Bounder.

"You say you did not, Carter?"

"I did not!"

"You lying cur!" hissed the Bounder.

"I don't care whether Wingate believes you or not, but I'll make you sit up for it! I'll—Wow!" The Bounder broke off, with a yelp, as Wingate gave him a slip with the ashplant.

"That's enough from you, Vernon-Smith!" said the Greyfriars captain. "Don't talk so much. One of you is lying—and that one is going to get the whopping of his life when I spot him. Did you see Carter when he locked you in?"

"No; he pinched the key while I was in another study."

"Then it was only his voice you heard?"

"Yes; but I know his voice! Besides, he said he was Carter!"

"Well, that sounds plain enough!" said Wingate. "Any of you know anything about it?" He glanced out at the crowd in the passage.

"No; most of us were in the changing-room after the football," answered Harry Wharton. "Nobody seems to have been up here. Smithy cleared off the minute he had changed, but the rest of us did not come up till some time later."

"I never came up at all!" snapped Carter. "I was in detention till half-past four, and after I came out of Mossos's class Quelch asked me to go down to Friardale, and I went. I never came up here till after I got back."

"Liar!" said Vernon-Smith grimly.

Whop!
"Ow!" gasped the Bounder. "Look here, Wingate, keep that ashplant to yourself!"

"I'll give you six with it if I have any more cheek from you, Vernon-Smith. What time was the football match over, Wharton?"

"Soon after four."

"How long before you came up to your study, Vernon-Smith?"

"About ten minutes," grunted the Bounder.

"How long after that before you were locked in?"

"A few minutes, I suppose."

"You were locked in before half-past four?"

"Yes, long before."

"Then, if Carter was in the detention-room till half-past, he cannot be the fellow who did it."

"He's lying!"

"We'll see about that! I suppose you know, Carter, that I shall ask Monsieur Charpentier what time he dismissed his class?"

"You can ask him as soon as you like, Wingate! If he doesn't tell you that I was in his class till half-past four you can give me six—or sixty, if you like!"

"By gum!" exclaimed Hazeldene, from the passage. "That's right, Wingate."

"How do you know, Hazeldene?"

Hazel grinned.

"Because I was in Froggy's detention class, too," he answered. "Mossos turned us out when it struck half-past four."

"Carter was there?"

"Yes; he came in after the rest, but he left when we all did," answered Hazel. "There was another Remove chap in the class, too; he can tell you the same! You were there, Snoop."

"That's right," said Snoop. "Carter was with us there till half-past four, Wingate! If Smithy had told us the time he was locked in I could have told him that it wasn't Carter that did it."

Herbert Vernon-Smith's face was quite blank for a moment or two.

He had not doubted for a moment that it was the new junior who had locked him in and taunted him through the door. He had known nothing about the time at which Mossos had dismissed the detention class. He would not have believed Carter's statement on that subject; but the evidence of Hazeldene and Snoop settled that.

The Bounder had to realise that it was a physical impossibility for Carter to have locked his study door before half-past four. And he knew that it was well before that time that it had been locked.

Wingate's face grew grimmer as he

fixed his eyes on the Bounder. He took a business-like grip on the ashplant.

"That clears Carter," he said. "Somebody else played that trick and landed the key in this study while Carter was in detention. Now, Vernon-Smith, I want to know why you named Carter."

There was a wriggle and a stirring in the crowd packed outside the study. Billy Bunter was trying to wriggle away.

Bunter had wanted, and had obtained, a front place to see the whoppings. Now he was very keen on getting out of that front place!

The turn the investigation was taking rather alarmed Bunter. It dawned upon his fat brain that it would be judicious to fade out of the picture.

But there was no escape for Bunter. Nearly all the Remove—a numerous Form—were packed round the doorway of Study No. 1! Nobody was going to shift to let the fat Owl wriggle away! Bunter had to stay where he was!

"Don't shove!" came several voices.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter! Stop shoving!"

"Now then, quiet there!" rapped Wingate. "I'm waiting for you to explain yourself, Vernon-Smith."

The Bounder stammered. He was quite at a loss.

"I—I—I thought it was Carter! The fellow owned up he was Carter—besides, it was Carter's voice—"

"That's rot!" said Carter. "I've heard no voice in the Form just like mine."

"Well, it sounded exactly like yours," snarled Vernon-Smith, "and I don't quite believe yet that it wasn't!"

"I say, you fellows, do let a fellow pass—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"I say, Bob, old chap, lemme get out—"

"Shut up, you ass!"

"You seem to have made a very extraordinary mistake, Vernon-Smith," said Wingate. "Some other fellow seems to have locked you in and led you to believe that it was Carter! I'm going to find that fellow out! Who was up here at the time?"

"Hardly anybody, I think," said Harry Wharton.

"Did you see anyone when you came up, Vernon-Smith?"

"Only Bunter."

"Bunter!" repeated Wingate. "Where's Bunter now? Oh, here you are, Bunter! Step in! Why, what's the matter with the young ass?"

Billy Bunter did not step into the study as bidden! Billy Bunter made a frantic effort to crash through the crowd behind him and escape!

There was a howl from Bob Cherry as a fat elbow crashed into his ribs—a yell from Peter Todd as his toes were ground under a heel. Billy Bunter barged like an insane hippopotamus in his desperate endeavour to escape! The crowd swayed round him.

"Bunter!" roared Wingate.

"Oh crikey!"

"Push that young ass in here!"

"Oh lor'! I—I say, you fellows—oh crikey! Ow!"

A dozen hands shoved Bunter, and he went headlong into the study.

"Ow!" spluttered Bunter. "Ooooh!" And he sat down, with a heavy bump, at the feet of the Greyfriars captain.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Alas for Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER sat and blinked up at Wingate of the Sixth, gasping.

Wingate stared down at Billy Bunter.

"You young ass!" looted Wingate.

"I—I say—" Bunter scrambled up and backed as near the door as he could. "It—it wasn't me, Wingate!"

"What wasn't you?"
"Oh! Anything! I—I mean, nothing!" gasped Bunter. "I wasn't here, you know! I was downstairs when Smithy saw me up here—"

"Wha-a-t? Was it you played that trick on Vernon-Smith?" demanded Wingate.

That suspicion was in every mind now. It could hardly fail to be, after Bunter's frantic endeavour to get off the scene.

"Oh, no! You see, I—I wasn't here!" gasped Bunter. "Besides, the beast kicked me—you know you did, Smithy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"That fat chump!" exclaimed the Bounder blankly. "I thought it was Bunter at first—and then I heard Carter's voice outside—"

"You didn't!" yapped Carter.
"I thought I did! It was that blithering Owl playing his rotten ventriloquial tricks—I see that now!"

"I wasn't!" yelled Bunter. "I never hid in Ogilvy's study while you went to mine, and I never got your key away. As for putting it in Carter's study, I never thought of such a thing! Why should I? I wasn't thinking of paying him out for getting me into such a row with Quelch this morning!"

"You fat chump!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Bunter all the time!" grinned Skinner. "Jolly old Bunter on the war-path! You might have guessed it, Smithy!"

"You shut up, Skinner! You'll make Wingate think it was me!" gasped Bunter. "I say, Wingate, I never had anything to do with it, you know. It was Carter that Smithy heard outside his study."

"You young ass," said Wingate. "We've already got it clear that Carter was in detention class till half-past four."

"Well, I never knew that, of course," said Bunter. "How was I to know what time Froggy sent them off?"

"Do you mean you'd have left it later if you'd known that?" asked Wingate, staring at him.

"Yes, of course!"
"Then it was you—"
"Oh, no! It wasn't!" gasped Bunter.
"It wasn't?" yelled Wingate.

"No, not at all! I wasn't here, you see! I couldn't have locked Smithy in when I wasn't here, could I? Besides, he heard Carter's voice—and my voice ain't anything like Carter's. I can't imitate voices, Wingate, or anything of that sort! You can ask any of these fellows! They've often heard me."

There was a howl of laughter in the passage. Even Vernon-Smith's angry face relaxed into a grin.

Carter was staring at the fat Owl blankly. It was quite a surprise to him to learn that Bunter was the man. But it was no surprise to the other fellows, well acquainted as they were with the fat Owl's ventriloquial trickery.

Wingate swished the ashplant. Evidently, he had got the right man at last! There was no further doubt on that point.

"You're up for six, you young ass!" he said. "Bend over that chair!"

"But it wasn't me, Wingate!" wailed Bunter. "I keep on telling you that I was somewhere else at the time! The fact is, I was out of gates. Besides, that beast Smithy kicked me. I only asked him whether he'd taken any goals, and he kicked me. You jolly well know you did, Smithy!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Wingate. "Where were you when Vernon-Smith was locked in his study, Bunter?"

"Out of gates!" answered Bunter promptly.

"And where did Vernon-Smith kick you?"

"On the trousers!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a shriek from the passage.
Wingate grinned—he could not help it.

"You benighted young ass, I mean, where were you when Vernon-Smith kicked you?" he gasped.

"Oh! I—I—I was—was—was—I mean, he never kicked me!" stuttered Bunter. "I wasn't here, you see, so—so he couldn't have! When—when I say he kicked me, I—I mean that he—he didn't!"

"Oh, gad!" said the Greyfriars captain. "Queleh must enjoy having you in his Form, Bunter! Sort of pupil to make a Form-master merry and bright! Now bend over that chair!"

"Wha-a-t for?" gasped Bunter. "I—I haven't done anything, Wingate! I—I hope you can take my word."

"Bend over that chair!"
"Oh lor'!"

Billy Bunter bent over the chair.

Wingate wielded the ashplant with a practised hand! Six times it swiped on Bunter's tight trousers, to an accompaniment of loud and lamentable howls from Bunter.

Then the prefect tucked the ash under his arm.

"That's that!" he said. "Any more tricks of this kind, Bunter, and you'll get it harder next time!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"You'll take a hundred lines for kicking up that shindy in your study, Vernon-Smith! I'll mention it to your Form-master. Now, no more noise in this passage—if I have to come up again, I'll whop you all round."

And Wingate walked away to the stairs, his duty done.

Bunter was left wriggling.

Smithy gave him a look—and left the study! Six from a prefect's ash was enough for Bunter, even in Smithy's opinion, and he left it at that. But Carter's eyes were glinting at the wriggling fat Owl with a deadly glint.

"So it was you!" he said, between his teeth. "You made that fool Smithy believe it was I, to land me in a row?"

"Beast!"
Carter made a quick step towards the fat junior.

Bob Cherry made one just as quick, from the passage, and interposed.

"Hands off!" he said gruffly.
"Stand aside, Cherry!"

"Put me aside, if you want me aside!" retorted Bob. "I'll be glad to handle you, you cur!"

"You've heard that fat rotter admit playing a dirty trick—I might have got six from Wingate, as well as a row with Smith!" hissed Carter. "Are you standing up for foul play like that?"

"You know all about foul play!" answered Bob scornfully. "You've set that fat fool the example, and he's followed it! It was a dirty trick, if Bunter had sense enough to understand it—but it was no dirtier than sneaking his silly limerick and pinning it up for Quelch to see in the Form-room! You've got some of your own medicine, and if you don't like the taste of it, that's your look-out."

"I'll smash him!" roared Carter.

"Get on with it—you'll have to smash me first! Get out of the study, Bunter, you fat ass—I can't stay here for ever. That fellow makes me sick."

Billy Bunter rolled out of the study.

Carter made a movement to follow, but Bob, at the doorway, stood like a lion in the passage.

Carter ended the matter by slamming the door.

A few minutes later Vernon-Smith and Redwing, in Study No. 4, looked round, as the door opened, and a fat face looked in.

Billy Bunter, still wriggling from the ashplant, blinked into the study.

