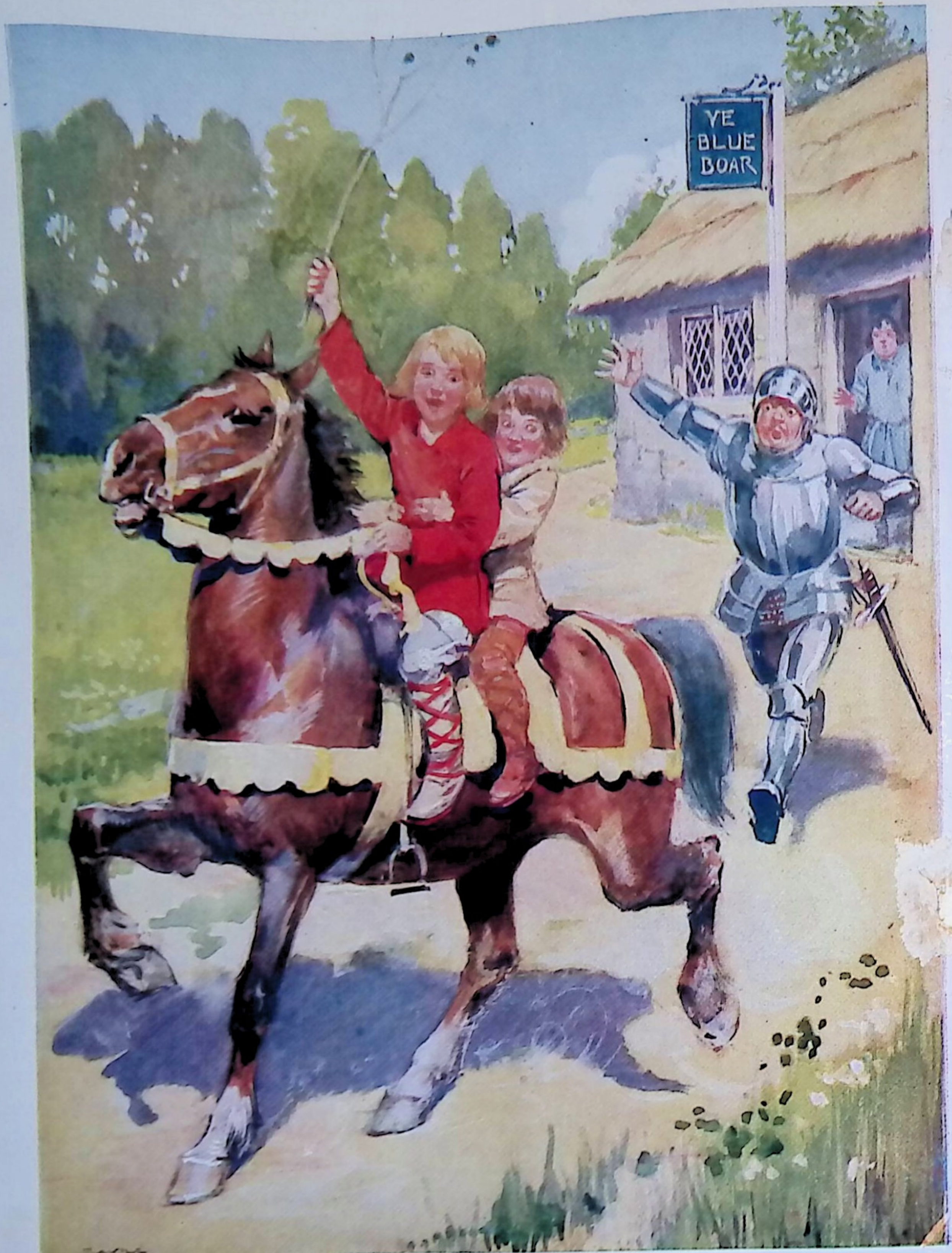
THE GREYFRIARS

HOLIDAY ANNUAL

1929 1929

FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

The Hit of the Season!



Frontispiece.

YE JOYE RIDE!

THE GREYFRIARS HOLIDAY ANNUAL

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This Book Belongs to ----------

1929

The Editor to his Friends

TEN years have passed since the first volume of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL was announced, and it is to mark the occasion of our tenth birthday that this volume appears in a new and improved form. According to the host of kindly critics who have written to me, to attempt to improve the contents of our ANNUAL is a well-nigh hopeless task. Nevertheless I have taken special pains to preserve the supremely high standard of the cheery schoolboy stories and the thrilling yarns of clean adventure which are the special feature of every HOLIDAY ANNUAL.

The more substantial paper used, while adding considerably to the cost of production, makes the HOLIDAY ANNUAL a more imposing volume than ever, and will gain for it a host of new friends.

In the pages that follow are waiting to greet you all that famous company of schoolboy heroes who are so well known and well loved by boys and girls in every quarter of the globe.

Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry and Billy Bunter, and all the familiar members of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, will entertain you again; Tom Merry and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of St. Jim's, are also in great form; while Jimmy Silver and his famous Co., who inhabit the End Study in the Fourth-form passage at Rookwood, are very much to the fore in a great story written specially for this volume by world-famous Owen Conquest.

The cheery adventures of these favourite characters can never grow stale. On the contrary, their popularity grows year by year, and there is every indication that they are doomed to remain schoolboys for ever!

And why not? The laughter and high spirits and youthful zest which run through these, the most popular schoolboy stories in the world, make them the finest of reading for the young, and as good as a tonic even for grandpa!

Like its predecessors, the HOLIDAY ANNUAL for 1929 is offered with every confidence as a contribution to the gaiety and jollity of life, and an addition to the sum of human happiness—by your old friend,

THE EDITOR.

THE FLEETWAY HOUSE,
FARRINGDON STREET,
LONDON, E.C.4.

A GRAND TOUR of GREYFRIARS!



Personally conducted by your Editor, who will show you all the principal sights of the famous old Greyfriars School and will introduce you to all the notabilities—whom many of you already know so well in print!

LET us give free rein to our fancy for a moment, and imagine that it would be possible to charter a huge charabanc, capable of conveying all our readers—boys and girls and grown-ups—on a grand tour of Greyfriars School, which is famous the world over.

It would need to be a very roomy charabanc indeed—a leviathan of the road—for the number of HOLIDAY ANNUAL readers runs into tens of thousands!

Having come together from all parts of the globe, and foregathered in London, you crowd into this monster vehicle, all agog with excitement and brimful of eagerness to see this famous school you have read so much about, and its equally famous scholars.

The grand tour is to be personally conducted by your Editor, who will show you all the sights worth seeing, and introduce you to all the people worth meeting, and also tell you—through a powerful megaphone, of course!—something of the history of the school as we go along.

We are off and away! London, with its seemingly endless prospects of bricks and mortar, is left behind at last, and our charabanc goes thundering through its environs, down into that choice corner of "England's green and pleasant land," the fair county of Kent.

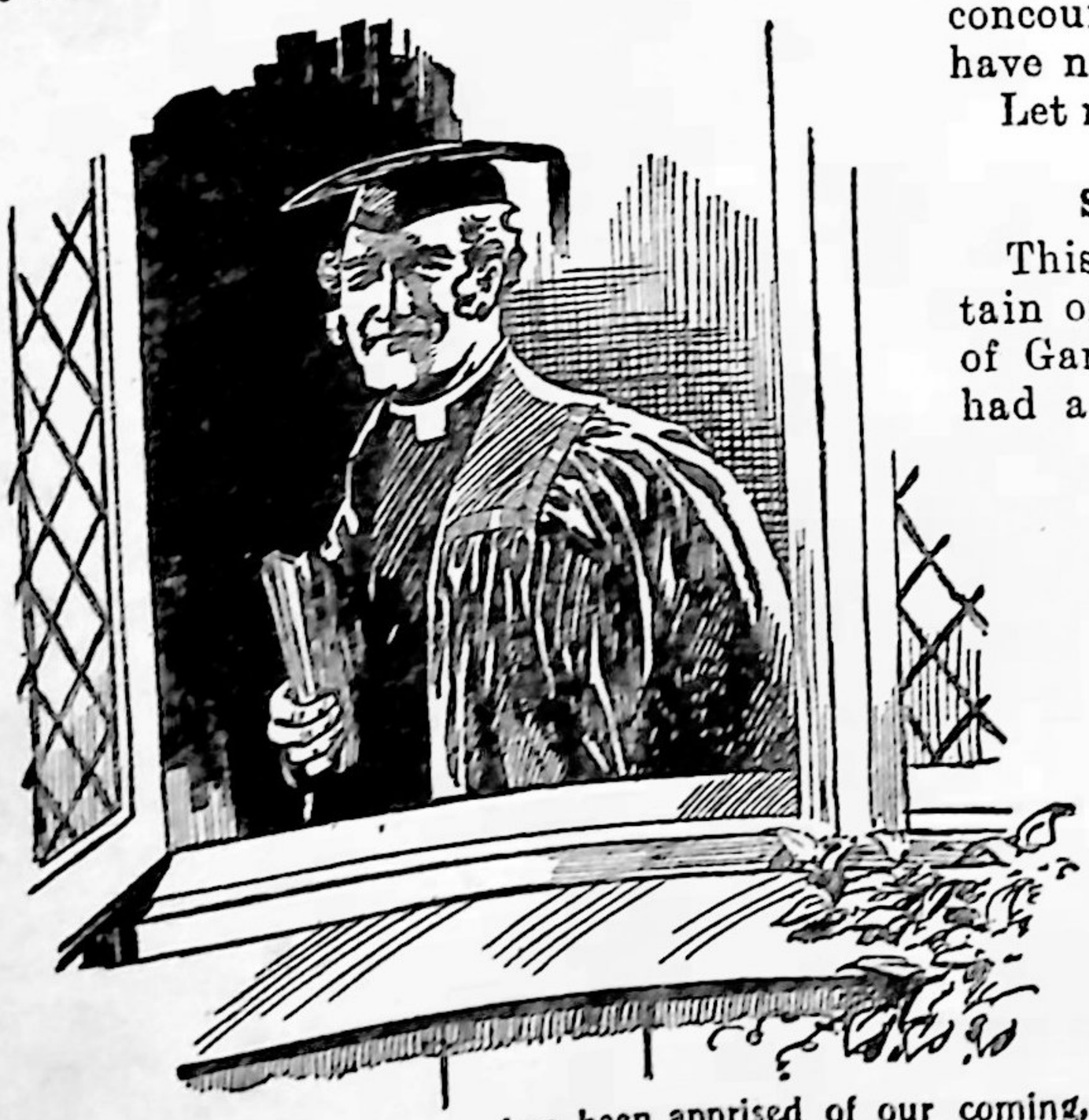
FIRST STOP—GREYFRIARS!

A jolly two-hours' run brings us within sight of Greyfriars School. We see its old

tower looming on the skyline—a quaint old tower, ancient and ivy-clad, standing four-square to all the winds that blow. For hundreds of years that historic tower has stood sentinel over the rugged coast. Some of you shall climb it with me presently, and we will look out over the wide waters of the North Sea, sparkling in the sunlight. From the opposite window of the tower we shall get a bird's-eye view of the charming Kentish countryside, and I will point out to you the peaceful village of Friardale, which has not altered a great deal since the days when the old monks shuffled through it with sandalled feet. Farther away nestles the old-fashioned town of Courtfield, though an occasional factory chimney lends it a touch of modernity.

Our charabanc slows up at the gates of Greyfriars, bringing Gosling, the porter, from his lodge, wide-eyed with wonder.

"Wot I says is this 'ere," remarks Gosling, "I ain't never seen a sharrybong of this size before! Do I dream? Do I wonder an' doubt? Is things wot they seem, or is visions about?"



Dr. Locke, the headmaster, has been apprised of our coming, and his kindly face beams at us from his study window.

Gosling's surprise is natural, for people are not in the habit of visiting Greyfriars in tens of thousands at a time. And the astonished porter dare not refuse us admittance, for what is one man against a mighty host numbering tens of thousands?

We clamber down from the charabanc and surge in at the gates, while Gosling surveys the vast procession in awe and wonder. Little did he dream that the "'allowed precincts" of Greyfriars were to be invaded on so colossal a scale. But Dr. Locke, the headmaster, has been apprised of our coming, and his kindly face beams at us from his study window.

You like the look of Dr. Locke. His character is mirrored in his face—sincerity, kindliness, and justice; ideal qualities in a headmaster.

The Close was deserted when we entered, but now it is swarming with seniors and juniors and fags; in fact, all Greyfriars has turned out to greet us.

The majority of you, my friends, will have to rest content with a verbal introduction to the Greyfriars fellows. If they attempted to shake hands with such a vast concourse of people, they would eventually have no hands left to shake!

Let me perform the introductions.

STALWARTS OF THE SIXTH!

This big fellow is George Wingate, Captain of Greyfriars, head prefect, and Head of Games. I doubt if Greyfriars has ever had a more popular skipper. Wingate is the prince of good fellows; a sterling sportsman, a brilliant scholar, and loved by all who know him—even by those who are more apt to hate than to love.

And this is Patrick Gwynne, from the Emerald Isle. He is Wingate's chosen chum, and has worthily filled the place of gallant Arthur Courtney, who lost his life some time ago in a courageous effort to rescue a fellow-senior from a blazing building. An excellent fellow is Gwynne, sunny-tempered, gay-hearted, and easy-going. The

fags worship the ground he walks on, and tumble over each other for the honour of fagging for him.

And here is Laurence Faulkner—another real good sort, and one of the pillars of Greyfriars authority. He and Gwynne make an ideal right-wing for the School First Eleven. Good man, Faulkner!

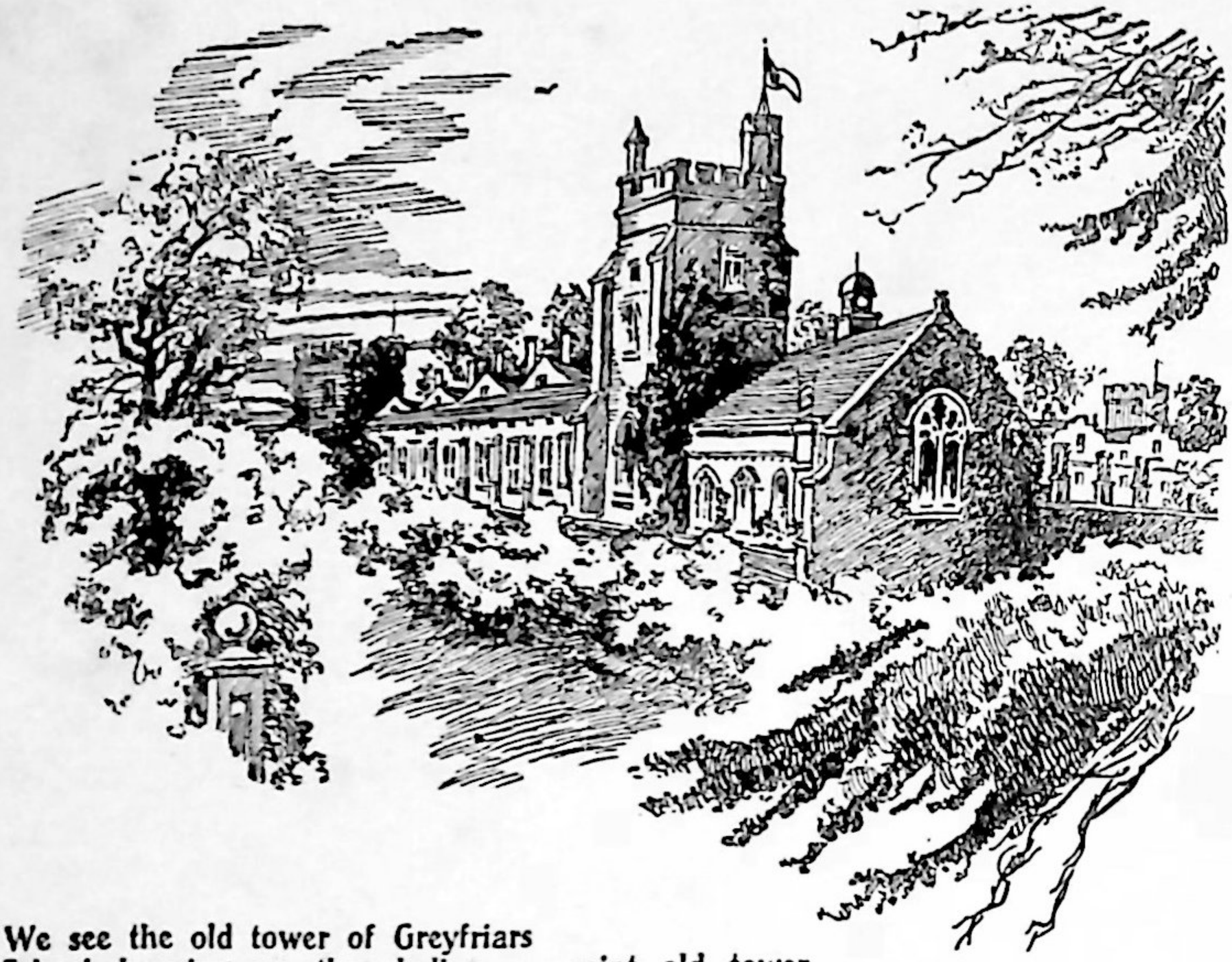
Who is the lanky fellow with the unpleasant leer? He is Gerald Loder, the black sheep of the school. Loder is not at all a nice person to know. He spends his leisure in a way that would not meet with the approval of Dr. Locke, if that gentleman were aware of Loder's shady pursuits. Fortunately for Loder, he isn't! But the scapegrace of the Sixth had better tread warily, for sins have an unpleasant habit of coming home to roost!



Certainly Frank Nugent would pass for a girl if he wore feminine attire, but if you saw him playing footer, or sparring in the gym, you would scorn the idea that he was effeminate!

And here is James Walker; rather a queer mixture. He is a dual personality, reminding one of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." When the "Dr. Jekyll" side of him is revealed, you find him quite a decent fellow, backing up Wingate, and pulling his weight in the school games. But when the reverse side of Walker's nature is shown, you find him hobnobbing with Loder, neglecting his prefectorial duties, and stooping to all sorts of folly. (It's no use your scowling at me, Walker! I have hit off your character to a T.)

We will take the rest of the seniors in a bunch. Time will not permit me to introduce them individually. Taking them by and large, they are as sound and decent a set of fellows as you would find anywhere. There is no danger of Greyfriars "going to the dogs" so long as such splendid sportsmen hold sway in the Sixth. The influence of George Wingate is largely responsible for this healthy state of affairs; so before



We see the old tower of Greyfriars
School looming on the skyline—a quaint old tower,
ancient and ivy-clad, standing four-square to all the winds that blow.

we pass on I think we might give three cheers for the Greyfriars skipper—don't you? Now, all together! Hip, hip, hip—*hurrah!*

Mass cheering, from tens of thousands of throats, is a new experience for Greyfriars. Such a volume of sound is enough to shake the old walls to their foundations!

LESSER LIGHTS!

You see that group of fellows yonder, waiting to be introduced? They are Fifth-Formers. The biggest and burliest of them—Horace Coker—looks as if he ought to belong to the Sixth, and has wandered into the Fifth by mistake! Well, as far as stature goes, Coker certainly qualifies for the Sixth; but alas! in his case there is a surplus of brawn and a deficiency of brain! The fact is, Coker possesses the mentality of a Third-form fag—though he would be the last fellow in the world to admit it. (It's no use making grimaces at me, Horace! I am merely stating the facts. I shall have something to say about your virtues in a moment, so cheer up!)

Coker is not captain of the Fifth, my friends, which is perhaps fortunate for the Fifth, but a very sore point with Coker! He thinks he should be skipper instead of Blundell. That's Blundell, the rather good-looking fellow standing next to him. Coker is not exactly an Adonis, is he? If his face was his fortune, he would be bankrupt! (Calm yourself, Horace, and don't shake your fist at me!) Coker is inclined to be bombastic and heavy-handed in his dealings with juniors, but his heart's in the right place, and there is no real vice in him. He's a duffer in class, and the way he plays football is a sight for gods and men and little fishes; but he is honest and honourable—straight as a gun-barrel, in fact—and Potter and Green (the two fellows standing behind him) may well be proud of Coker's friendship.

Blundell is an energetic, go-ahead sort of fellow—the right man in the right place—and the Fifth supports him loyally, on the whole. Bland is all right, and Cedric Hilton is another queer mixture of the James Walker type. The other members of the Fifth do not call for special mention, so we will pass on to the Shell. This is, perhaps, the least-heard-of Form at Greyfriars, and only Hobson and Hoskins warrant our attention. James Hobson is the leader of the Form, sturdy and stolid, and a really sound fellow. Claude Hoskins is also a "sound" fellow in a different sense. He plays the piano! His long-suffering Form-fellows vote him a "thumping" nuisance, and certainly the music that

Claude Hoskins dispenses is odious rather than melodious! You have heard the expression "Hobson's choice." Well, you can take it from me that it *isn't James* Hobson's choice when his study-mate puts on the loud pedal!

Who is this elegantly-dressed youth, surveying our monster charabanc with a lofty and supercilious stare? It is Cecil Reginald Temple, of the nuts nutty. Temple is the leader of the Upper Fourth—and the "Upper Ten," too, judging by his aristocratic air. He is a really wonderful fellow—quite one of the leading lights of Greyfriars—in the opinion of Cecil Reginald himself! But when you meet some of the mighty men of the Remove, in a moment, you will realise that Cecil Reginald Temple is very small beer. Dabney and Fry and Scott are Temple's chief cronies. They feed him with their flattery, and lead Temple to suppose that he is a personage of no small importance. Quite a false supposition, of course!

"THE FAMOUS FIVE" OF A FAMOUS FORM!

Now for the Greyfriars Remove! Here are the youthful heroes who have made history, and are still making it week by week, in the pages of "The Magnet Library." My voice will be quite husky by the time I have introduced all these celebrities, but no matter.

Forward, the Famous Five! Step briskly into the limelight, please! You now stand



Inky has a delightfully droll way of speaking; in fact, the amusement caused by our esteemed and ludicrous chum is terrific!

in the searchlight of thousands of pairs of eyes, but that does not seem to ruffle your serenity. Nothing shy about our heroes!

We will take Harry Wharton first. There may possibly be some people who have never heard of Harry Wharton; but, if so, they must be Crusoes, cast away on desert islands!

I don't propose to tell you Harry's life story. We have not brought our beds with us to Greyfriars, and arranged to stay a month! I will merely comment on one or two salient features of Wharton's school career. As a new boy he was headstrong and perverse and sullen, but those days are better forgotten. Harry quickly carved out a niche for himself at Greyfriars. He supplanted Bulstrode as captain of the Remove, and since then he has done for the Remove what Wingate has done for the Sixth. It has often been said that the Remove is the most unruly Form at Greyfriars, but that is not Wharton's fault. He is a stickler for discipline, and he takes his duties as Form captain very seriously.

He is a born leader of boys, and by his example of clean, energetic sportsmanship he has made the Remove a force to be reckoned with on the playing-fields. They invariably beat the Upper Fourth and the Shell at football and cricket, and even the Fifth have often been made to bite the dust. Wharton is a sound scholar, though lacking the brilliance of such as Mark Linley. He has proved himself a staunch comrade through storm and shine, and, having conquered his early waywardness, Harry Wharton is a credit to his Form and to his School. (No, Wharton, I will *not* spare your blushes!)

Of course, you have all picked out Bob Cherry from the rest. Bob's sunny smile would betray him anywhere. His smile is as much a part of him as his features and limbs. Bob's is indeed "the smile that won't come off." He carries it about with him wherever he goes, leaving in his trail a heritage of happy laughter. "The man worth while is the man who can smile when everything goes dead wrong," and Bob Cherry's smile is as strongly in evidence on black days as on bright ones. He is bubbling over with the joy of life—the sort of fellow who sings in his bath and bounces down the stairs three at a time. Bob is a splendid type of British schoolboy—good-natured, generous to a fault, and a sportsman tried and true. No wonder they all like Bob Cherry!

Frank Nugent is probably the most handsome member of the "Five." (Did I hear a murmur of feminine approval?) It has been said that Frank is effeminate. Certainly he would easily pass for a girl if he wore feminine attire, but if you could see him playing footer, or sparring in the gym, you would scorn the notion that he was effeminate. Frank has a noble nature, and he is a real good fellow in every way. Need I say more?

Johnny Bull is a boy whose name is the index to his nature. He is a bluff and sturdy young Briton, with a habit of speaking—and hitting—straight from the shoulder when he is roused. John Bull fits in very well with the Famous Five, and his services in a "scrap" are invaluable. He is a downright, thorough-going person, entirely free from affectation, though not lacking in affection—particularly for his chosen chums.

And now, my most esteemed and ludicrous friends, permit me to introducefully present to you Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur, commonly called "Inky," on account of his dusky complexion. (No need to make such a sweeping salaam, Inky; you are not in your native province now!) Hurree Singh came to Greyfriars to continue the education which was imperfectly begun by the native teachers of Bengal. They were supposed to have taught him the English tongue, but I am afraid their own conceptions of our language were somewhat hazy.

Inky has a delightfully droll way of speaking; in fact, the amusement caused by our esteemed and ludicrous chum is terrific! He gets our English proverbs hopelessly muddled, and will tell you that "It's a long lane that has no silver lining," and that "A stitch in timefulness is the best

policy," and that "Birds of a feather are worth two in the bushfulness."

Hurree Singh is a valued member of the famous "Co." As a bowler he has no equal among the Greyfriars juniors, and his lightning deliveries are as deadly and destructive as those of Fatty Wynn, the demon bowler of St. Jim's. Of course, Inky is a sportsman through and through, well worthy of a place in this remarkable quintette of schoolboys.



The Third are a merry and mischievous crowd, never happier than when squabbling amongst themselves, or feasting on fried herrings which are impaled on penholders before the common-room fire!

BILLIE BUNTER—AND OTHERS!

Billy Bunter, I notice, has already introduced himself to many of you. I have seen him, from the corner of my eye, rolling up to several boys and girls with a self-satisfied smirk on his fat face, and proceeding to tell them the tale. He has doubtless pointed out that he is a fellow of considerable weight in the Greyfriars Remove—a statement which is quite accurate, if you take "weight" to mean avoirdupois! He turns the scale at fourteen stone, and is a tremendous trencher-man. But, then, you know all there is to be known about William George Bunter. His fame—or should I say notoriety?—has gone before him.

Bunter has been aptly described as "The Schoolboy Pickwick," and his antics are even more amusing than those of Dickens' famous character. You all know of his propensity for exceeding the feed limit, though he complains bitterly that he doesn't get enough to eat between meals! You all know the time-honoured story of the postal-order which he is expecting hourly from one of his titled relations. Bob Cherry predicts that the postal-order will turn up some time during the Greek Kalends—which means never! But hope springs eternally in the human breast, or rather, *internally* so far as Billy Bunter is concerned!

I might chat to you for hours about the

follies and foibles of William George Bunter. I might—but I don't intend to! The rest of the acts of William George, and all that he does, and the numerous scrapes he gets into, are they not written in the chronicles of Mr. Frank Richards, and published every Saturday in "The Magnet Library"?

I must not dally over the rest of the introductions, for Dr. Locke has just whispered in my ear the welcome news that luncheon will soon be served. He has very kindly invited a number of us—as many as the spacious dining-hall will hold—to take luncheon with him at Greyfriars. Special arrangements have also been made with the various restaurants and cafés in Courtfield, and sufficient provisions have been laid in to feed the bulk of our mighty army. Obviously, it is no easy matter to cater for so vast a congregation; but if, by some mischance, there is not enough food to go round, we shall be compelled to turn cannibal, and start on Billy Bunter! There was a time when Bunter was in very real danger of being roasted and gobbled up by cannibals, but the story of how he escaped the stew-pot will have to keep.

NOTABILITIES IN A NUTSHELL!

