

# THE FIRST CHAPTER The Voice!

"NO, Master Bunter! I would not dream of it!"

Dame Mimble's tone was firm—and final.

Billy Bunter gave the tuckshop dame an appealing blink. But Dame Mimble was proof against appealing blinks. She had been proof, also, against Bunter's stream of eloquence. For the space of five minutes, the fat junior had begged, and entreated, and cajoled, but all to no purpose.

It was the old, old story. Billy Bunter was hungry, and he badly wanted some jamtarts; but he lacked the wherewithal to procure them. He had therefore requested to be supplied with the tarts on credit—to be paid for as soon as his postal-order

turned up.

Mrs. Mimble knew that postal-order—and she knew Bunter! And she was not to be drawn. She pointed out to the fat junior, as she had done many a time and oft, that her establishment was a tuckshop, not a tick-shop.

Billy Bunter launched a last appeal.

"Oh, really, ma'am! If you realised how fearfully hungry I am—jolly nearly starving, in fact—you'd serve me without a moment's hesitation! It's nearly locking-up time, and I've had nothing to eat since tea. And I shall get nothing more for twelve hours! People have died of starvation in less time than that. You wouldn't like to see me starve; would you? You wouldn't like to attend the inquest, and to have to admit that you refused to serve me with the nourishment which would have saved me?"

"Don't be dramatic, Master Bunter."

"Six twopenny tarts!" pleaded Bunter. "And you shall have the shilling first thing in the morning. My postal-order's bound to arrive then. It's been in the post since—"

"The day you first came to Greyfriars?"

suggested Dame Mimble sarcastically.

"Since the day before yesterday!" said Bunter desperately. "But it's been hung up somewhere. These incompetent postal officials, you know—"

"Kindly leave my shop, Master Bunter.

I am waiting to put up the shutters."

Dame Mimble's tone showed clearly that

the discussion was closed. But Billy Bunter lingered. Hope was dead in his breast; yet he could not tear himself away.

"Dame Mimble!"

The name was suddenly rapped out in a harsh voice—a voice that sounded strangely uncanny. It seemed to come from the ceiling, and Mrs. Mimble gave a startled jump, and gazed upwards.

The tuckshop was in semi-darkness, and that voice had a most unnerving effect. Describing her sensations afterwards to her husband, the school gardener, Mrs. Mimble admitted that she was "all of a-trimble."

" Dame Mimble!"

The name was repeated—more insistently this time; and again the voice seemed to

come from the ceiling.

Dame Mimble stared upwards with starting eyes, but in the half-light she saw nothing—though she hardly knew what she had expected to see.

"Mercy me!" gasped the tuckshop dame, in great alarm. "Who-who is calling?"

"I am the Ghost of Greyfriars!"

That alarming information was imparted in the same weird, uncanny voice.

Billy Bunter, still lingering in the shop,

uttered a startled yelp.

"The—the Ghost of Greyfriars?" faltered Mrs. Mimble.

"I have spoken!"

Dame Mimble shivered. Had it been broad daylight, she might have laughed at the idea of a ghost. She was a practical, matter-of-fact person, who did not believe in such phenomena as "ghosties and ghoulies, and things that go bump in the night."

But the Voice? It was not, apparently, the voice of any human being. It had scared Bunter, and it scared Dame Mimble. She decided to light the gas, with a view to locating the owner of the voice; but somelhow her limbs refused to function, and she

stood rooted to the floor.

"I—I say, ma'am——'' faltered Billy

Bunter.

"Be silent, varlet! I have nought to say to thee. I would fain hold converse with Dame Mimble. Dost hear me, dame?" "Ye-e-s," quavered Mrs. Mimble. And she wondered whether she ought to add "sir." Not having conversed with spooks before, she could not be sure whether or not they were entitled to that respectful appellation.

"Listen!" went on the voice. "This night, and for many nights to come, I will haunt thy premises!"

"G-g-good gracious!"

"I depart now, but at the witching hour of midnight I will return, to affright thee!"

Dame Mimble shuddered.

"As for that plump and scurvy knave "continued the Voice."

Billy Bunter did not wait to hear more. Panic appeared to seize him, and he fled precipitately from the tuckshop.

The Ghost of Greyfriars seemed to vanish at the same time; for Mrs. Mimble, listening apprehensively for the Voice to continue, heard no more.