"I say, Smithy—" he burred.

The Bounder grasped a cushion! He had let Bunter off once, but if the fatuous Owl had come to ask for it, he was welcome to it.

"I say, old chap, ain't you going to lick Carter?" asked Bunter. "I say, I'd jolly well lick a chap for locking me in my study! I would, really! I say, Smithy, you ain't funking Carter, are you?"

Whiz!
Crash!
Bump!

The cushion landed almost like a cannon-ball on Bunter's well-filled waistcoat.

Bunter went backwards into the passage like a stone from a catapult, and landed there roaring.

"Come back when you want some more!" said Smithy, as he shut the door.

Bunter did not come back for more! He seemed satisfied with what he had had!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Begs for It!

"CARTER!"

Arthur Carter started as the sharp, acid voice of Mr. Hacker, master of the Shell, rapped out suddenly from an open study window.

It was in break, the following morning; and Carter was lounging in the quad on his own, with a far from pleasant expression on his face.

The trick Billy Bunter had played on him the previous day had surprised and startled him, and alarmed him a little also.

Hitherto, he had regarded the fat Owl of the Remove as an obtuse and unthinking ass, powerless against his scheming knavery—a sort of fat dart-board at which he could pitch darts without danger of any of them coming back at him.

It was quite a surprise to him, and not a pleasant one, to find that Bunter could hit back—though it was true that the hapless fat Owl had not had much luck in his hitting back. And there had been a spot of unscrupulousness in Bunter's fatuous scheme, not unlike Carter's own! It disconcerted Carter very much. A rogue does not like to be the victim of roguery—no burglar likes to be burgled! In truth, a rogue would have no chance in life at all, but for the fact that the average man plays the game.

Carter was thinking, not pleasantly, over this new and unexpected development, when Hacker's sharp voice rapped from the study window.

He suppressed a scowl, as he glanced round.

Hacker, as master of the Shell, had nothing to do with Remove fellows, and had no right to call them. Still, a beak was a beak!

"Yes, sir!" answered Carter, glancing up at the window.

"Kindly come to my study at once, Carter!" rapped the acid voice from within the study.

Carter breathed hard! Nobody but his own Form-master, or the Head, had a right to give him that order! However, he had to go. He supposed that Hacker must have something to say about the egg that he had performed for him the day before.

"Very well, sir!" he answered sulkily. And he went along to the door.

He would hardly have done so, had he been aware that Mr. Hacker was in Common-room, and that a fat ventriloquist was grinning at him from behind the curtain of Hacker's window!

Billy Bunter was on the warpath again!

Having spotted Carter lounging on the path under the windows of Masters' Studies, this bright idea had occurred to the Remove ventriloquist.

As Carter started for the door of the House, Bunter started for the door of the study!

Carter, coming in, met him at the corner of the passage, and gave his fat, grinning face a scowl in passing.

"He, he, he!" followed him from Bunter, as he went up the passage.

In the sacred precincts of Masters' Studies a fellow could not kick a fellow; so Carter went on his way unheeding the fat Owl.

Bunter rolled cheerily out into the quad.

He rather hoped that Carter, finding nobody in the study, would wait there for Hacker, and get into a row! Hacker, who was called the "Acid Drop" in his Form, was not a nice-tempered man, and not likely to be pleased at finding a Remove fellow in his study—and he was certainly not likely to believe Carter's explanation that he had called him in, when he had done nothing of the kind.

Billy Bunter felt that he was getting on quite nicely—on the warpath! He rolled out into the quad, grinning.

Meanwhile, Carter arrived at Mr. Hacker's study, tapped, and entered. He stared angrily round an empty study.

Why Hacker had called him from the window and gone away before he could arrive, was rather a mystery.

Undecided what to do, Carter stood waiting! If Hacker had called him, and stepped out for a moment to speak to some other beak, he would expect him to wait. He waited, with growing annoyance.

As he stood there, his eyes fell on the postal order he had placed on the study table the previous day. Hacker, evidently, had not posted it yet. It lay where Carter had left it, under the paper-weight.

He gave it only a careless glance. Then he glanced out of the doorway, to see whether Hacker was coming. Nobody was in sight.

Puzzled and angry, he waited. He had nothing special to do in break; but he did not want his time taken up like this, by the master of another Form. He stared impatiently from the window.

A fat and grinning face met his view! Billy Bunter, in the quad, was blinking at that window, through his big spectacles, and grinning from one fat ear to the other.

"Oh!" ejaculated Carter.

A sudden suspicion shot into his mind. He remembered the trick at Smithy's door the previous day. Bunter had got away with that, by some weird trick of imitating voices! He had met Bunter, as he came to Hacker's study—going away from some master's study evidently! All was suddenly clear to Carter! He had been tricked!

He drew a deep, deep breath!

Hacker had not called him at all—it was that fat idiot pulling his leg, with his weird ventriloquist trickery, as he had pulled Smithy's. And if Hacker came in and found him there—

A spasm of rage went through him. With all his cleverness, all his cunning, he had been taken in like a baby by a fellow he regarded as a fat fool, with hardly enough sense to go in when it rained!

He turned quickly towards the door. He did not want to be caught there by Hacker, to stammer out an explanation to a sharp-tempered and suspicious man.

But he paused as he passed the table. His eyes fixed on the postal order under the paper-weight!

He stood—with his face whitening. The thought that had come into his mind almost frightened him.

So far, in his peculiar campaign against Bunter he had taken advantage only of the fat Owl's own faults and foibles—of which the name was legion. But this—

Possibly, rascal as he was, he would never have done it, but for the spot of unscrupulousness Bunter had revealed. That seemed some sort of feeble justification to him—rogue against rogue!

For a long moment he stood undecided—then he peered, with a white face, from the door. Had anyone been in sight, he would have left the study without carrying out the dastardly scheme that had flashed into his mind. But there was no one in sight—the coast was clear.

He stepped back to the table, picked up the postal order, and slipped it into his pocket. Then he left the study swiftly.

A minute later he was in the quadrangle, strolling with his hands in his pockets, with a casual air.

He strolled away to the old Cloisters, and, having made sure that no eye was on him, folded the postal order and slipped it into a slit cut in the lining of his jacket with a penknife. It was safe there till wanted.

Relieved in his mind, though still undecided how the scheme was to be carried out, and indeed not quite certain that he would carry it out at all, he left the Cloisters.

A minute or two later the bell rang, and the Remove went in for third school.

Billy Bunter's fat voice was—as usual—audible as the juniors gathered at the Form-room door.

"I say, you fellows, my postal order never came."

"It never does, does it?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Well, I was expecting a postal order from one of my titled relations, you know! These delays in the post office are a bit annoying!" said Bunter. "I say, Wharton, what about lending me the ten bob—"

"Nothing about lending you the ten bob, old fat man."

"I mean the five bob, old chap—"

amended Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's practically certain to come tomorrow!" urged Bunter. "I've been expecting it for some time."

"Whole terms, a fact!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, old fellow, you might lend me the five bob! One good turn deserves another, you know!"

"You've done me a good turn?" asked Bob. "Is that how you describe bagging my toffee from my study?"

"I never bagged your toffee! I haven't been in your study! Besides, I suppose you're no going to make a fuss about a spot of toffee—there was only one chunk in the bag. I'm not talking about toffee. You were jolly glad to play in the football match yesterday, I know that."

"Jolly glad!" agreed Bob.

"Well, then, one good turn deserves another!" said Bunter.

"Anybody know what the fat chump means, if he means anything?" asked Bob.

"Well, you wouldn't have played if Carter had played, you know that!" said Billy Bunter warmly. "And who got him into detention?"

"Eh! Quelch did!"

"He, he, he!"

"What are you going off like an alarm clock for, you fat ass?"

"He, he, he! That cat Carter thought it was Quelch!" chuckled Bunter. "But if he'd looked out of the study, he wouldn't have seen Quelch! He, he, he!"

Every fellow on the spot stared at Bunter. Carter, who had just arrived, stared with the rest. The short-sighted Owl of the Remove had not noticed him coming up the passage.

Harry Wharton, with a grim face, stepped to the fat Owl, and dropped a hand on a podgy shoulder.

"What do you mean by that, Bunter?" he asked, very quietly.

"Oh, nothing! I had nothing to do with it, of course! Still, one good turn deserves another, and Bob can't deny that he was jolly glad to play in the St. Jim's match after all. I think he might let me have the half-crown on my postal order, after all I've done for him."

"My only hat!" gasped Bob. "Is that what you meant when you were gabbling to me in the quad? Was Carter fool enough to let you pull his leg to that extent?"

"He, he, he!"

Carter, his face almost livid with rage, made a stride at the fat junior. He understood now. Bunter's words, added to his discovery of the fat Owl's ventriloquist trickery, made it all suddenly clear. That was why Mr. Quelch had not shown the expected signs of being "wrathy" with him. Quelch knew nothing of the matter. It was not Quelch who had ordered him into detention on Wednesday! It was the fat ventriloquist of the Remove, imitating Quelch's voice, outside his study!

"Why you—you—you rotter!" he gasped, almost choking. "You—you did that—you took me in—you got me a detention, and I thought—"

"Eh? I didn't see you, Carter! Oh, no! Nothing of the kind! I say, you fellows, keep him off!" yelled Bunter.

Bob Cherry interposed just in time, and spun Carter back with a heavy shove.

"Ware beaks!" murmured Skinner, as Mr. Quelch appeared in the passage, coming up to the Form-room door.

Carter controlled his fury. He went into the Form-room with the rest of the Remove, his lips set hard.

He had sat through the previous afternoon, in the detention-class, at extra French, instead of playing football—and he owed it to Billy Bunter! The last spot of remorse was banished from his heart now—his mind was made up. The fat fool was not only asking for it; he was begging for it—and it was coming to him!

Billy Bunter had set his podgy feet on the warpath; but he little guessed where that path was to lead him!



"Someone seems to have locked you in your study, Vernon-Smith, and led you to believe that it was Carter," said Wingate. "I'm going to find that fellow out. Who was up here at the time?" There was a sudden commotion as Billy Bunter made a frantic effort to escape.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Stump for Bunter!

"LOOK here, Bob—" "Oh rats!" said Bob gruffly.

Four exasperated glares were turned on Bob. His "feud" with the new fellow, Carter, had tried the patience of his chums many times that term; but never so severely as now. Now it seemed tried to breaking-point.

The Famous Five were in the Rag, after class. Harry Wharton had a cricket stump in his hand.

That stump was intended for Billy Bunter! Three members of the Co. were in full agreement; so were all the Remove, except Bob Cherry. Bob, as usual, was standing up for Bunter.

He was the fat Owl's only defence. Behind Bob's sturdy figure Billy Bunter was blinking in alarm at the angry Removites. He had been walked into the Rag after class, to take his gruel; and he would have been taking it, at the present moment, but for Bob! Bob stood like a rock in the way.

"You're setting yourself up against the whole Form, Bob," said Frank Nugent.

"Check!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"The cheekfulness is a little terrific, my esteemed Bob!" said Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh mildly.

"Chuck it, Bob!" said Mark Linloy.

"Barge him out of the way!" exclaimed Bolsover major. "What are you wasting time talking to the cheeky ass for?"

"I say, you fellows—" squeaked Bunter.

"Save your breath, old fat frump!" said Peter Todd. "You'll want it all for yelling, in a minute."

"Beast!" groaned Bunter. "Ain't you going to do anything for a pal, Toddy?"

"Yes—I'm going to have a whack with that stump!"

"Beast!"

"Will you get out of the way, Bob, and stop playing the fool?" asked Harry Wharton, very quietly.

"No!" answered Bob.