Apart from the Famous Five, the most prominent members of the Remove Form are Herbert Vernon-Smith, the son of a millionaire, and a black sheep now regenerate. "Smithy" has risen on stepping-stones of his dead self to higher things.

The two fellows who appear to be twins are Peter and Alonzo Todd, both study-mates of Billy Bunter. Peter is shrewd, and Alonzo is "soft," but both are extremely likeable fellows.

The hefty-looking individual with the pugilistic manner—he happens to be tweaking Skinner's ear at the moment—is Bolsover major, the bully of the Remove. Skinner, his present victim, is an unprincipled cad, and possibly the worst fellow at Greyfriars. Snoop, yonder, is a sneak and a toady; Peter Hazeldene, his companion, is weak-willed and unstable. The boy with the tanned face is Tom Redwing, the sailor-man's son, and a staunch pal of Vernon-Smith.

Sampson Quincy Iffley Field—christened "Squiff" because life's short—is a first-rate fellow from Australia, while Tom Brown hails from New Zealand, and is a splendid all-rounder. Fisher Tarleton Fish is a "cute guy" from across the herring-pond—"Fishy" by nickname and by nature, too.

Mark Linley is the brilliant scholar I mentioned a while back—a scholarship boy from Lancashire, who has had to fight an uphill battle against the forces of snobbery and prejudice. George Bulstrode is a light of other days. Formerly captain of the Remove, he was superseded by Harry Wharton, and has passed into comparative oblivion, though still a useful man at games.

The pig-tailed Chinee is Wun Lung—a velly muchee cutee little fellow, you savvy?—and the thoughtful-looking fellow is Dick Penfold, who writes bright and breezy ballads and jingles that never jangle. The two fellows strolling arm-in-arm are Dick Russell and Donald Oglivy, fast and firm friends of the David and Jonathan order.

And now the fags come clamouring for an introduction, headed by Dicky Nugent, the irrepressible young minor of Frank, and the talented "orther" of many weird and wonderful stories of school life, featuring a certain "Dr. Birchemall," an excellent comedian, but an impossible headmaster!

I must introduce the inky-fingered fraternity in a lump—First, Second, and Third Forms combined. They are a merry and mischievous crowd, never happier than when squabbling among themselves, or feasting on fried herrings, which are impaled on penholders before the Common-room fire. Those who have big brothers—the fags, I mean, not the herrings!—take an impish delight in driving them to distraction; those who haven't big brothers take it out of their Form-masters, bringing many grey hairs to the heads of those unfortunate gentlemen.

THE GREYFRIARS MASTERS!

Speaking of Form-masters, it is their own fault that they have been left till the last. By all the laws of etiquette, I

should have introduced them first; but they were not here to introduce! They are here now—imposing-looking personages in their gowns and mortar-boards, but not nearly so formidable when you come to know them.

The stern-faced gentleman with the piercing eyes is Mr. Horace Henry Samuel Quelch, M.A., the mentor—and sometimes the tormentor!—of the Remove Form. Mr. Quelch's eyes have frequently been likened to gimlets, on account of their penetrative powers. And Mr. Quelch's voice, when he is angry, resembles the rumble of thunder. He is stern and severe, and a gentleman whose lower limb may not be pulled with impunity; but he is a very just man, who takes the keenest interest in his pupils, not only collectively but individually.

The gentleman with the florid face and excitable manner is Mr. Paul Pontifex Prout, M.A., the master of the Fifth. Mr. Prout could tell you some thrilling stories of his adventures as a big-game hunter. "When I was in the Rockies in '89——" he would begin, and, having begun, he would emulate Tennyson's brook, and go on for ever! Mr. Prout's study is adorned with trophies of the chase—bearskins and tiger-skins, and antlers, and so forth—but his most treasured possession is his Winchester repeater, which has sent many a beast to its doom, and many a Red Indian to his happy hunting-ground—unless Mr. Prout's tales are purely legendary! Mr. Prout is now leading a more or less placid existence at Greyfriars, but he must often sigh for the hectic days of yore, and for "the wild and woolly West."



Dr. Locke has very kindly invited a number of us—as many as the spacious dining-hall will hold—to take luncheon with him.

That young and athletic-looking gentleman is Mr. "Larry" Lascelles, the mathematics master. "Larry" has made quite

a name for himself in the world of sport, and before coming to Greyfriars he was a champion amateur boxer. He is hero-worshipped by many of the juniors, and he thoroughly deserves his place on the pedestal of popularity.

Messrs. Hacker, Twigg, and Capper, and Monsieur Charpentier, the French master, are not so much in the limelight as their colleagues, but they are very estimable gentlemen, who work very hard for the welfare and development of Greyfriars.

Ha! There goes the gong for luncheon, the main force of our army proceeding to Courtfield and the remainder to the Greyfriars dining hall, where—if I know anything of Dr. Locke's hospitality—a feast of the gods awaits us.

SEEING THE SIGHTS!

Like a giant refreshed! That's how I feel after that excellent repast, and, judging by your cheery and contented faces, my friends, you all feel likewise. Now you may wander around at will, exploring the old school and its spacious grounds, or rambling beside the River Sark, which winds its tortuous way through green meadows and beneath quaint rustic bridges. Or you may like to plunge into the woods, and explore the old Priory ruins. There are a thousand places of entrancing interest lying all about us.



George Wingate calls for three cheers for the readers of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL, and three for its Editor, and the cheers ring out loud and strong over the darkening Close.

No, I have not forgotten my promise to take some of you up into the old tower. Only a dozen at a time, please! The little apartment at the top will not hold more, even at a squeeze. Up we go, climbing the spiral stone stairway, till at last, breathless but triumphant, we gain the summit. This is the little room where Bob Cherry once barred himself out from the rest of the school, refusing to accept expulsion for an offence he had never committed. Of course, Bob was vindicated in the end, and his barring-out is now forgotten, save by some of you older readers.

Here is the glorious view of Pegg Bay, and the Shoulder, and Black Rock, and the towering cliffs. Is it not magnificent? It is like looking down from an aeroplane.

From the opposite window we get a kaleidoscopic view of the inland scenery. Can you distinguish Courtfield—and Friardale? The white rows of tents in the distance form the military camp at Wapshot. That steep hill yonder is where the Greyfriars fellows go tobogganing. The beacon tower at the top was used in the days of the smugglers.

Having feasted your eyes with these views, you go clattering down the spiral staircase, and another party of a dozen comes up to explore. Then more parties, and finally we all join forces in the Close, and set out to explore the crypt, and the cloisters, and the old chapel; the studies and the dormitories, and the Form-rooms, and countless other places of interest.

Dr. Locke now relieves me of my duties as guide, and he describes, with more knowledge and eloquence than I have at my command, the inner history of all the old places, and the legends which have gathered about them.

How swiftly the afternoon slips by! All too soon the time of departure comes, and it seems but an hour ago that our monster charabanc made its sensational arrival at the gates of Greyfriars.

Now it is ready for the return journey, and all Greyfriars turns out to give us a rousing send-off.

George Wingate, in a voice which Stentor of old would have envied, calls for three cheers for the readers of THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL, and three cheers for its Editor, and the cheers ring out loud and strong over the darkening Close. But those cheers are mere whispers in the wind compared with the responsive salvoes which boom forth from our mighty host.

"The tumult and the shouting dies"; our charabanc rumbles away, swiftly to be swallowed up in the shadows. And we take back with us nothing but the happiest recollections of our "grand tour" of Greyfriars!

A Great Occasion!

Sport's Day at Greyfriars School!





SIR HILTON & LADY POPPER ARRIVE



SOME OF THE CROWD



THE HURDLES



GEORGE WINGATE, Captain of the School!



P.C. TOZER & GOSLING





WALKER WINS THE LONG JUMP!



A FREQUENT VISITOR TO THE REFRESHMENT TENT

C.H. Chapman



THE FINISH — 100 YARDS!



Chequemate!

By FRANK RICHARDS

When Billy Bunter receives a registered letter containing a big cheque, all Greyfriars agrees that the age of miracles is by no means past!

THE FIRST CHAPTER
Billy Bunter's Registered Letter!

"I'M expecting——"

"Rats!"

"I'm expecting——" repeated Billy Bunter firmly.

Bob Cherry held up his hand.

"Don't say postal-order!" he said. "We're fed-up on your postal-order, Bunter. If you say postal-order, you get bumped!"

"Hear, hear!"

"And the bumpfulness will be terrific, my esteemed and prevaricating Bunter," added Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"But I say, you fellows, I'm really expecting——"

"I told you what to expect," said Bob. "Just say the word postal-order, and you get it."

"In the neck!" remarked Johnny Bull.

Billy Bunker blinked at the Famous Five of the Remove more in sorrow than in anger.

"I wasn't going to," he answered, with dignity.

"What?"

"You're not expecting a postal-order?" ejaculated Harry Wharton.

"No."

"Ye gods!" said Bob Cherry dazedly. "You're not expecting a postal-order, and you don't want to raise a loan on it in advance?"

"Certainly not!"

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Nugent.

Harry Wharton & Co. surveyed Billy Bunter with interest. It was the first time on record that the Owl of the Remove hadn't been expecting a postal-order.

"I'm expecting a cheque," explained Bunter.

"Oh, it's a cheque this time!" said Bob Cherry, with deep sarcasm.

"Yes, it's a cheque this time," answered Bunter calmly. "I've written to my pater for a cheque."

"Which, of course, he will send by return

of post?" asked Bob, still deeply sarcastic.

"Exactly."

"If you won't be happy till you get it," remarked Johnny Bull, "you're booked for an unhappy life, Bunter."

"I'm expecting a cheque by any post now," said Bunter.

"I've asked the pater to make it a fairish large one, so that I can settle up some little accounts I owe in the Remove. I believe I owe you fellows some money."

"I believe you do," chuckled Bob.

"I dare say it comes to a pound or two altogether!"

"I dare say it does—and the rest!"

"My idea is to get a decent cheque from the pater, and square up all round," said Bunter. "I've put it to him nicely, and I've no doubt—no doubt whatever—that the cheque will turn up all right. It's pretty certain to come by this afternoon's post."

"About a thousand pounds, I suppose?" asked Bob Cherry, evidently still in a sarcastic vein.

Bunter shook his head.

"Not at all. Only about fifty."

"Only about fifty!" said Bob faintly. "I call that rather stingy of your pater. Only about fifty pounds!"

"That's all," said Bunter. "But it will enable me to square up all my little accounts, and leave me something in hand. But there's just one little difficulty."

"I can guess what that is," remarked Wharton.

"Well, what?"

"The cheque won't come."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nothing of the kind!" roared Bunter. "The cheque will come all right. I'm not worrying about that. I've mentioned to you fellows that my father's rich."

"You've mentioned a lot of things," assented Bob Cherry. "You beat Ananias and George Washington hollow."

"There's one little difficulty," said Bunter, unheeding. "The pater's so jolly careful in money matters. He may cross the cheque for safety. He always crosses his cheques. Then there may be some delay about cashing it. That's all."

"Really all?" asked Bob.

"Yes. Now, I want you fellows to lend me ten pounds to tide me over——"

"Until the cheque comes?" grinned Bob Cherry. "I don't think! We'll see the cheque first, if you don't mind."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't mind," answered Bunter. "What I'm worrying about is that the cheque may be crossed. If it is, I shall have to ask Mr. Quelch to pass it through his bank, and naturally he won't hand over the money till it's cleared. That means delay. Of course, it may be an open cheque. In that case, I shan't trouble you fellows. But if it's crossed——"

"You howling ass!" said Bob Cherry, in measured tones. "Do you think you can pull our legs to that extent? Your cheque will come along with the postal-order you've been expecting ever since you were a fag in the Second Form——"

"And no sooner!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"If you doubt my word——"

"If!" ejaculated Bob.

"Seeing is believing," said Bunter, with dignity. "I should think you might trust me, knowing me so well——"

"We know you too well, you see," chuckled Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"It's a new stunt," said Bob. "The postal-order's worn out, and Bunter's made it a cheque instead. Let's bump him!"

"Good egg!"

Billy Bunter jumped back.

"I say, you fellows, don't play the goat, you know. I'm not asking you to lend me ten bob till the cheque comes——"

"It won't come!" roared Bob.

"If it's crossed, I shall take it to Quelchy to cash for me," said Bunter. "And then ——"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"If you get a cheque for fifty pounds, old top, we'll lend you ten bob till it's cashed," he said. "If you don't, we'll give you a jolly good ragging for trying to spoof us with a new yarn. That's a compact."

"Agreed!" said Bunter.

"Off his dot!" said Bob, in astonishment.

"You're going to get the ragging, Bunter."

Billy Bunter turned up his fat little nose.

"You'll see," he answered calmly.

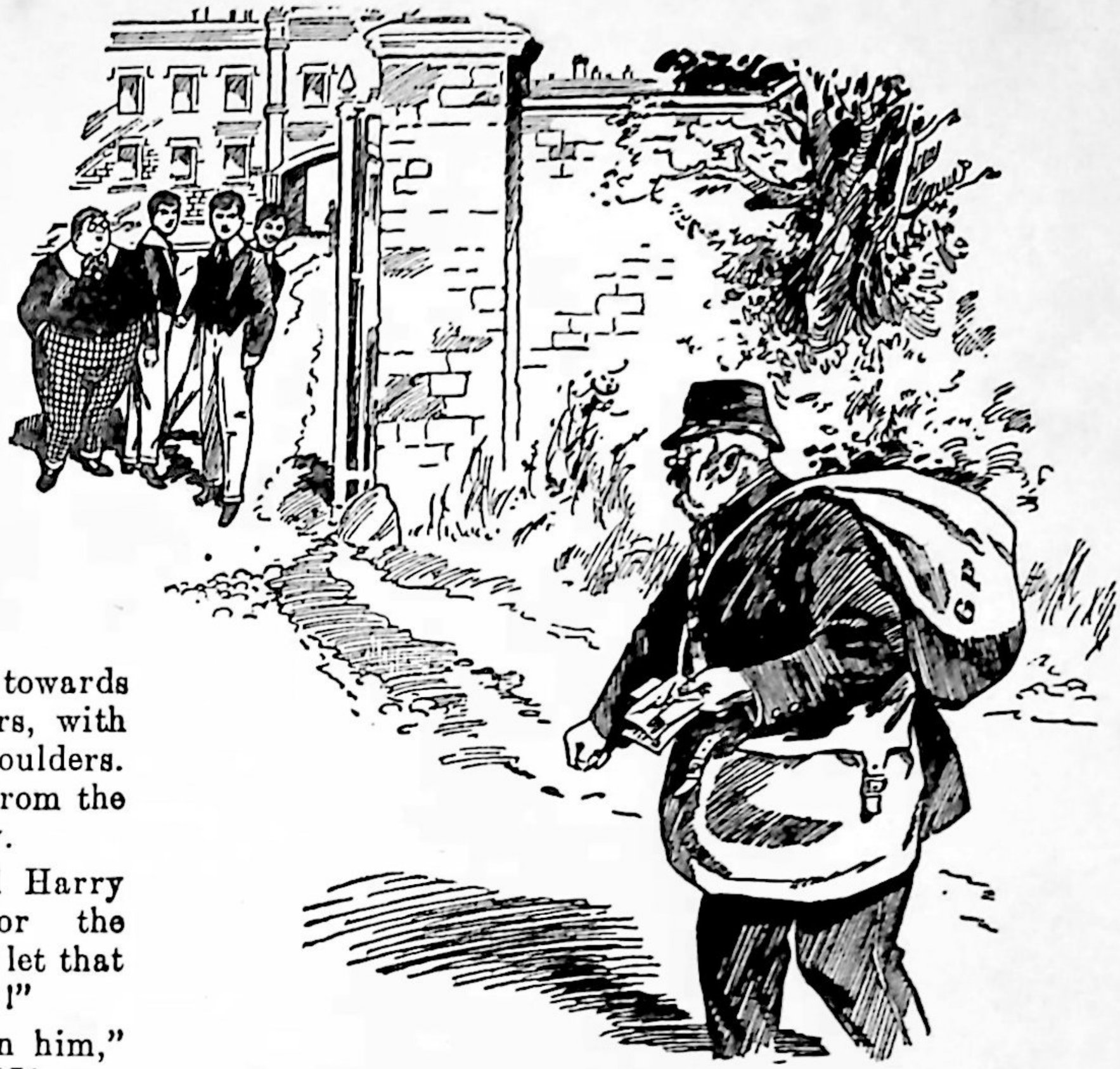
"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's the postman."

Mr. Boggs, the village postman, was sighted in the distance. He was plodding up the road from Friardale towards the gates of Greyfriars, with his sack on his shoulders. There was a chuckle from the juniors in the gateway.

"Here he is!" said Harry Wharton. "Now for the giddy cheque! Don't let that fat porpoise roll away!"

"I've got an eye on him," said Johnny Bull. "If you move off, Bunter, you get my boot."

"Oh, really, Bull——"



"Anything for me, Boggs?" William George called out.
"Yes, Master Bunter!"
"Registered letter?"
"Yes, Master Bunter!" (*See Chapter* 1.)

Harry Wharton & Co. stepped out of the gateway to greet the village postman. Mr. Boggs stopped and breathed hard and touched his cap. The Famous Five kept William George Bunter in their midst. They expected him to attempt to dodge now that his remarkable statement was to to be put to the test.

But, to their surprise, Bunter showed no desire to dodge. He seemed quite eager to meet the postman.

"Anything for me, Boggs?" he called out.

"Yes, Master Bunter."

"Registered letter?"

"Yes, Master Bunter."

The obliging Mr. Boggs fumbled for the letter, while Billy Bunter gave his unbelieving companions a triumphant blink.

"I say, you fellows, what did I tell you?" he chirruped.

"Seeing is believing!" remarked Bob Cherry. "Let's see the whacking cheque!"

"Sign, please, Master Bunter."

Billy Bunter took his registered letter, signed for it, and the postman plodded on with his sack. The Famous Five gathered round Bunter in great curiosity as he jabbed a fat thumb into the sealed envelope. It was but seldom that the Owl of the Remove received registered letters, though he was in a constant state of expecting them.

A registered letter had to be supposed to contain something of value. Was it the celebrated postal-order at last—the postal-order that had become famous at Greyfriars?

"Let's see it!" gasped Bob Cherry. "We're dying to see it! Hurry up!"

"We are on the tender hooks, my esteemed

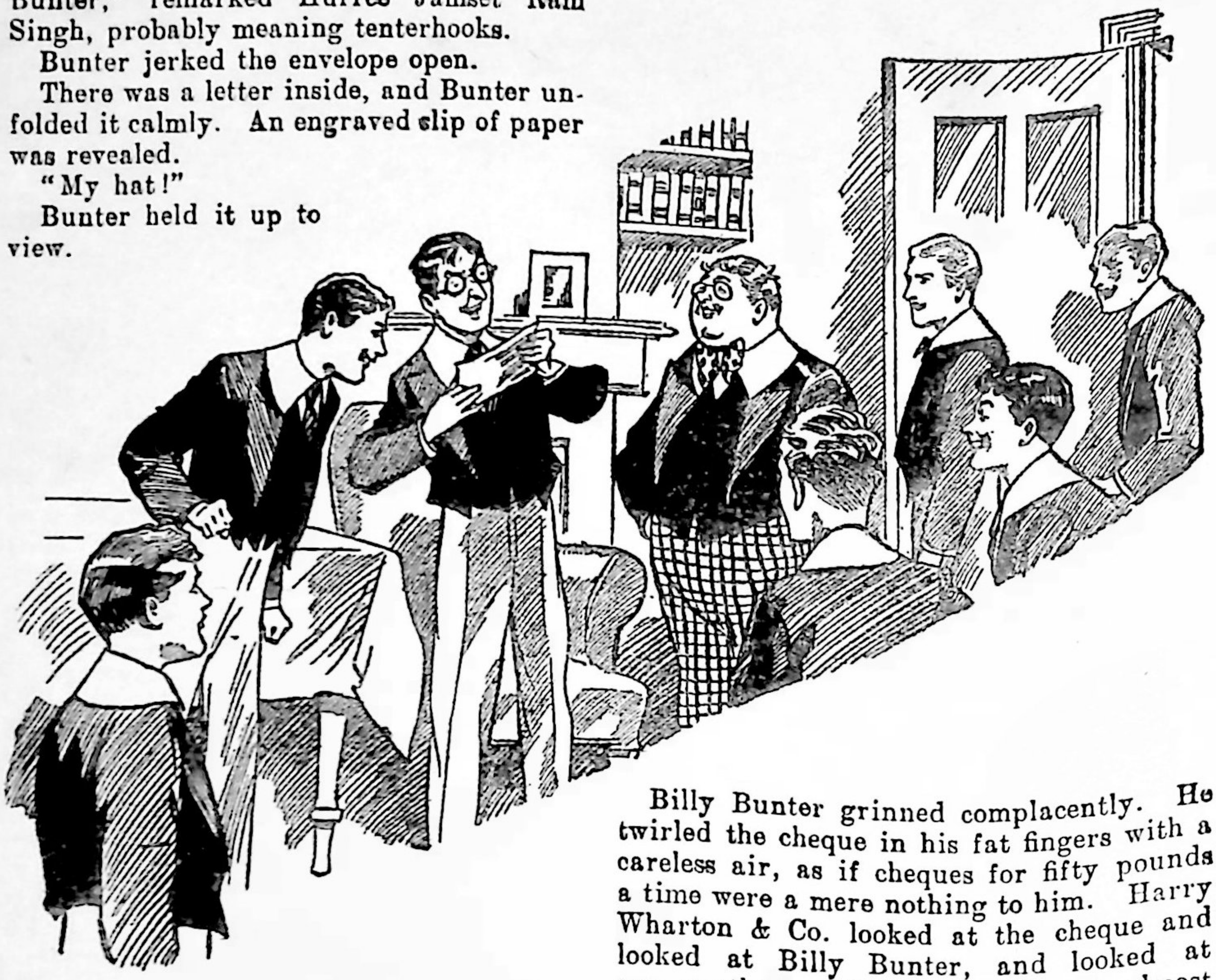
Bunter," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, probably meaning tenterhooks.

Bunter jerked the envelope open.

There was a letter inside, and Bunter unfolded it calmly. An engraved slip of paper was revealed.

"My hat!"

Bunter held it up to view.



Fisher T. Fish examined the cheque with meticulous attention, and seemed loth to part with it again! *(See Chapter 2.)*

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at it. They stared at it. They blinked at it. For it was a cheque—evidently a cheque!

November 22nd.

LONDON AND SOUTHERN COUNTIES BANK, LTD.

Pay W. G. Bunter.

Fifty Pounds (£50).

W. S. BUNTER.

THE SECOND CHAPTER
Money to Burn!

"FIFTY pounds!"

"My only hat!"

"Great Christopher Columbus!"

"My only esteemed aunt!"

Billy Bunter grinned complacently. He twirled the cheque in his fat fingers with a careless air, as if cheques for fifty pounds a time were a mere nothing to him. Harry Wharton & Co. looked at the cheque and looked at Billy Bunter, and looked at one another. Their astonishment almost deprived them of the power of speech.

It was a cheque for fifty pounds, payable to W. G. Bunter, signed by his father, Willam Samuel Bunter. There was no doubt about that. It was a real cheque on a real bank, and it was for fifty pounds. Certainly it was crossed—two lines were drawn from top to bottom of the cheque, which made it necessary to pass it through a bank to be cleared. There was, as Bunter had forboded, some delay to be looked for in gathering the cash. But it was a cheque for fifty pounds!

"He's crossed it," said Bunter regretfully. "I was afraid he would. The pater's so jolly careful in money matters. Otherwise I could walk down to Courtfield this afternoon and present it at the bank. Still, it means only a few days."

Bob Cherry rubbed his eyes.

"Do I sleep, do I dream, or is visions about?" he ejaculated. "It looks like a cheque."

"It is a cheque, you ass!" hooted Bunter.

"The chequefulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Singh. "The surprisefulness is also great. Bunter has told the truth."

"Oh, really, Inky——"

"Is it possible that Bunter has told the truth before, and we never knew it?" murmured Bob. "Is there really such a place as Bunter Court, and such a person as Bunter's butler? After this, nothing would surprise me."

"I'll take this to Quelchy at once," said Bunter. He held out a fat hand. "Lend me ten bob, you fellows, to tide me over till this is cashed."

"Caught!" said Wharton, laughing. "It's up to us! You'll have to square when the cheque's cashed, Bunter."

"Rely on me, old fellow." Bunter loftily accepted the ten-shilling note extended by the captain of the Remove. "You fellows can make a list, if you like, of the little sums I owe you."

Billy Bunter rolled in at the gates, with the cheque in his fat paw. He left the Famous Five in a dazed state.

They simply could not get on to it.

Bunter's yarns of his wealthy home, his wealthy people, and his titled relations were a standing joke in the Remove. His father had been seen at Greyfriars—a fat little, important City gentleman, who certainly did not look as if he could afford to send his hopeful son tips of fifty pounds a time, and still less as if he would do it even if he could afford it. Yet here was the cheque!

"Hallo! What's the giddy excitement?" Skinner came out of the gates with Snoop, and paused to look at the astonished five. "Anything happened?"

"Lots!" answered Bob Cherry. "Bunter ——"

"Got his postal-order?" grinned Snoop.

"Better than that! He's got a cheque for fifty pounds."



Quite a procession marched with William George Bunter to the Remove-master's study! (*See Chapter 2.*)

"Gammon!" said Snoop and Skinner simultaneously.

"Honest injun!"

"Made it himself, then?" asked Skinner sceptically.

"It's from his father."

"You've actually seen it?" asked Harold Skinner.

"With our own dazzled eyes."

"My hat!" Skinner drew a quick breath. "My hat! I remember once Bunter had fivers, after his pater brought off some swindle or other on the Stock Exchange. Has the old sport struck it lucky again, I wonder? But fifty pounds! Phew!"

"Fifty pounds!" said Sidney James Snoop, in an awed voice. "And—and only to-day I refused to lend Bunter my bike——"

"It's never too late to mend," suggested Bob Cherry satirically. "Rush after him and lend it to him—quick! There'll be a dozen fellows ready to lend him bikes when they've seen his cheque."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner and Snoop exchanged a glance, and turned back into the gates. They had been starting on a little walk that half-holiday, but they were not bothering about a walk now. If William George Bunter had fifty pounds, he also had two devoted pals ready to haunt him like shadows, to lend him bikes and even bobs, and to listen with admiring attention to any remarks he was pleased to make. Skinner and Snoop would have been pally with a Prussian Hun if the Hun had had fifty pounds.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Bunter's going to be popular," he remarked.

"The popularity will be terrific."

Bob Cherry was right.

As the Famous Five strolled back into gates, they sighted the Owl of the Remove. Skinner and Snoop had joined him in the quadrangle, and were walking one on either side of him—hovering round him, as it were, in the most friendly fashion. They were the first to hover; but there were destined to be some more hoverers—many more. Fifty-pound cheques were not seen every day in the Greyfriars Remove; indeed, Bunter was the first fellow at Greyfriars who had ever possessed such an article—excepting perhaps, Lord Mauleverer. The Famous Five chuckled, though still astonished. But there were plenty of fellows who were not indifferent.

Skinner and Snoop obtained a view of the cheque, and even the sceptical Skinner had to acknowledge that it was the genuine article. And from the moment that his eyes rested on it, Skinner's manner to William George Bunter was like honey, only sweeter.

"I'd hike off to the bank at once before it closed!" Skinner advised. "I'll come with you if you like, Bunter."

"So will I," said Snoop.

"You see, the cheque's crossed," said Bunter. "The pater's so jolly careful. I can't cash it at the bank."

"What are you going to do, then?"

"Take it to Quelchy. He will put it through his bank and hand me the money, of course."

"Of course," said Skinner. "He may think it rather odd your pater sending you so much, though. The Head mayn't like it!"

"I'll tell him I'm going to get a new bike and camera and things," said Bunter.

"Good! I say, this is ripping of your pater, Billy, old fellow."

Bunter blinked at Skinner.