When she had recovered the power of movement, the tuckshop dame put up her shutters, and locked up. Then she hurried into the friendly light of her parlour, where she awaited the homecoming of her husband, eager to apprise Mr. Mimble of the weird happenings which had disturbed the tranquillity of her mind.

Mr. Mimble arrived at length, and listened to his wife's story. He was bluntly, almost brutally sceptical. He averred, emphatically, that there were no such things as ghosts, and that Dame Mimble had imagined it all. When she pointed out that Billy Bunter had also heard the voice, Mr. Mimble was not impressed.

"Wot I says is this 'ere—you both imaginated it!" he said, with a snort.

"Very well," retorted Mrs. Mimble. "Just you wait till midnight, Joseph, and

then p'r'aps you'll be convinced."

Mr. Joseph Mimble shook his head doggedly, and knocked out his pipe, and picked up the evening paper. He was not prepared to discuss the Ghost of Greyfriars any further; indeed, he was quite satisfied in his own mind, and in his own words, that "there wasn't no sich person."

# THE SECOND CHAPTER The Witching Hour!

M IDNIGHT came—and with it came the ghostly visitant, as per promise, or rather threat.

In their bed-room over the tuckshop, Mr. and Mrs. Mimble passed a very uncomfortable ten minutes. They, saw nothing—not even when Mr. Mimble rose reluctantly from his bed and lighted a candle; but they certainly heard something.

The weird, uncanny voice, which had startled Mrs. Mimble in the twilight, now informed them that the Ghost of Greyfriars was present.

Mr. Mimble had laughed at his wife's fears; but he didn't laugh now. He stood quaking and shaking, candlestick in hand, blinking round the room like a frightened owl.

"Joseph Mimble!" said the Voice sternly. "Tremble!"

The command was superfluous, Joseph Mimble was already trembling like an aspen leaf.

to haunt thee!" went on the Voice. "Canst thou see me?"

Mr. Mimble directed a startled glance at the ceiling, from whence the Voice seemed to come; then he blinked all round the room.

The candlelight cast strange shadows over the walls and ceiling. They might have been merely shadows; on the other hand, one of them might have been the outline of a ghostly form.

"Canst see me?" insisted the Voice, which now seemed to come from beneath the bed.

" Nunno!" gasped Mr. Mimble.

"Look under the bed, Joseph," urged Mrs. Mimble, with chattering teeth.

Very reluctantly, Mr. Mimble dropped on all fours. In a state of abject terror, he grovelled on the floor, and nerved himself to lift up the counterpane which overlapped the bed. But the flickering light of the candle revealed no crouching, ghostly form.

Then the Voice spoke again; and this time it seemed to come from inside the wardrobe. "Joseph Mimble! Thou art a craven



"As for that plump and scurvy knave—" continued the Voice, Billy Bunter did not "I have come hither wait to hear more, but fled precipitately from the tuckshop! (See previous page.)

wight! Screw up thy courage, man, and investigate!"

"Look in the wardrobe, Joseph," advised Mrs. Mimble.

Mr. Mimble picked himself up, and staggered across to the wardrobe. With his disengaged hand, he threw it open, half-expecting a grisly phantom to spring out at him.

But nothing happened.

"Joseph Mimble!" said the Voice. "I come to warn thee that some day thou shalt surely die!"

"Wow!" yelped Mr. Mimble. And the perspiration stood out in beads on his fore-head.

This time, the voice had seemed to come

from the window.

"Go to the window, Joseph!" commanded Mrs. Mimble.

And her husband tremblingly obeyed. He crossed to the little casement, and peered out into the blackness.

Greyfriars stood still and silent under the frowning midnight sky. There was no movement or motion in the dusky Close.

Mr. Mimble had more than expected to find a ghostly figure perched upon the outer window-sill. He was agreeably disappointed.

And then, just as he withdrew his nightcapped head, the Voice sounded in his ear,

at startlingly close quarters.

"Coward! Poltroon! Thou fearest me! Pah! I would fain strike thee with my spectral hand—"

"Yaroooo!"

With a wild yell of terror, Mr. Mimble thrust the candlestick on to the nearest chair, and darted towards his bed. He scrambled in, and drew the bedclothes over his head, and lay there, trembling as if with the ague. Mr. Mimble was no longer sceptical on the subject of ghosts. He would not be prepared to take an affidavit that he had seen one; but he had certainly heard one, and that was quite enough. In fact, it was more than enough!