"Look here, Cherry!" exclaimed Squiff. "Don't be a goat! You know what that fat porpoise has done. Nobody cares a straw for his rows with his relations; but when it comes to keeping a man out of a football match—"

"We beat St. Jim's without Carter!" said Bob.

"That's not the point!"

"Oh, yes it is, to some extent," answered Bob coolly. "We mightn't have beaten them, with Carter in the team—croaking any man he happened to dislike."

"Oh, rot!"

"The rotfulness is terrific."

"What do you think, Smithy?" asked Bob. "Carter had an accident with me in the Highcliffe match. What did you tell him?"

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"I told him that if he had an accident with me, I'd have one with him," he answered. "Ho hasn't yet!"

"That's rot, Smithy!" said Harry Wharton.

"Is it?" sneered the Bounder. "Well, I can tell you this—if Carter ever hacks me like he did Cherry, accident or not, I'll give him the same back, and one over for interest! He knows that, or he'd have done it already. He likes me no more than he does Cherry."

"Well, that's neither here nor there!" said Harry Wharton impatiently. "I happen to be football captain, and I put Carter into the eleven. Bunter took it on himself to shift him out. Is Bunter to decide who's going to play for the Remove?"

"Hardly! You're a fool to play Carter—but you're skipper!" said the Bounder. "I'd whop him black and blue for meddling, if I were skipper."

"A Daniel come to judgment!" said Peter Todd. "You hear that, Bob?"

"You can leave Bunter alone!" said Bob. "That is, unless you give Carter the same! Bunter kept a man out of the St. Jim's match with his silly tricks—well, Carter put a man out of the Highcliffe match with his foul play! Bunter's a fool—but Carter's a rascal! No sense in whopping the fool and letting off the rascal."

"Something in that!" agreed the Bounder. "Carter got away with it—why not Bunter?"

"I say, you fellows, I never did it!" wailed Bunter. "I wasn't there at all, you know! I was somewhere else when I did it! Honour bright!"

"Shut up, you fat ass!" grunted Bob.

"Beast!"

"Look here, Bob—"

"Rats!"

"I say, you fellows, I never did it, and I won't do it again!" howled Bunter. "That cad Carter has been after me ever since he came. You jolly well know it. Well, if he's after me, why shouldn't I get after him? Not that I did it, you know—I didn't!"

"You get after him all you like, you fat idiot, but not to the extent of meddling in the football!" said the captain of the Remove. "You've got to be made to understand that, you frabjous cuckoo!"

"I—I understand it all right, old chap!" gasped Bunter. "I—I understand perfectly, old fellow. I'll take your word for it! I will, really."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're going to have a dozen with this stump—"

"Beast!"

"Will you get out of the way, Bob?"
"No!" answered Bob stubbornly.

Harry Wharton breathed deep and hard. Next to Nugent, Bob was his best chum. But he was captain of the Remove; and nobody but Bob was able to find any excuse for Bunter's trickery. Football matches were important matters in the Remove—and for a selected player to be tricked into missing a match was altogether beyond pardon. The fact that Carter had not, after all, been specially wanted, made no difference to that. Neither did Bob's contention that Carter was a foul player; for the general belief was that the unfortunate episode in the Highcliffe match had been an accident.

The captain of the Remove would not have retreated had any other fellow stood in the way. So he could hardly do so because it was one of his own friends who opposed the administration of justice!

"Last time of asking, Bob!" he said.
"I'm sticking here!"
"We shall have to shift you!"
"Get on with it!"

Bob's jaw squared, and his blue eyes gleamed. He was not giving way an inch against all the Form.

Wharton compressed his lips.
"Shift him!" he said curtly.

The next few minutes were exciting. Half a dozen fellows shifted Bob Cherry—but the shifting was no easy task!

He hit out on all sides, and he hit hard—and there was a wild and scrambling tussle. Peter Todd and Johnny Bull mixed up on the floor—Ogilvy went across them—Russell spun one way, and Redwing another—Harry Wharton went over his back and Nugent stumbled over his legs, crashed into Hurree Singh, and brought the Nabob of Bhanip to the floor.

But more and more hands grasped at Bob, and he was dragged headlong away.

He went down at last, still resisting, and crashed and half a dozen fellows sat on him to keep him there.

Harry Wharton staggered to his feet. He rubbed a painful nose.

"You silly fathead!" he gasped.
"Now some of you put that fat chump across the table!"

"I say, you fellows, leggo! I say—yaroooh!" roared Bunter.

Bob, heavily sat on, gasped and heaved. But half a dozen grinning fellows pinned him helplessly down. Bunter was plumped on the long table, yelling with apprehension.

Very soon he had something more serious to yell for. The cricket stump rose and fell with rhythmic whacks.

A dozen reports like pistol-shots rang through the Rag. Then the captain of the Remove threw aside the stump.

"You can cut you fat chump!" he snapped, rubbing his nose again.
"Yaroooh!"

"Boot him out!"
"Beast!"

Bunter flew. Three or four boots helped him out of the Rag, and he disappeared, yelling.

Then Bob Cherry was allowed to rise to his feet.

Rod and rumped, he glared at his friends. Then without a word he tramped out of the Rag.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Tea in Study No. 13.

AT tea-time Billy Bunter rolled into Study No. 13, and blinked round that apartment through his big spectacles.

Mark Linley, kneeling at the study
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fire, was making toast. Little Wun Lung, standing at the table, was buttering the same as fast as made. Bob Cherry was sitting on a corner of the table, with a rather moody expression on his face.

But if Bob had not forgotten the row in the Rag, Bunter had dismissed it from his fat mind. If he still felt a few twinges from the application of the stump, the prospect of tea comforted him. At the approach of a meal-time, all lesser matters naturally slipped from Bunter's thoughts.

"Early?" he asked breezily. "I thought I wouldn't keep you fellows waiting. Anything to cook? I'll lend a hand."

Bob Cherry gave him a rather grim look. He was championing Bunter, and he did not regret it; but Bunter was not exactly a credit to his champion. He had told Bunter to come to his study for a talk with him—one of those heart-to-heart talks. But a heart-to-heart talk, though possibly instructive and beneficial, had no great attraction for William George Bunter; and he certainly would not have come for that alone. So Bob had asked him to tea.

"Oh, here you are!" he grunted.
"Yes, old chap," said Bunter cheerily. "I say, did they damage you in the Rag? He, he, he! You looked awfully funny with all those fellows sitting on you. He, he, he!"

"Did I?" breathed Bob.

"Yes, fearfully; your arms and legs sticking out—just like a lobster, you know," said Bunter. "But, I say, what have you got for tea? Something beside toast, I hope? If my postal order had come—"

"I've got something to say to you, Bunter."

"All right. If you want me to cut down to the tuckshop, say the word, old chap, I'll go."

"About your row with Carter—"

"Oh, blow Carter!" said Bunter. "I've jolly well paid him out. I'll pay him out again, too—see if I don't! I say, have you got a cake?"

"Now, listen to me!" said Bob. Heart-to-heart-talks were a little difficult with Bunter's eyes roving about the study in quest of foodstuffs. However, Bob got on with it. "That cad Carter is on your track, and he won't stop at any dirty trick to dish you. But dirty trickery isn't an example to be followed—see?"

"Isn't it?" asked Bunter.

"No!" roared Bob.

"All right, old chap. Can I get anything out of the cupboard?"

"Will you listen to me?"

"I'm listening, old fellow; but I may as well help get tea, while I'm listening. I don't mind if you go on talking, of course."

There was a chuckle from Mark Linley; and Wun Lung grinned. Bob Cherry restrained a natural impulse to boot Bunter out of the study.

"Look here," he said, "you can play all the tricks you like on Carter, as he plays them on you; but you ought to play the game, even if he doesn't—see?"

"Think so?" asked Bunter.

"Yes, you ass!"

"All right. If there's a cake, shall I get it out of the cupboard?" asked Bunter. "I don't mind telling you I'm rather hungry."

"That fellow's a sneaking, scheming cur!" said Bob. "That's not the sort of fellow you'd like to be, Bunter."

"No fear! Upright and honourable—kindest friend and noblest foe, and

all that—that's my sort," said Bunter. "I say, shall I begin on the toast?"

"That trick you played at Smithy's study yesterday was mean," said Bob. "So it was tricking Carter out of the football match. You can't do dirty mean things because he does them, Bunter. Can't you see that?"

"Oh, yes! Any sardines?"

"What?"

"I like sardines with toast," explained Bunter.

"I've been standing up for you, because that rat is after you!" said Bob, heedless of the important question of sardines. "But I can't stand up for a fellow who plays dirty tricks the same as that cad himself. And, look here, Bunter, it pays better to keep straight."

"That doesn't appeal to me," said Bunter cheerily. "I dare say that's how you look at it, Cherry; but I don't care whether it pays or not. I just go straight, because it's my nature."

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Mark Linley. "Fatteo old Bunter velly funnee," chuckled Wun Lung. "Muchee good olde Bob Chelly talkee 'long Buntere."

"You fat idiot!" roared Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry! If that's how you talk to a fellow after asking him to tea in your study—"

"Shut up, dummy, and listen to me! Try to get into your fat head that honesty is the best policy, even if there was no other reason for being decent. Look at that cad Carter, for instance! Where has all his trickery got him? Nowhere, so far. Can't you see that?"

"Well, I fancy I'm the fellow to put paid to a cad like that," said Bunter. "I've got brains."

"Oh crikey!"

"I'll handle him all right," said Bunter confidently. "I say, this is jolly good toast; but you might put the butter on a bit thicker, Wun. I like plenty of butter on my toast. I'll make that cad sit up, don't you worry. You see, with my wonderful ventriloquism, I can pull his leg all right. I'm going to make Quelch think Carter's cheeking him in the Form-room. He, he, he!"

"You're not!" roared Bob.

"Eh? Why not?"

"Because it's a mean trick."

"Wouldn't Carter do it, if he could?" demanded Bunter, through a large mouthful of toast.

"Yes, he would; and that's a reason why you shouldn't, or any decent fellow. If I catch you playing dirty tricks, I'll jolly well boot you—see?"

"Well, I like that," said Bunter warmly. "I'm not the fellow for dirty tricks, I hope. I like that from you. Who let his skipper down in a football match, just because he had a row on with one of the men?"

Bob gazed at him, speechless.

Bunter blinked round the study.

"I say, have you got any sardines, Linley?" he asked. "I don't seem to be able to get any sense out of Cherry. He can't talk about anything, except his silly rows with Carter."

"In the cupboard," said Mark, laughing.

"Oh, good!"

Bunter rolled across to the study cupboard, and got busy with sardines. Bob Cherry watched him in silence. He realised that he was not making much progress in that heart-to-heart talk with Bunter.

"Look here, Bunter!" he said, at last.

"Any more sardines?" asked Bunter. "No!" yelled Bob.

"Oh, all right! No need to howl at a fellow. I'm not deaf, like Dutton. One tin of sardines isn't much. Look here, if you fellows don't want any, I'll finish them. They go all right with toast. I suppose you're going to make some more toast, Linley. You don't seem to have much of a spread here; but a fellow can fill up on toast."

"Will you listen to me, Bunter?"
 "Well, I'd rather you gave me a rest, old chap, if you don't mind. You're a bit like a sheep's head, you know—all jaw. Blessed if I ever saw such a fellow for chin-wag! If you'd let a fellow speak, I was going to tell you that there's a row on in the Shell."

"Never mind that!"
 "Well, I don't mind it, of course," said Bunter. "Hacker can make out that the Shell fellows go pinching in his study, if he likes. I say, he's had a lot of them up, and asked them about a postal order he makes out he's missed. I dare say the old ass has got it in his pocket all the time—you know Hacker. Sure there ain't any more sardines? What about this jar of bloater paste? I suppose I can open it?"