It was not an hour since Skinner had called him a "fathead." Now he was "Billy, old fellow." Such was the magic power of a printed slip of paper.

"You were mentioning that you wanted a bike this afternoon, old scout," remarked Snoop.

Bunter elevated his fat little nose.

"You refused to lend me your bike," he said.

"I—I didn't exactly refuse——"

"You said you'd see me hanged first."

"Well, that wasn't refusing, was it?" said Snoop jocularly. "Only my little joke, Billy! Of course, I'd be glad for you to use my bike whenever you please."

"Same here," said Skinner heartily.

"I wouldn't lend my bike to every chap, but Billy's different."

"Quite different—among pals, you know," said Snoop.

"Well, perhaps I may borrow it," said Bunter.

"Bull — I say, Bull!" Johnny Bull and Alonzo Todd were coming out of the School House, and they stopped as Bunter hailed them.

"Bull, old chap!"

"Hallo, tubby!" answered Bull.

"Don't call Bunter silly names, Bull," said Skinner warmly. "There's such a thing as politeness."

Johnny Bull stared at him.

"Eh? What's the matter with calling him 'tubby'? You were calling him a greasy barrel this morning!"

"I—I——" stammered Skinner.

"You shouldn't make such jokes, Skinner," said Snoop reprovingly. "Of course, Billy knows it's only your fun, but, still——

"I admit it," said Skinner blandly. "Billy knows I wouldn't say anything to offend him."

Johnny Bull and Peter Todd stared.

"Is this a game?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Or has Bunter come into a fortune?" queried Peter.

"You've generally got plenty of cash about you, Bull," said Bunter. "Can you cash a cheque for me?"



"You howling ass!" roared Bob Cherry, as Fisher T. Fish cannoned into him on the stairs. "You—you——!"
(*See Chapter* 3.)

Bull chuckled.

"I dare say I could," he answered. "I'd like to see the cheque first."

"Here it is."

"Wha-a-a-at?"

Johnny Bull blinked at the cheque as he took it in his hand.

"Fifty pounds! My only hat! Where did you get it?"

"My pater sent it, to get some things I want," answered Bunter carelessly. "I suppose you can't cash it for me?"

"Hardly. My pater doesn't send me quids in fifties," said Bill, laughing. "Better take it to the Head if it's genuine."

"Can't you see it's genuine, you ass?" hooted Bunter.

"Well, it looks all right," admitted Bull. "But I thought your people hadn't much tin——"

"I've often told you they were rolling in money."

"Yes, that's why I thought they weren't."

"Oh, really, Bull——"

Several Remove fellows were gathering round, and they all wanted to look at the cheque. Bunter showed it round willingly enough. He seemed to be enjoying the limelight he was receiving. The cheque passed from hand to hand, amid exclamations of surprise and congratulation. Even Bolsover major condescended to congratulate Bunter. Fisher T. Fish examined the cheque with meticulous attention, and seemed loth to part with it again. When it was returned to Bunter, Fish's eyes followed it hungrily.

"Jerusalem crickets!" said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess that's the real goods, and you're the lucky guy from Luckville, Bunter. I'll tell you what—if you'd like to put some money into a little scheme I've thought of——"

Bunter did not heed.

"I'm going to Mr. Quelch now," he said. "He's going to cash it for me. I shall have to wait until it's through the bank. Still, I've some friends who'll lend me a pound or two to go on with."

"My dear chap——" said Skinner.

"My dear fellow——" said Snoop.

"I guess I'm your antelope——"

"Don't forget me, Bunter——"

Quite a procession marched with William George Bunter to the Remove-master's study. Perhaps some of the fellows had a lingering doubt as to the genuineness of the cheque, and wanted to see whether Bunter really would take it to his Form-master. But there was no hesitation about Bunter. He marched up to Mr. Quelch's door and knocked.

"Come in!"

Bunter entered the study, and the door closed on a crowd of eager and interested juniors. They heard a murmur of voices within, but they were not to be distinguished. Then came Mr. Quelch's clear metallic voice:

"Certainly, Bunter!"

A minute or two later the door re-opened, and Billy Bunter came out. His friends—a dozen in number now—gathered round him in faithful array. They walked out of the schoolhouse with him in faithful attendance. Billy Bunter's steps led him, as if by instinct, towards the school shop. And thither his numerous friends escorted him; and during the next half-hour William George Bunter, seated on a high stool at the counter, sticky and shiny and happy, had the time of his life!

THE THIRD CHAPTER

The Rise and Fall of William George Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! My giddy millionaire!"

"Lend me ten bob, will you?"

"I don't think."

It was two days later, and William George Bunter, the Owl of the Greyfriars Remove, was at the zenith of his popularity.

Never had a fellow become popular so suddenly and so completely.

It was as sudden and complete as the change which, according to the advertisements, follows the taking of a patent medicine.

Before the arrival of the cheque, Bunter had been a person of the least possible consequence in the Lower Fourth. He had been a fat bounder, and a tubby toad, and a cringing porpoise, and all sorts of things like that. After the cheque, the difference was astonishing.

The effect was as amazing as that of Dr. Somebody's pink pills, or somebody else's memory system.

No longer a fat toad or a podgy porpoise, W. G. Bunter was an old fellow, an old

With a speed that was amazing William George Bunter fled, with a howling crowd on his track! (*See Chapter* 3.)



chap, an old scout. Friends sprang up around him like mushrooms.

Skinner and Snoop and Stott were sworn brothers to him. Fisher T. Fish worshipped the ground he walked on and the bank the cheque was drawn on. Bolsover major was markedly civil; lots of fellows had a kind word for Bunter. Angel, of the Fourth, invited him into his study for a quiet game of nap, and was quite content to accept Bunter's I O U's for his very considerable losses. For evidently it was only a matter of days before W. G. Bunter would be rolling in currency notes.

The story of the cheque spread. Even Loder and Carne, of the Sixth, had cheery nods for Bunter, whose existence they would never have dreamed of deigning to notice a few days before. Fitzgerald, of the Fifth, even went for a walk with him. Bunter dropped into a way of alluding carelessly to my friends in the Sixth, or my pals in the Fifth Form.

The glory of the fifty-pound cheque was like a halo round Bunter's podgy brow.

On his great expectations, he borrowed right and left.

Once upon a time he had borrowed on the expected arrival of a postal-order. But that postal-order was, as Bob Cherry had remarked, worn out. It had done yeoman service, but as a money-making stunt it had seen its best days, and was now a chicken that would not fight. But the cheque was a real thing. Many eyes had seen it; a dozen fellows had gone with Bunter to Mr. Quelch's study with it. It was only a matter of days before it would have been cleared by the bank, and the actual cash would be in Bunter's fat hand. Fellows even began to believe that there was such a place as Bunter Court.

To lend Bunter a bob or two now was, as Skinner remarked in the privacy of his study, a paying game. It was a "sprat to catch a whale." Bunter was airily planning motor excursions, runs up to London

to the theatres, feeds at big hotels in Folkestone; and fellows who stood by him now were to come in for a share of these good things—crumbs that were to fall from the rich man's table.

For two days William George Bunter was a pig in clover, and he thrived on it. Even Fisher T. Fish squeezed out a loan for Bunter, though parting with money gave Fishy a pain like the toothache. He squeezed most of his friends dry in the course of two days. Then he had recourse again to the Famous Five. He requested the loan of "ten bob" in a careless and casual manner, as of a fellow to whom ten-bob notes were trifles. But they were not trifles to Harry Wharton & Co., and five heads were shaken in response to Bunter's request.

"I'll tell you what," said Bunter, blinking at the chums of the Remove, "I'm rather short of money—till my cheque's cashed. Lend me ten bob, and I'll hand you a pound for it—when my cheque's cashed."

"I'll lend you a thick ear, you fat rotter!" growled Bob Cherry.

"I suppose you're rather jealous of my wealth, Bob Cherry——"

Bob raised his boot, and Bunter rolled away without finishing his remark. He looked into Hazeldene's study.

"Hazeldene, old chap, lend me a pound till my cheque's cashed——"

"Bow-wow!"

"I'm making up a party for the Frivolity next week," said Bunter. "We're going up in a big car, and there's going to be a feed at the Carlton, and——"

"Fathead!"

"I jolly well shan't take you!" roared Bunter. "Yah! Go and eat coke!"

And he rolled along the Remove passage in search of a lender. Skinner and Snoop were drawn blank; they had no more to lend. They had already expended their sprats which were to catch whales. As a last recourse, Bunter looked into Fisher T. Fish's study.

"I guess I'd be glad to oblige, old sport," said Fisher T. Fish. "But money is tight. Haven't you heard from Quelchy?"

"I haven't asked him," said Bunter loftily. "I'm not in a hurry for the money. I simply want ten bob or so for the present, but I dare say Angel, of the Fourth, will lend it to me. I'm going to take him on a theatre crawl when my cheque's cashed."

Fishy hesitated.

"I—I guess you're asking this infant, too?" he insinuated.

"I'm asking the fellows who can trust me with a little loan," said Bunter distantly.

"I—I guess——"

"I'll give you my I O U if you like," said Bunter. "Money's nothing to me. I'll give you an I O U for a pound, if you like."

Fisher T. Fish fairly quivered with greed.

"Pay as soon as the cheque's cashed?" he asked.

"Same day."

"I guess I've got ten bob," said Fisher T. Fish. "Of course, I'd always be glad to oblige a friend like you, Bunter; but business is business. Just give me that I O U you were speaking of——"

"Certainly."

Bunter fumbled in his pocket for a fragment of paper, and drew out a rumpled old letter. On the blank side he scribbled the I O U, handed it to Fisher T. Fish, and received the ten-shilling note. One moment more, and William George Bunter was hurrying down the Remove passage en route for the tuck-shop in the corner of the quad. Money never remained in William George's pocket till it burned a hole there.

Fisher T. Fish folded up the I O U very carefully, to put it away in safety. Fishy grinned over it with satisfaction. In a day or two he was going to bag a hundred per cent on his loan, which was good enough even for a sharp youth who had been "raised" in "Noo York."

As he folded the paper, he noticed that there was writing on one side of it. He grinned again. The short-sighted Owl of the Remove had evidently handed him a letter with the I O U on the back, instead of having written it on a loose piece of paper, as he supposed. Fishy unfolded the paper again, and glanced at the letter.

Fishy was no more scrupulous than Bunter himself on points like this.

"Gee whiz!"

Fisher T. Fish jumped.

If Fishy's sharp eyes had suddenly rested on the Gorgon, the sight could not have startled him more than the sight of Bunter's letter.

He read it—he read it again—he stared at it—he blinked at it—and he gasped for breath.

"Done!" spluttered Fisher T. Fish. "Gee whiz! Great snakes! The pesky spoofer! Done! Diddled! My ten bob! Oh, hokey!"

He glared wildly round the study, caught up the cricket bat belonging to Johnny Bull, and tore out of the doorway—after Billy Bunter. He came along the Remove passage as if he were on the cinder path, wild-eyed.

Crash!

"You howling ass!" roared Bob Cherry as Fisher T. Fish cannoned him on the stairs. "You—you——"

"Where's Bunter?" gasped Fishy.

"Bother Bunter! You——"

"I want his blood!" yelled Fisher T. Fish. "I'm going to brain him! Where is he?"

Without stopping for an answer to his question, Fisher T. Fish raced down the stairs, leaving Bob Cherry staring after him blankly.

"What's the matter with Fishy?" called out Bull.

"Blessed if I know! Off his rocker, I should think," gasped Bob. "He's after Bunter with a cricket bat. He's going to brain him."

"Fishy——"

"What the thump——"

Heedless of the excitement he was causing, Fisher T. Fish rushed out into the quad, wild-eyed and gasping. He glared round for Bunter. Half-a-dozen fellows rushed on the excited junior.

"What's the matter with you?" roared Harry Wharton, seizing Fishy by the collar and shaking him.

"I guess I'm going to brain Bunter—my ten bob—and the other bob—and the half-crown——" spluttered Fisher T. Fish incoherently.

"What's he done?" demanded Skinner. "You let Bunter alone, Fishy! Bunter's got friends to stand by him, I can tell you."

"Yes, rather," said Snoop warmly.

"The fat clam!" shrieked Fisher T. Fish.

"You shut up!" said Bolsover major. "What do you mean by calling Bunter names, you skinny scarcecrow?"

"Look at this!" Fisher T. Fish waved the letter wildly in the air. "Spoof—that cheque! Oh, Jerusalem crickets! And he's had my last ten bob!"

"Quite potty," said Bob Cherry, in wonder. "That's an I O U in Bunter's scrawl. What's wrong?"

"The other side——"

"It's a letter——"

"Bunter's pater's fist," said Skinner. "I know it. Why—what—oh, my hat! Great pip!"

A dozen eyes saw the letter as Fisher T. Fish held it up. It was really a surprising letter—especially to Bunter's new friends. It was short, if not sweet.

"Dear William,—It is impossible for me to send you anything beyond your allowance, but I quite approve of your desire to keep up equal appearances with your schoolfellows. I have no objection to sending you a cheque which you may show about the school. You will be very careful to return it to me by the next post.

"Your affectionate father.

"S. BUNTER."

Evidently that was the letter that had accompanied the celebrated cheque. Skinner blinked at it with quite a sickly look. Skinner had expended seven shillings and sixpence in "sprats" to catch whales that, only too clearly, never would be caught!

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Johnny Bull. "But—but—but he took the cheque to Mr. Quelch to be cashed!"

"We—we went with him!" stammered Snoop.

Fisher T. Fish raved.

"He was pulling our pesky leg. He just went into Quelchy's study and spun him

some yarn—asked him to lend him a dictionary, perhaps. I guess I see it all now."

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

"'Tain't a laughing matter," yelled Fisher T. Fish. "He's had fifteen bob out of me!"

"Seven-and-six out of me!" panted Skinner.

"He owes me twelve shillings" spluttered Bolsover major. "Where is he? Where is the spoofing toad?"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Don't you feel friendly to Bunter now?" asked Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where is he?" raved Fisher T. Fish. "I'm going to brain him! I'm going to scalp him! I guess I want his blood!"

"Where is he?" howled Skinner.

"I saw him making for the tuck-shop ten minutes ago," remarked Todd, with a chuckle.

Fisher T. Fish gave a whoop.

"Then my ten bob's gone! It wouldn't last him ten minutes! I'll have his scalp! I'll have his gore!"

Brandishing the bat, Fisher T. Fish headed a rush for the tuck-shop, followed fast by Bunter's new friends, who did not look friendly now. It was just then that Bunter, very sticky and shiny, emerged from the tuck-shop, with exactly ten-shillings' worth of tuck reposing in his well-stored interior. He gave the crowd of wrathful juniors a startled blink, and, without waiting to ask questions, bolted for his life.

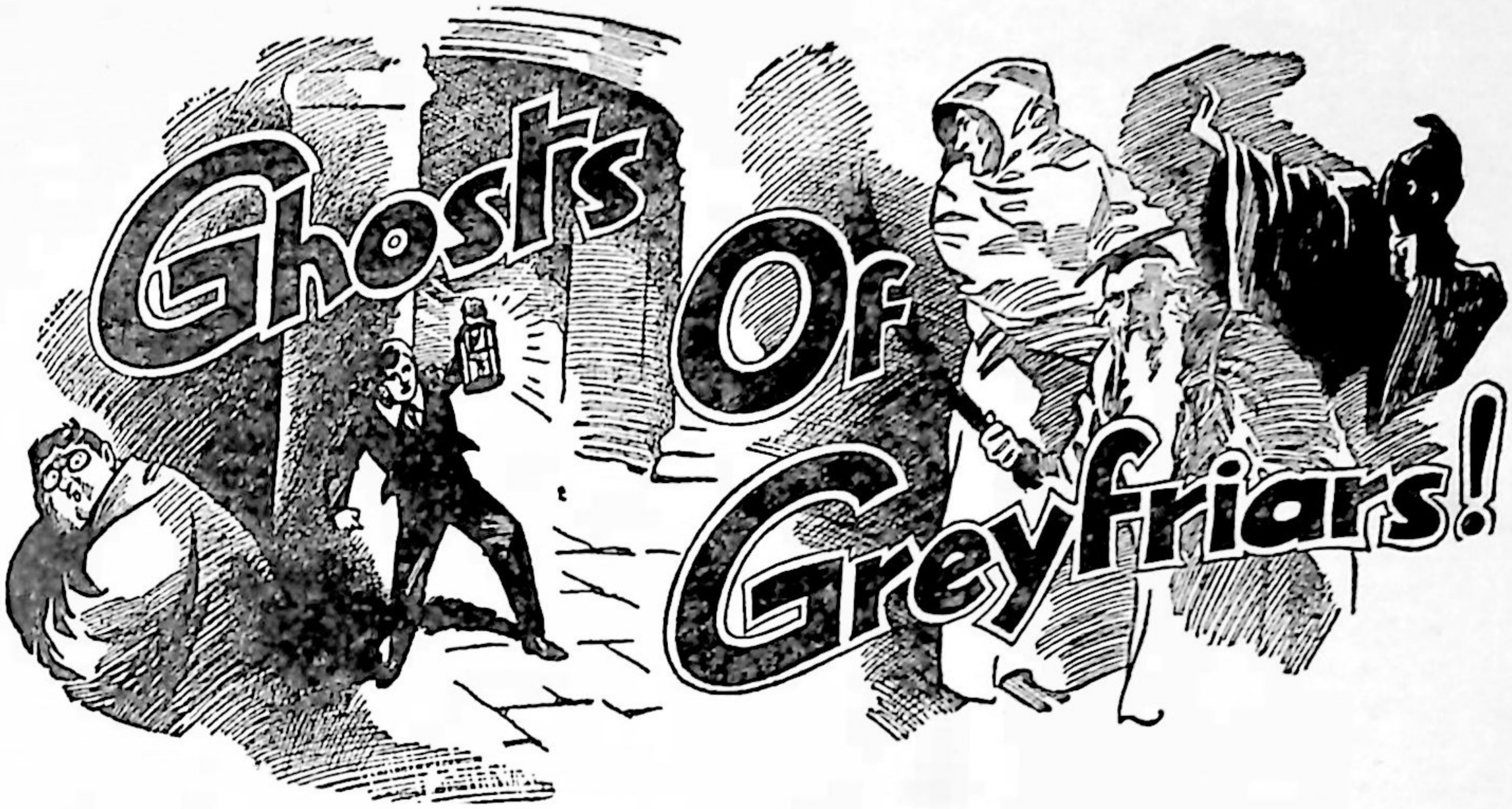
"After him!" roared Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Go it, Bunter!"

And, with a speed that was amazing considering the weight he had to carry, William George Bunter fled, with a howling crowd on his track.

What was left of William George Bunter after his friends had done with him lay in the armchair in Study No. 7 that evening and groaned. Brief—very brief—had been the popularity in which William George had basked. He had gone up like the rocket, and had come down like the stick, and as he groaned in the armchair he wondered dismally whether life was really worth living. Just then it felt as if it wasn't!





An eerie, creepy article from the gifted pen of Mr. Henry Quelch, Master of the Greyfriars Remove

GREYFRIARS SCHOOL has long enjoyed the reputation of being ghost-haunted. Having been a monastery in the remote past, it is not surprising that many strange stories and quaint legends should have gathered around the ancient building.

Every old school, like every old mansion and manor house, has its traditional ghost; and Greyfriars is reputed to harbour, at different times, not merely one ghost, but a veritable tribe of eerie visitants.

THE WANDERING FRIAR

PERSONALLY, I am inclined to smile at the majority of these ghost stories, and to set them down as foolish fancies, bred in the minds of imaginative schoolboys. The tale of "The Wandering Friar," for example, does not convince me, though I have heard it from the lips of several Old Boys, as well as present scholars, who declare that they have met the ghostly wanderer face to face.

The gloomy and historic crypt is alleged to be the happy haunting-ground of this ghost. Wearing monkish robes and a cowl, and with sandalled feet, the Wandering Friar is said to patrol the crypt from end to end, at the witching hour of midnight, on certain nights of the year.

I well remember a most startling incident which occurred some years ago. I was burning the midnight oil in my study when a distraught junior, clad in pyjamas and dressing-gown, burst in upon me. Breathlessly he told his strange story. He confessed that a midnight feast was about to be held in the Remove dormitory, and that he had been deputed to go and fetch the tuck-hamper, which had been hidden in the crypt. He rolled away the stone at the crypt entrance, and descended the iron ladder.

As he did so, he was startled by the sound of shuffling footsteps down below. Wonderingly, and with a palpitating heart, the junior flashed his electric-torch into the cavernous gloom of the crypt. He then saw, to his horror, the ghostly figure of the Wandering Friar shuffling towards him, and intoning a Latin chant. For a moment, the junior stood rooted to the spot with terror. Then, regaining the power of movement, he was up the ladder in a flash and rushing, panic-stricken, across the Close.



. . . The ghostly figure of the Wandering Friar shuffled slowly towards him !

I have told you his story more coherently than it was told to me. The boy gabbled dreadfully, and kept darting nervous glances over his shoulder, as if expecting to see the ghost of the Wandering Friar standing in my study doorway.

I pacified the boy as best I could, and requested him to accompany me to the crypt, where I would investigate his strange tale. But he shrank at the prospect of going back, so I bade him return to his dormitory. Then I set out myself to the scene of the visitation, armed with a lantern and a cane. I took the latter in case the " ghost " should prove to be some mischievous Greyfriars boy.

I must confess to a slight feeling of trepidation as I descended into the Stygian darkness of the crypt. The hand that held the lantern trembled a little, and my grip on the cane became convulsive. Supposing I found myself confronted with the Wandering Friar? What should I say? How should I act?

However, neither speech nor action proved necessary, for, although I explored the crypt from end to end, I saw nothing, and heard nothing—save the sound of a rat scuttling across the stone floor. I came to the conclusion that the terrified junior had been the victim of a powerful hallucination, and dismissed the matter from my mind.

Oddly enough, however, his story has been repeated to me at different times by different persons, and in essentials it has been the same. But until I see with my own eyes the strange phenomenon of the Wandering Friar, I shall refuse to believe that he patrols the crypt at dead o' night, intoning Latin chants!

THE TORTURE CHAMBER

THERE is an old lumber-room at Greyfriars, isolated from the rest of the building, and used as a sort of extra box-room. Here are stored the trunks and portmanteaus which are not likely to be required by their owners during term-time. The room is kept locked, and the key is in my possession.

This room has a sinister history. In the days of Queen Elizabeth, when the notorious Dr. Hardstaff ruled Greyfriars with a rod of iron, the apartment was used as a punishment-room. The scholars of that period christened it " The Torture Chamber," and with good reason, for many a birching, of unexampled severity, took place within those four walls.

The "ghost " of Dr. Hardstaff is reputed to haunt this lumber-room. Nobody has ever seen it; but from time to time persons passing the door have been startled to hear strange swishing sounds emanating from within, as if a birching were in progress. The swishings have been accompanied by moans and groans of a truly terrifying nature.

The last person to hear these extraordinary sounds was Wingate, of the Sixth. Now, Wingate is the last person in the world to harbour delusions, or to be tricked by his own imagination. He is sane, level-headed, and practical. On hearing these mysterious sounds, he came to the conclusion that a " rag " was in progress.

The door of the lumber-room, however, was locked on the outside, and the room has no window. How, then, could any "raggers " have gained access to "The Torture Chamber "?

Wingate summoned me at once, and I arrived on the scene just in time to hear the last faint yelps and moans. Instantly I unlocked the door and flung it wide. Together we rushed into the room—only to find nobody there!

I do not pretend to be able to explain this mystery. Whether the ghost of the infamous Dr. Hardstaff had returned, and a birching scene of long ago had been re-enacted, or whether the queer noises we heard had some perfectly innocent and natural explanation I cannot say. But I frankly confess that the mystery of "The Torture Chamber" impresses me far more than the story of the Wandering Friar; and I am hoping that sooner or later some satisfactory explanation will be forthcoming.

A VERY SOLID GHOST!

During last winter a strange story circulated throughout Greyfriars, to the effect that a ghostly figure had been seen making its way in the direction of the school kitchen at dead of night.

I took no official cognisance of the story until I heard it from the lips of my colleague, Mr. Prout, who declared that he had actually seen the apparition when making his final tour of the building. Mr. Prout described it as a terrifying spectre, of abnormal proportions, and clad in white.

Instead of gliding gracefully, as is the habit of most ghosts, it waddled along in an undignified manner, emitting strange gasps and grunts.

"I hastened to my study to fetch my Winchester repeater," said Mr. Prout, "but on my return I saw nothing of the fearsome apparition. It had vanished utterly."

I discovered next morning that a rabbit-pie had also vanished utterly from the school kitchen, and I decided that this was a case for prompt investigation. Accordingly, I kept watch the next night, taking up my position in a doorway which commanded a view of the kitchen door. My electric-torch was ready to hand.

Shortly before midnight I was startled by the sound of approaching footsteps and somewhat laboured breathing. I watched and waited, until the footsteps halted almost opposite me. Then I heard the handle of the kitchen door being turned. Instantly I flashed my torch, and there was a squeal of alarm from the "ghost," whom I recognised at once as Bunter major, of my Form!

The fat and fatuous junior had draped himself in a sheet, thereby giving the impression that he was a ghost. For several nights he had successfully carried out a raid on the school kitchen, but he was thwarted on this occasion. In a moment I had him squirming in my grip, and marched him along to my study for condign punishment. In vain the wretched Bunter pleaded that he had been walking in his sleep, and that he knew nothing of the repeated raids on the school kitchen.



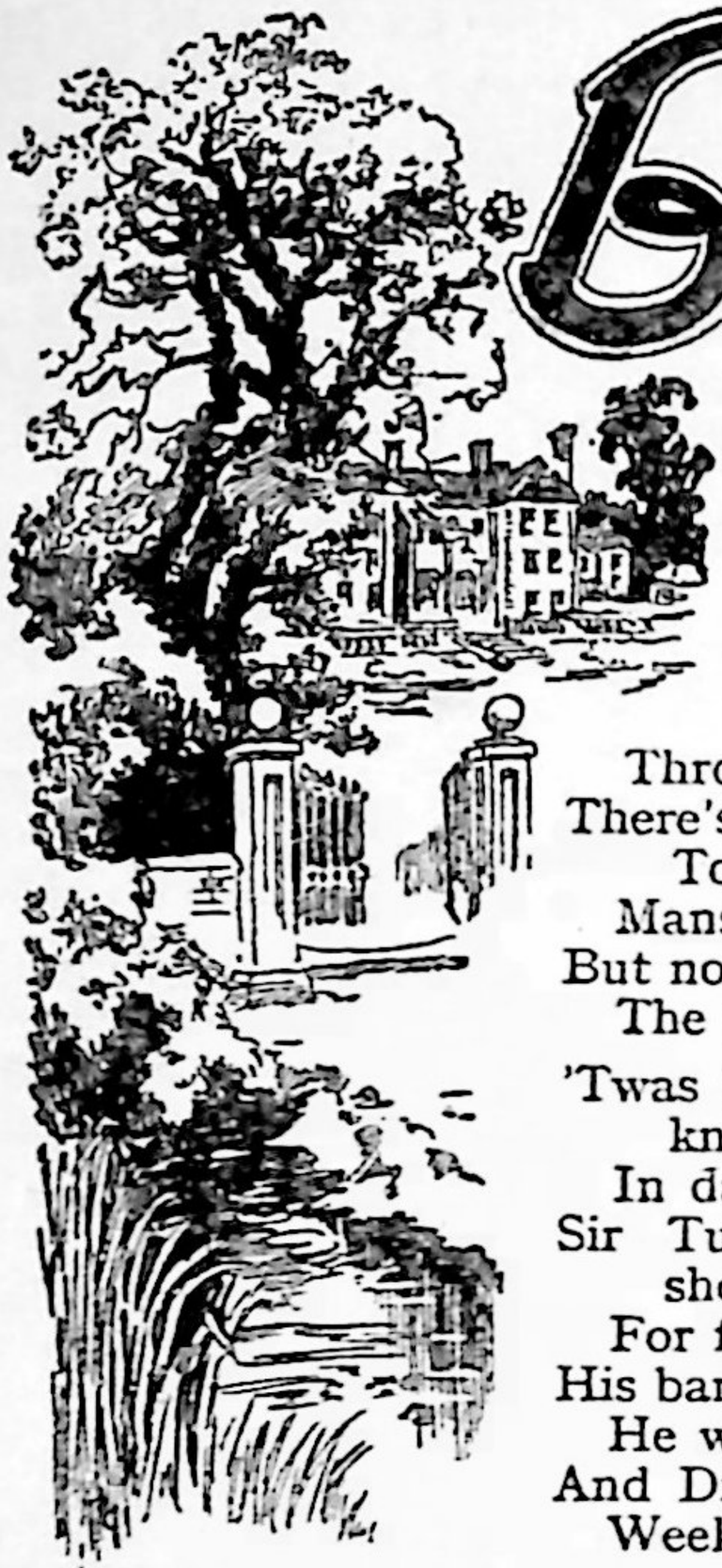
The fat and fatuous junior finds his career as a "ghost" coming to a painfully abrupt end!