The Voice was not heard again, for which Joseph Mimble and his wife were truly

thankful.

For over an hour they remained awake, expecting further molestation; but apparently the Ghost of Greyfriars had flitted away into the night. And Mr. and Mrs. Mimble fell into a troubled and uneasy slumber.

Morning came—a sunny spring morning—and the terrors of the night were dispersed like a flock of rooks at a farmer's

gun.

It seemed difficult to believe, in broad daylight, that the Greyfriars tuckshop was haunted. But Dame Mimble and her husband knew only too well that it was. They had their alarming midnight experi-

ence as proof.

Probably nobody else would have accepted it as proof. The Greyfriars fellows would have laughed to scorn the notion of the tuckshop being haunted. They would have put the whole thing down to a vivid imagination on the part of the Mimbles—or possibly nightmare. Certainly they would have discredited the story of the Ghost of Greyfriars.

"We'd better not mention this affair to any of the young gents, Joseph," said Mrs. Mimble, over the breakfast-table. "I hope Master Bunter hasn't done so. We should only be laughed at, and told that it was pure fancy on our part."

Mr. Mimble nodded.

"We won't say nothin' about it," he agreed. "But I'll tell you this, Jessie—I ain't goin' to sleep on these 'ere premises to-night, not if I knows it! That spook will be pretty certain to turn up again at midnight; an' my nerves wouldn't stand it! I ain't a timid man, by no means. I'd tackle anythin' in flesh an' blood. But when it comes to the soopernatural—"

"You didn't believe in ghosts last

night," Mrs. Mimble reminded him.

"No; but I believes in 'em now—I believes in 'em implicit. An' I wouldn't sleep over this 'ere shop again, not if I was offered an 'undred pounds! Why, I'd as soon sleep in the Chamber of 'Orrors at Madam Two-swords! We must take rooms down in the village, my dear. I'll fix it up durin' the day."

"But what about the shop, Joseph?" protested Mrs. Mimble. "Somebody will have to be on the premises. We can't leave the

place unguarded."

Mr. Mimble stroked his chin thoughtfully. He saw the point clearly enough. It would not be good policy to leave the tuckshop to the mercy of a possible raider. Even with the shop shuttered, there were ways and means by which an agile person might gain access.

"I know!" said Mr. Mimble suddenly.
"I'll let Gosling, the porter, into the

secret, an' ask 'im to sleep over the shop to-night. Gosling reckons 'e's mighty brave, an' not afraid of ghosts. Well, 'ere's a chance for 'im to prove 'is mettle.''

So saying, Joseph Mimble rose from the breakfast-table, and made his way across the Close to the porter's lodge, outside which stood William Gosling, leaning upon a broom, and surveying the sunny spring morning with a jaundiced eye.

After a brief conversation with Gosling,

Mr. Mimble returned, looking rather crestfallen, to the tuckshop.

"No go!" he said lugubriously. "Gosling refuses to come an' sleep over the shop. E won't believe a word about the ghost. Says it's all stuff an' nonsense. But it's my belief that Gosling's scared stiff!"

Mrs. Mimble nodded.

"Well, we shall have to get somebody to sleep on the premises," she said. "If we can't, we must stop here ourselves."

"Not for a pension!" said Joseph Mimble emphatically. "We're goin' to sleep in the village to-night

—I'll see to that. I must be off to work now. Couldn't you take one of the young gents into your confidence, an' get 'im to come an' sleep over the shop? It would 'ave to be a secret arrangement, of course. The 'Ead wouldn't approve of such goings hon.''

"I'll try Master Wharton," said Mrs. Mimble. "He's a boy I can thoroughly trust, and he's got any amount of pluck."

Mr. Mimble signified his approval, and went off to his day's work in the Head's garden.

# THE THIRD CHAPTER Bunter's Pluck!

BILLY BUNTER rolled cheerfully into

"Good-morning, ma'am!" he said genially, blinking at Dame Mimble through his big spectacles.

"Good-morning, Master Bunter!"

Mrs. Mimble beckoned confidentially to the fat junior, and lowered her voice.

"Have you told anybody about what

happened last night?"

"Eh? About the

"Eh? About the Ghost of Greyfriars, do you mean? No, I haven't told a soul. Nobody would believe me, if I did."

Mrs. Mimble looked relieved.