"Oh, gum!" said Bob. "That's the fellow I've rowed with my pals about—that I punched Wharton's nose for—"
 "Serve him right!" said Bunter. "It's time Wharton had his nose punched—together too stuck up, if you ask me. I wonder you've never punched it before, old chap, with the airs and graces he puts on! I used to be in his study when he first came, you know; but I had to get out—I couldn't stand it! Not that Toddy's much better—he's mean! I say, is there any more bloater paste? I suppose you've got something for tea, after asking a fellow here?"

There was a tramp of feet in the passage, and four fellows looked in. Mark Linley and Wun Lung grinned welcome. Bob Cherry stared. Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurreo Janset (Ran. Singh) walked in, and the captain of the Remove deposited a parcel on the table.
 "Well, what do you fellows want?" asked Bob gruffly.

"Tea!" answered Harry cheerily. "We've brought our grub along!"
 "I say, I'll unpack that for you!" exclaimed Billy Bunter eagerly.

And he proceeded to do so without delay.
 "You've got Carter's company in your own study," said Bob, with sarcasm.
 "We prefer yours, old bean!" said Frank Nugent affably.
 "The preferfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurreo Janset (Ran. Singh).

"After sitting on my head in the Rag?" growled Bob.
 "Nothing in it to damage, was there?" asked Johnny Bull.

Bob stared at him, and then grinned.
 Billy Bunter, turning good things out of the parcel, beamed.
 "I say, you fellows, this is a spread!" he exclaimed.
 "Cherry asked me to tea, but he doesn't seem to have anything but toast. I say, what a ripping cake! You fellows treated me rottenly after class, but I never was a chap to owe grudges! I say, there's two pots of jam. Shall I open them both?"

"Open anything you like except your mouth!" said Johnny Bull. "For goodness' sake keep that shut for a bit!"
 "Beast!"

Bob Cherry looked rather uncertainly at his friends; but he was more than glad to meet them half-way and let the row in the Rag be abolished, as if it had never happened.
 "Sit down, you chaps!" he said. "I was rather an ass to stick up for that fat frog. There's a cricket stump on the shelf, if you'd like to give him a few more whops."

"Why, you beast—" yelled Bunter, in alarm.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I say, you fellows—"

"Pack in the grub and shut up, Bunter!"
 And Billy Bunter promptly obeyed the first half of that injunction, though not the second.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.
A Row in the Shell!

THAT there was a "row" on in the Shell, as Billy Bunter had mentioned in Study No. 13, most of the House knew before dorm that night.

Trouble in the Shell was not uncommon, for Mr. Hacker, the master of that Form, was a suspicious man, with a sour temper and an acid tongue. Shell fellows would gladly have "swopped" him for any other beak at Greyfriars. Hobson, the captain of the Shell, had been heard to breathe dire threats of coming back some day as an Old Boy, and whacking Hacker with his own cane.

But the present row was rather out of the common. In the Rag that evening several of the Shell fellows told fellows of other Forms about it, with deep and thrilling indignation.

(Continued on next page.)

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The Acid Drop it seemed, made out that there was a postal order missing from his study table! He had missed it when he had sat down to write a letter, in which he had intended to post it. That was just before tea. Tea in the Shell studies had been disagreeably interrupted.

Every Shell man who had been in Hacker's study since class, and a good many who hadn't, were called on the carpet.

"The old goat!" said Hobson, to a crowd of juniors in the Rag. Thus disrespectfully did Hobby describe his Form-master. "The bony old goat! Making out somebody's snoop and quid out of his study! Of course, nobody has! You all know Hacker!"

"Don't we!" said Bob Cherry sympathetically.

"He says he got it yesterday—sent some Remove kid to fetch it. I think," said Stewart of the Shell, "and left it on his table under a paper-weight till he wanted it. Well, if he did, it might have gone any time—and anybody might have had it. He never missed it till he came to write a silly letter to his silly nephew at some silly school."

"Silly old ass!" said the Bounder.

"Cheeky too!" said Hoskins of the Shell. "He rooted me out of the music-room to ask me about it, because I'd been in his study after class! I was practising Caskowski's sonata in B major, you know and what do you think he said? Told me to stop that noise while he spoke to me!"

At which there was a chuckle in the Rag! Claude Hoskins was no end of a musician, with a taste for modern composers, and Hacker, with all his faults, was not the only man at Greyfriars who regarded Hobby's musical effects as a noise! Fellows had been heard to describe them as a horrid din!

Still, it was agreed that it was like Hacker's cheek to interrupt a fellow, inquiring about a postal order which, of course, he hadn't lost at all.

"In his trousers pocket, most likely!" said Hobson. "That's the sort of old ass he is! He lost a letter once, and suspected every man in the Form in turn of snooping it out of his desk, and it turned out he'd shoved it into his trousers pocket, instead of the pocket he thought he had! That's the kind of footling ass Hacker is!"

"I suppose it's still in his study all the time!" said Harry Wharton.

"Of course it is! He's laid a book on it, or something," said Stewart.

"No good telling him so!"

"But he can't think it's pinched!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "That would be rather thick even for the Acid Drop."

"Well, he jolly well does think so!" said Hobson. "He doesn't exactly say so—perhaps he's ashamed to but he's had man after man up, questioning him like a dashed detective! I jolly nearly told him to shut up! Only, of course, you can't tell a beak that."

"Hardly!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"You fellows grouse about Quelch, at times!" growled Hobson. "Wouldn't I like to swap Hacker for him! Wouldn't I just! Quelch is a cough-drop, but he's got sense! Hacker's a fool!"

"When did Hacker miss it?" asked Carter.

"I've told you—just before tea!"

"But if he left it there since yesterday, it might have gone any time," said Carter.

"Just what I was saying!" said

Stewart. "Of course it might—if it went at all! But, of course, it never did."

"Did you see anything of it, Bunter?" asked Carter.

Billy Bunter blinked round through his big spectacles.

"Eh?" he ejaculated. "What?"

"Did you see anything of Hacker's postal order when you were in his study in break this morning?" asked Carter deliberately.

A sudden silence followed that question.

As nobody outside the Shell had any business in Hacker's study, it had not occurred to anyone, so far, to think of any fellow outside that Form in connection with the matter. Neither, apparently, had it occurred to Mr. Hacker! It was news to all the fellows that a Remove had been in Hacker's study that day.

Bob Cherry's eyes flashed.

In Study No. 13, after that heart-to-heart talk with Bunter, he had almost made up his mind to let the fat Owl, as it were, rip. But at that question from Carter, Bob saw the hand of the schemer at work again. He broke out angrily, before Bunter could answer.

"You rotter, are you trying to make out that Bunter was in Hacker's study? Are you trying to stick this on Bunter, you cur?"

Carter shrugged his shoulders.

"Before you sling out the compliments, why not ask Bunter whether he was there or not?" he suggested. "I've no doubt he will tell you."

"You weren't there, Bunter?" asked Bob, looking round at the fat Owl.

"Not if old Hacker's going to think that I snooped his postal order!" said Bunter. "No fear!"

"Wha-a-at?" gasped Bob, while the other fellows yelled. "You howling ass, Carter says you were there. Were you, or not?"

"Well, you know what a fibber Carter is!" said Bunter. "Don't you believe a word Carter says. He'd jolly well like to stick this on me! I don't believe that chap could tell the truth if he tried. He's my relation, I know, but he's not truthful—not much of the Bunter side of the family in him! The Carters are a low lot!"

"Were you in Hacker's study this morning, you fat frump?"

Bunter appeared to be deep in reflection for a moment or two.

"Well, no," he answered. "On the whole I wasn't. I went nowhere near Hacker's study! Mind, I wouldn't mind telling you fellows, but if Hacker got to hear of it he might think I'd snaffled his putrid postal order. So the fact is, I wasn't there—nowhere near the place! Carter jolly well knows it, too, if he'd own up. He passed me as I was coming away."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Did you see the postal order while you were there, you fat ass?" asked Harry Wharton.

"No—I never looked round the room at all! Besides, I told you that I wasn't there!"

"Well, my hat!" said Hobson, staring at the fat Owl. "Hacker would want to know what a Remove man was up to in his study if he knew."

"Well, Carter was there, too," said Bunter. "He was going there when I came away! I—I mean, of course, when I never came away, as I wasn't there, you know."

"You benighted chump," said Bob Cherry. "Why on earth did you go to Hacker's study?"

"I didn't, old chap!"

"Was he there?" asked Peter Todd. "Eh? No fear! I knew he was jawing in Common-room, or I shouldn't have picked his study to pull Carter's leg!" chuckled Bunter. "You see, I made that ass Carter think that Hacker was calling him, with my wonderful ventriloquism, you know! He cut off to Hacker's study at once! He, he, he!"

"Oh," said Bob, "that was why you went there, you fathead?"

"Oh, no, I never went there at all!" Bunter shook his head decidedly. "Don't you get making out that I went to Hacker's study while he was in Common-room, Cherry! He might hear of it, and you know what a suspicious beast he is."

Carter laughed.

"If that postal order doesn't turn up, I shall have my own opinion about what's become of it—but it's no bizney of mine. Hacker can sort it out for himself."

"You can keep your opinion to yourself, at any rate!" growled Bob. "It's the sort of rotten opinion a fellow like you would have."

"Thanks!" yawned Carter, and he walked out of the Rag, leaving the discussion still going on.

By bed-time, half the Lower School knew that Billy Bunter had been in the study from which the postal order had been missed. And a good many fellows wondered whether Bunter could have explained, had he liked, what had become of it!

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Catching Carter!

GURRRRRRGH!

Arthur Carter jumped. The Remove were at breakfast, in the morning. Quelch, who always breakfasted with his Form, sat at the head of the table. Other beaks breakfasted in Common-room, or sometimes in their studies, and often the Remove wished that Quelch did the same: for there was no doubt that, early in the morning, Quelch was not at his bonniest.

Until he had disposed of eggs and bacon, Quelch was undoubtedly grim.

Like many middle-aged gentlemen, Quelch was a little norvy and testy before breakfast, but did not realise that an empty interior was the cause—he was more prone to think that the fault lay in others, who irritated him.

He improved considerably, and took a brighter view of life, after the very first mouthful and the first draught of tea! Before breakfast was over, he would often be quite genial.

Unluckily, Quelch had not yet started on the provender when Carter gave that sudden convulsive jump and dropped a cup.

It was hardly Carter's fault! A deep and savage growl under his chair was enough to make any fellow jump. It sounded, to Carter, as if a particularly vicious dog was just at his legs, and he jumped. His cup crashed, in pieces, and tea spread in a flood.

A gimlet eye transfixed him from the head of the table.

"Carter!" came Quelch's deep rumble. "What on earth are you doing, Carter? How dare you! Sit down at once!"

"There's a dog under my chair, sir!" gasped Carter.

"What? Nonsense! Sit down immediately!"

Quelch's look, and tone, were awe-inspiring—almost terrifying! But Carter did not heed his master's voice.



"I say, you fellows—leggo! I say—yaroooooh!" roared Bunter. Whack, whack, whack! The stump rose and fell, and Bunter wriggled wildly. Bob Cherry gasped and heaved, but half-a-dozen grinning fellows pinned him helplessly down.

He was not going to sit down with his legs in reach of that vicious dog!

Standing up, he pushed his chair back and stared under it, and under the edge of the table. To his astonishment, no dog was to be seen.

"Carter!" almost roared Mr. Quelch.

"It—it was a dog, sir!" stammered Carter.

"Nonsense! I repeat, nonsense! There can be no dog in Hall! If there is a dog here, point it out to me."

"I—I can't see it, sir—but—"

"Take a hundred lines, Carter! If you do not sit down this instant, I shall send you out of Hall without your breakfast!"