I addressed him very sharply, first with my tongue and then with my cane; and from that time onward no "fearsome apparition" has been seen prowling in the vicinity of the kitchen at dead of night!

THE END

Bunter Court!

Billy Bunter.





You've heard of England's
stately homes,
How beautiful they stand,
Lifting their tall, majestic domes
Through all the pleasant land.
There's Wharton Lodge and Temple
Towers,
Mansions of every sort;
But none can beat the home of ours,
The princely Bunter Court!

'Twas built for good Queen Bess, you
know,
In days of past renown;
Sir Tucklesse Bunturre bought the
show
For fifty thousand down.
His banquets were the best in Kent;
He was a grand old sport,
And Drake and Raleigh always spent
Week-ends at Bunter Court!



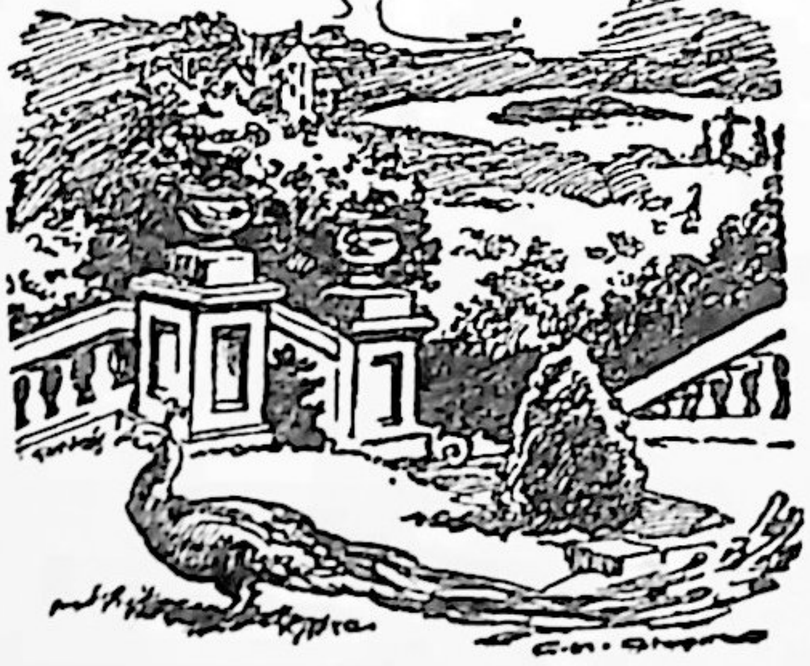
Sir Tucklesse perished in his prime;
He ate a truly "whopper" tea!
And since that bold bad baron's time
Our family's held the property.
Once Pater took to letting rooms,
When funds were rather short,
And all our vassals, serfs, and grooms
Were sacked from Bunter Court!

You ought to see the noble park;
It covers half an acre.
But don't go near it after dark,
Or you'll become a "Quaker"!
Sir Tucklesse Bunturre's ghost then
haunts,
According to report;
With jingling spurs, he takes his
jaunts
By night at Bunter Court!



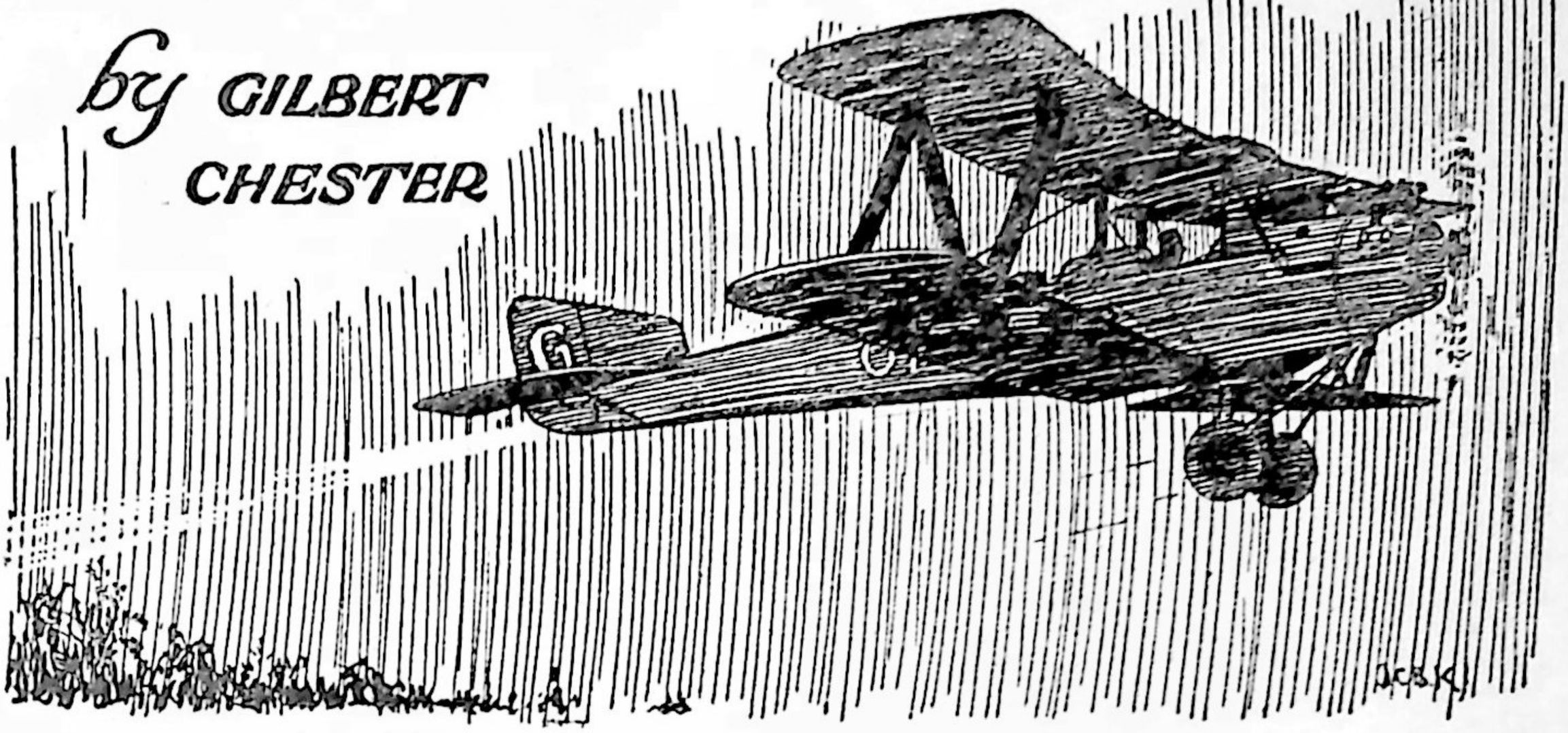


Bob Cherry says it's all a myth,
And Wharton, in a pally way,
Agrees with Bull and Vernon-Smith
That Bunter Court's an alley-way!
"You're jealous as can be, you
beasts!"
I furiously retort,
"Because you can't attend the feasts
We hold at Bunter Court!"



BOB THE AIRMAN!

by GILBERT CHESTER



An exciting yarn of a lad's dash from London to Prague by aeroplane and motor-cycle, with some important papers.

THE FIRST CHAPTER

"No Use for Flying!"

"YOU'RE late, sir!"

John Norton raised his stern grey eyes from the bundle of documents on his desk to regard his young nephew angrily from under his fierce and shaggy brows.

"Yes, uncle. I—I'm sorry," Bob Norton admitted apologetically, though with some difficulty. Flushed and out of breath with running, he was rather flustered, besides which he stood somewhat in awe of his masterful relative. "I—I couldn't help it this time," he added. "But it shan't happen again."

"Humph!" John Norton scrutinised the youngster's tanned features for a brief moment. Then he queried sharply: "Been flying again, eh?"

"Yes, uncle. Jim Cardew's going abroad. He wanted me to make a final flight with him before he goes, just to make sure I was really shaping well. Only the engine packed up, and we had to make a forced landing, so——"

"Confound Cardew!" his uncle broke in wrathfully. "Ought to be ashamed of himself, encouraging a half-fledged boy like you to break your idiotic young neck! The half-crazy madman——"

"But Jim's a crack pilot!" Bob protested, aghast at such an outburst against his hero.

"I don't care what he is!" John Norton interrupted. "I promised your dead father I'd make a business man of you. You're here to learn the rudiments of engineering, not to kill yourself before your time. I've told you before, I won't have you flying. I absolutely forbid you to go up again!"

Bob bit his lip. His whole soul was wrapped up in aviation, and he cared very little for the office routine of the big engineering firm over the destinies of which his uncle presided.

John Norton, he knew, had no use for flying. A railway man, whose life had been spent on constructional contracts at home and abroad, his uncle looked on the aeroplane as a dangerous rival to his beloved

railways. And Bob shrewdly suspected that his prejudice was subconsciously founded on this, rather than on the alleged dangers of flight.

"Very well, uncle." Bob spoke at length, reluctantly.

John Norton was his guardian, and, until he came of age, the lad realised that his uncle's word must be law, however absurd or unfounded his views appeared to be.

"Then remember what I've said," the elder man resumed, "or I'll send you somewhere where you won't have a chance of getting within five hundred miles of one of these confounded contraptions."

He straightened abruptly in his chair, then took up a sheaf of papers, tied together with a length of red tape.

"Here is that Czecho-Slovakian tender, the one we're putting in for that new line near Burno. I've made some alterations. As Miss Hickman is away ill to-day, you'll have to copy them. I doubt if you'll be able to get them done in office hours, though you could have done so had you arrived on time. You'll have to stop behind and work overtime. I'm leaving for Prague first thing to-morrow morning, and must take this tender with me."

"Don't worry, uncle. It shall be ready, even if I have to work all night," Bob announced promptly, anxious to make amends for his enforced absence from duty. "If need be, I'll ask Holstman to help me."

"No! I want no one to see that tender except yourself. That German firm are out to get the contract for themselves, and though, of course, I don't for one moment suspect the loyalty of any of our staff, I want no chance of any details leaking out in advance. You are not to mention them to anyone, understand?"

"Certainly, uncle." Bob gathered up the papers, and, by no means sorry to escape from his uncle's presence, went back to his desk in the outer office, where he settled down to his appointed task.

At a neighbouring desk, a short, thickset young man was seated, intent on some calculations. As Bob settled himself the other looked up.

"Get it in the neck from the old man, eh?" he inquired in a pronounced American accent, and with a rather unpleasant sneer on his loose lips. "He raised Cain properly when you didn't show up this morning."

"Well, I got ticked off a bit," Bob admitted, making a wry face. "Not so bad as it might have been, though, Holstman. Except I'm afraid it will mean no more flying, and—— However, I've got to get on with this."

He indicated the documents, at the same time glancing at the clock, whose hands were moving onwards with disconcerting regularity.

"Huh! Holstman bent over to scan the papers. "What's that you've got there? The Czech tender, eh? Gee! You'll never get all that copied out in time. Better let me help you."

"Thanks all the same, but I'll do it somehow," Bob replied, remembering his uncle's instructions. "Still, it's jolly sporting of you, Holstman, to offer. I appreciate your kindness no end."

"Oh!" the American muttered, shrugging. He seemed about to renew his offer. Then, as though thinking better of it, he turned to his own work.

For some time silence reigned in the room, unbroken except for the scratch of Holstman's pen and the steady clicketty-click of Bob's typewriter. Then, when at length the clock struck five-thirty, Holstman rose. It was knocking-off time, as the hooter on the power-house told by its long, raucous screaming.

"See here!" On his way to the door Holstman paused. "Can't I give you a hand there, Bob? You'll be here all night from the look of it."

"Oh, I'll be through by nine all right," Bob declared confidently. "You might let me have the key to that cupboard over there, though, before you go. I'll need to stow these papers somewhere safe for the night when I'm finished."

"Sure!" Holstman took a key from his ring, and tossed it carelessly on to Bob's

desk. "Well, cheerio. Don't be late in the morning."

For all Bob's optimism, however, it was nearly ten before the re-draft of the tender was completed, and he stumbled up from his desk, stiff-limbed and tired-eyed, to lock the papers in the cupboard.

The office building attached to the big works was silent and in darkness, except for a light or so in the passage and stairway that led to the front entrance. Out in the yard the sound of the night watchman going his rounds was the only indication of life.

Yawning, Bob got his hat and let himself out of the premises. He was half-way home when he heard the clock of a neighbouring church strike the hour.

"Better set my watch," he thought to himself, "now I think of it. It won't do to risk being late to-morrow." And he made to adjust hs wrist-watch, only to discover that it was missing.

"Great Scott! I'd forgotten!" he exclaimed in dismay.

He remembered then that he had taken the watch off before settling down at the typewriter, in case the key-punching should jar its delicate works. The watch was still on his desk at the office.

Better not trust to that old dud of a clock at his digs. He had not come far, and it would not take many minutes to get the watch. With that tender locked up in the cupboard and the key in his pocket, it was essential that nothing should be left to chance, since John Norton was leaving first thing in the morning. So he retraced his steps.

He let himself in quietly. He had no wish to rouse the watchman and be delayed over explanations. He had rubber soles on his shoes, so it was unlikely that his arrival had been noted. Hurrying up the stone stairs, he made for the office.

The place was in darkness, but he did not switch the lights on because of the watchman. Groping for the door-knob, he found the door open.

"Could have sworn I shut this door," he muttered, half aloud, to break off abruptly as a sharp sound came from the corner by the cupboard. Someone was in the room!

"Hallo!" he exclaimed, jumping for the electric-light switch as a rush of feet came through the blackness.

But before he could find the switch someone cannoned violently into him, and he staggered back heavily against the wall.

Like lightning, Bob grabbed at the intruder, and, when the latter tried to free himself with a violent wrench, clung on tightly. But the fellow was strong as a bull, bigger than Bob, and heavy. In his efforts to hold his opponent the youngster was dragged right across the room.

Still, Bob was not to be beaten. Though his unseen adversary struggled furiously to throw him off, he held on grimly.

Twisting and wrenching, jerking and heaving, the pair rocked up and down the room, overturning chairs in their whirlwind passage, and locked in a fierce embrace.

Through the darkness Bob could hear the other's panting, could feel his hot, laboured breath upon his forehead. But the fellow did not speak. Fighting silently, he worked with grim ferocity to wear his would-be captor down.

Though only seventeen, Bob was strong and well grown for his age. What was more, he was fit and nimble with constant exercise. But he was not yet in his prime, and against a full-grown man he was at a disadvantage.

Slowly but surely he felt his strength going, felt the other's superior weight bearing him down. If the struggle went on much longer, he must inevitably go under. Something had got to be done, and quickly.

There was only one thing for it—shout! He must rouse the watchman before his opponent overpowered him.

"Help!" he yelled, with all the power of his strong young lungs, as he felt the intruder force him over against a desk and pin him to it.

His enemy promptly loosened one hand and pressed it to the lad's mouth. For a second his grip relaxed.

In a flash Bob acted. With an agile

wriggle he broke free of his adversary, and, ducking, leapt for the doorway.

But in the dark he misjudged his direction. His rush ended against solid wall. With another shout, he sprang to correct his mistake, guided by the scurry of feet across the floor as the intruder blundered for the exit.

He gained the door ahead of his opponent and slammed it shut, then leaped at the fellow once more. But his enemy had had enough of wrestling. As Bob flung himself on him, he lashed out viciously with his fist, determined to end the combat swiftly.

The blow took Bob full in the face with sickening force, and he reeled backwards against the door. But, recovering gamely, he struck back like lightning, countered a second blow, then smashed a left hook to his opponent's jaw.

With a stifled curse the man broke away, lost in the darkness. And, breathing tensely, Bob waited, his fists clenched, and covering up in expectation of further attack.

But the onslaught did not come. For an instant there was silence. Then a slight noise sounded by the window. His enemy meant to escape that way.

In a flash Bob dashed towards the window, to fling himself upon the fellow and hold him till the watchman arrived. But he never reached his objective.

Half-way across the room something heavy smashed down upon his head with terrific force, and he went down on the floor in a heap, his head ringing with the force of the blow.

Before he could stagger up again he heard his enemy spring past him. Something clattered noisily to the floor, and the door shut with a bang. As Bob stumbled towards it he heard the lock click home.

He flung himself frantically on the door to wrench it open. But it was fast. So, realising the futility of tugging, he found the switch and turned it on.

In the middle of the floor lay a broken chair—the club used to fell him. Then his eyes sought the cupboard in the corner. Its doors were shut, but in the lock was a key.

Stumbling dizzily to the cupboard he pulled it open—to give a quick sigh of relief as his hand closed upon the precious tender. He had been in time!

THE SECOND CHAPTER
"I Won't be Beaten!"

By the time his shouts brought the watchman and release, all trace of Bob's opponent had vanished. Only a duplicate key remained as clue to the fellow's mysterious identity. So, shelving the matter for the time being, Bob went home, taking the papers with him as a precaution.

"Humph! Spies, eh?" John Norton grunted when, next morning, his nephew reported the incident. "Well, thank goodness the fellow was foiled. Though I hope this will teach you a lesson, my lad. But for that confounded flying trip of yours, the papers would have been re-drafted during office hours and locked up in the safe," he added, stowing the documents in the familiar leather attaché-case he always carried when on business.

"Still, I've no leisure to investigate this matter now," he went on quickly. "There have been so many delays getting this tender finished that I've had to run things very fine. The tenders must be in at Prague by noon to-morrow. In fact, I'm having to do something I've never done before, and that's fly there by a special aeroplane that's waiting for me at the airport."

Rather downcast, for he had expected at least some slight appreciation of his promptitude the previous evening, Bob withdrew. He even failed to see the irony of fate which compelled his uncle to make use of the very form of transport against which he constantly inveighed.

"I think he might have let my lateness yesterday rest," the youngster muttered as, nursing a swollen jaw, he quitted his uncle's room. "He seems snappier than ever this morning."

"Cheer up, young 'un! The Chief's a bunch of nerves this morning." Bob looked up, to find the genial works manager before him. "There's so much hanging on this

contract. If we lose it, it will mean paying off hundreds of the hands, and Mr. Norton has a kindly heart underneath, even if he is strict over discipline."

With a sympathetic smile the manager went past into John Norton's office, to reappear shortly and beckon to Holstman.

"Here, Holstman, the Chief wants you. Bring those figures for that Kenya bridge, will you? Hurry! Mr. Norton's just off!"

"Right!" Holstman seized an attaché-case and hurried into the inner office.

For a few moments, Bob's room-mate was closeted with his Chief. Then the latter came out, carrying his attaché-case.

"Good-bye, Bob. No flying, mind, while I'm gone!" John Norton threw a brusque farewell to his nephew. "Come, Carstairs!" He signed to the works manager. "I'll want you to come as far as Croydon with me. We'll talk over those details for that other matter on the way."



Twisting and wrenching, jerking and heaving, the pair rocked up and down the room, locked in a fierce embrace. (*See Chapter* 1.)

Another moment, and the two men were gone. Holstman returned, a bundle of papers in his hand. Along with Bob, he settled down to tackle the day's work.

. . . . .

Bob's head was aching frantically. Try as he would, he could not concentrate on the work before him. That blow from the chair had left a nasty lump on his head, and an effort to do figures only made matters worse, as did vain puzzling over the identity of last night's intruder.

"I believe I saw some aspirins on uncle's desk this morning," Bob thought to himself as, during the afternoon, his headache grew splitting. "Perhaps a couple will put me right."

He went into the empty sanctum, where he hunted amongst the litter of documents strewn about the big flat-topped desk. But he could not see the little bottle he was looking for.

Wondering if it had fallen to the floor beyond the desk, Bob went round to

scrutinise the narrow space between the desk end and the wall. But there was no bottle there—only a leather attaché-case, stowed out of sight in the narrow gap.

"Hallo!" Bob whipped the case from its hiding-place, and started as he saw the initials, "J. S.," on its lid. He could have sworn he had seen the case in his uncle's hand when, in company with Carstairs, he had set out for Croydon.

Puzzled, Bob tore the lid open, only to step back in dismay as his gaze rested on the interior There lay the all-important tenders!

In a flash the lad realised what had happened. By some mischance John Norton had picked up the wrong attaché-case, and, though he did not know it, was flying rapidly towards Prague with a case full of perfectly useless documents!

Bob's heart almost stopped beating. By this time his uncle would be well over the Channel, and beyond recall. Even if a wireless message could be got to the 'plane that carried him, it would be too late for him to return and get the tender.

Yet unless that tender reached Prague by noon to-morrow the contract would be irretrievably lost. And Prague was in the heart of Middle Europe—hundreds of miles away!

To reach Prague by train in the time was out of the question. The only way was to get to Croydon, charter a special 'plane, and pursue his uncle with the tenders by air.

But to do that a big sum of ready cash was needed. The aeroplane people would demand payment in advance. Where was he to get such a sum from?

There might be enough in Carstairs' safe. But, then, Carstairs was in London, and might not be back for many hours—might not be back to-day. It was late in the afternoon now, and the banks were closed. There was no chance even of drawing on his savings.

Besides, dare he trust anyone in the office with this information? That attempt on the cupboard last night might have been the work of an outsider But this affair of the attaché-case was different.

Obviously someone had managed to substitute another case for Jim Norton's, at the last minute, and while his attention was diverted. That could only have been done by some traitor in the office itself. And the very position in which the case had been hidden proved that the affair was no accident.

Holstman, he now remembered, had gone in to see John Norton with those Kenya statistics, carried in just such an attaché-case.

Bob frowned. Only Holstman could have known he was going to put the papers in that cupboard for the night.

No, this was a matter he must handle by himself, Bob decided. There was plainly some deliberate, determined, and well-organised plot afoot to secure the tender, or prevent its safe arrival at Prague. If he sought help from officials of the firm, news of the trick and its discovery would leak out. Forewarned, the traitor would simply form fresh plans to intercept the papers on their way to Czecho-Slovakia.

Bob peeped back into the outer office. It was empty. Holstman had evidently gone on some errand to another department.

A quickly-formed plan in his head, Bob seized the telephone and got through to the aerodrome where Cardew housed his 'plane. Getting on to the man in charge, the youngster put a rapid question to him.

"Can I let you have Mr. Cardew's 'bus?" the man echoed down the wire in a tone of astonishment. "Certainly not! Mr. Cardew's left for France, and I've no authority to hand his 'plane over to anyone."

"But it's important!" Bob exclaimed desperately. "I've simply got to reach Prague by noon to-morrow, and I'm sure Mr. Cardew wouldn't mind if he knew ——"

"Well, he doesn't," the other interrupted irritably. "And if you think I'm going to risk letting you have his or anyone else's 'bus for a crackbrained attempt to get to Prague, you must take me to be as silly as yourself. Why, an inexperienced flier like you would never get across the Channel! You're crazy!"

His last hope gone, Bob rang off, to stand disconsolately by the telephone. It seemed that the treacherous enemy would triumph, after all.

"By gosh, I won't be beaten, though!" he exclaimed, his mouth tightening in a grim, straight line, and he clenched his fists. "There is a way, and I'll take it! There'll be no one at the aerodrome after dark! I'll pinch that 'plane of Cardew's this evening, and chance my arm! I'll get that tender to Prague or bust!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER
Aboard the 'Plane!

"VELL, haf you der papers got, mein freund?" a guttural voice demanded as, rising from the park seat on which he was sitting, the speaker gripped the arm of a man who had just come up.

"No, worse luck!" The newcomer was Holstman. "That infernal, meddlesome young hound was too much for me again!"

"Himmel! You mean John Norton haf gone to Prague mit der tenders?" The other, a blond-haired foreigner, started back in dismay.

"No." Holstman chuckled evilly as he shook his head. "When that nephew of his surprised me at the office last night, I made fresh plans. I knew the attaché-case Norton always uses, got another just like it, and managed to change the two over unseen at the last moment. He went off unsuspecting, with a case full of dud papers!

"Unluckily the young cub discovered, this afternoon, the case Norton left behind. I had to hide the thing, and had no chance to get hold of the tender for you."

"Vell, at least Norton vill not get der tenders through in time," the German commented philosophically. "You may der five hundert pounds ve offer earn after all, Herr Holstman. If ve get der contract, dat is."

"I hope so," Holstman returned gloomily. "But the young hound's planning to pinch a 'plane to-night, and fly to Prague himself with the papers. Quite by accident, I overheard him on the 'phone this afternoon."

He reported the conversation Bob had had with Cardew's representative.

"Den you must to der aerodrome go, and gif varning!" the Teuton exclaimed excitedly. "To schtop dis flight——"

"Not me," Holstman interrupted coolly. "He's a persistent young hound. If he's stopped, he'll only try some other way. He might get through, too. Besides, by this time he must guess who worked that trick on the old man. And I don't want him dropping John Norton any hints. I've got a good job to lose.

"Still, at present the youngster doesn't suspect his plans are known. He never heard me enter the room, and I escaped before he turned round." Holstman paused to smile grimly, then added: "And he mustn't suspect, either. I want him to go ahead."

"Are you mad?" the other ejaculated.

Holstman shook his head and grinned again.

"No, but I've got a good plan. Listen! I've seen this 'plane of Cardew's. It's the usual tractor type—with engine in front, and a long exhaust pipe running aft, alongside the fuselage. It's wrapped with abestos thread, and runs so far back as to protect the wood and fabric of the 'plane itself from the heat of the exhaust gases.

"Young Norton wouldn't dare enter the aerodrome till after dark, in case he's caught. But I know a man there, and he can get me in unnoticed. I'm going to unship Cardew's exhaust pipe, drill a hole in its inner side—I mean the side next the fuselage—and plug the hole up with cement."

"But vat for?"

"If I replace the pipe, everything will look as usual," Holstman explained. "I'll tap a screw-thread in the hole. That will hold the cement in place for some time. But after a while the vibration of the exhaust will blow the cement out, and flames will spurt out through the hole on to the fuselage. The 'plane will catch fire, and the young hound will crash!"

For an instant the German paused, gasping, as details of the fiendish plan his confederate had so callously proposed penetrated his intelligence. Then he gave a grunt of satisfaction.

"A goot plan, mein freund, und doubly

goot because no von vill efer know it vas nod ein accident. Be quick, den, and make everyt'ings as you haf said. Remember, five hundert pounds, Herr Holstman."

But "Herr Holstman" gave a short laugh.

"Don't worry," he said confidently. "That five hundred is as good as mine!"

. . . . .

It was quite dark when, trembling with suppressed excitement, Bob reached the deserted aerodrome, the all-important attaché-case gripped in his hand. Climbing the high fence, he slipped swiftly towards the hangar, oblivious of the stealthy form that melted into the shadows as he came up.

The hangar was locked, but no matter! Cardew had given him a key, and with this he quickly got the doors open. Then, after pausing to listen cautiously, he set to work to get the 'bus out into the open.