"I'm glad of that," she said. "I don't want this story to get a bout. Everybody, would laugh at us."

"Of course!" said Bunter. "Hardly anybody at Greyfrians believes in ghosts. By the way, did the spook turn up again at midnight, as he threatened to?"

"Yes," said Dame Minible, with a shiver. "It—it was terrible, Master Bunter! We

could hear that voice coming from all parts of the room, but we couldn't actually see the ghost. And we didn't want to, either! We are not going to sleep here to-night. Mr. Mimble intends to take rooms in the village."

"A jolly good wheeze!" said Billy Bunter. "But I suppose you'll have somebody on the premises, just to keep guard?"

"I have just been discussing that with Mr. Mimble," said the dame, with a worried look.

"You ought really to get somebody, you know. You need some fearless, lion-hearted



The candlelight cast strange shadows over the walls and ceiling; one of them might have been the outline of a ghostly form. "Canst see me?" insisted the voice. "Nunno!" gasped Mr. Mimble. (See Chapter 2.)

fellow, who would snap his fingers at a blessed ghost."

Mrs. Mimble nodded.

"I was thinking of asking Master

Wharton---'' she began.

"Wharton!" Billy Bunter's tone was scornful and contemptuous. "Why, he hasn't the pluck of a rabbit! If Wharton saw a ghost, he'd turn up his toes!"

Dame Mimble smiled.

"You weren't exactly a hero yourself last night, Master Bunter," she said. "You soon bolted when you heard that voice!"

"I didn't!" exclaimed the fat junior, in hot denial. "I'll tell you why I buzzed off in such a hurry. I saw by your clock that it was time for calling-over, and I was afraid I should be late."

" Oh!"

"Look here, ma'am. I shouldn't say a word to Wharton about this business, if I were you. He'd only laugh at you, and so would all his pals. Nobody believes in ghosts."

Mrs. Mimble felt that Bunter was right.

She wrung her hands helplessly.

"But what am I to do?" she said.
"Somebody ought to be here to-night——"

"I'm your man!" said Bunter promptly.

"You!"

Dame Mimble's tone, and look, were expressive of blank amazement. She had never regarded Billy Bunter as being of the stuff of which heroes are made. She found it difficult to picture the fat junior enduring a lonely vigil in the room overhead, and defying the Ghost of Greyfriars, and denouncing him by bell, book, and candle, so to speak.

Billy Bunter nodded his head vigorously "I'm quite game to sleep over your shop to-night, ma'am. You wouldn't find another fellow, not in all Greyfriars, who'd be willing to do it. They wouldn't see any necessity for it. But I'll take on the job! When you close your shop to-night, leave the key of your private door with me; and after lights out I'll come along here and take up my post as night-watchman. Is that a go, ma'am?"

Dame Mimble hesitated. She had no great

liking for Billy Bunter; and her opinion of his physical bravery was not very high.

But it was necessary to find somebody who would agree to guard the premises; and, since Bunter had volunteered for that hazardous job, in defiance of the ghost and the "voice," why not close with his offer?

It occurred to Dame Mimble, for a fleeting moment, that the provisions and foodstuffs in her shop would not be safe, with Billy Bunter in close proximity. But she quickly dismissed from her mind the notion that Bunter might tamper with her supplies. For the tuckshop was haunted; and the presence of the Ghost of Greyfriars on the premises would effectively check any attempt at a raid, even if Bunter dared to contemplate such a thing. With that uncanny "Voice" close at hand, reproving and admonishing, it was extremely unlikely that Bunter would feel like helping himself to food from the tuckshop. Indeed, that weird and terrifying voice would probably have the effect of taking away his appetite.

"Are you really serious, Master Bunter?" asked Mrs. Mimble, at length.

" Absolutely!"

"You are not afraid to spend the night in the room overhead?"

"A Bunter is never afraid, ma'am."

"But supposing they find that you are absent from your dormitory?"

Billy Bunter shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, I'll chance that, ma'am!" he said carelessly. "I'll come here after lights out, and stay till daybreak. There won't be any ghosts after dawn; they always vanish at cock-crow, you know."

"I hope you won't be dreadfully scared, Master Bunter, when midnight comes, and

you hear the Voice!"

Billy Bunter scornfully repudiated that

suggestion.

"It would take more than a voice to scare me!" he declared. "I'm not a funk. I fear no foe in shining armour—or ghostly trappings!"