Carter sat down.

He was angry and puzzled. The dog appeared to have growled savagely under his chair and then departed, which was perplexing. Other fellows, near Carter, had heard the growl, though Mr. Quelch, at the end of the long table, had been out of hearing, and they were puzzled, too.

Billy Bunter, blinking across the table at Carter grinned. And several fellows, spotting that grin on Bunter's fat face, caught on to the fact that the Remove ventriloquist was at work again.

Harry Wharton made a sign to the fat junior to "chuck" it. Bunter favoured him with a fat wink in response.

He was not disposed to chuck it! Ventriloquism was his only method of getting back at Carter, and Bunter was on the warpath!

Gurrrrrrrh!

Carter jumped again at the growl under his chair, and dragged his legs up instinctively, with a gasp of alarm.

"Carter!" rapped Mr. Quelch. "Will you keep still? Cannot you sit still at table, Carter? What is the matter with you, Carter?"

"It's that dog again, sir!" gasped Carter. "I don't want to be bitten, sir!"

"Upon my word!" Mr. Quelch rose to his feet, with an expression on his face like that of Roderick Dhu, on the occasion when dark lightnings flashed from Roderick's eye! "I will ascertain for myself whether there is a dog present, Carter, and if there is not, as I am sure there is not, I shall cane you."

"I heard him growl under my chair, sir."

"You did nothing of the kind, Carter, as there is certainly no dog here. But we shall see!" said the Remove master grimly.

He came along the table, and the juniors rose from their places to give him a clear field for investigation.

No dog, certainly, was to be seen on the spot. Mr. Quelch stooped and glared under the table. He beheld a forest of legs and feet, but nothing else.

He rose again, with a grim brow.

"There is no dog here, Carter! I was perfectly assured that there was not, and I have now ascertained the fact! Explain yourself."

"I—I—I heard him, sir—" stammered Carter.

"If you heard a dog here, Carter, where is the dog? Point out the animal to me!" snorted Mr. Quelch.

Carter stood helplessly puzzled. He could not point out a non-existent dog! Mr. Quelch waited one moment—no more! Then he pointed to the door.

"Go!" he said.

"I—I haven't finished my breakfast, sir—"

"Leave the Hall at once, Carter, and wait for me in my study!" said Mr. Quelch. "I shall cane you when I come there! Not a word more! Go!"

Carter, with set lips, went.

Mr. Quelch returned to his chair, and breakfast was resumed—Billy Bunter grinning with cheery satisfaction.

Some of the juniors, who had "tumbled" to the fat Owl's trick, gave him expressive looks. But expressive looks were wasted on Bunter! He had scored over Carter—and that was what Bunter wanted! Carter had a hundred lines, and was going to have a caning! The fat ventriloquist of the Remove had a happy and satisfied feeling that he was getting his own back.

"You fat chump!" whispered Bob Cherry. "Didn't I tell you yesterday not to play mean tricks—"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You can't let Carter take that licking!"

"Can't I?" grinned Bunter.

"If you do," hissed Bob into a fat ear, "I'll jolly well boot you round the quad after brekker."

"Beast!"

"You pernicious porker—"

"Cherry!" came a deep rumble.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Bob, looking round.

"Are you quarrelling with another Remove boy at the breakfast-table, Cherry?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Indeed! I judged by your expression that you were doing so, Cherry. Kindly repeat to me what you were saying to Bunter."

"I—I—I—"

"I am waiting to hear you, Cherry."

"I—I—I—"

"Will you tell me, this instant, what you were saying to Bunter!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I was telling him he was a—pernicious porker, sir!" gasped Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Cherry, you will take a hundred lines for using such expressions. Now be silent."

And Bob said no more during brekker.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Carter's Chance:

ARTHUR CARTER went into his Form-master's study with an expression on his face like unto that of a demon in a pantomime.

He was still puzzled about that growl under his chair, and the remarkable disappearance of the dog after growling; but he knew that he had heard what he had heard, whether Quelch believed it or not. Now he had to wait a good twenty minutes in the Remove master's study, with a caning at the end of that long wait.

He stared angrily round the study, wondering whether there was a chance of playing some trick there to worry Quelch—payment in advance, as it were, for the caning he was going to receive.

But he shook his head at that thought. Anything that happened in that study could hardly fail to be traced to the fellow who had waited there during breakfast in Hall.

But that glance round brought to his attention a pile of letters that lay on the Form-master's table.

He knew that these would be the letters for Remove fellows. It was one of Mr. Quelch's many duties to look over correspondence addressed to members of his Form.

Most of the letters, which naturally were from home, passed with a cursory glance, but occasionally there was one that the Form-master had to stop in transit, or order to be opened in his presence. But for the fact that all correspondence passed under a beak's eye, some Greyfriars fellows would certainly have received communications they were better without.

After Quelch had glanced over the letters it was Trotter's duty to put them up in the rack, to be taken by the boys in break. Quelch generally did the glancing after breakfast.

Seeing the pile of letters, Carter stepped to the table and looked at them. His reason was that there might be a letter for himself among them. At the moment he had no other thought in his mind.

But he forgot to look for a letter for himself as he spotted an envelope addressed to "W. G. Bunter."

His eyes fixed on that letter.

In break that morning Billy Bunter was going to find a letter for himself, and no doubt would hope—until he opened it—that it might contain his long-expected postal order. After opening, that hope was likely to be dashed.

Carter stood looking fixedly at that letter.

A strange expression was coming over his face.

He stepped quickly to the door, which he had left open, and shut it quietly. Then he stepped back to the table.

His eyes fixed on Bunter's letter again. He picked it up with fingers that trembled a little.

His thoughts were racing.

Ever since he had purloined the postal order from Mr. Hacker's study the previous day he had been wondering and pondering how to "plant" it on the fat Owl in such a way as to make it impossible for suspicion to be directed towards himself.

To barge into Bunter and thrust it into a pocket, or to drop it into his box in the dormitory, would have been easy, but futile. It would not be found without a search being made, and it was very unlikely that any search for Hacker's missing "quid" would be

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made in Quelch's Form. But a still more deterring circumstance was the fact that Bob Cherry suspected him, and had a watchful eye on him. It was known that he, as well as Bunter, had gone to Hacker's study while the postal order was there. He knew—at least, he did not doubt—that if that postal order turned up on Bunter, Bob Cherry would guess, and would announce at the top of his powerful voice that Carter had put it where it was found.

He had to think of something a little more subtle than that, and so far he had been unable to do so.

Bunter had to spend that postal order, or there was, he realised, nothing in the scheme at all.

He had thought of leaving it somewhere for Bunter to "find," for Bunter was exactly the ass to think that "findings were keepings." But even Bunter was hardly ass enough for that, since he had heard that the postal order had been missed by Hacker and inquired after.

The young rascal had been, therefore, at a loss—determined to carry on with the scheme somehow, but undecided how. Meanwhile, the postal order was hidden in the lining of his jacket, safe from discovery.

Now, with that letter for Bunter in his hand, he knew what he could do, and what he was going to do.

Bunter was expecting a postal order. Carter, of course, had heard all about that, like every other fellow in the Lower School at Greyfriars.

If he found a postal order in his letter, what could he think, except that it had been sent him from home?

The handwriting of Mr. Bunter on the envelope, and the Surrey postmark, showed that this letter came from Bunter's home. More likely than not it contained an answer to a request for cash, probably in the form of advice to Bunter to keep within his allowance. If there was a postal order in it, all the better. Carter had only to change one for the other.

He breathed hard, his heart beating thickly.

He wondered whether his evil counsellor, Gideon Gooch, would have approved of this scheme, or whether the cunning lawyer would have thought it too risky.

Yet where was the risk?

He had at least ten minutes, more likely a quarter of an hour, before Mr. Quelch arrived in the study.

To open the letter with steam, slip in the purloined postal order, and close the flap again—what could be easier?

He did not even need to leave the study.

In the fender stood a little copper electric kettle, which Mr. Quelch used when he needed hot water in the study for any purpose. Carter had only to switch it on and wait a minute or two for steam to issue from the spout.

He hesitated.

When Bunter found that postal order in his letter, what was he likely to do? Cut off to the tuckshop instantly—there was no doubt about that. He might ask Mrs. Mimble at the school shop to change it for him instead of waiting till he could go down to the post office. That mattered nothing, so long as he spent it.

The short-sighted Owl of the Remove was not likely to notice the stamp of the issuing office on the slip of paper which showed that it had been bought in Friardale. Moreover, that stamping, like so much Post Office stamping, was indistinct. In detective stories letters are traced by postmarks, but in real life

a postmark is only too likely to be utterly indecipherable, if anyone wishes to make it out. It was the same with the stamping on postal orders sometimes, especially in little village post offices. Carter had to look closely to make out "Friardale" in the circular stamping. Bunter would have had to screw his eyes behind his spectacles to make it out, and he was not likely to look at it at all.

That was all right!

A greater difficulty was the fact that in sending his son a postal order Mr. Bunter would naturally fill in his name. This postal order was not filled in as payable to anybody.

If Carter thought of dipping Mr. Quelch's pen in the ink, and filling in Bunter's name as payee, he dismissed it at once. He dared not do such a thing.

Sull, people sometimes omitted to fill in the payee's name before posting a postal order. If Bunter senior was anything like Bunter junior, he was very likely to be careless in such matters. Anyhow, Bunter, finding the postal order in his letter, could hardly fail to believe that his father had sent it to him, and the fact that his name was not on it would make no difference.

That, too, was all right.

Three long minutes passed while Carter was thinking it out, with perspiration on his brow. Then he stooped and switched on the electric kettle and waited.

He had plenty of time yet—more than ample time; but his heart beat in throbs as he waited for the kettle to boil.

But he had no doubts. This time he had the fat sweep on the hip. It was not merely a matter of getting him a bad report. This meant the sack from the school, and a crashing end to all Bunter's hopes and prospects with old Joseph Carter! This scheme was perfect, without a flaw—unless, indeed, there was something in rascality itself that insured its own defeat. And Carter had not yet learned that honesty was the best policy.

Steam came bubbling from the spout of the copper kettle in the fender. Carter held the envelope over it, and in a few moments the flap loosened. He shut off the switch.

Carefully pulling open the flap of the envelope, he drew out the letter from within. He glanced at it. It was brief:

"Dear William,—I have received your letter—the seventh this term, all in the same strain. As I regret that I am unable to send you anything beyond your usual allowance, I recommend you not to spend so much money on postage stamps.—Your affectionate father,
"W. S. BUNTER."

Carter grinned for a moment over that letter from home. But his face became at once very serious. This was not the sort of letter that was likely to be accompanied by a postal order for a pound. Even Bunter, fathead as he was, would be surprised and puzzled to find a "quid" in the envelope with such a letter as that.

There was only one way of getting out of that difficulty. Carter dropped the letter into Mr. Quelch's study fire.

Bunter might be surprised at receiving a postal order without an accompanying line; but the postal order, after all, was what he wanted, and he would naturally suppose that Mr. Bunter had been in a hurry.

Taking the folded postal order from its hiding-place in the lining of his jacket, Carter slipped it into the empty

envelope. He stuck down the flap again with a spot of Mr. Quelch's gum.

Then he replaced the letter where he had found it—in the pile on the study table.

Glancing at Mr. Quelch's clock, he was surprised to see that he had not yet been ten minutes in the study. It had seemed much longer than that.

He stepped to the window, which was open, to let in the morning air of early spring, and stood looking out into the quad while he waited for the Remove master to appear.

Ten minutes later there was a scurrying of feet and whooping of voices in the quad as the Greyfriars fellows came out.