Fortunately the machine was a light one, or he could never have accomplished the task unaided. As it was, after much hauling and straining, he contrived to get the 'plane outside, where he proceeded, swiftly but systematically, to replenish the fuel tanks.

Every nerve in him told him to hurry, to get away before someone surprised him. But again he fought such instincts down. The flight was a long one. He must make his preparations coolly, thoroughly. A premature start might spell disaster in the air.

So he inspected everything minutely, an electric torch screened in the "cup" of his hand. But everything seemed in order, and at last, satisfied, he walked round to the propeller.

Here he foresaw his greatest difficulty. There was no mechanic to swing the "prop" for him, and thus start the engine while he sat ready in the cockpit. The instant the motor fired the 'plane would start to move forward on to him, uncontrolled, and the plaything of the powerful engine.

He would have to trust to luck and his own agility to spring clear in time, and to board the moving 'plane before she took off or buried her nose in the ground. Failure might well mean death. At the least, it would mean a smashed machine, and an end to all his plans.

Well, it had to be done! Gritting his teeth, he seized the long wooden blade, thrust it into position, then jerked it downwards with all his strength.

"Hi, there! Stop!"

As the engine gave a futile cough, a loud, peremptory voice bawled at him through the darkness. While he thrust the blade upwards again, he saw over his shoulder two men running towards him.

But, ignoring them, he yanked at the propeller once more. The engine burst into a roar, and, as he jumped clear of the whizzing blades, jerked forwards upon him.

He sprang sideways, ducking low. A great balloon-tyred wheel struck his thigh, throwing him. But he stumbled free by an ace, only to blunder into the arms of the foremost newcomer.

"Here—you!" The man grabbed at him furiously.

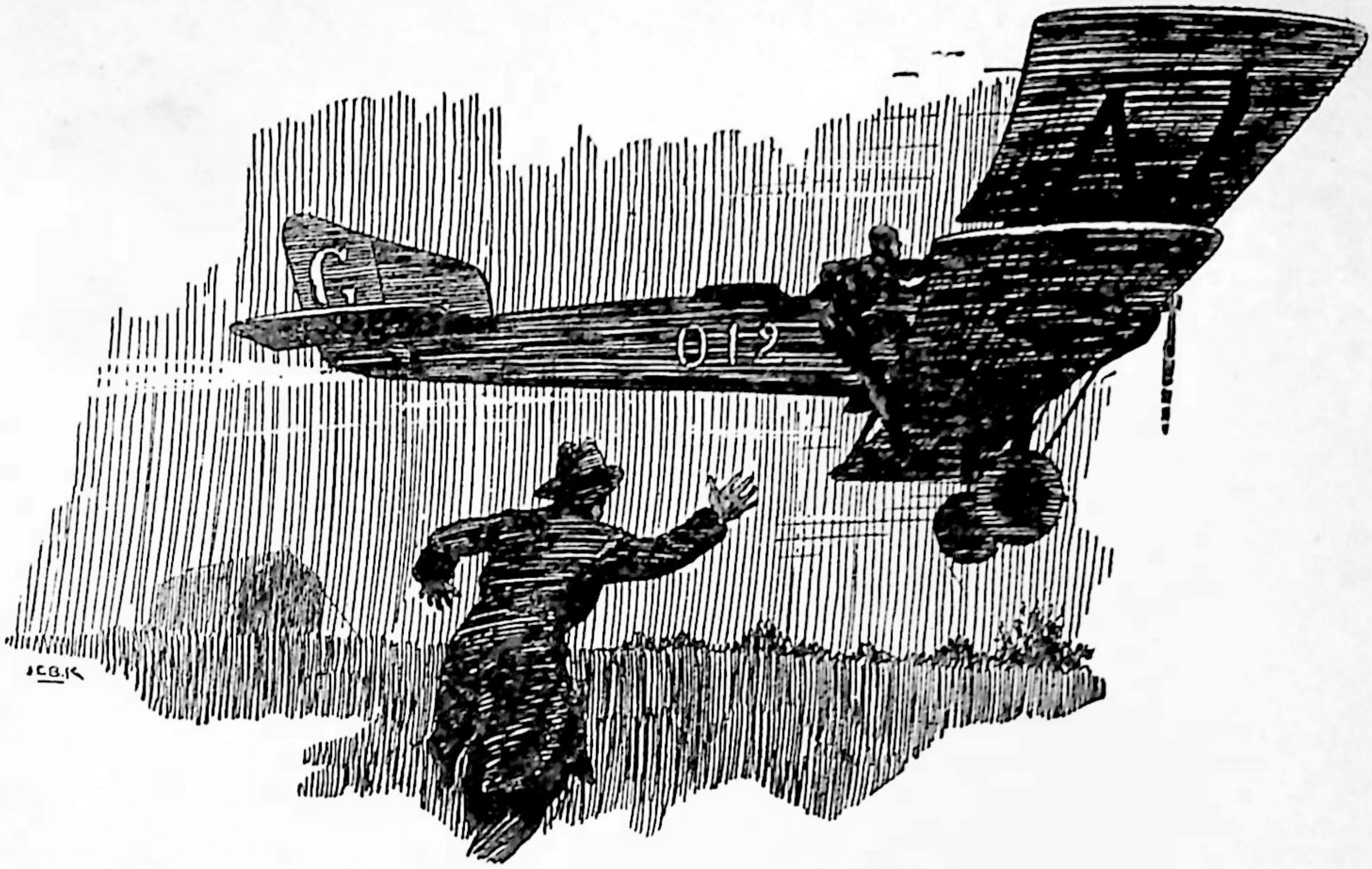
Bob hooked an under-cut to his jaw, knocking him backwards. As the fellow reeled away he sprang for the machine, and, with a flying leap, got a precarious foothold.

Rocking and swaying, the 'bus bumped over the rough ground, its tail swinging viciously, lifting and heaving. A dozen times, while the intrepid youngster scaled into the cockpit, the 'bus all but overturned.

But in the nick of time he managed to seize the controls, fought the bucking 'plane into submission, and, a long line of tall trees dangerously close ahead of him, took off the ground, the shouts of the two men drowned in the roar of the engine.

For a breathless second the trees loomed up to meet him. It seemed he could never clear them, as he wrestled desperately with the elevator rudder to gain more height. Then the wheels of the landing chassis cleared the topmost branches by an inch, and he was safely over.

Rising swiftly in the air, cool, confident, and undismayed, he set out on his daredevil flight through the darkness across the



In the nick of time Bob managed to clamber into the cockpit and seize the controls, the shouts of the two men drowned in the roar of the engine. (*See previous page.*)

long, unfamiliar stretch of sea and country that led to Prague.

Had he known of the fatal flaw, fashioned by Holstman's treacherous hands in the flame-flooded exhaust pipe, he would have been less confident.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

The Crisis and—Victory !

He had been flying for over seven hours, guided through the night by his compass and some maps he had with him. Seven long hours, in which his tired hands grew numb, his feet, never off the elevator bar, stiff and cramped.

In his ears the deafening monotone of the roaring engine. Away to the right, shadowy giants against the white gleam of the rising moon—the towering crests of the Swiss Alps.

Gradually these fell away and were lost in the distance. Then ahead he saw the rosy radiance of coming dawn, heralded by the ruddy iridescence of cotton-wool clouds. Below, the unseen Bavarian countryside, hidden in mists.

Well, he was on the right course—the Alps, now vanished, proved that. Another hour or two would bring the Czech capital in sight. Meanwhile, his engine was behaving beautifully The whole flight, notwithstanding its hazards, had gone off without a hitch. He was within sight of victory, and——

Hallo ! What was that ? Impelled by some subtle instinct, he turned to glance backwards. Behind, from the fuselage, black clouds of smoke were billowing. Even as he looked, a sheet of flame burst from their midst. The 'plane was on fire !

"My giddy aunt !"

His feet moved to depress the elevator. He must dive for it quickly, before the fire spread. His fingers gripped the "joystick," only to slacken as no response greeted their movement. A wire or something had gone already ! The rudder was out of control ! To dive meant death !



To face page 40.

A LEAP FOR LIFE!

Swiftly he checked the downward plunge, his brain working furiously. If he dived and got into a tail spin! No! Yet to stay up here in the blazing machine meant equal disaster. All this flashed through his mind in a second.

The doomed aeroplane was quivering now, as though in fear of the flames that wrapped it. He could feel the torrid heat from the eager, licking tongues that ran along the failing fuselage astern.

The 'bus heeled sideways, twisting as she made to spin. This was the finish.

The parachute! He had forgotten that, ready strapped as it was to his body. Clutching the attaché-case, he scrambled up, gained the side, and for a second stood poised on it. Then he jumped.

For an eternity he seemed to fall through space, his arms rigid, his hands gripped to his thighs, while, still clinging to the case, he spun over and over.

The parachute had failed him! It would never open! He was choking!

Thud! With a terrific wrench that all but tore his arms from their sockets, the stout straps tightened. His flying heels righted, and he felt the rush of air about him cease. Then he sensed the clammy touch of the ground mists, but a moment since far below.

The parachute had acted, after all, and not a second too soon! As realisation came, and with it relief, his feet crashed into some springy, yielding object, and he fetched up with a jerk, mild as compared to that other one, to find himself dangling from the wreck of his parachute in a large tree.

He was safe!

Dropping the case, he wriggled loose and dropped to earth. At the same instant, a frightful crash in the distance smote the still air, and a leaping mass of fire shot skywards. It was the 'plane, crashed some way off in an inferno of blazing petrol.

With a shudder, Bob retrieved the attaché-case, really aware now for the first time of the frightful death he had so narrowly avoided. Then his ear caught the staccato bark of a motor-cycle engine, and instinctively he turned in its direction.

This reminded him—he was on land once more, though where he did not know. And, delightful as it was to be again on terra-firma, the thought brought with it a fresh sense of danger.

He had flown across Europe without a permit, without a passport even. He was a law-breaker, an outlaw, in the heart of some foreign land. The crash would bring people to the spot; he would be questioned, his papers demanded. It meant arrest and detention—while the precious hours sped!

The motor-cycle had stopped now. Through the half-light he saw a man running across the mist-cloaked fields towards the blazing wreck. As yet he himself was undiscovered.

His eyes sought the red glow on the horizon in the East, his direction. Another instant, and he was running towards the roadway.

Tumbling over a fence, he came upon the motor-bike, abandoned by its rider in his dash for the scene of the crash. And as he saw the lone machine Bob realised his opportunity.

He must get away unchallenged, get on with his journey. Here was the means, and nobody to stay him!

Stamping on the kick-starter, he set the machine in motion and swung into the saddle. Its owner could be traced later and compensated, with apologies. He flung the throttle lever over, his mind made up. Another instant, and he was scorching all out towards the ever-rising dawn.

As he tore onwards through the misty country, he scanned the sign-posts, flashing past in the growing light. The lettering on them was Gothic, like the title-head to a morning newspaper. He was in Germany, with the frontier between him and Czecho-Slovakia, his destination!

Weiden; a name flew by on a sign-post. It caught his eye as he sped past, and he remembered seeing the name on a map. Well, he was close to the frontier, anyway, and going in the right direction.

He streaked on, fences, hedges, houses, all flashing by. Then, before he was aware of it, a guardhouse swung into view on a corner, and another beyond it. At the same moment, a uniformed figure in green-grey

stepped out, rifle in hand, to meet him.

The frontier, questions, detention! The crisis was at hand!

He gripped his handle-bars resolutely. The figure in uniform shouted, waving him to stop. But he tore on, his speed unchecked.

The man raised his rifle, full in the leaping motor-cycle's path. There was a crash, a spurt of flame, and something whistled past Bob's head. He was on the figure now —the gun——

But the fellow sprang aside at the last second, and Bob was by, to shoot into the midst of another group by the second guardhouse, scattering them like chaff before his breakneck onrush.

Again he was through and safe, but only for a moment. In his wake a splutter of rifle-shots echoed, and the ping-ping and "phwitting" of flying lead broke about him. Something went sighing past his ear; a fleck of leather, gouged from his shoe-sole, spun into the air.

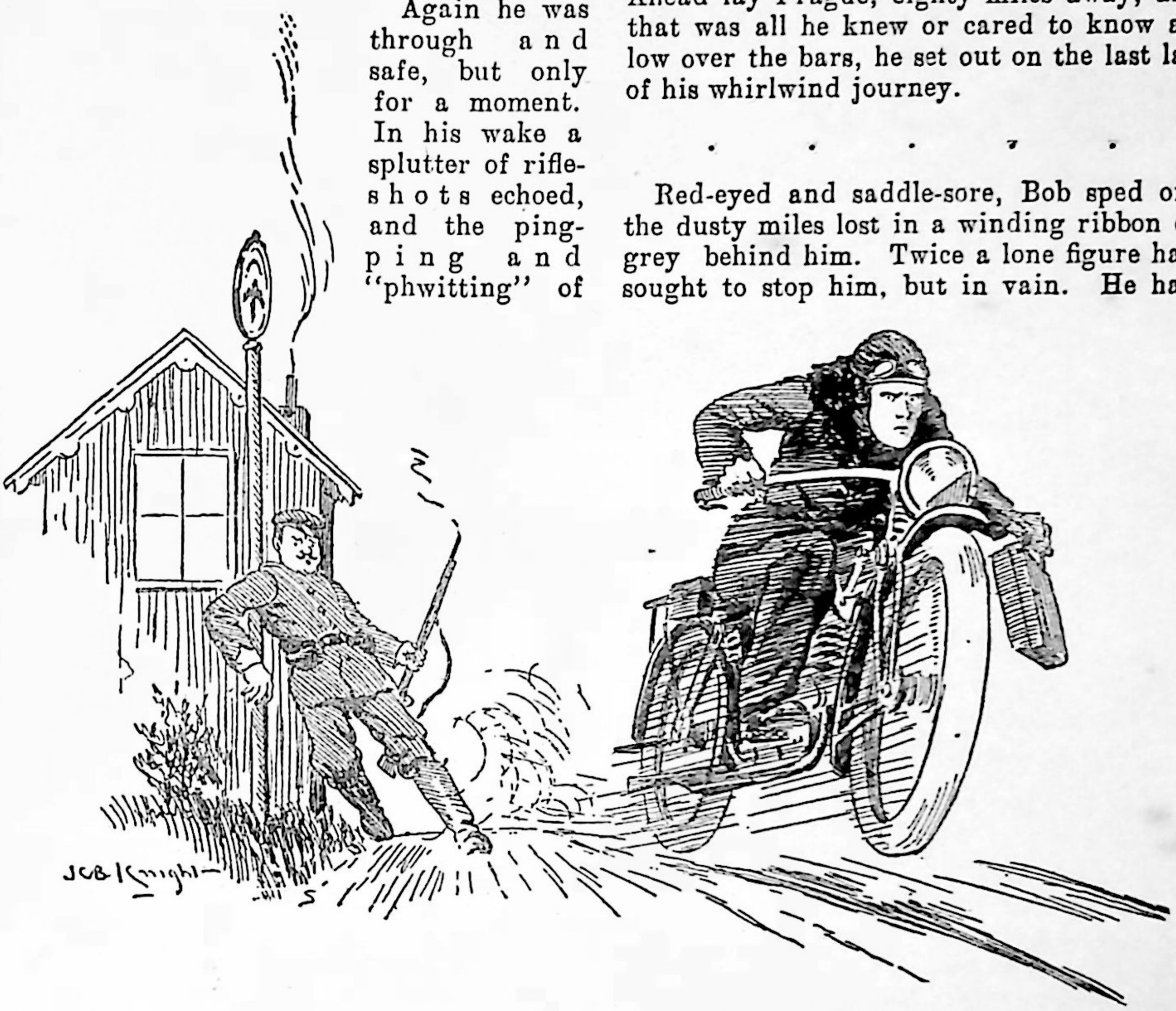
But luck was with him. Unhurt, he gained a bend in the road, and the guardhouses dropped out of view. Beyond the turn was a signpost, on its arm words painted in strangely-accented lettering and devoid of vowels, like Welsh.

Czech! And that word—Plzen. That was Pilsen, en route for Prague! His courage rose within him. He was a frontier jumper, astride a stolen mount, the hounds on his trail, and, doubtless, a price on his head.

But he did not think of such things now. Ahead lay Prague, eighty miles away, and that was all he knew or cared to know as, low over the bars, he set out on the last lap of his whirlwind journey.

. . . . .

Red-eyed and saddle-sore, Bob sped on, the dusty miles lost in a winding ribbon of grey behind him. Twice a lone figure had sought to stop him, but in vain. He had



The frontier guard, missing his aim, sprang aside at the last second, and Bob went by him with a rush and a roar! (*See this page.*)



"It's all right! The tender's here!" gasped Bob, bursting in upon his astonished uncle and a group of government officials. (*See next page.*)

shot past grimly, and the figure had dropped behind, impotent.

But such episodes warned him that the telegraph wires had been busy. They were looking for him, and his mount, with its tell-tale German registration marks, might at any moment spell his undoing.

How long the petrol in his tank would last he did not know. If he could find a garage across that railway bridge ahead, it would be wise to stop and refill. But then he had no money—Czech money, that was.

He bit his lip as he roared up the steep approach to the bridge, then grabbed wildly at his throttle lever. Across the narrow gap between the bridge sides a barrier of carts and barrels had been erected. On the barrier were more uniformed figures.

C-r-runch! His brakes went on with a jerk that all but flung him over the bars, and he fell off, right on the very crown of the bridge, his front wheels not a yard from the obstacle in his path.

With a groan he stumbled up, defeat before him as the men sprang down to seize him. He was beaten.

There was a roar and a rattle beneath his feet, and a dense cloud of smoke rushed upwards from beneath the bridge. It was a train, passing below!

A man gripped his arm, but he jerked himself free. Before his would-be captors realised his intent, Bob had mounted the parapet and dropped to the line of black carriage roofs rushing out from under the bridge!

. . .

He struck the convex roofing squarely, with a thud that shook the breath out of him, rolled sideways drunkenly, all but lost both case and foothold, then saved himself with a last prodigious effort. When he looked backwards, the bridge and the men on it were lost in the drifting clouds of smoke from the locomotive.

Gathering himself together, Bob recovered breath; then, creeping cautiously to the end of the coach, climbed stiffly down to the buffers. The train went on, unchecked; evidently its crew knew nothing of the incident. Emboldened, he swung out on to the stepboard, found a door, and pulled it open.

"My hat!" As he stumbled into the

compartment, its solitary occupant started forward, to stare at him in amazement.

Bob sank on to the seat, and drew a deep breath of relief. The astonished accents were English, pure and unmistakable.

He had found a friend!

And so it proved. An English agent, with an office in the City, the stranger was more than sympathetic. Bob's story told, he stowed the airman's kit out of sight in his bag, found money for the youngster's ticket, and, Prague reached—by luck the train was bound there—guided him to the contract office, the address of which was on the tender.

Racing into the building, Bob ran into the arms of John Norton, engaged in tearing his hair in vexation at a last-minute discovery of his useless trip. At the same instant the big clock overhead boomed out the hour of twelve.

"It's all right! The tender's here!" Bob gasped, flinging the case on a table, before the astonished eyes of his uncle and a group of government officials.

"How the deuce did you get here?" John Norton exclaimed.

"I flew, uncle. And—why, I've committed so many crimes on the way there isn't a punishment big enough to fit 'em all!" he added, with a cheery grin, as he poured out his story.

That done, he lay back on a chair, panting, conscious that a smiling, kindly-faced official spoke of "smoothing matters over." After all, it was a Government contract, which, it seemed, John Norton was undoubtedly going to get.

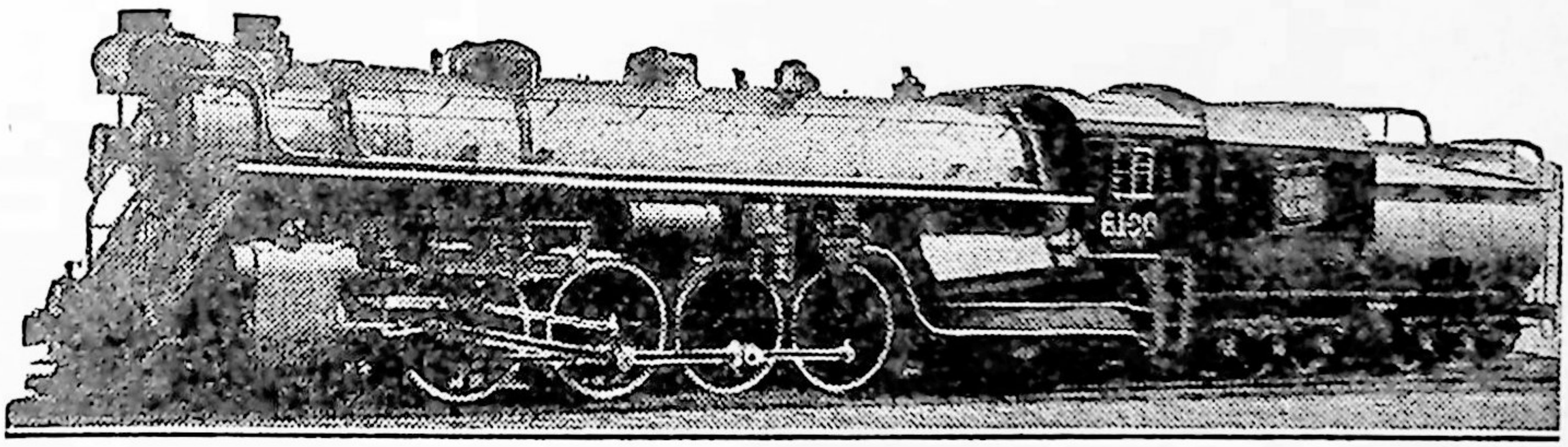
That gentleman seemed a little overcome and speechless at first. But as Bob closed his tired eyes, his uncle's voice came to him dimly:

"After this, I reckon your neck's unbreakable, Bob. Still, if you want to go on tempting Providence—well, I s'pose I'll have to let you!"

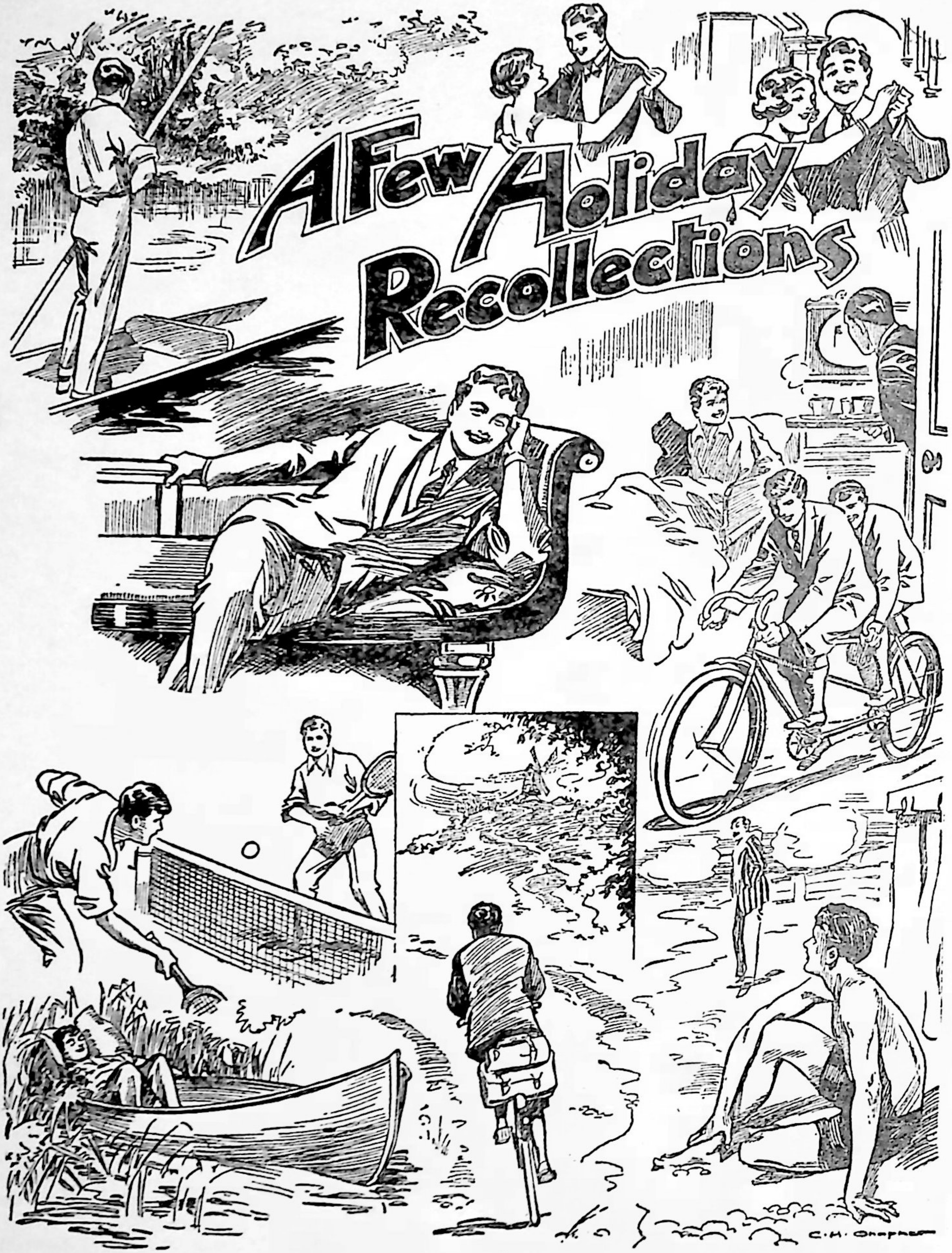
Bob gave a sigh of eminent satisfaction. He had delivered the goods, and, what was almost as splendid, the embargo on his future flying had been lifted!

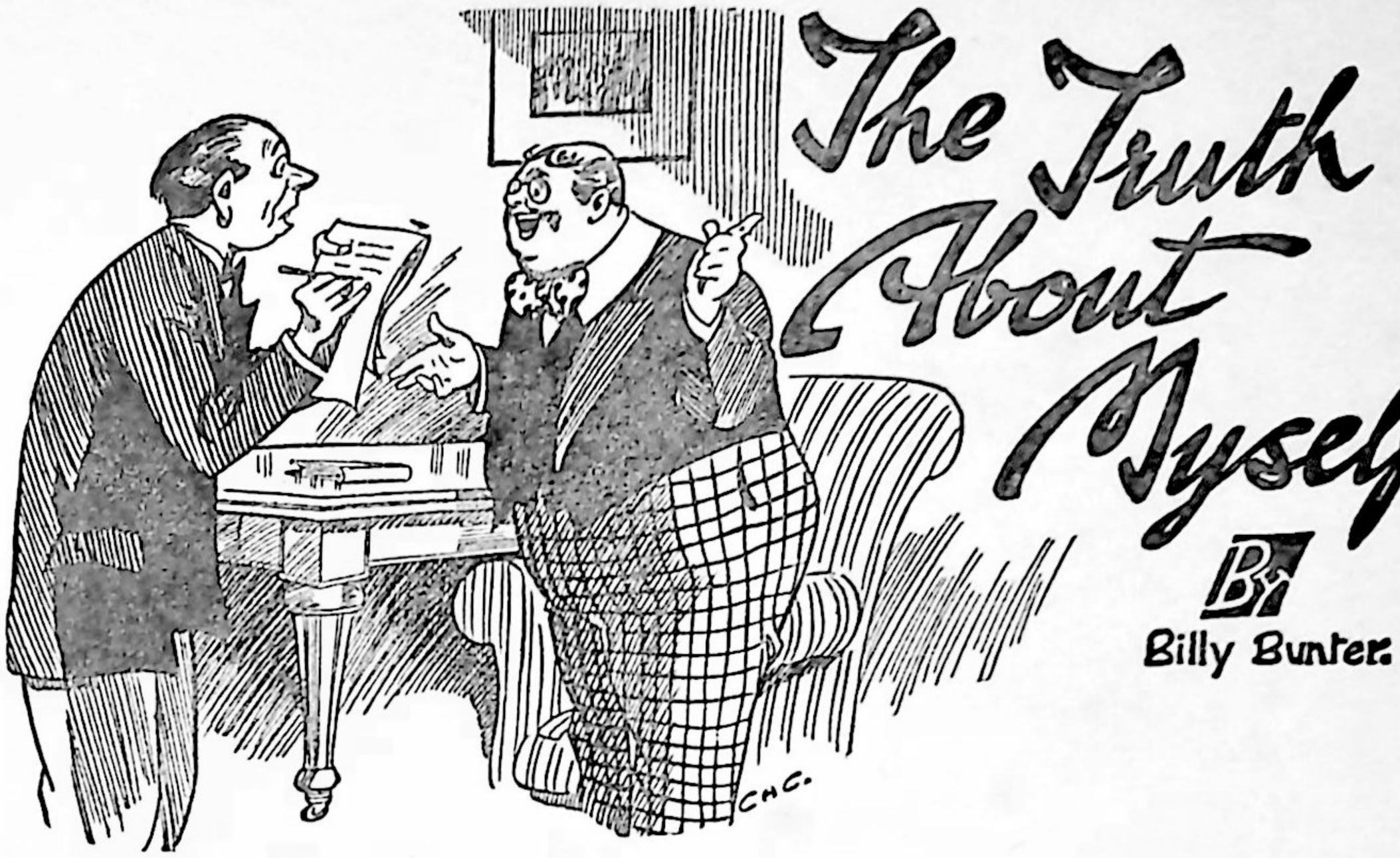
THE END

A Giant of the Canadian Railways!