"It is good of you to help us in this way, Master Bunter," said Dame Mimble grate-

fully.

"Yes, it is, isn't it?" said the fat junior

with whom modesty was not a cardinal virtue. "Awfully decent of me, really; but then, I was always a generous and obliging sort of chap. Ahem! I wonder if you would let me have a few jam-tarts, ma'am? I'm expecting the postman at any moment, and I'll settle for them as soon as he comes."

Dame Mimble promptly passed a dish of tarts across the counter, and Billy Bunter fell upon them like a ravenous wolf. Perched on a stool, the fat junior proceeded to enjoy



"Awfully decent of me, really," said the fat junior.
"Ahem I I wonder if you would let me have a few jam-tarts, ma'am?" (See this page.)

himself. He felt that he needed a little snack, to whet his appetite for breakfast.

Dame Mimble did not begrudge the jamtarts. She was only too relieved to have found someone who was willing to spend the night on her premises. Neither she nor her husband cared to stay and risk another midnight visitation from the Ghost of Greyfriars. Their hair-raising experiences of the previous night had inspired them with a wholesome dread of invisible ghosts—unseen, but not unheard!

# THE FOURTH CHAPTER A Hard Life!

"Vou fellows awake?"

Billy Bunter sat up in bed, and peered through the gloom, and waited breathlessly for a response to his softly

uttered query.

But there was no response. The members of the Greyfriars Remove, with the exception of William George Bunter, were in the arms of Morpheus. The only sound which broke the silence of the Remove dormitory

was the booming snore of Bolsover

major.

Billy Bunter slipped quietly out of bed, and dressed in the darkness. He donned a pair of rubber-soled shoes, and stole quietly from the dormitory.

The fat junior chuckled softly as he groped his way down the wide staircase. Jingling in his trousers pocket was a bunch of keys—the keys of the school

tuckshop.

It had been one of Billy Bunter's most dearly cherished ambitions to become the custodian of those keys for a few hours. They were as precious to him as the keys of Paradise, for they gave access to a glorious realm of unlimited tuck—a land flowing with milk and honey, as it were.

Even in his wildest dreams, Bunter had never seriously thought that he would ever obtain possession of the keys of the tuckshop, or be in a position to pass the night in that delightful establishment. But he had the keys now; and the tuck-

shop was at his mercy.

Strangely enough, the fat junior did not seem a bit perturbed at the prospect of receiving a midnight visit from the Ghost of Greyfriars. He was remarkably cheerful, for a fellow who was about to undergo a nerve-racking ordeal. Perhaps the traditional bravery of the Bunters—of which William George was so fond of prating—stood him in good stead now.

On reaching the ground-floor, Billy Bunter made his way cautiously to the end box-room. He raised the window, and started to squeeze his huge bulk through the aperture. Owing to his rotundity, he



Even Bunter's voracious appetite was satiated at last. He seemed in imminent peril of bursting, and it was some time before he could move. (See this page.)

got stuck for one painful moment; his head and shoulders were out in the Close, and his legs and pedal extremities were still in the box-room. Bunter felt much as King Charles the First must have felt when making his memorable attempt at escape from the window of Carisbrooke Castle. But the fat junior managed to wriggle himself through at last, and he dropped down into the dusky Close—quite an easy drop.

Billy Bunter stole through the shadows in the direction of the tuckshop.

Standing in silent isolation, in a corner of the Close, the building was in utter darkness, and its aspect was ghostly and forbidding. Braver hearts than Bunter's might have quailed at the prospect of entering the place, knowing it to be haunted. Yet Bunter was chuckling quite gleefully as he made his way to Mrs. Mimble's private entrance at the back.

He unlocked the door, and let himself in, and passed through the little parlour into

the shop.

If Billy Bunter had heard a ghostly voice, or felt the touch of a clammy spectral hand on his cheek, he would probably have

jumped out of his skin. But he heard no voice, and he felt no icy touch. The only sound which broke the silence of the tuckshop was the scuttling of a mouse, which had been disturbed whilst having late supper in a biscuit-tin, the lid of which Dame Mimble had inadvertently left off.

Billy Bunter lit the gas. Owing to the window being shuttered, there was no fear of the light being seen from without.

The sudden blaze of illumination flooded the tuckshop, and revealed a choice array of foodstuffs stacked upon the shelves.