Billy Bunter blinked at him standing at Mr. Quelch's window, with a fat grin. The next moment Bunter yelled as Bob Cherry's boot landed on his trousers.

Carter turned away from the window as Mr. Quelch entered the study.

After breakfast Quelch was in a bonnier mood. He picked up his cane, and told Carter to bend over; but it was merely a flick, and Carter hardly knew whether he was caned or not when Quelch told him to go.

He went. Mr. Quelch sat down at the table to look over the letters, little dreaming what had happened there.

Carter went out into the quad, with a sour smile on his face. His thoughts were concentrated on what was going to happen in break when the letters were taken from the rack. First and second school seemed very long to Carter that morning.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Like a Charm!

"I SAY, you fellows, is there one for me?"

Billy Bunter, in break, blinked anxiously up at the letter-rack.

Bunter was, as usual, expecting a postal order. He had been expecting it ever since the term started, and it had not yet arrived. But hope springs eternal in the human breast.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's one for you, Bunter!" said Bob Cherry; and he reached down a letter to the fat Owl.

"Oh, good!" said Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I wonder if this is my postal order?"

"The wonderfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Well, it's really over-due, you know," said Bunter. "I've been expecting it for some time, really. But I'm afraid this letter is from home, by the fist."

"He's afraid it's a letter from home!" chuckled Smithy. "O dutiful and affectionate son and heir!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I mean to say, I was expecting a letter from one of my titled relations, with a postal order, you know; but this can't be it, as there's no crest on it," explained Bunter. "Besides, it's the pater's fist. But it may be all right. I've written to him half a dozen times at least—"

"Seven times!" said Peter Todd.

"Eh—how do you know it was seven, Toddy?"

"Because you borrowed a stamp from me every time. You'd have written oftener if I'd stood the stamps."

"Oh, really, Toddy, I'll pay for those stamps if my pater's sent me a tip in this letter!" said Bunter. "After all, he might. It doesn't feel as if there's much in it. Still, you never know, you know."

Bunter did not seem in an urgent hurry to open that letter. His pater's "fist" on the envelope seemed to have damped him down, as it were.

Possibly he knew how unlikely it was that Mr. William Samuel Bunter had weighed in with a remittance. That letter was more likely to contain sage advice on the subject of economy. Bunter had been there before, so to speak, and he knew. And he had little use for sage advice. It was not legal tender at the tuckshop!

However, he jabbed a fat thumb into the envelope at last, which was Bunter's elegant way of opening a letter, and groped within with his fat fingers.

One fellow, lounging at a little distance, was watching him covertly while affecting to read a letter.

That one was Carter.

Other fellows who happened to be there were concerned about their own correspondence. Some of them cast rather envious glances at Smithy, who carelessly drew a couple of pound notes from a letter. But no fellow in the Remove was likely to cast envious eyes at Bunter.

But a sudden chirrup of glee from the fat junior drew attention on him.

"Oh crumbs! Oh, good! Oh crikey! Ripping!" ejaculated Bunter.

Many eyes turned on him then. "What on earth's that?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, staring at a printed slip of paper in Bunter's fat fingers. "Don't—oh, don't say it's your postal order! The shock would be too great, old chap!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows," trilled Bunter, "it's come!"

"Fan me!" gasped Peter Todd.

"Oh day worthy to be marked with a white stone!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh solemnly.

"I say, you fellows, this is all right!" chortled Bunter. "I say, the pater's sent me a quid!"

"Glorious!" grinned Bob.

"Gratters, old fat man!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"You'll have to pay poundage on that postal order, Bunter!" declared Skinner.

"Eh—why?" "It's been such a jolly long time coming, it must be out of date!" explained Skinner. "Any whiskers grown on it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah!" retorted Bunter. "You don't often get a quid, Skinner, and chance it! I say, you fellows, a whole quid! He, he, he!"

"Hold on, old fat bean!" said Toddy. "Make sure it's a tip! 'Member your last postal order; your pater sent it for something special. Better see what he says in his letter before you blow it on riotous living."

"There ain't any letter with it!" said Bunter, blinking into the envelope. "That's rather odd, too. Generally the pater sends a letter, but not a tip; this time he's sent a tip, but not a letter!"

"Well, that's a change for the better in his manners and customs!" remarked the Bounder. "I'd encourage him to keep that up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, I'm going to stand a spread with this!" said Bunter. "I shall have to have a snack in break, of course. But a whole quid—"

"There won't be much left for a spread if you have a snack!" remarked Skinner. "Better stand the spread in break."

"I say, Wharton, change this for me, will you? I can't go down to the post office in break."

"Pleased!" said the captain of the Remove, laughing. "I've only got ninepence, but if you'll take that for it—"

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"Oh, really, Wharton! Look here, Smithy, you've got lots! Cash this postal order for me, will you?"

"I will if it's a real one!" said the Bounder, with a chuckle.

"Well, look at it, you silly ass! It's not filled in, either, so you can fill your own name when you cash it—see? Give me a pound note for it, Smithy."

Vernon-Smith took the postal order and glanced at it. Obviously, it was a real and genuine postal order, and the Bounder slipped it carelessly into his notecase and handed the fat Owl one of his pound notes in exchange.

With that note clutched tight in a fat hand, Billy Bunter shot out of the House and headed for the tuckshop. After him walked Skinner and Snoop and Fisher T. Fish. With a whole quid in his possession, Billy Bunter was worth cultivating as an acquaintance—temporarily, at least!

Arthur Carter walked away, with a gleam of satisfaction in his eyes. It was through now!

Bunter had received that postal order—Hacker's postal order—without a glimmering of suspicion. He had changed it, and it was too late to recall that action. Whether he changed it at the tuckshop or the post office or with one of the Remove fellows mattered nothing. He had changed it, and the fact could, and would, be brought home to him.

When he was taxed with it, it would not be of much use for him to say that he had taken it out of that letter from home?

Who could—or would—believe such a statement? His father, if referred to, could only say that there had been no postal order in the letter at all.

That postal order could be proved to be Hacker's—the number on it would prove that; a reference to the village post office would establish the fact!

The scheme had worked like a charm—the fat Owl had taken the bait like a fat gudgeon. All that was needed now was for Hacker's attention to be drawn to the fact that Bunter had been

seen changing a postal order for a pound—after having been seen in Hacker's study! To that, the hard-hearted young rascal now devoted his thoughts—while Billy Bunter, with the assistance of two or three temporary pals, disposed of his unexpected tip at the school shop—with very little left out of the pound, when the bell rang for third school.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Spotted by Smithy!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH breathed hard, and his eyes glittered.

He stood in his study—with a postal order for twenty shillings in his hand, staring at it, and his face hardened, and hardened, as he stared. His teeth came together.

"Spoofed!" he muttered aloud. "By gad! Spoofed! By gad! I'll—"

He shut his teeth again. He dropped the postal order into his pocket, and left the study. It was after dinner, and most of the fellows were out in the quad. The Bounder went out of the House, and looked about him.

"Cherry!" he called. "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry was punting a footer with some Remove fellows, but he glanced round as the Bounder called.

"I want you a minute."

"Oh, all right!" Bob joined Vernon-Smith, rather wondering at the hard, grim look on the Bounder's face.

"Anything up?" he asked. "Yes—lots! Come along with me—I don't want to shout it out all over the school—at present, at least!"

Bob, in wonder, walked with him under the elms, leaving the other fellows punting the ball.

"What on earth's up, Smithy?" he asked.

"I don't quite know! I'm going to know! I thought I'd speak to you first, as you seem to have set yourself up as

that fat fool's chief champion! Where's Bunter?"

"In the tuckshop, I expect, if he's got any of his quid left."

"My quid!" said the Bounder grimly.

"What do you mean? You gave him a pound note for his postal order—"

"For old Hacker's postal order!" answered Smithy, in the same grim tone.

Bob Cherry stood quite still. That answer from the Bounder bereft him of speech for a moment or two.

"Are you mad, Smithy?" he asked, at last.

"No!"

"Has Carter been pulling your leg, you fool? I noticed in the Rag last night that he was trying to make capital out of old Hacker fancying that he had lost a postal order—"

"I noticed it, too!" said Vernon-Smith. "That's the chief reason why I'm speaking to you, instead of Quelch, and why Bunter isn't being taken to the Head to be sacked this minute."

"If you're not mad, what do you mean?" growled Bob. "Bunter seems to have gone to Hacker's study yesterday, but he never touched his postal order—he wouldn't, fool as he is. Carter put the idea into fellows' minds—that was his game, the cad! Are you idiot enough to think that Bunter's postal order to-day was the one Hacker missed?"

"Exactly—as it's the same one."

"Don't be an ass!"

"I've got it here," said Vernon-Smith quietly. "Look at it!"

"Looking at it won't make it Hacker's!" growled Bob. "Bunter got that postal order in a letter from his father this morning, as you jolly well know."

"I know he said so! Does Bunter's pater live in Friardale, a mile or so from Greyfriars?" asked the Bounder sarcastically.

"You know he doesn't."

"Think he'd drop in at Friardale post office to get a postal order then?"

"How could he, fathead, when he lives in another county?" snapped Bob. "What the dickens do you mean?"

"I mean that that postal order was bought in Friardale on Wednesday this week!" answered Smithy.

"It wasn't, and couldn't have been."

"Look at the post office stamp on it."

"Oh, rot!" growled Bob.

But he looked, and his face changed as he made out the blurred stamping—FRIARDALE, with the date. He gave the Bounder a startled, almost scared look.

"Smithy!" he gasped.

"If old Bunter sent young Bunter a postal order, it would be bought either in Surrey, where he lives, or in London, where he goes to business!" said Vernon-Smith. "It couldn't and wouldn't be bought in Kent, near this school."

"I know! But—"

"A postal order for a pound, bought at Friardale on Wednesday, has been taken from Hacker's study. This is a postal order for a pound, bought at Friardale on Wednesday. Don't be a fool, Cherry! You know this is Hacker's as well as I do!"

"Good heavens!" breathed Bob.

He gazed at the Bounder in horror. It was Hacker's postal order in Smithy's hand: he knew that now. The Bounder slipped it back into his pocket.

"What made you think—" gasped Bob.

"I'm no fool!" answered Smithy coolly. "I thought, this morning, that

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Bunter had taken that postal order from his letter, as all the fellows thought. I was only surprised that he got it at all. But—it struck me as a bit of a coincidence, afterwards, Bunter getting a postal order for a pound, when a postal order for a pound had just been missed from a study he went into without having any business there. So I gave it the once-over before letting it go further! When I made out the post office stamp on it, of course, I knew it was Hacker's."

"But—" stammered Bob.

"But," said the Bounder, "I've been spoofed—but was it by Bunter, or somebody else?"

"Who else? What do you mean?"

"I've been thinking!" said the Bounder, with a sneer. "I know what it looks like on the face of it. Bunter saw that postal order on the table when he sneaked into Hacker's study yesterday—he bagged it—and he pretended to receive it by post this morning, to account for having it. He thinks I shall cash it next time I pass the post office, and that that will be the end of it. Hacker's suspecting fellows up and down the Shell—never dreaming of a Remove man! Safe as houses! That's what it looks like."

"I can't make it out! I'd never have believed—I know he snoops tuck, and he's an unscrupulous little beast in a good many ways, but this—"

"I said that that's what it looks like!" said the Bounder deliberately. "But things are not always what they look like, old bean! Haven't you ever heard that appearances are deceptive?"

"How—"

"As soon as I saw what it was, I jumped to it at once that Bunter had bagged Hacker's postal order, and spoofed me into taking it off his hands. That will be the general opinion, if this gets out."

"It must get out!" said Bob. "If Bunter pinched it, the sooner he's sacked, the better I'd never stand by a thief, I know that."