The "Confederation," Locomotive No. 6100—the pride of the Canadian National Railways—takes its place among the world's record passenger engines. It is 100 feet long, it weighs over 300 tons, and it stands fifteen feet high! This giant hauls a train a third of a mile long, at ninety miles an hour when travelling at its fastest, and does a trip of 2,900 miles! The train carries 500 people and, all told, the "Confederation" has to pull a load of 1,850 tons. How would you like to be the driver! A proud job, eh?


A Few Holiday Recollections
C·H· Ormerod



William George Bunter, in an interview, takes this opportunity of giving the whole world the truth (?) about himself.

Although I admit that Mr. Frank Richards is a jolly good writer, I really consider that some of the insinuations he makes about me are uncalled for. In case, therefore, some of his readers may have a wrong impression of me, I am going to take this opportunity of giving the whole world the truth about myself.

Now, in the first place, as to my appearance. I possess a slim, graceful figure, an aristocratic demeanour, and an easy grace of manner. Mind you, when I say I'm slim, I don't mean I'm skinny, like the rest of the blessed Form, because I'm not. I'm fairly well covered, if it comes to that. Possibly a little plump—stoutish, maybe.

Well, all right! It's nothing to be ashamed of! I'm like a young elephant, then!

About grub. If you believed Mr. Richards, you'd think I was a regular gormandiser. Nothing of the kind! Three light meals a day is all I require in the way of nourishment. Well, fairly light, anyway. Say half a dozen eggs and a pound of ham for brekker, a couple of chickens, plenty of veges., and a Christmas pudding for dinner, and two or three haddocks and half a dozen poached eggs for tea.

Did I say three meals? Better make it six. Safety first, you know!

Then there's that blessed postal-order business. Readers of Greyfriars yarns are always being told I never really receive one. Rot! They arrive by nearly every post. Of course, I'm disappointed sometimes. Perhaps I shouldn't say nearly every post; nearly every day would probably be more like it. An exaggeration? Oh, really! Sometimes, it's true, a week goes by—or a month, or even a term or so. When I really come to think of it, I don't remember when I got the last one!

Turning to the question of my abilities in the Form-room. Mr. Frank Richards is awfully fond of telling everybody what a dunce I am, but the truth is very different. Take Latin. Caesil—I fairly revel in him! Virger—I know his works backwards. Or is it Caesar and Virgil? Blessed if I remember! It's all a lot of piffle, anyway!



About a dozen eggs and a pound or two of ham is all I require for brekker!

I don't know anything about either of them, and, what's more, I don't want to know anything!

And it makes me jolly wild to read the sarcastic remarks Mr. Richards makes about the way I play football. Honestly, if you'd seen me play at compulsory practice last Wednesday you'd have said I ought to play centre-forward for the First Eleven. I kicked a magnificent goal in the second half, too! Had the goalie fairly whacked, you know!

What's that? Well, now you remind me, I must admit it—though, mind you, I still say it was a fine goal. Yes, I did kick the ball into my own goal!

A very sore point with me, too, is titled relations. Mr. Richards just pours scorn on them, and even suggests that they don't exist. Cheek, you know! I've got tons of relations with titles, and some in the House of Lords, too! Well, not exactly the House of Lords, perhaps—The Lords, anyway—Lord's cricket ground, you know. Awfully well connected there, the Bunter family.

How? Well, they're really nothing to do with the ground, if it comes to that. As a matter of fact, it's just an uncle of mine who's there—runs an ice-cream barrow outside the entrance now and again. What other titles? Well, I can't quite think of them for a moment. Of course, that rot about Sir Bunter de Grunter is just Mr. Richards' sarcasm. There isn't such a person. But I did have a cousin who once received a letter addressed A. Bunter, ESQUIRE, and that's something, isn't it? Fact! He showed me the envelope!

And finally, I hate the way that blessed writer tries to make out that I'm not always strictly truthful. It's a libel, you know—an outrageous libel. I've never told a lie in my life! A little exaggeration now and again, perhaps! A misunderstood metaphor here and there. Possibly I do get a little confused over facts at times. What's that? It's only by mistake that I ever tell the truth? That's done it! I'm finished!



I kicked a magnificent goal in the second half—had the goalie fairly whacked!

The Haunting of the Herr!



You've heard of the lion in an ass's skin? Here we have asses in a horse's skin—a really funny yarn of a great school jape!

By G. E. ROCHESTER

THE FIRST CHAPTER
The Herr's Story!

THE Fifth, to a man, adopted an air of breathless interest and pleased expectancy which Herr Guggenslogger must have found extremely gratifying. They knew what was coming. They had heard it often before, and they infinitely preferred it to lessons.

"A young man I vos ven id occurred," commenced the Herr, "and vid mein liddle brudder I addended ad de University of Munich for to learn de languages."

"What languages, sir?" inquired Boulter, with polite interest.

"Id does nod madder vot languages, Boulder," replied the Herr, a trifle testily. "Dat has noddings to do vid vot I indend to tell you. Allow me to broceed. Mein liddle brudder vos de naughty von!"

"Oh, sir!" came in shocked chorus from the Form.

"Ja!" The Herr nodded solemnly. "He vos inaddendive to de lessons, and luffed to blay de sword games vid de oder studends. For to buy a sword he vonce sold mein luffly red waisdcoad!"

"Your red waistcoat, sir?" inquired Boulter, with concern.

"Ja, I haf said so! Blese nod to inderrubt, Boulder! But von day he took de horse of mein fader for to haf id shod!"

"Shot?" ejaculated Pilson, with well-simulated horror.

"Nein! Shod—shoes pud on de feed of id ad de blagsmidth. Bud mein liddle brudder vished for to go to Augsberg for to see de duelling between de studends, and he had no monies. So vot did he do?"

The Herr paused dramatically.

"Sold the rest of your waistcoats, sir," ventured Boulter brightly.

"Ach, no! You are de foolish von, Boulder! He sold de horse of mein fader to de sausage-machine mans, and ven mein fader vent for to seek de horse, de mans gived him a big basket of luffly sausages!"

The Fifth hugged themselves with delight.

"Bud dat is nod all, nein!" went on the Herr. "Dat horse vos a goot horse, and id vos angry ad being pud through de sausage-machine!"

"You mean it was cut up, sir!" murmured Boulter, and giggled delightedly at Pilson.

The Herr stared at him suspiciously for a moment, then went on:

"Dese interrubtions I vill nod haf, Boulder! I say de horse vos angry, and for why do I say dat? Becos," he waved a podgy forefinger at the class, "becos on de anniversary of the day ven he vos pud through de machine, de ghost of him abbears and gazes ad me so sad and so rebroachful! I dink id dinks dat I should haf saved id from ids sad fade in de machine!"

"And that's to-day, sir, isn't it?" said Boulter, with disarming interest. "It appears to-night, sir, doesn't it?"

"Ja, to-night, Boulder!"

"How often have you seen the ghost, sir?" inquired a respectful and admiring voice.

The Herr hesitated. He was never quite sure how far St. Freda's believed these reminiscences of his. Then, with the air of a man sticking to his guns, he replied:

"Ofden haf I seen id! But sometimes I am asleeb, and do nod see id!"

"Doesn't it wake you up, sir?" inquired Boulter. "I mean, it must feel awf'ly fed up at coming all the way from Munich to St. Freda's and then finding you asleep!"

"Id does nod wake me up, Boulder!" replied the Herr. "I'd—— But dere is de bell ringing. De lesson id is ended. Blese to dizmizz!"

Boulter hoisted himself to his feet, and, as the Herr strode from the Form-room, he turned grinningly to Pilson.

"I'll bet it'll wake the fat old liar up to-night!" he remarked. "We'll see that kid, Howard, after school!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER
The Plot Thickens!

TUFTY HOWARD, of the Lower Fourth, was having tea with his pal, Carstairs, in their study when the door was thrown open and Boulter strode into the room, followed by Pilson.

"Hallo, kids!" greeted Boulter. "I understand that you brought a horse's skin back with you after last hols—some theatrical rubbish. I want to borrow it!"

That was like Boulter. He never beat about the bush, particularly when dealing with kids.

"You're not going to get it, Boulter, so shove off!" replied Tufty. "And if you must bring Pilson into other men's studies, you might ask him to wash his neck and change his collar!"

"You cheeky young rotter!" yelped Pilson, and made a rush for the table.

Boulter grabbed him by the arm.

"We don't want any impertinence, young Howard!" he said loftily. "Are you going to hand over that skin?"

"No!" retorted Tufty. "So buzz off! We don't want to have to fumigate the study!"

Boulter choked.

"I'll give you a thundering good hiding if you don't hand over that skin!" he shouted.

A peculiar look crept into Tufty's eyes.

"Why do you want it?" he demanded.

"Never mind why I want it!" snapped Boulter. "I want it—that's good enough for you!"

"There's a rag on in the junior common-room to-night, please, Boulter," said Tufty, with a humility which caused Carstairs to gape at him in consternation. "We wanted to use it ourselves, please, Boulter!"

"I can't help that!" retorted Boulter, with a slightly mollified air. "You hand it over without any more argument!"

"All right!"

Tufty rose to his feet and stepped towards the cupboard. Then he halted.

"I'm afraid it's in a bit of a mess, Boulter," he said. "I'll clean it up and bring it along to you."

"Yes, give it a clean, you grubby little beast!" replied Boulter. "And if you don't bring it to my study this evening I'll come back here with an ash-plant!"

"I'll bring it, Boulter."

With a triumphant snort Boulter stalked from the study. Outside in the corridor he turned to Pilson.

"Nothing like high-handed methods with these kids!" he said. "We men in the Fifth have got to assert our authority! Now, come on! I want to see Meeke."

And in the study Carstairs was eyeing Tufty in amazement.

"Are—are you dotty?" he gasped. "Dash it, man, what d'you mean by knuckling under to that rotter?"

Tufty eyed him calmly.

"My dear ass," he replied, "Boulter's been throwing his giddy weight about all term. We're fed up with him. And this—this——"

He flopped down in the arm-chair and gave himself up to a paroxysm of silent laughter.

"Well?" inquired Carstairs grimly.

"This," spluttered Tufty, "is—is where we get our own back! Just—just wait!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER
The Phantom Horse!

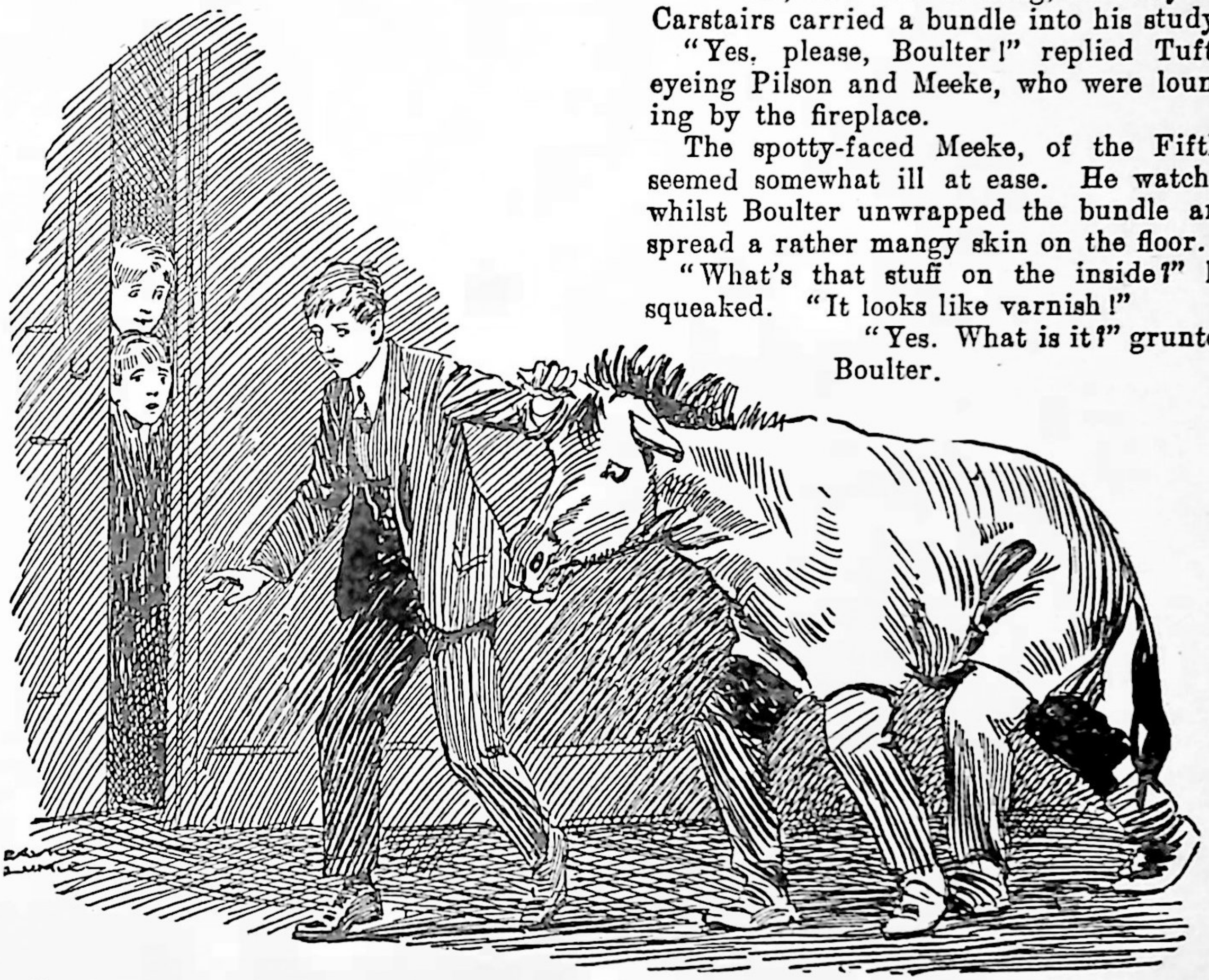
"So you've brought it!" remarked Boulter, later that evening, as Tufty and Carstairs carried a bundle into his study.

"Yes, please, Boulter!" replied Tufty, eyeing Pilson and Meeke, who were lounging by the fireplace.

The spotty-faced Meeke, of the Fifth, seemed somewhat ill at ease. He watched whilst Boulter unwrapped the bundle and spread a rather mangy skin on the floor.

"What's that stuff on the inside?" he squeaked. "It looks like varnish!"

"Yes. What is it?" grunted Boulter.



Two forms appeared. One was the skinny figure of Meeke, and the other was an angular-looking horse, which he was leading along by the ear! (*See Chapter* 3.)

"It's a dressing," replied Tufty. "A sort of preservative, please, Boulter."

"All right! Clear out! You can come and collect the thing to-morrow," growled Boulter.

Tufty and Carstairs withdrew. But till prayers they lurked about the Fifth Form corridor. They wanted to see what Boulter & Co. were up to. Lights out came, and Boulter had not sallied forth except to go up to the dorm. with Pilson and Meeke.

"We'll slip downstairs again as soon as we can!" whispered Tufty as he and Carstairs undressed in their own dormitory. "The beast is up to something, and it's going to happen after lights out—that's obvious!"

An hour later they crept downstairs and crouched in a doorway at the end of the Fifth Form corridor. The minutes dragged slowly past, and more than once Carstairs voted the thing a wash-out, and suggested going back to bed. But Tufty would have none of it, and suddenly he grabbed Carstairs by the arm.

Three shadowy forms were coming along the dimly lit corridor. They disappeared into Boulter's study. Then followed a wait of ten minutes or more, and two forms reappeared. One was the skinny figure of Meeke, and the other was an angular-looking horse, which he was leading along by one ear.

"Boulter and Pilson in the skin, and—and Meeke leading 'em!" spluttered Tufty. "Come on!"

Silently the two juniors crept in the wake of Meeke and his peculiar quadruped.

"They're making for the masters' quarters!" whispered Tufty.

They were. They were making for Herr Guggenslogger's bed-room, and, reaching it, Meeke gently turned the handle, then bolted back along the corridor, leaving the horse to carry on alone. He whizzed silently past Tufty and Carstairs, who were crouched in an alcove, and disappeared through the green baize door at the end of the corridor.

The horse nosed open the door of the Herr's bed-room and lumbered across the threshold. A night-light was burning in the room, and the juniors, who by this time were ensconced outside the door, had an excellent view of the subsequent proceedings.

The Herr was snoring lustily, his pink pyjama-clad form rising and falling beneath the sheets. The horse pranced to the foot of the bed, and, thrusting its head over the rail, uttered a penetrating moan.

The Herr stirred uneasily. Again came the long-drawn moan. The Herr awoke. He opened his eyes sleepily. Then they popped open wide, and stayed like that. A horse was staring at him over the foot of the bed. It was a sad, mournful-looking horse. Its features fairly oozed melancholia.

Herr Guggenslogger was galvanised into action. He sat up with a jerk. His mouth opened. It was his laudable intention to bellow for help, but his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. He made feeble, throaty noises.

The horse placed its forefeet on the bed. It was shaking its head at the Herr, as though in reproach. Again it moaned—a long, horrible moan, which caused a cold perspiration to break out all over Herr Guggenslogger.

And what of Boulter and Pilson, inside the skin? Boulter was the head, shoulders, and front legs. Pilson formed the rear quarters. It will be noted, therefore, that really Pilson had very little say in what followed next. Boulter, through the eye-holes in the head, could see all that was going on. He was grinning delightedly. The Herr's funk was extremely gratifying to Boulter. He did not like the Herr. He soared to further efforts. He decided to get into the bed!

He lumbered forward, and Pilson followed. Pilson had no other choice in the matter. Like some horrible nightmarish form, the horse heaved itself on to the bed, and commenced to tuck itself under the clothes.

But Herr Guggenslogger had had enough. Sheer panic brought motion to his limbs. His plump form shot out of bed with a howl.

"Donner und blitzen!" he bellowed, and bounded for the door.

"Ein geist! Ein geist!" he roared as he shot into the corridor.

"Helb! Helb!" he howled as he legged it down the corridor, gesticulating wildly with frenzied arms.

And Tufty, supporting himself against the limp and almost hysterical Carstairs, wept silent tears of overwhelming mirth.

He stopped abruptly as his eye fell on Tufty and Carstairs.

"What are you boys doing here?" he demanded.

"We thought we heard a shout, sir," explained Tufty.

"A lot of shouts!" chimed in Carstairs.

Mr. Snooker was in a poisonous mood. He had been literally yanked out of bed by a babbling Herr Guggenslogger. He

THE FOURTH CHAPTER
A Horse in Distress!

SCARCELY had the Herr reached the green-baize door and thundered through it than the horse emerged from the bed-room and went along the corridor at a shambling trot. Boulter and Pilson had the wind up. They didn't want a crowd to collect before they got clear.

They also disappeared through the baize door, and the two juniors were preparing to follow when Herr Guggenslogger returned with Mr. Snooker, the maths master, and Egbert, the janitor.



Herr Guggenslogger had had enough. Sheer panic brought motion to his limbs His plump form shot out of bed with a howl! (*See Chapter* 3.)

The Herr was breathing stertorously, and still gesticulating wildly.

"A bantom!" he was booming. "I dell you dat a bantom vos in mein bed-room!"

"A bantam!" growled Egbert. "'S'funny! There ain't no 'ens around this 'ere school!"

"Fool! Block'ead!" boomed the Herr. "I do nod say a bantam, bud a bantom! A bantom—a ghosdt! Ein geist!"

"Ah, a phantom!" said Mr. Snooker. "But, my dear Guggenslogger——"

thought the Herr was suffering from nightmare. He remembered the enormous dinner the Herr had shifted that night. Certainly he did not believe that the fatuous Teuton had seen a ghost. And emphatically he did not wish a master to become a laughing-stock, so he snapped:

"Get back to your dormitory at once! There is nothing the matter—nothing whatsoever!"

Tufty and Carstairs departed, thankful to have got off so lightly. But they did not return to their dormitory. They made their way to Boulter's study. A chink of

light was shining under the floor, and strange noises were coming from inside the study. The frenzied squeak of Meeke was intermingled with shufflings and grunts.

With a grin at Carstairs, Tufty knocked quietly on the door, and, opening it, stepped into the room, with Carstairs at his heels. Meeke, very red in the face and very scared-looking, was standing in the middle of the floor. The horse had taken dubious cover behind the ramshackle arm-chair, and was staring over the back of it at the intruders.

"Grrr! Brrrrr! Mrrrrrrrr!" it said.

"What do you want?" translated Meeke.

"We want that skin!" said Tufty. "What's the idea? We didn't know it was going to be used after lights out. What footling idiots are in it, anyway?"

The horse shoved aside the arm-chair with its head and advanced threateningly.

"It's—it's Boulter and Pilson!" squeaked Meeke. "I—I can't get 'em out of it! The skin's stuck to 'em!"

"Oh, has it?" replied Tufty slowly. He turned to Carstairs with sudden concern. "I say, old man, I hope we didn't get the skin preservative mixed up with that liquid glue!"

"Looks as though we must have done, old chap," replied Carstairs solemnly.

"What?" screeched Meeke. "Oh, my hat! Glue! Glue, did you say? Oh, dear!"

"Grrrr! Brrrrr! Mrrrrrrrr!" grunted the horse, and pranced frenziedly on the carpet in front of the fireplace.

The trouble was that, although Boulter could see and hear quite plainly, the horse's head was not constructed to allow for speech. There was much Boulter could have said had plain speech been possible, but he had to content himself with muffled grunts and subdued bellowings.

Tufty, Carstairs, and Meeke watched with interest whilst the horse, after seemingly endeavouring to tie itself into knots, fell into the fireplace.

"Some—something's got to be done!" stuttered Meeke. "Have you got any scissors, and we'll cut 'em out of it."

"We want to know where you've been!" said Tufty. "As for scissors, the matron's the only person from whom we can borrow scissors, and I'm dashed if I'm going to knock her up at this time of night. It'll mean the sack for the three of you if this is discovered! What have you been up to?"

"Never mind," wailed Meeke.

He cast a look at the horse, then edged towards the door.

"It—it was an idiotic plan from the—the start!" he squeaked. "I—I'm going to bed."

He made a rush for the door. The horse, in a valiant but unsuccessful effort to head him off, bashed its head through the panels of the cupboard. Tufty and Carstairs extracted it with difficulty, and backed it into the centre of the floor.

"Can you hear me, Boulter?" asked Tufty. "Nod your head if you can."

The horse nodded violently.

"Then sit down. Carstairs, take a pew. We've got to hold a council of war."

The horse seated itself on the hearthrug, and gazed forlornly at the two juniors.

"We'll find out later what giddy idiocy you've been up to," went on Tufty. "What concerns us at the moment is how to get you out of that skin!"

"Brrr! Grrrrr! Mrrrrrr!" assented the horse heartily.

"It's a pity Meeke's sloped off to bed, or we could have sent him for the vet." continued Tufty. "I—— Whoa, you brute!"

The horse had lumbered to its feet, and was advancing in a menacing sort of double shuffle.

"You don't want the vet. Is that it?" inquired Tufty, from behind the chair, where he had taken ambush.

The horse shook its head violently—passionately. Plainly it did not want the vet.

"Then you'll have to stay like that," said Tufty. "Although, if I was the Head, I'd object to a bally horse coming in to lessons! I suppose," he went on reflectively, "that at mealtimes they'll turn you out to grass in the playing-fields."

"And we'll get a subscription list up to

buy you a nice enamelled bucket to drink out of," chimed in Carstairs.

"You'll have to go home in a horse-box when the holidays start," supplemented Tufty. "Taken all round, you're in for no end of a jolly time! What—what did you say?"

"Brrrrr! Grrrrr! Mrrrrr!" bellowed the horse, and whirled frenziedly up and down the floor in a frantic effort to dissolve itself into its component parts.

It concluded the performance by tripping over the hearthrug and charging head-first into the fireplace.

"There! There! Good 'oss! Good 'oss!" said Tufty soothingly, patting its flank, and receiving a kick in the region of the waistcoat for his pains.

"Ungrateful brute!" he said feelingly. "Well, Carstairs, it'll probably want to sleep here, so I vote we leave it and shove off to bed!"

"Bed down now, 'oss!" said Cartairs authoritatively. "Bed down now! Good 'oss! Quiet, now!"



Meeke was standing in the middle of the floor. The horse had taken dubious cover behind the ramshackle armchair, and was staring over the back of it at the intruders! (*See Chapter* 4.)

In desperate haste, the horse collected itself together and made for the door at an ungainly trot.

"You don't want us to leave you, what?" inquired Tufty.

"Brrr! Grrr! Mrrrr!" bellowed the horse, and shook its head angrily.

"Well, what do you suggest we do?" demanded Carstairs. "Dash it all, Boulter, we're not a couple of blessed grooms, you know!"

"I've got it!" cried Tufty triumphantly.

The horse regarded him hopefully.

"We'll make him a topping loose-box with the Form-room blackboards, and—— Whoa, you brute!"

He skipped aside to avoid a savage rush by the outraged horse.

"You see," said Carstairs plaintively, "it doesn't matter what we suggest, the brute won't listen! I think it might jolly well show a little more appreciation——"

"Mrrrrrh! Grrrrrrh! Brrrrh!" snorted the horse indignantly.

"We might, of course," said Tufty slowly, "get the fatheads out of that skin with a penknife!"

The horse pranced excitedly, and nodded its head with frantic enthusiasm. Carstairs watched it with interest.

"Looks to me as though it's going to have a fit," he remarked laconically.

"No. I believe it's pleased," replied Tufty. He turned towards the door, with a wink at Carstairs. "I'll go and get my knife from the dorm. I won't be long."

Smiling to himself, Tufty left the Fifth-Formers' study and hurried to the dormitory.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER

"De bantom! De bantom!"

HE was back within a few minutes, his penknife in his hand. The horse was sitting on the hearthrug, gazing with simmering wrath at Carstairs, who, mounted on the table, was spouting, with impassioned gestures:

"I was known as the Punter's Pride, sir,
When I won the Northumberland Plate.
The bookies all sat down and cried, sir,
When I stood at the starting gate.
I was very soon into my stride, sir.
Great corn-bins! I went at a rate!
Let me tell you the tale of that ride, sir—
For I won at a hundred to eight!
I only stopped once——"

He broke off at sight of Tufty, and grinned.

"The brute was a bit restive after you'd gone," he explained, "so I've been soothing him with a little poetry."