Boneath glass covers, Billy Bunter had a vision of tempting jam-tarts, and doughnuts, and meringues, and maids-of-honour. In Mrs. Mimble's safe was a large steak-and-kidney pie, recently baked. Affixed to the counter was a corpulent barrel of homemade ginger-beer.

Certainly there was no danger of Bunter

starving in the midst of plenty!

The fat junior smacked his lips, and

blinked around the shop.

It was Bunter's intention to have the feed of his life, but he scarcely knew where to start. The tuckshop contained a vast and varied assortment of good things—" infinite riches in a little room," as the poet puts it—and it was difficult to decide which delicacy to sample first.

But Billy Bunter did not hesitate for long! He went from dish to dish, lifting the glass covers, and taking a nibble here, and a nibble there—sampling a little of

everything.

An hour passed—one crowded hour of glorious bliss, so far as Billy Bunter was concerned. And by the time the hour expired, the fat marauder had sampled not merely a little of everything, but quite a lot of everything!

Bunter had fairly let himself go, and he had done himself well—too well, in fact. It was as if a meat-eater, after a long period of enforced vegetarianism, had been

suddenly let loose in a chop-house!

Even Bunter's voracious appetite was satiated at last. Like the average London omnibus, he had "no room inside." The fat junior seemed in imminent peril of

bursting, and it was some time before he could move.

At last he managed to summon enough energy to extinguish the gas, and heave him-

self upstairs.

The bed-room had been neatly prepared for him; but Bunter was in no state to notice that. He felt considerably the worse for food, having taken far too much cargo on board; and his one desire was for sleep.

Partially undressing, Billy Bunter



"Mrs. Mimble begged me to come and sleep here, because of the ghost," said Bunter. "This tuckshop is haunted, sir, by a fearful apparition in white, with clanking chains—" (See this page.)

crawled between the sheets, and was soon sound asleep.

Midnight came, and passed; but the Ghost of Greyfriars, apparently, was taking a night off!

When Dame Mimble arrived at the tuckshop next morning, it was to find Billy Bunter still in bed, and uttering heartrending moans. Bunter's complexion was almost green, and he was obviously in the throes of a bilious attack.

Dame Mimble's next discovery was of an

alarming depletion in her stock. She at once connected the depletion with Bunter's bilious attack, and she accused the fat junior, accordingly, of having raided her supplies during the night.

Billy Bunter indignantly denied the charge. If there was anything missing, he averred, the Ghost of Greyfriars must be

held fully responsible.

By this time, Dame Mimble was seriously beginning to doubt whether the Ghost of

Greyfriars was an existent entity. She began to suspect Bunter, not only of raiding her supplies, but of engineering the whole business.

A little later, when Mr. Quelch, the Remove-master, came into the tuckshop for his morning glass of milk, Dame Mimble sent him upstairs

to interview Bunter.

The interview was a painful one. Under Mr. Quelch's stern and searching cross-examination, Billy Bunter floundered helplessly, in a sea of denials and contradictions.

"I don't know anything about the grub being raided, sir!" he declared. "I haven't budged from this bed all night, sir—honour bright!"

"You have no business to be in this bed at all, Bunter!" said Mr.

Quelch sternly.

"Oh, really, sir——Mrs. Mimble begged me to come and sleep here, because of the ghost. This tuckshop is haunted, sir, by a fearful appari-

tion in white, with clanking chains—"
"Nonsense, Bunter!" Mr. Quelch looked very grim. "I think we shall find that the 'ghost' is a very substantial one of flesh and blood!"

Billy Bunter quaked beneath the bed-

"I—I hope Mrs. Mimble hasn't been making accusations against me, sir," he said. "It's quite wrong to say that the ghostly voice was due to my ventriloquism:

" What!"

"And if Mrs. Mimble suggests that I

climbed up to the fanlight over her bedroom, the night before last, and scared her and her husband by throwing my voice all round the room, I can only say that it's an awful

fib, sir!"

"Bunter!" The voice of Mr. Quelch resembled the rumble of thunder. "What you have just told me is tantamount to an admission that you have been scaring Mr. and Mrs. Mimble with your ventriloquial tricks! You succeeded, in fact, in scaring them off the premises."

"Oh, really, sir-"

"I can clearly see what has occurred," said the Remove-master. "By means of ventriloquism, you deluded Mrs. Mimble and her husband into believing that the place was haunted. You then volunteered to sleep on the premises, with the object of helping yourself to the supplies, and holding a disgusting orgy. Such conduct, Bunter, merits condign punishment. When you are sufficiently recovered from your revolting state of biliousness, I shall take you before the Headmaster!"