"But did he?" said Vernon-Smith. "I'm not a fellow to act in a hurry—and I got some second thoughts on the subject. There's two or three queer little circumstances about this, Cherry. There's a fellow in the Form whom we know to be on that fat fool's track. Two or three weeks ago, he gave me away at the Three Fishers, thinking it was Bunter there—and nearly got me bunked. I paid him out for that, and let it drop! But I haven't forgotten! I've got a good memory! Well, Carter knew all about that postal order—he had gone to fetch it for Hacker, on Wednesday, when I was locked in my study—you remember? And Carter went to Hacker's study yesterday, as well as Bunter."

"He said he never went in—"

"That, for what he said!" The Bounder snapped his fingers. "Look here, Cherry, if Bunter pinched that postal order he's going to be sacked. But did he? Is it possible that that cad Carter wangled this somehow?"

"How could he?"

The Bounder shook his head.

"I don't know! If Bunter never pinched it, he found it in his letter from home, as he said; so Carter, if he wangled it, must have got it into that letter somehow."

"That's impossible, Smithy."

"Is it? Letters have been opened by steam before now! I know it sounds thick—but it's possible. Bunter said there was no letter with it—he needn't have said so—it was jolly odd. Suppose Carter found an old envelope of Bunter's, patched it up, and put it in

the rack. That would account for no letter being in it."

Bob started.

"You seem to think worse of Carter than I do!" he said, slowly. "Do you think any fellow could be such a reptile?"

"I think Carter could!"

"But—but—" muttered Bob. "It's possible, Smithy—but—but it's almost impossible! An old envelope, after Bunter had ripped it open and thrown it away—And then, how would he get it in the rack with the others? He wasn't out of the Form-room before us."

"No—it doesn't sound very feasible!" admitted the Bounder. "But if that letter was delivered this morning, he couldn't have got at it—Quelch has them all in his study, till they're put out for the fellows." The Bounder broke off, with a sudden jump. "Why, you fool, Carter was in Quelch's study this morning—more than a quarter of an hour there by himself—don't you remember? Quelch sent him there, after Bunter played that fool trick of the growling dog under the table—!"

"Oh!" gasped Bob.

The two looked at one another! Bob's face was pale—the Bounder's bitter and cynically sardonic. Both knew, now.

"The reptile!" breathed Bob. "The worm! The snake in the grass! Smithy, is it really possible that—that—"

"Nobody would believe it, I suppose," said Smithy, with his sneering grin. "No proof—there never is any proof with Carter—I've found the cur out, and you've found him out; but your own pals are fed up with your down on him—they wouldn't believe this, ten to one! And yet I know that Carter had Hacker's postal order, all ready to plant on that fat fool, and that he got it into Bunter's letter, just as if I'd seen him doing it!"

"If we could prove it—"

"We can't—only to ourselves."

"I don't see even that—"

The Bounder laughed.

"If this is Carter's work, you've only got to wait for his next move! This won't serve his turn, unless he gets Hacker on Bunter's track. If he did this, and I know he did, that's his next step."

"The fellow's a crook!" muttered Bob, "just a crook!"

"All that!" agreed Smithy. "Bad to the bone! Well, I lose a quid over this—but I'd lose a dozen to dish that bound. Hacker's going to find his postal order in his study—and that will be that! I shall be late for class this afternoon."

"Eh, why?"

"Because I shall have to wait till Hacker's gone in with the Shell, before I can nip into his study! Hallo, here's dear old Bunter! He doesn't look as if he's under the chopper, does he?"

Billy Bunter rolled up, happy and shiny, and sticky. He gave the two juniors a cheery blink through his big spectacles.

"I say, Smithy, I've been looking for you!" he said. "Look here, old chap, I was going to stand a spread, out of that quid pater sent me, but—it's gone! I hardly know how it all went—but it has! It's surprising how a few things at the tuck-shop mount up, ain't it?"

"Very!" agreed the Bounder.

"Well, look here, old chap," said Bunter. "I had a postal order this morning. You know that! Fellows make a lot of jokes about a chap expecting a postal order—but it came all right, didn't it?"

"It did!" assented Smithy, while Bob Cherry stood looking at Bunter's fat, sticky face in silence.

"Well, then, you jolly well know that it's all right, what?" said Bunter. "Now, I'm expecting another postal order—from one of my titled relations, you know. You can rely on it, Smithy—it will come, just like this one did, you know. I'd like to stand that spread, after saying I would! I'm going to ask you, Smithy! Will you lend me the quid?"

The Bounder laughed.

"No!" he answered.

"I mean to say, that postal order's certain to come to-morrow!" explained Bunter. "It won't hurt you to lend me a quid till to-morrow, Smithy! It will be in the rack to-morrow morning, just as this one was this morning! You can be absolutely sure of that."

"You're sure that one this morning came from your pater?" asked the Bounder, watching Bunter's fat face intently.

"Eh? Yes, of course!" Bunter blinked at him in astonishment. "It was in his letter from home."

"Sure it wasn't Hacker's?" asked Smithy.

"Hacker's!" Bunter jumped. "How could it be Hacker's, you ass? What are you getting at, Smithy?"

"Like me to ring up your pater, and ask him whether he sent you a pound postal order?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Eh? You can if you like! Why should I care?" asked the amazed Owl. "No bizney of yours, but you can if you like, you silly fathead!"

"Well, I won't," said the Bounder, laughing, "and I won't lend you another quid, either! Roll away, old tub!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled away.

Smithy and Bob Cherry exchanged a look. Both were quite certain now. It was clear enough to them, that Bunter believed that that postal order had come in the letter from Mr. Bunter.

"That settles it, I think?" drawled Smithy.

"It does! But—that reptile—that cur—" Bob almost choked. "That snake ought to be kicked out of Greyfriars—he ought to be sent to Borstal—"

"He may be, before he's much older! This kind of game doesn't pay, in the long run! I'd bet you ten to one that he will dish himself, instead of Bunter, by the time he's through! Anyhow, we're dishing him this time!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith was five minutes late for class in the Remove-room that afternoon. Mr. Quelch duly gave him fifty lines for the same—which did not disconcert the Bounder. He winked at Bob Cherry, as he went to his place.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

Not as Per Programme!

MR. HACKER breathed hard, and he breathed deep.

He was intensely annoyed. Hacker was often annoyed—quite trivial things annoyed the Acid Drop. But this, really, was very annoying.

For a whole day he had been in a state of acid suspicion, on the subject of that missing postal order! Acid drop as he was, he shrank from the suspicion that it had been stolen from his study—neither was he anxious to make it appear that there was a pincher in

his Form! But the thing was gone—and what had become of it?

And then, coming into his study after class, he found it!

He found it quite unexpectedly!

Glancing at his table, he saw a postal order lying there, with the ink-stand on the corner to keep it down.

It had not been there the last time he was in the study, he knew that. But it was there now. He picked it up and examined it. It was his twenty-shilling postal order—the one that Carter of the Remove had fetched for him on Wednesday. The Friardale Post Office stamp, and the date on it, demonstrated that. The only difference was that the counterfoil had been torn off. That mattered little, as it did not detract from the value of the postal order. But it showed that it had passed through some fellow's hands—whose?

Mr. Hacker would have given a good deal to know!

Most unpleasant of all was the knowledge that it could not have been a Shell fellow. He had been in his study till the bell rang for class. After that the Shell had been under his eye. The postal order had been put there, under the inkstand, while he was in the Shell Form Room. So the young rascal who had taken it and returned it must belong to some other Form—unless it was one of the servants. It was not a theft; it was an irritating and annoying trick. And he had ragged and worried and suspected the Shell all day—only to discover now that no Shell fellow could have been the culprit. It was really very annoying.

Mr. Hacker compressed his thin lips hard.

However, having found the missing postal order, after all, he sat down to address a letter to his nephew Eric, slipped the postal order into it, and sealed it. He slipped the letter into his pocket to post when he went out. It was safe now, at all events.

Then he concentrated his irritated mind on the problem who had played that trick on him. He was thinking that out, with a bitter brow, when a tap came at the door of his study.

"Come in!" snapped Mr. Hacker.

It was a Remove junior who entered. Hacker stared at Carter, not at all pleased to see one of Quelch's boys.

"What is it, Carter?" he asked sharply.

"Please excuse me, sir!" said Carter smoothly. "There is something I think I ought to mention to you. It's about your postal order, sir."

Mr. Hacker's eyes glinted. He was very anxious for information on that subject.

"Indeed!" he said. "Kindly explain, Carter!"

"I'm rather disturbed about it, sir, as Bunter is a relation—a distant relation—of mine," explained Carter. "But—"

"Bunter? What has Bunter to do with it?"

"He has a postal order for twenty shillings, sir," said Carter. "As he never has any money, and as a postal order for twenty shillings is missing

from your study, sir, I—I couldn't help being disturbed about it. I thought, sir, that perhaps you might ask Bunter to let you see it."

But for the fact that Mr. Hacker had already found the missing postal order, there was no doubt that he would have jumped at that.

Certainly he would have requested—or, rather, demanded—to see a postal order for twenty shillings in any junior's hands, and would not have been satisfied till he had seen it. That would have been quite natural and inevitable in the circumstances.

But as Mr. Hacker's postal order was now enclosed in a letter in Mr. Hacker's pocket, the case was altered. He sat gazing very hard at Carter.

"I think Bunter has changed it in the Form, sir," went on Carter. "But it is not yet changed outside the school. I hope you'll excuse me, sir; but if my relation has got himself into trouble, I'm very anxious—"

A Tonic for Twopence

—and better than all the doctors' medicine in the world! You'll get it in next week's grand yarn of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled:

"BILLY BUNTER'S DEAD CERT!"

By Frank Richards,

in which you will read about Arthur Carter, the schemer of the Remove, and the fat and fatuous Billy Bunter, playing the role of amateur sportsman. Bunter has got a tip "straight from the horse's mouth," as it were. The snag is, getting hold of a "bookie" and getting the money "on" without being spotted by the powers that be. Carter, naturally enough, does his best to lead the fat Removeite on! Laugh! You'll be tickled to death when you read this spanking fine yarn in next Saturday's

MAGNET.

Mr. Hacker rose to his feet.

"That will do, Carter!" he said bitterly. "I have been the victim of a disrespectful trick! Some boy, whose identity I cannot guess, took the postal order away from my study yesterday, and returned it here this afternoon—"

Carter jumped.

"Returned it!" he gasped.

He stared at the master of the Shell like a fellow in a dream.

"You did not expect to hear that, Carter?" said Mr. Hacker sardonically.

"Had you been aware that the disrespectful practical joker had returned the postal order, you would not have come here with this cock-and-bull story."

Carter gazed at him—dumb.

That the purloined postal order was back in Mr. Hacker's possession seemed to him wildly impossible. Yet it was evidently the case, from Hacker's own words. With his brain in a whirl of

stupefied amazement, the wretched schemer stared at Hacker.

Mr. Hacker picked up a cane from the table.

"As a rule," he said, "I should not cane a boy outside my own Form. But as you have chosen to come to my study, Carter, to delude me with this tale, you will take the consequences! I shall be happy to explain to Mr. Quelch, if necessary! Bend over that table, Carter!"

"I—I—" stammered Carter. "I—I—I thought—"

"You thought it would be an excellent joke—a leg-pull, no doubt, you would call it—to cause me to intervene in Mr. Quelch's Form and follow a wild-goose chase!" said Mr. Hacker, still sardonic.

"I quite understand! You and your friends would, no doubt, laugh heartily at wasting my time and causing me to ask disagreeable questions of a boy who knows nothing of the matter! Oh, quite! But I am not so easily deluded, Carter!"