The horse lumbered to its feet, and approached Tufty in a sort of crab-like shuffle. Then it halted, and backed apprehensively. For the Lower Fourth, to a man, were filing slowly into the study.

"Now, listen, Boulter!" said Tufty. "You've made an awful beast of yourself this term. So has Pilson. I'm going to get you out of that skin all right—you needn't worry about that. But you're coming down to the gym. first, to stand your trial for being a rotten, swelled-headed bully! If you won't go quietly, we'll chivvy you there!"

Firm hands gripped it, and started it down the main staircase. The horse half walked and half slithered down the stairs, and, helped by a judiciously-applied towel, crossed the hall and made for the gym. at a shambling trot.

But the sleepless Herr, with ears attuned for the slightest sound, was sitting up in bed, grabbing the coverlet with a shaking hand.

Ja! There it was again! Something was moving far away downstairs. It might be the phantom again. The Herr shuddered. Then, summoning up all his courage, he slid out of bed, and legged it along the corridor again to the room of Mr. Snooker.

Meanwhile, in the gym., candle-ends had been lighted. The horse stood gazing frenziedly over the top of a fireguard, which served as the dock. Tufty, the judge, sat perched precariously on the parallel bars.

Counsel for the defence, a thin youth whose father was an eminent barrister, did his best. But it was obvious that his heart was not in his job. He himself had felt the heavy hand of the lordly Boulter on more than one occasion. He pleaded for leniency in a speech which caused the horse to indignantly knock the dock over in an effort to get at him.

The jury brought in their verdict without retiring.

"Guilty!"

Tufty cleared his throat.

"Prisoner at the bar," he said gruffly, "you have been found guilty of being a particularly poisonous sort of bully! I am addressing both the front and hind quarters. The sentence of this court is that you be photographed, and that the photograph shall hang for all time in the junior common-room! Mr. Stubbs, do your duty!"

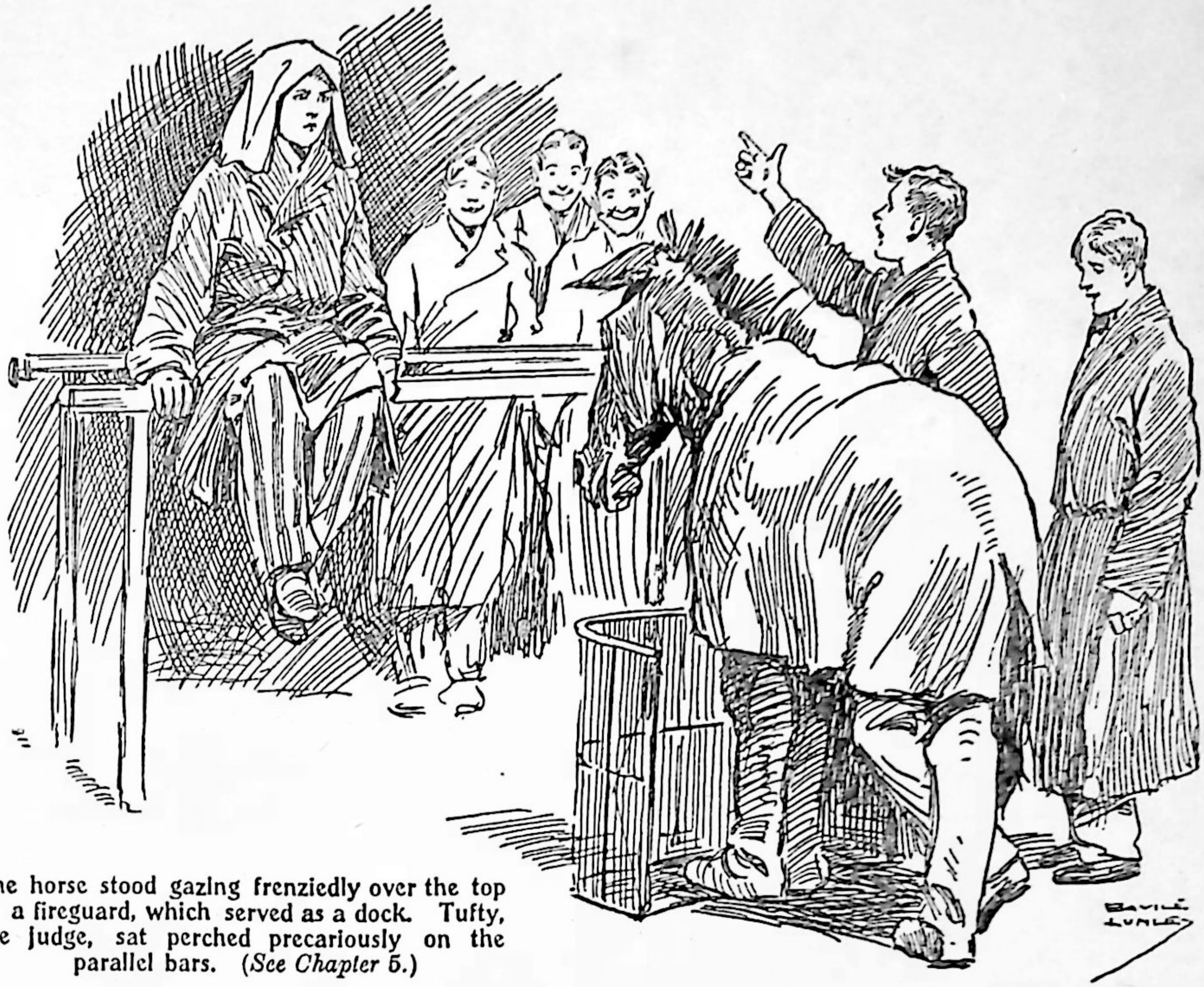
Stubbs, the Lower Fourth photography expert, stepped forward. The horse plunged and kicked frantically, but willing hands held him. Stubbs produced his camera and a box of magnesium-powder, with which to take the flashlight photograph.

"Right! I'm ready!" whispered Stubbs.

The candle-ends were promptly squashed. It was at this interesting point that Herr Guggenslogger and a fuming Mr. Snooker crept cautiously towards the gymnasium door and silently opened it.

Swish!

A brilliant, blinding light illuminated the gym. The Herr had a vision of a savage-looking horse charging towards him.



The horse stood gazing frenziedly over the top of a fireguard, which served as a dock. Tufty, the judge, sat perched precariously on the parallel bars. (*See Chapter 5.*)

"De bantom! De bantom!" he howled, and turned to flee.

He scudded across the dimly lit hall, ventured one glance over his shoulder; then, with another howl, bounded upstairs.

The horse was galloping at his heels. Behind it came an almost apoplectic Mr. Snooker, making frantic efforts to grab the flying tail. And behind Mr. Snooker trooped the whooping and delighted Lower Fourth.

With a howl, the Herr slipped. He slid downstairs, and bellowed with alarm as he felt the horse trampling on his prostrate form.

There came a long, tearing rip as Mr. Snooker grabbed the tail and the skin parted.

. . . . .

""Pilson," said Boulter half an hour later as the two Fifth-Formers crawled painfully up into bed.

"Yes, Boulter?"

"It's beastly undignified for a Fifth-Form man to be flogged as though he were a blessed little lower-form kid!"

Pilson wriggled painfully.

"Do—do you know what I think, Boulter?" he said feebly.

"No."

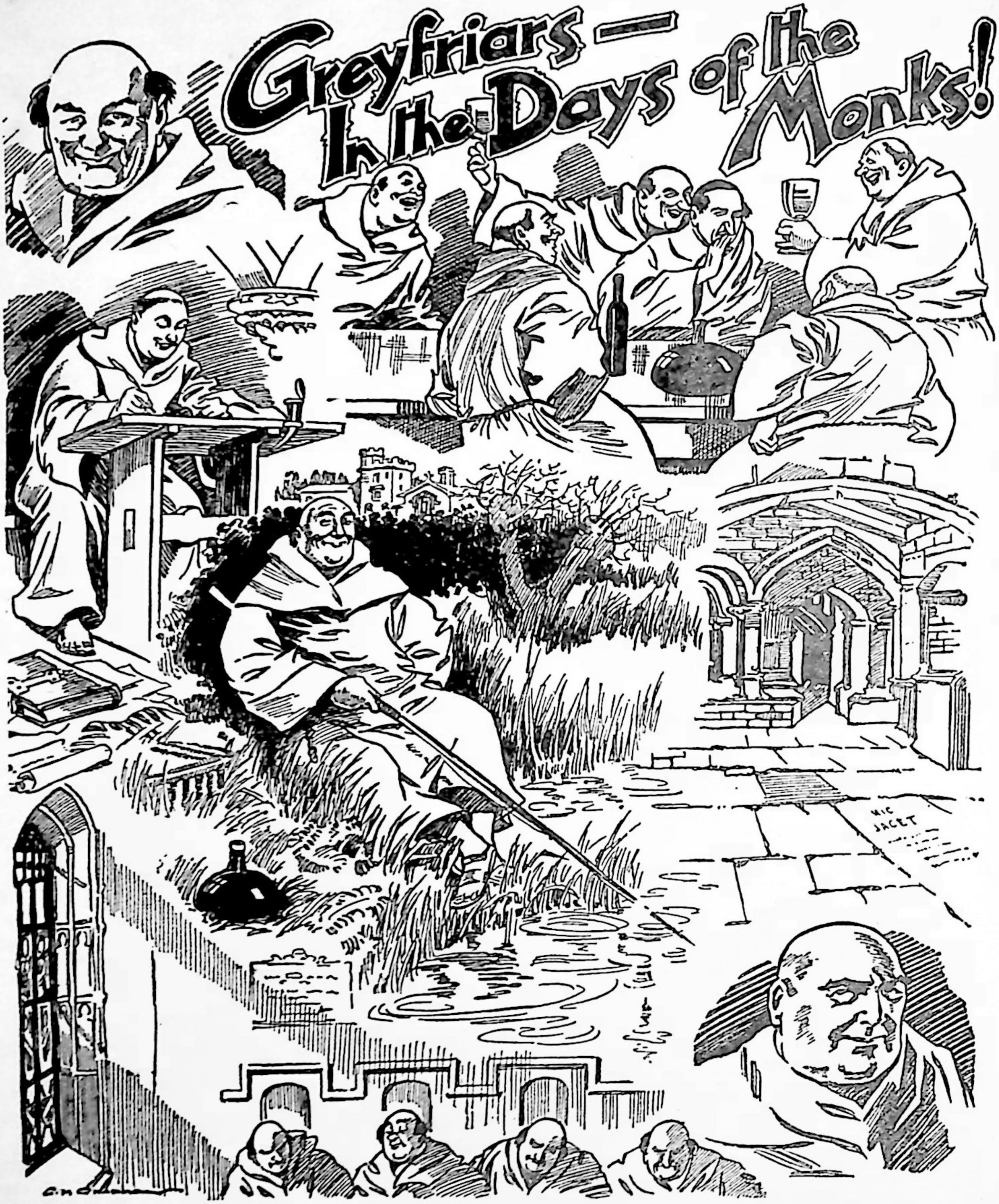
"We got off rather lightly. We—we wouldn't have done if those kids hadn't made out it was just an end of term rag. They got five hundred lines apiece for their share, you know."

Boulter snorted.

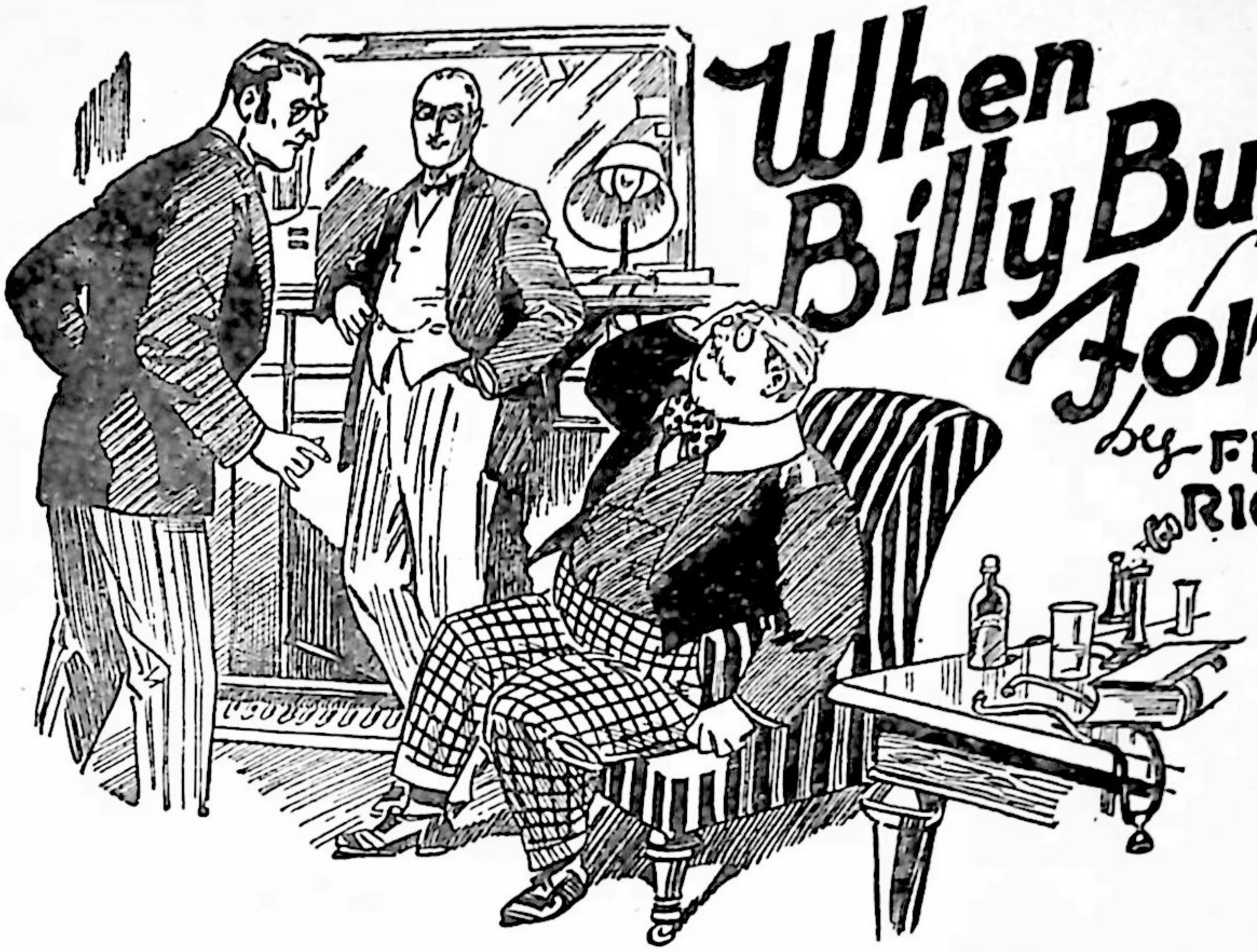
"I heard that little beast Howard say it was worth it!" he snapped. "Good-night!"

"Good-night, Boulter!" moaned Pilson.

THE END



How the Jolly Friars of Old Passed their Peaceful Days!



When Billy Bunter Forgot!

by FRANK RICHARDS

The famous fat junior of Greyfriars School has always suffered from absence of cash, but never before has absence of memory afflicted him to such an amazing extent as in this extra-long yarn of the Greyfriars chums!

THE FIRST CHAPTER
No Loans!

"You fellows going out?"

Billy Bunter put his head into Harry Wharton's study to ask the question. Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh were there. Nugent carried a bundle of towels on his arm, and Wharton was sorting bathing costumes out of a box. Billy Bunter blinked at them through his big spectacles.

"No," said Wharton brusquely.

"I don't mind if I come with you," said Bunter, proceeding as if Wharton had not spoken. "I've got nothing special to do this afternoon. I was expecting a titled friend of mine to run down in his motor-car, but he hasn't come somehow, and——"

"Rats!"

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"Look here, we're going for a splash in the swimming-bath," said Harry curtly. "We're not going for a feed We're not going to call in at the tuck-shop. We're not going to eat or drink anything. So you can buzz off."

Bunter blinked at him.

"You're going to the swimming-bath, you fellows?"

"Yes."

"Then you won't be spending any money?"

"None at all."

"Ahem! In that case, you might be able to advance me a few bob off a postal-order I'm expecting to-night," said Bunter. "It should really have come this morning, and there has been a delay in the post."

"Rats!"

"If you could make it five bob——"

"I'll make it a thick ear if you don't clear out!" exclaimed Nugent wrathfully, as he made a step towards the fat junior.

Billy Bunter dodged out into the passage.

But as the juniors did not pursue him, the fat face, with its big spectacles, blinked into the doorway again in a few moments.

"I say, you fellows——"

Nugent grasped the poker and brandished it, rushing towards the door. Billy Bunter gave a gasp of terror, and bolted down the passage.

Nugent grinned, and threw down the poker with a clang into the grate.

"Blessed if that chap doesn't get worse and worse!" he exclaimed. "It's simply marvellous that he should expect fellows to take in that postal-order yarn after all this time."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"There's one thing to be thankful for in regard to Bunter," he said.

"What's that?"

"That he isn't in our study now. He used to be."

"Ha, ha! Quite right."

"The rightfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur, in his weird English. "The absentfulness of the honourable and caddish Bunter is the boon and the blessing."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry, of the Remove, looked in at the door. "There's no hurry, you fellows; the water's not in the bath yet."

"Oh, that's Gosling, of course!" said Wharton crossly. "How long is the bounder going to be, I wonder?"

"Half an hour, very likely. Let's have a trot round the Close."

The juniors left the study and went downstairs. The great swimming-bath at Greyfriars was a very popular institution, but it was only at certain times during the week that it was available to the juniors. The chums of the Remove passed Billy Bunter in the passage. He blinked at them, and was about to speak, when they tramped downstairs, and left him to address the desert air.

"Beasts!" murmured Bunter.

He rolled along the passage to the end study. In that study—No. 14—he knew he would find one fellow—John Bull, of the Remove. For John Bull occupied most of his half-holidays just now in devoting his attention to the school paper—"John Bull Junior's Weekly."

Bull was editor of the junior paper, and his post was by no means a sinecure. He found that an editor had real work to do, and that looking after the "Weekly" took up a great deal of his time.

Bull lifted his head and frowned as Bunter rolled in. The fat junior stopped and blinked at him from a safe distance. He had had some painful experiences in the editorial room of "John Bull's Weekly."

"I say, Bull——" he began.

"Buzz off!"

"But I say——"

"I'm busy!"

"I'll help you if you like. I'm willing to put in contributions of any length, and of first-class quality. I've made the offer before."

"And I've refused it. I've had enough of your copying down poems out of Tennyson and working them off as your own," growled Bull. "Get out!"

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"Clear!"

"The fact of the matter is, Bull, that I'm stony. I've been disappointed about a postal-order."

John Bull grasped the ink-pot, and swished it towards Bunter. The Owl of the Remove popped back into the passage just in time to avoid a stream of ink.

"Beast!" he roared.

But he did not venture to look into the study again.

He rolled disconsolately down the passage, and stopped at the next door. This was the room tenanted by Bob Cherry, Mark Linley, and Wun Lung, the Chinee. Bob Cherry was out, but Linley, who was working up for a prize exam., was busy in the study, and little Wun Lung was curled up in the armchair before the fire.

"I say, you fellows——" began Bunter.

Mark Linley looked up patiently from his work. The scholarship boy was deep in Greek, a subject that was as Sanskrit or Chinese to Billy Bunter, and indeed to most of the Remove fellows, for Greek was not in the regular curriculum at Greyfriars. The fat junior blinked at the page that Linley had been covering with signs that seemed to

him like wandering spiders and insects, and grunted.

"Blessed if I know how you can waste time over that rot," he remarked.

Mark smiled a little.

"It is not rot, Bunter," he said.

"Well, look here, I've been disappointed about a postal-order. A titled friend of mine was going to send me a remittance, but there has been some delay in the post. Can you lend me half-a-crown?"

Linley shook his head.

"I'm sorry; no."

"Make it a bob."

"I cannot."

"Do you mean to say that you haven't a bob about you?" demanded Bunter scornfully.

Billy Bunter was always inclined to be scornful towards the scholarship boy; but he generally kept his scorn within bounds, for Mark Linley was a painfully hard hitter when his quiet temper was fairly roused.

Linley coloured.

"Yes, I have more than one shilling about me," he said.

"Well, lend me one."

"I cannot."

"Why not?" demanded Billy Bunter belligerently.

"I cannot spare it."

"But I've already explained that I'm going to settle the moment my postal-order comes," said Bunter. "Didn't you hear me?"

"Yes, I heard you."

"Well, isn't that good enough for you?"

"I'm sorry; no."

Bunter glared through his spectacles. According to Bunter's point of view, the scholarship fellow ought to have felt honoured to lend to Bunter, even if he ran the risk of never seeing his money again.

"Well, you cheeky factory bounder," he exclaimed, "I suppose you learned those manners in the slum you were brought up in, didn't you?"

Mark Linley's eyes gleamed, and he laid down his pen and rose to his feet. Billy Bunter viewed that proceeding with alarm. There was only one thing that could equal Bunter's insolence, and that was his meekness when his insolence got him into trouble.

"I—I say, you know," he stammered, "I—I meant to say I—I always regarded you as a chap with very pleasant manners, you know."

Linley smiled scornfully, and sat down again, and took no further notice of Bunter. The fat junior gave him a doubtful blink, and then looked at the little Chinee in the armchair.

"I say, Wun Lung——"

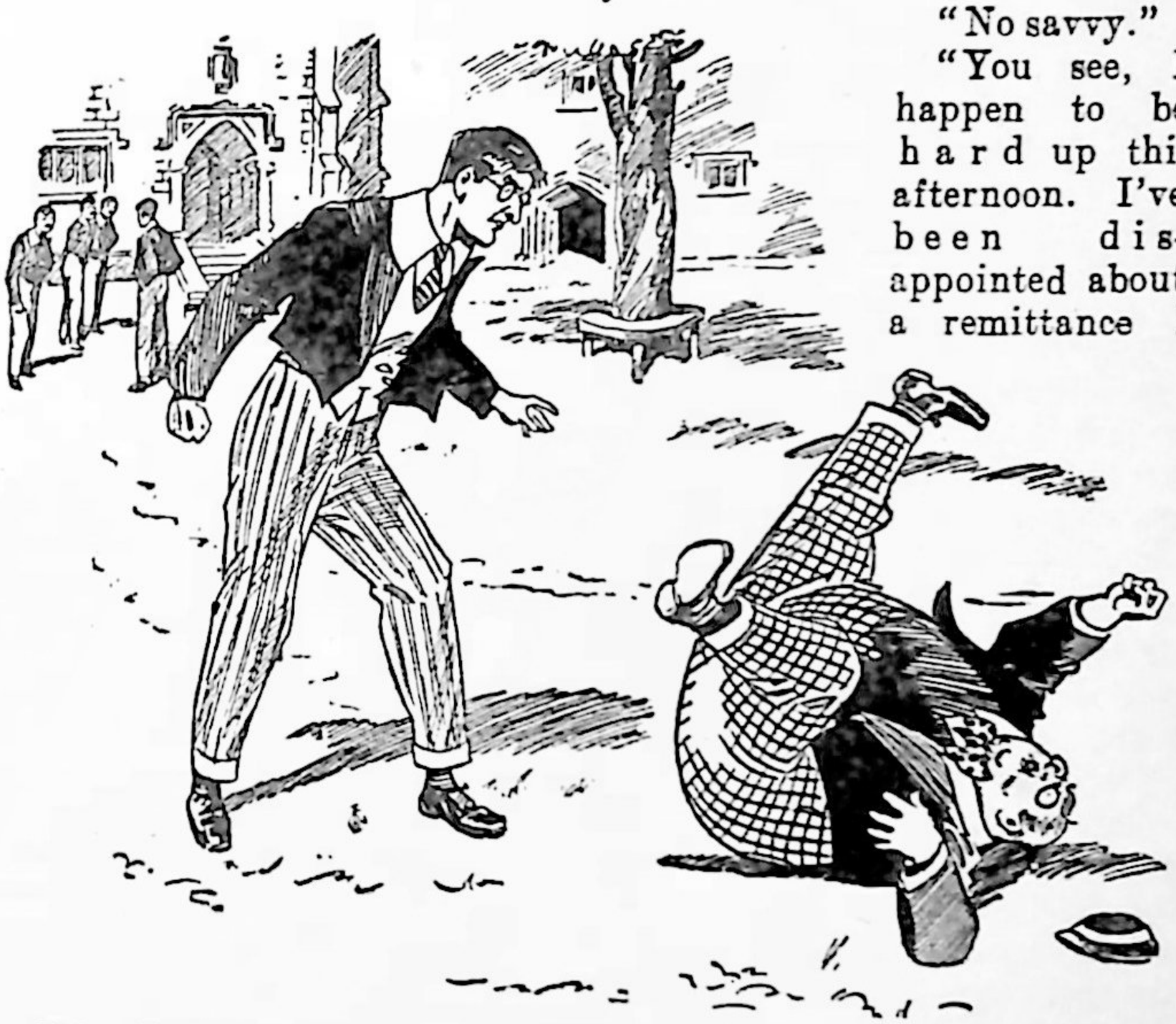
The little Celestial opened his almond eyes and looked sleepily at Bunter.

"Allee light," he murmured.

"Got any tin?"

"No savvy."

"You see, I happen to be hard up this afternoon. I've been disappointed about a remittance I



Fisher T. Fish put out a long leg and pushed Bunter on the chest with his boot. Sure enough, the fat junior rolled over backwards. (*See Chapter 2.*)

expected from a titled friend of mine. Can you lend me ten bob?"

"No savvy."

"Say five bob, then."

"No savvy."

Bunter glared. That baffling reply from Wun Lung left him no opening. As a matter of fact, Wun Lung "savvied" very well, but trustfulness was not one of the things he had been taught in China.

"Look here, Wun Lung, if you like to lend me a half-crown——"

"No savvy."

"You heathen beast!"

"No savvy."

"Come, old chap, don't be a cad, you know. I only want half-a-crown until my postal-order comes this evening," said Bunter persuasively. "Look here, I'll let you have back three-and-six for it."

"No savvy."

"You—you pigtailed young rotter!"

"No savvy."

"I say, old fellow——"

Mary Linley rose again and opened the door. His look was enough for Billy Bunter.

"Beasts!" said Billy Bunter.

And he rolled away in search of a lender.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Spoof!

BILLY BUNTER blinked discontentedly as he rolled out into the Close. It was not very long since Bunter had had his dinner, but he was hungry; at all events, he imagined he was hungry. Bunter was accustomed to getting all the meals he could, in season and out of season. And Mrs. Mimble, who kept the school tuck-shop, had a new supply of jam-tarts in that day, nice and fresh, and crisp and tasty. Those tarts haunted Billy Bunter. Until he had raised a loan and plunged into the tarts he felt that he could not be happy.

But the Remove were fed up with Bunter's borrowing proclivities. They seemed even less inclined to lend than usual.

Ogilvy, and Morgan, and Treluce, and Micky Desmond were tried in turn, and the result was nil. There was no cash going.

Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth, were strolling in the Close, and Bunter came up to them with an insinuating wriggle. As a rule, no Removite would have had cheek enough to attempt to borrow of a fellow in the higher Form. But Billy Bunter had cheek enough for anything, especially when he was hungry.

"I say, you fellows——" he began.

"Hallo, porpoise!" said Temple.

"Oh, really——"

"He wants some exercise to take his fat down," said Fry, with a wink at the others. "He's come to just the right parties."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Chase him!"

"Oh, really—— Oh—oh—oh!"

Whether Temple, Dabney & Co. guessed that Bunter wanted to borrow, or whether they simply wanted a little fun, is doubtful, but they certainly gave Bunter some of the exercise which he needed but did not want.

The three of them rushed straight at the fat junior, and as he turned to fly three boots came upon him at the same moment.

Biff!

"Ow!" roared Bunter. "Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Goal!" shouted Dabney. "Go it! Pass there!"