"But-but you've got it all wrong, sir!"

protested Billy Bunter. "I used to be a jolly good ventriloquist, but I've given it up since I strained my larynx. As for raiding the tuck, sir, such an idea would never enter my head. I've always been taught to keep my hands from sticking and peeling—I mean, picking and stealing—"

"Be silent, Bunter!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "You cannot hope to impose upon my credulity by a tissue of falsehoods. As soon as you are well enough to rise and dress, you will report to me, and accompany

me to Doctor Locke's study!"

So saying, Mr. Quelch took his departure, leaving Billy Bunter to spend a melancholy morning, and an even more melancholy afternoon.

When the bilious attack had passed off, Bunter was arraigned before the Head; and there was weeping and gnashing of teeth. Those who happened to be within earshot surmised that pig-sticking was in progress.

William George Bunter was being made to realise—not for the first time in his chequered career—that the way of the transgressor is hard!



# Holiday Joys- -1.



### OFF TO THE SEA!

By Dick Penfold

We board the train in cheery style,
And swarm into the carriages;
And every porter wears a smile,
Not one our joy disparages.
Our faces, to the windows pressed,
Are studies in hilarity;
We raise a cheer with joyous zest,
And frowns are quite a rarity.

The greybeard guard has waved his flag,
The train steams onward merrily;
Travel may seem a dreary drag,
But we will laugh—ves, verily!
For soon we'll be beside the sea,
Where frisky waves are capering;
And cliffs, as lofty as can be,
Toward the sky are tapering!

Oh, happy, happy holidays!
Days that are not monotonous,
But joyous days and jolly days,
With sunshine scorching hot on us!
Freed from the drudgery of class,
From primers and from lexicons,
Long days in wind and sun we'll pass,
And get as brown as Mexicans!

The train goes thundering on its way, It flashes through a fairyland; The level pastures roll away
Like a vast sweep of prairie-land.
And now the ocean greets our gaze,
Where the waves dance in unity;
"Hurrah for happy holidays!"
Exclaims our gay community!

# Holiday Joys—2.



#### CARAVANNING!

MORNING wakes with its magic spell,
The birds are gaily singing;
And sunshine streams o'er hill and dell,
Its golden mantle flinging.
The caravanners tumble out,
They scorn the thought of lazing;
The horses wander round about,
Deep in the joys of grazing!

INTERNATION OF THE PROPERTY OF

"Brekker, you chaps!" Bob Cherry cries,
"I'm hungry as a hunter."
"I say! please let me supervise!"
Entreats the portly Bunter.
Rushing around with pots and pans,
The echoes we awaken;
And there's a gathering of the clans
To feast on eggs-and-bacon!

Our noble steeds are barnessed then,
The caravans go rumbling
Down leafy lane, and shady glen,
And no one dreams of grumbling.
For every heart is light and gay,
Black looks and scowls we're banning;
This is the Perfect Holiday—
Hurrah for caravanning!

From peep o' day to twilight shade We jog along the highways; Then halt in some sequestered glade, Far from the busy byways. Weary but cheery, we retire, To deep and dreamless slumber; No healthier life could we desire, No cares our minds encumber!



A few of the "Shining Lights" of the famous old School, whose names will live in history!

# AVISION OF THE FUTURE!



THE Greyfriars boys are Peter Pans,
They keep their youth eternally;
And this is good, for old age would
Distress us most infernally!
Picture Bob Cherry, white of hair,
A bent old man in a hired bath-chair!

Just picture Bunter with a beard,
And greater in rotundity;
Talking of buns to grown-up sons,
And lecturing with profundity
On how to bake a rabbit-pie,
And what to eat, and when, and why!

Can you imagine Vernon-Smith
A grey old man in goggles?
Or "Doctor Brown," in a Head's long gown?
Imagination boggles!
And what if Wharton were to say:
"You chaps, I'm ninety-nine to-day!"

Coker, on reaching seventy-five,
Would sell his motor-bicycle;
Wrinkled and bent, he'd crawl through Kent
Upon a creaking tricycle.
And Potter and Greene, for old times' sake,
Would hobble on crutches in his wake!