"I—I—"

"If you do not bend over that table, Carter, I shall take you by the collar!" said Mr. Hacker grimly. "I am going to make you understand, beyond the possibility of doubt, that I am not a proper subject for your leg-pulling propensities! Will you bend over that table?"

Carter backed a step towards the door.

Mr. Hacker promptly grabbed him by the collar. With Carter's collar in his left, he wielded the cane with his right.

Whack whack, whack, whack, whack, whack!

Hacker laid every whack on hard.

Carter squirmed and wriggled and yelled. But he had a full six, and every one of the six was a swipe!

Then Mr. Hacker opened the study door, bundled him into the passage, and shut the door on him. He was feeling more pleasant now. He had not discovered who had played tricks with his postal order, but he had, at least, soundly punished a cheeky young rascal who had intended to pull his leg on the subject—or so, at least, the Acid Drop believed.

Carter, squirming from the caning and red with rage, amazed and chagrined and disappointed, squirmed away down the passage. Two Remove fellows were waiting at the corner.

"Try again, you cur!" said Bob Cherry.

"Yes, try again—and book a room at Borstal; you'll want one!" said the Bounder.

Carter gave them a glare, and squirmed on. They knew—how, he could not guess, but they knew! Whether they knew or not, he was beaten; the outcome of his scheme had been a thrashing from Hacker—merely that, and nothing more! It was really enough to make the schemer of the Remove wonder whether honesty, after all, was not the best policy!

THE END.

(Having failed so many times to get Billy Bunter into trouble, will Carter give it up as a bad job? For the answer see next Saturday's MAGNET.)

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THE HUNTING HEADMASTER!

New Serial—First Instalment

By DICKY NUGENT

"Where is he?"

Jack Jolly, of the St. Sam's Fourth, asked that question in egg-sperated tones. His pals, Fearless and Merry and Bright, shook their heads.

"Give it up," said Bright.

"It's a mystery," said Merry. "It's not like the Head to disappear like this—especially at tea-time!"

"Blow the blessed Head, anyway!" said Frank Fearless, with tippical recklessness. "He said he wanted our impots by tea-time, and we've done them. If we leave them in his study, we've done our bit—whether he's there or not!"

Jolly and Merry and Bright looked dubious. That mite have been all right with an ordinary headmaster. But Doctor Alfred Birchmall was no ordinary headmaster. Quite the reverse, in fact!

When the Head had caught Jack Jolly & Co. bumping Snarler that morning he had ordered them all, Snarler included, to hand him fifty lines by tea-time. And when the Head said "hand," hand was what he meant!

But now that the heroes of the Fourth had done their lines they could not find the Head to hand him over the impots.

They had to look for him in all the

likely places, including the tuckshop, the Junior Common room, and the Second Form-room—but without success.

Nobody had seen him in any of these places. Where to look next was a bit of a puzzle; and yet the Co. felt very dubious about merely dumping the impots on his study table.

"Your idea would be all right, Fearless, old chap," remarked Jolly, "if only the Head wasn't such a bossy tyrant. The worst of it is, if we leave the impots in his study, as likely as not he'll say we weren't carrying out his instructions, and give us all a whopping with his birch."

"True enuff!" nodded Fearless. "Hallo! Here's Snarler! Perhaps he knows. Seen the Head, Snarler?"

"No; I'm looking for him," growled Snarler. "I want to hand him this impot."

"Looks as if we're all in the same boat," grinned Jack Jolly. "I wonder where the thump—" "Lissen!" ejaculated Bright at that instant.

The Fourth Formers lissened. To their grate relief, they then heard the Head's voice.

"That's the Head right enuff,"

said Fearless. "He's in the one place where we didn't look—the jim! Come on, you fellows!"

Grately surprized at the Head being in such a place at tea-time, the juniors moved off towards the jimmynasium. As they drew nearer, they distingwished his voice more clearly and their surprize increased when they found that he was shouting out cries usually heard on the hunting-field.

"Yoicks! Gee-up! Tally-ho!" he was yelling.

"Grate pip! What's the old buffer up to?" asked Jack Jolly wonderingly. "Has he taken leave of his senses?"

Frank Fearless grinned. "If you ask my opinion, he said good-bye to them a long time ago!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Tally-ho! Tally-ho! A-hunting we will go!" came the Head's bellowing voice from the jim. "Yoicks! Whoa, maro! Gee-up!"

"My hat!" The Fourth Formers broke into a run—and a couple of seconds later broke into the jim.

despair was in every line of his face. He was utterly bowed down with inexpressible grief.

"My penny!" he kept on moaning.

Back at Greyfriars, he broke down completely. He was taken to the sanny and kept in bed in a darkened ward. Sorrow had shattered his health.

Since that black day he has slowly recovered, and now he is out and about again.

It would be nice to be able to say that everything turned out all right in the end—that he went back to the pin-table saloon and recovered his penny. Alas! I can tell you nothing so pleasant as that.

When he did go back it was only to find that all the pin-tables had gone and the place was locked up. There was a sign up in one of the windows: "TO LET."

Fishy didn't collapse again. He was beyond it. He just uttered a bitter, hollow laugh and passed on. And though, to outward appearance, he is still the same, we who know him well know that the light has gone out of Fishy's life. He is a broken man because tragedy came to him in a fun fair.

Awful, isn't it?



The GREYFRIARS HERALD

No. 281.

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

February 26th, 1938.



HARRY WHARTON CALLING!

We have become so used to regarding Bob Cherry as the champion boxer of the Remove that it seems quite strange to hear of anyone doubting his supremacy.

Yet some of our readers have taken it into their heads to ask whether there isn't a dark horse amongst us who might dispute Bob's claim to the title. Some of them have asked the pertinent question: "How long is it since he defended it, anyway?"

The answer to that question is that the boxing championship of the Remove is not a cut-and-dried affair, ruled and judged by any kind of boxing board or athletic commission. It simply happens to be the opinion of most fellows that Bob Cherry is the best boxer in the Remove, and that's that!

But since some of you readers have raised the matter, it has occurred to me that it would be a bright idea if we got to work and held a series of contests to make sure that there is no mistake about it.

I have been turning it over in my mind for a week or two, and finally I have put it to an improvised committee of Remove sportsmen.

I feel you will all be pleased to know that the idea has met with an enthusiastic reception. The committee has decided definitely to hold a competition to find the champion boxer of the Remove, and the first round of the competition will be held next week.

How's that, chums? Nice work, eh? I knew you'd like it!

Let me add that the competition is going to be no hole-and-corner business, either. We have approached Mr. Lascelles and Wingate and obtained their sanction and support; and the contests will all take place in the gym before qualified judges of the noble art. Seats will be provided round the ring for spectators, and all I wish is that our readers could be there to see the fun.

I am looking forward to the competition eagerly myself, and I may say that, in spite of our old friendship, I shall try my utmost to go one better than Bob.

I have arranged for Vernon Smith to report on the fights, and you can rely on the Bounder giving you a crisp and racy account of all that happens. Look out for his first special article next week!

All the very best, chums!

HARRY WHARTON.

BUNTER IS SURE TO BE RATTLED!

The Head is thinking of forbidding the borrowing of other fellows' bikes.

If this compels Bunter to use his own old jigger again, it will be a "rattling" good idea.

PUNISHMENT TO FIT CRIME!

Coker, who is still at large with his motor-bike, wonders what he is likely to get for knocking down the kitchen garden fencing.

Our suggestion—a "gating."



(What dark scheme is forming in Snarler's brain? For the answer, read next week's hilarious instalment!)

THOUGHTLESS!

Skinner really should be more careful in class. What can you do with a chap who answers the geographical question: "Where do we get our tobacco?" by saying: "At the back door of the cigar shop in Courtfield!"

GREYFRIARS FROM FRESH ANGLES

1. Behind The Tuckshop Counter

By JESSIE MIMBLE

Dearie me! A nice task you boys have set me, writing for the papers at my time of life! Well, well, I can only tell folks in my own way how Greyfriars School appears to me from behind the tuckshop counter!

What it mostly seems like is just a collection of hungry boys, all clamouring to be served first!

Bless me! The way they struggle and push, you would think they had had nothing to eat for a week; and yet, as like as not, they have only just finished their dinner!

But that's not to say that all the customers in my shop are alike. Dearie me, no! There are fat ones and thin ones and rich ones and poor ones—and, in fact, a more mixed collection of boys you could never wish to meet, I declare.

The boy who would like to be my best customer is really and truly the worst. His name is Billy Bunter, and a more greedy or silly boy I never wish to see. The things that boy has said to try to get me to allow him credit would fill a volume as big as my cookery-book!

Lord Mauloverer spends more than anybody else in my shop, and a very nice, agreeable young man his lordship is, too.

But I don't want you to think I just like the boys for what they spend. Oh dear, no! Some of the boys with very little to spend are great favourites of mine; and, on the other hand, there are one or two of my most profitable customers of whom I have a very low opinion.

Master Loder, for instance, comes in with all the airs and

graces imaginable and talks to me as if I were dirt beneath his feet. But I think maybe he will be more respectful after yesterday. He was even more rude than usual, and it provoked me so much that I took one of my jam tarts and squashed it on his face. It was a threepenny one, too; but if it improves Master Loder's manners I shall consider it well worth the expense.

Yes, it's true that I have my trials and troubles in the tuckshop. But there's a lot that makes up for them. On a sunny summer's day I would not change my little shady nook under the elms for a mansion, I can assure you. It's nice to see the old school buildings across the quad and the green playing-fields in the distance. And even though the boys are bewildering with all their orders, their pranks and prattlings keep me young.

And now I can see a crowd of them walking over from football, with those nice boys, Master Wharton and Master Cherry, at the front. So I must stop writing and get back to my work!

(Spare our blushes!—Ed.)

TRAGEDY IN A FUN FAIR!

By S. Q. I. FIELD

What attracted Fishy about the new pin-table saloon in Courtfield High Street was the sign "ADMISSION FREE." Fishy never can resist anything free.

I was with Fishy, so, although fun fairs are all out of bounds, I went in with him.

The pin-tables, of course, were not free. They cost a penny a go. But there was one attraction from Fishy's point of view. Each pin-table contained an announcement that if you scored 5,000 you won a sixpenny box of chocolates.

Fishy gazed long and hard at that notice. Eventually he drew out his purse, took out a penny from it, and put it in the slot. It must have been an unusually thick one. It stuck.

Fishy tried to pull it back again. It wouldn't come. He tried to press it in. It wouldn't go. A look of alarm came into Fishy's hatched face.

"I guess that penny looks like it's stuck," he said. "Where's the guy that looks after the joint?"

Well, the guy that

tightly set and back lunched, he sprang at the pin-table. His thumb descended on the protruding portion of his penny and he made a desperate onslaught. Then he changed his tactics and started wrestling with the whole machine. Minute after minute the fearsome struggle went on, till at last,

looked after the joint had gone out for a cup of tea. The only official left was an undersized kid who was now to the place and had no idea how the machines worked. What was still more alarming to Fishy was that he had no pennies for refunds to dissatisfied customers, either.

Fishy went back to the pin-table. He thumped it, he rattled it, he rocked it, he kicked it, he climbed on top of it, he went down on his hands and knees underneath it. Nothing happened. The penny still obstinately refused to budge.

Fishy's alarm changed to complete panic.

"I guess we gotta do something!" he yelled. "We've only got five minutes before we catch our train back. Maybe the guy won't be back from his tea."

"More than likely," I agreed. "What are you going to do about it?"

Fishy answered by deeds—not words. With lips

with deep and tender sympathy. I told him the dreadful news that we could wait no longer or we would miss our train.

Never as long as I live, dear readers, shall I forget the heartrending groan that burst from Fishy's lips at that announcement.

I led him away. Blank