On Old Boys' Day, what sights and scenes
At Greyfriars we would witness!
Bent, bearded men, would gather then,
And talk of their unfitness.
Russell's rheumatics, Nugent's gout
Are topics we should hear about!

"Grow old along with me," says one (I think the bard was Browning), But Greyfriars clans are Peter Pans, And Father Time's fierce frowning Will never take from them, in truth, The secret of perpetual youth!



# WHAT I WANT TO BE!

Amusing Ambitions of Greyfriars Celebrities

### BOB CHERRY



". . . . A daring, dashing aviator.. . .

My ambition is quite a "lofty" one. You see, I want to become a sky-pilot. Not a "sky-pilot" in a clerical collar, but a daring, dashing aviator of the Royal Air Force! I have already taken part, as a passenger, in an aerial trip, and the experience thrilled me. How I envied the pilot for the masterly way he handled the machine! He seemed as much at home in the clouds as on terra firma. I look forward to the proud day when I shall take my pilot's certificate, and when Fiying-Officer Cherry will dash fearlessly through the ether in a "Glyn Scout," invented by Bernard Glyn, of St. Jim's!

### PERCY BOLSOVER

It is my great ambition to become the Welter-weight Champion of the World. I think I have a fine chance of attaining this ambition, because, even at the age of fifteen, I've the most punishing punch' in all Greyfriars. It stands to my credit that no less than five frail fags were knocked out by me in a single day! If I continue in such fine fighting trim, the day will soon come when I shall be able to do battle with the world's best! And when I revisit Greyfriars, bearing my blushing honours thick upon me, I shall be "chaired" through the Close, and triumphantly acclaimed as Pugnacious Percy, the Prince of Pugilists!



"... Welter-weight Champion of the World ... ";

### BILLY BUNTER



"... A sheff at a first-class hotel . . .

I should love nothing better than to be a sheff at a first-class hotel. I think the sheff has a topping time of it. He soopervises the soop; he prepares the fish and the joints and the saveries; and he samples every dish in turn, to see that it's properly cooked. Oh, what a lovely life! I once met a fellow who was a certified tart-taster. His job was to visit all the tuckshops in the land, and taste the tarts, to see that they were free from injurious substances. He was the fattest, fittest fellow I've ever seen. If I fail to obtain a job as a sheff, I shall certainly apply for the post of Tart-taster to the Ministry of Food!

### DICKY NUGENT

i want to be an enjin-driver bekawse an enjin-driver's life is full of thrills and advenchers. i can picture myself rushing along the Iron Way at seventy miles an hour, surrounded by clouds of smoke and flying sparks. In my mind's eye, i can see myself driving an express-trane from london to glasgo, and breaking all previous time-records! (Our contributor is not likely to see any of these events with any other eye than his mind's eye!—ED., "H. A.")



". . An enjin driver's life is full of thrills . . . "

### ALONZO TODD



". . I shall probably be consumed by cannibals , . "

My ambition may appear somewhat strange to some folks. I want to take up mission work in the wild and unenlightened places of the earth. Bob Cherry warns me that I shall probably be consumed by cannibals, who are very partial to boiled bishop, or poached parson on toast. However, there is no fear of my meeting such a dreadful fate. I am so extremely slim that no cannibal would look at me twice. But I tremble to think what might happen to my study-mate, William George Bunter, if he paid a visit to the Cannibal Islands!

# Holiday Joys—3.



### CAMPING OUT!

Down in our Camp beside the sea, We're happy as the sandboys; This is the holiday for me—
The finest ever planned, boys! Exposed to sun and wind and air, Getting as brown as berries;
"No joy with camping can compare," To quote a phrase of Cherry's!

In cricket shirts and flannel "bags"
We go about our labours;
Feeling as frisky as the fags
Who "rag" their camping neighbours.
Merrily we prepare our meals,
And Bunter's keen and curious;
He talks of crabs, and jellied eels,
And other things luxurious!

In healthy sport we pass our days,
Days that are packed with pleasure;
Then gather round the camp-fire rays
To take our evening leisure.
Our cheery voices all unite
To chant a swinging chorus;
And eagerly we talk at night
Of joyous days before us!

The shades of night creep on apace,
The stars are shyly peeping;
To ghostly tents our way we trace,
And soon are soundly sleeping.
What if the stormy breezes blow?
What if the rain starts damping?
Few are the pleasures here below
To equal those of Camping!

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