"Yarooh!"

Bunter fled at top speed. He rushed right into Harry Wharton & Co., and stopped, with Bob Cherry grasping him round the neck. He had nearly knocked Bob flying.

"You ass!" gasped Bob.

"Yow! Yah! Rescue! Oh!"

The Fourth-Formers grinned and walked away. Billy Bunter stood blinking and gasping for breath.

"Yow! I'm hurt! I'm fainting!" he moaned. "Help me to the tuck-shop! I——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you fellows——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I can't stand up! I——"

"Dear me!" said Bob Cherry sympathetically. "Then you'd better sit down."

And he sat Bunter down with a bump on the ground.

"Yah! Oh! Oh!"

The Famous Four walked away laughing. Billy Bunter sat gasping on the ground, and blinking furiously after the chums of the Remove.

"I guess you're taking a rest—hey?" remarked Fisher T. Fish, the American junior, as he strolled up, with his hands in his pockets.

Bunter blinked at him.

"Oh! I'm hurt! I—I've been assaulted and battered! I—I feel that I shall be ill unless I have some refreshment at once. Will you help me as far as the tuckshop, Fishy?"

Fish grinned.

"Too feeble to walk—hey?" he asked.

"Ye-es. You could knock me down with a feather," said Bunter pathetically.

"You opine you'd roll over if I touched you with my foot—hey?" asked Fish.

"Ye-es, I'm sure I should."

"Yep? We'll see, I guess."

And Fisher T. Fish put out a long leg and pushed Bunter on the chest with his boot, and, sure enough, the fat junior rolled over backwards.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Fish.

And he strolled away. Bunter sat up again and blinked.

"Ow! Beast! Yow!"

"My dear Bunter!" exclaimed Alonzo Todd, the kindly youth who was known as the Duffer of Greyfriars. "My dear Bunter! I——"

"Ow! Help!"

"I trust you are not injured, Bunter, and that the concussion of Fish's pedal extremity has produced no lasting effects," said Alonzo, in his long-winded way.

"Ow! I'm seriously injured!" groaned Bunter. "I—I say, will you help me as far as the tuckshop, Todd?"

"Certainly, my dear Bunter. My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to help any fellow who was in distress," said Todd. "Pray lean on my arm."

"Ow! Oh! Groo!"

"My dear Bunter, you seem to be seriously injured. Would it be better for me to run and summon medical attendance and a stretcher?" suggested Alonzo.

"Groo! No!"

Bunter leaned heavily upon Todd's arm as the Duffer of Greyfriars led him to the school shop, in the corner of the Close behind the elms. Todd manfully bore the weight—which was considerable — and piloted him into the shop.

Bunter sank heavily into a chair.

Mrs. Mimble came out of her little parlour. Her



The exasperated Bunter let out his right, and caught Alonzo on the end of his somewhat prominent nose. *(See Chapter 2.)*

expression was not amiable at the sight of Billy Bunter.

"My dear Mrs. Mimble, Bunter is seriously injured," said Todd distressfully. "I think he requires some refreshment to revive him."

"Jam tarts," groaned Bunter.

Mrs. Mimble sniffed.

"Master Bunter can have all the jam tarts he can pay for," she said.

"Ow! Groo!"

"My dear Mrs. Mimble, surely, in a serious case like this, you will not stand upon so paltry a question as mere monetary payment?" exclaimed Todd, in astonishment.

Mrs. Mimble sniffed again, but vouchsafed no other reply.

"You—you lend me a bob, Todd," said Bunter faintly. "You can have it back out of my postal-order this evening."

"I'm so sorry, Bunter——"

"Make it a tanner, then."

"I'm so sorry, but I cannot, as I have no money. It is an extremely unfortunate concurrence of circumstances, but——"

Bunter sat upright on the chair.

"Do you mean to say you're stony?" he growled.

"Dear me, what a sudden recovery!" exclaimed Todd, in astonishment. "Yes, Bunter, I am indeed destitute of ready cash—or, as you describe it, stony!"

"You ass! Why couldn't you say so before?"

"But you did not ask me, Bunter. You made no allusion to money. You simply requested me to aid you as far as the tuckshop," said Todd, in surprise.

Bunter snorted, and stamped out of the shop. Todd looked after him in the greatest amazement. Then a pained expression dawned upon his face.

"Dear me! Bunter has been deceiving me once more! My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked at him—indeed, disgusted. I must remonstrate with Bunter."

Todd followed the fat junior, and tapped him on the shoulder.

Billy Bunter swung round with an angry snort.

"Well, what do you want?" he growled.

"My dear Bunter, you have again relapsed into distinct and inexcusable untruthfulness, after I had begged and implored of you to break yourself of the habit," said Alonzo. "Again, my dear Bunter, I beg and implore you——"

"Fathead!"

"I beg and implore——"

Biff!

The exasperated Bunter let out his right, and it caught Alonzo Todd on the end of his somewhat prominent nose.

Alonzo sat down.

"Oh!" he gasped.

And the fat junior, somewhat comforted, rolled away and left the Duffer of Greyfriars sitting there.

THE THIRD CHAPTER
Hurt!

"I SAY, you fellows——"

Harry Wharton & Co. grunted in chorus. There seemed to be no getting rid of Bunter that afternoon.

"Well, what is it now?" asked Harry.

"I'm coming for a swim with you," said Bunter, blinking at him. "You know, I'm a dab at swimming. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you some tips about swimming if you'll stand a feed afterwards."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you know——"

"You ass!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "You can't swim for toffee, and you know you can't! You can just keep afloat in calm water."

"Oh, of course, it's no good arguing with a chap who's jealous of what a fellow can do!" said Bunter loftily. "But I'm willing to give you some tips. Anyway, I'm going swimming."

"Better keep out of the bath. You'll be in the way."

"I suppose I can do as I like?"

"Yes, but——"

"Oh, rats!"

"Oh, rats——"

Bunter stamped away.

As a matter of fact, he was an extraordinarily poor swimmer, but he meant to

swim that afternoon, if only because he knew that he would be in the way in the bath.

He went into the House and changed into swimming costume, and came out again with a big coat wrapped round him.

The chums of the Remove saw him as he made for the swimming-bath and grinned.

"We're going to have an exhibition, I suppose," said Wharton; "and somebody will have to fish the fat duffer out."

"The fishfulness will be terrific."

"I suppose the ass knows the water isn't in the bath yet," said Nugent. "He's not duffer enough to jump in without it."

"Well, I suppose he can see!"

"I don't know——"

"Bunter!" called out Wharton. "Bunter!" He ran towards the fat junior.

Bunter had reached the door. He blinked round at Wharton, and went in. The fat junior imagined that the chums of the Remove were going to stop him, and he could be very obstinate when he liked.

He hurried in and threw off the coat, and took off his spectacles. He could not, of course, keep his glasses on in the water, as they became opaque when wetted. But without his glasses Bunter was terribly short-sighted. The atmosphere became as a fog to him, and the things he could see he could not see clearly.

He ran to the swimming-bath.

Harry Wharton & Co. came running in. Wharton was really alarmed about the fat junior. It seemed hardly possible that Bunter would not notice that the bath was empty and plunge down on the tiles; but there was no accounting for what Bunter might do.

"Bunter!" called out Harry.

"Oh, rats!"

"Don't jump in!" roared Harry. "There's—— Oh, he's done it!"

The fat junior had dived from the side into the bath.

Crash!

"My hat!"

"Good heavens!"

"Poor old Bunter!"

There was one cry from the swimming-bath—and silence.

The juniors' hearts stood still for a moment.

They advanced with faltering steps to the side of the bath and looked in.

Billy Bunter lay extended on the white tiles, without sound or motion.

"Good heavens!" muttered Harry Wharton, his face blanching. "He's hurt!"

"He must be!"

"The hurtfulness is terrific."

"Bunter! Bunter!"

There was no reply from the fat junior.

He lay quite still, without a sound.

The Greyfriars fellows were accustomed to Billy Bunter's "spoofing." He could pretend to be seriously hurt on the slightest occasion. But this time they felt instinctively that it was not spoof. Bunter was hurt!

Harry Wharton jumped down into the bath.

He bent over Billy Bunter and raised his head.

Billy Bunter was deadly pale, and there was a large bruise on his head, and his eyes were closed.

"Bunter, old man!"

But Bunter could not speak. Bunter was insensible. It was genuine this time!

"Is it very bad?" called out Nugent.

"Yes, he's stunned."

"Oh!"

"Poor old Bunter!"

"We must get a doctor to him!" exclaimed Harry. "Oh, rather, it will be quicker to take him to the doctor. Tell Gosling to get his trap ready."

"Right-ho!"

Nugent dashed out. Bob Cherry joined Harry, and they carried Bunter up out of the swimming-bath.

The fat junior neither moved nor spoke.

"One of you had better call in Mr. Quelch," said Harry, in a low voice. "He——"

"I am here!"

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, came quickly up.

His face was dark and concerned.

"I have just met Nugent," he said. "He says that Bunter has been hurt—that he

jumped into the bath without noticing that it was empty——"

"He dived in, sir."

"Poor lad! But how——"

"He had his glasses off, and I suppose he couldn't see," said Harry, in distress. "I never knew the poor chap was so short-sighted as that, sir. Shall we take him down to the doctor's? It will be quicker than sending to Dr. Pillbury."

"Yes, yes, by all means!"

Nugent came dashing in.

"The trap's ready."

"Let me help you carry him," said Mr. Quelch. "So far as I can see, he is simply stunned, and there is no great injury done. But I will come with you."

Bunter was carried out to the trap.

As he was placed in the vehicle Bunter's eyes opened, and he gave a groan.

"Oh, my head! Ow! It aches! What's the matter?"

"It's all right, old son," said Harry softly. "You've had a bump, but we're looking after you."

"Lemme alone!"

"We're not going to hurt you, old chap. Just lie on the cushions."

"Who are you?"

"Eh?"

"Who are you?" said Bunter peevishly. "Lemme alone."

"He does not recognise you without his glasses," said Mr. Quelch. "Lie quiet. Bunter. You have bruised your head, and we are taking you to the doctor's."

Billy Bunter did not reply.

His eyes had closed, and he seemed to be unconscious again. Harry Wharton and Alonzo Todd sat with him in the trap, and Mr. Quelch took the reins.

The vehicle dashed out of the gates of Greyfriars.

A crowd of juniors stood round, and while some of them were touched and sympathetic, the general feeling was one of suspicion and scoffing.

Billy Bunter's humbug was too well known. There were few among the fellows who heard of the accident who believed that Bunter was really hurt.

But the fat junior was not spoofing this time. Bunter was hurt, and his injury was destined to have peculiar consequences, for himself and for others.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER
Bunter Loses His Memory!

TEN minutes later, Billy Bunter was in Dr.Pillbury's surgery, and the little medico was leaning over and examining him. Alonzo Todd stood looking on with an expression of the deepest sympathy on his face.

The Duffer of Greyfriars drew Wharton aside.

"I'm so sorry, Wharton," he murmured.

"We're all sorry," said Harry.

"Yes, but I feel that I am bound to be particularly sorry," said Todd, "because I spoke quite crossly to Bunter a short time before his accident, and I was looking for him to punch his head when I learned that he had been injured. Wharton, I am shocked to have to confess that I had allowed myself to entertain revengeful feelings, because Bunter had punched my nose. My Uncle Benjamin——"

"Hush! He's speaking!"

"Do you feel much pain, my lad?" asked the physician.

Bunter blinked at him.

"He wants his glasses," cried Harry.

"Eh, what's that?"

"I've got your glasses here, old chap."

"Glasses?"

"Yes; here they are."

Bunter blinked at the pair of spectacles that Wharton held out to him. He was sitting up, with a somewhat wild expression on his face. He made no motion to take the spectacles.

"Look here, none of your larks!" he exclaimed. "I'm not going to wear those things."

"But—but they're yours."

"Rats!"

Harry Wharton stared at him. He could not understand Bunter in the least now. Some strange and inexplicable change seemed to have come over the fat junior.

Dr. Pillbury took the spectacles, and placed them on Bunter's nose. The fat junior blinked through them, and evidently found himself seeing better with the aid of the glasses, for he allowed them to remain there.

Dr. Pillbury drew Mr. Quelch into the next room. The master of the Remove was looking a little anxious.

"Well, doctor?" he said.

"The boy has had a severe shock, and he has a very large bump on his head, which must be kept bandaged for some time," said Dr. Pillbury. "Otherwise, there is little the matter with him. Had he been in good condition he would have stood the shock much better. But he is in a low state from over-feeding and want of exercise. He will not be able to take his place in class for a week, at least; but I see no reason why he should be confined to the sanatorium. But you will use your own judgment about that."

"But he seems very strange in his manner."

"That is because he is still dazed from the shock. I have no doubt that his manner will become normal in a few hours."

Mr. Quelch nodded.

"Then I may take him back to Greyfriars with me?"

"Certainly!"

Mr. Quelch rejoined Bunter.

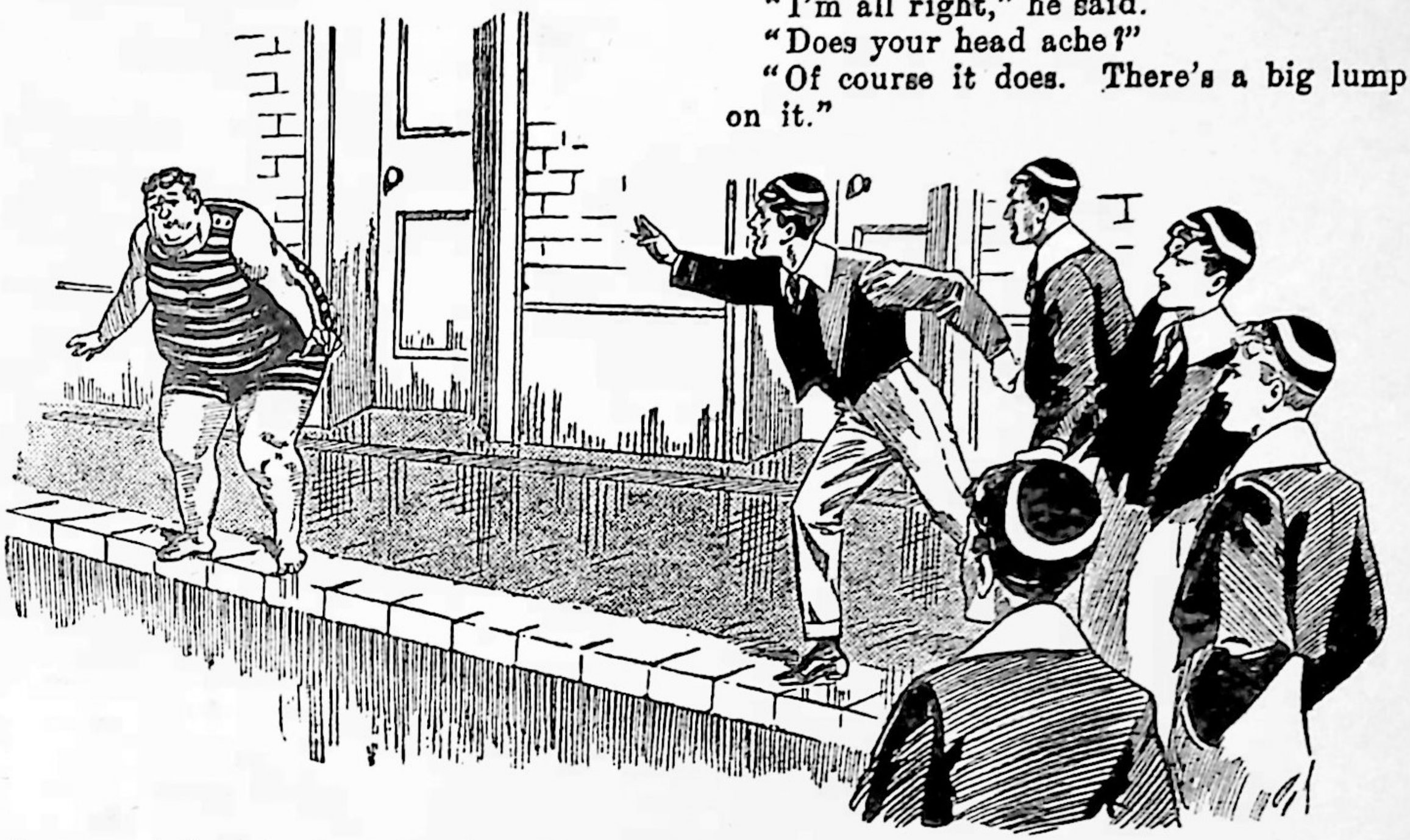
"Do you feel strong enough to move?" he asked.

Bunter blinked peevishly.

"I'm all right," he said.

"Does your head ache?"

"Of course it does. There's a big lump on it."



Bunter ran to the swimming-bath. Harry Wharton & Co. came running in. Wharton was really alarmed about the fat junior. "Don't jump in!" roared Harry. "There's——Oh!" (*See Chapter* 3.)

"You shall have a good rest when we get back to Greyfriars," said Mr. Quelch.

The fat junior stared at him.

"Greyfriars?"

"Yes, Bunter."

"Where's that?"

"What?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, quite staggered.

"I don't know what you're talking about. Who are you?"

"I! Surely you know me, Bunter—your Form-master, Mr. Quelch?"

"Form-master?"

"Yes."

Bunter blinked at him, and then closed his eyes. He seemed to be grappling with some mental problem. Mr. Quelch seemed very much perplexed.

"He is still suffering from shock," said Dr. Pillbury. "It will pass off!"

Billy Bunter was taken out to the trap. He did not speak a word while he was placed in it. During the drive to Greyfriars, he looked round him curiously several times, as a new boy might have looked round upon wholly new scenery.

Wharton and Todd watched him. They were vaguely uneasy, and vaguely alarmed. Even Alonzo Todd's loquacity was dried up.

Bunter's manner was strange. It would have been like the fat junior to talk on in an endless stream, and make the most of his injury. But he did not. He did not open his lips, but only looked about him with that strange expression upon his face, as if thoughts were passing in his mind that he could hardly grasp, and could not utter.

What was the matter with Bunter?

Wharton felt that the injury had gone deeper than Dr. Pillbury imagined. There was something odd, something alarming, in Bunter's look.

The trap arrived at Greyfriars, and stopped outside the School House. Billy Bunter looked at the grey old building, and at the crowds of fellows in the Close, with a new and startled look.

"Here we are again!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, as cheerfully as he could.

Bunter blinked at him without replying.

Wharton descended from the trap, and helped Bunter down. The fat junior looked round him with an odd, scared expression.

"Look here!" he exclaimed suddenly. "What's this place you've brought me to, you fellows?"

"Bunter!"

"What's this place, I say?"

"Don't you know Greyfriars again?"

"Greyfriars!" said Bunter, with a puzzled look.

"Yes, your old school, Billy?"

Bunter looked round vacantly.

"Gammon," said Bulstrode, the bully of the Remove. "We know Bunter. He's trying to spoof us again. Come off, Bunty!"

"I guess so!" remarked Fisher T. Fish.

Bunter blinked at them without speaking.

"Shut up, you chaps!" said Wharton quietly. "Bunter's not well. He's had an awful crack on the head, and it's just upset him. Come in, Bunter!"

He led the fat junior towards the door.

Bunter resisted.

"Look here, I'm not going in there!" he exclaimed angrily. "I don't know the place, and I'm not going in."

There was a buzz of amazement from the juniors crowded round.

Bunter's words took their breath away.

"My only hat!" muttered Bob Cherry. "He's lost his memory!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER
Not Spoof!

"Poor old Bunter!"

That was what Bob Cherry said as the fat junior passed into the house, with his arm linked in Harry Wharton's.

His words were echoed by several fellows, but Bulstrode burst into a laugh.

"You surely don't believe him!" he exclaimed contemptuously. "He's spoofing! I think we've had enough of Bunter's spoof to know it when we see it."

"What-ho!" said Skinner.

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"I don't think he's spoofing now," he said. "It looked genuine enough. It was that biff on the bottom of the bath that did it. He's hurt his head somehow."

"More likely to hurt the bath."

"Oh, rats! I tell you he's hurt, and he's suffering from shock to the system. He's lost his memory."

"Bosh!"

And Bulstrode put his hands into his pockets, and walked away, whistling. Bulstrode's opinion was shared by more fellows than was Bob Cherry's. They knew Bunter.

"I guess it's a little steep, you know," Fisher T. Fish remarked. "Anyway, if we don't believe the chap, it's his own funeral; he's such an awful whopper merchant!"

"You are quite right, Fish," said Alonzo Todd. "Bunter is certainly untruthful,

though I have begged and implored of him to become more honourable. I have often wished that my Uncle Benjamin had an opportunity of speaking a few words to him; but in the present case I think that Bunter is sincere."

"I guess it's too steep."

"Lies, of course," said Vernon-Smith. "We all know Bunter."

And so said many more.



Billy Bunter blinked at the comestibles. "I don't want any!" he said. "I'm not hungry!" (*See Chapter* 6.)

Meanwhile, Billy Bunter was taken into the house by Harry Wharton. With his head bandaged up, and a still dazed and bewildered expression upon his face, the fat junior looked very curious, and it was evident that he could not quite get his bearings. Familiar objects seemed new to him, and he did not seem even quite sure of his own name, for on more than one occasion he paid no attention when addressed as Bunter or Billy.

If the fat junior was spoofing, and acting all the time, he was doing it remarkably well. But Wharton did not think so. He was convinced that the unfortunate Owl of the Remove was sincere this time. The bump on his head had done it, and for the present, at least, the terrible shock had shattered Bunter's memory. It was not an uncommon occurrence, and the question was—would it last? Would the Owl of the Remove ever be himself again?

Bunter had been as nearly intolerable as it was possible for a boy to be while in health. But Wharton forgot all that now. He even felt that he had been a little hard on the fat junior. As a matter of fact, Wharton had been more patient with him than any other fellow at Greyfriars, with perhaps the exception of Alonzo Todd. But all Bunter's sins were forgotten now.

"I can leave him to you, I think," said Mr. Quelch. "Under the circumstances, he will require looking after, Wharton."

"Yes, sir; I'll look after him."

"Very good!"

"You'd like to lie down for a bit, Bunter?" asked Wharton.

Bunter blinked at him.

"No, I wouldn't," he said.

"Will you come into the study?"

"What study?"

"My study, or your own."

"No, I won't!"

"H'm! Will you have something to eat?" asked Wharton, playing what he considered to be a trump card. Billy Bunter had never been known to refuse an invitation of that kind."

"I'm not hungry," said Bunter.

Wharton almost staggered.

"W-w-what!" he gasped. "Not hungry?"

"No."

"Sure, Billy?"

Bunter made a peevish gesture.

"I suppose I ought to know whether I'm hungry or not!" he exclaimed.

"Ye-e-es, but—but——"

"Well, I'm not. I've got a headache," said Bunter, passing his fat hand over the bandage. "How did I get this lump on my head?"

"You dived into the swimming-bath when there wasn't any water?"

"Oh, did I?"

"Don't you remember, Billy?"

"No, I don't."

"My word, it's genuine enough," said Nugent, as he joined them. "What are you going to do with him, Harry?"

Harry Wharton rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

"Blessed if I know!" he exclaimed. "It's pretty clear that he's lost his memory—for the present, at least. I've heard of such things before. I suppose it will come back again; but for the present——"

"Yes, that's it! It's a jolly curious thing; but we shall have to look after the poor bounder—he hasn't any chum!"

"Well, that's his own fault. I mean," added Wharton hastily, "we should have been his chums if—if things had been different. Still, we'll look after him."

Bunter was blinking to and fro.

"I say, you fellows!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, Bunter?"

"What does all this mean? How did I get this bump on my head?"

"I—I've just told you," stammered Wharton.

"Have you?" said Bunter vacantly.

"Poor old Bunter!" murmured Nugent.

"Come to your room, Bunty," said Wharton softly.

The fat junior made no resistance. Wharton piloted him up to his study. For the time being, Bunter had a small room in the Remove passage to himself. There was room for two, certainly, but nobody in the Remove had ever shown any ambition to share that study with Bunter. The Owl of the Remove was not popular as a study-mate. More than one study had tried him, and had found him insufferable.

Mr. Quelch had believed that, among the Remove fellows, surrounded by familiar associations, Bunter would soon recover.

But as the fat junior entered his own study, it was clear that he did not recognise it. He blinked round the room like a stranger.

"Your own study, you know," said Harry Wharton.

"Is it?"

"Yes. Sit down, old chap."

Bunter grunted.

The study did not look very cheerful. It was a cold day, but there was no fire there. It was Billy Bunter's little way to spend all his pocket-money, and all the little loans he succeeded in raising, at the tuckshop, and he depended for coals upon what he could borrow along the passage. Bunter was untidy, too, and his study was always in a slovenly state.

Wharton looked round it with a disapproving eye.

It certainly was not a cheerful place to take an invalid into.

"Look here," he said in a low voice to Nugent, "I think we'd better get him to bed. He may be better after lying down for a time. Then you and the fellows can clear up the study a bit, and get a fire going, in case he wants to come down."

"Right you are!" said Nugent cheerfully.

The chums of the Remove were giving up their half-holiday to the Owl, but they did not even think of that. They were quite willing to make any sacrifice for a fellow in poor Billy Bunter's state.

Bunter was taken up to the dormitory. He made no resistance as Wharton put him to bed. As a rule Bunter was always prepared to go to sleep. After eating, his greatest pleasure lay in sleeping.

But he was very wakeful now. He lay in bed blinking at Wharton through his big spectacles, and so evidently trying to puzzle out something in his mind that it was painful to watch the changing expressions of his face.

Several juniors came into the dormitory, impelled by curiosity or sympathy. When they looked at Bunter their doubts as to the genuineness of his malady were dispelled. He could never have acted like this if he had been shamming.

"I say—what's your name?" said Bunter.

"Wharton," said Harry quietly.

"I've heard that name before," said Bunter.

"Yes, I dare say, old fellow," said Harry cheerfully. "I'm an old friend of yours, you know. I've known you a long time."

"Have you?" said Bunter doubtfully.

"Yes, quite a long time, kid."

"I've been here before," said Bunter, blinking round the dormitory.

"Yes; it's the dorm."

"The dorm.?" repeated Bunter.

"That's it—the Remove dormitory, you know."

"Oh!" said Bunter.

"My hat!" said Bulstrode softly. "He can't be spoofing to that extent! He'd have given himself away before this!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Then it's genuine! Poor old Bunter!" said Bulstrode, and his voice was unusually soft.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Yes, Bunter?"

"I—I—I——"

Bunter broke off. A gleam of intelligence had flashed into his dazed face, but it was gone again. Had it been a momentary glimmer of returning memory? If so, it was gone, and it did not recur.

John Bull stepped to the bedside.

"How do you feel, Bunter?" he asked.

"Eh?"

"Don't you know me?"

Bunter blinked at him.

"No, I don't! Who are you?"

"I'm John Bull!"

"Oh, don't be funny!" said Bunter peevishly.

"I—I'm not being funny," said Bull, rather taken aback. "I'm John Bull, you know."

"Why don't you say you're Uncle Sam?" said Bunter, with a sniff. "Do you think I believe that's a real name, you duffer?"

THE SIXTH CHAPTER
Amazing!

JOHN BULL came into the Remove dormitory with a bag in his hand. Bull's face was grave and quiet. He was sorry for Bunter—as the others were — and anxious about him. He came up to the bedside, and Harry Wharton glanced at the bag.

"Is he any better?" asked Bull.

Wharton shook his head.

"He doesn't seem to be in much pain," he replied. "But his memory's gone. He doesn't know me. He doesn't even know the dorm."

"Poor old Bunter!"



Frank looked into the room. Nugent minor—Frank's young brother—was brandishing a clenched and somewhat grimy fist in Bunter minor's face. "Beast!" he roared. (*See Chapter* 8.)

John Bull turned pink. He was accustomed to chipping on that subject, for it seemed comical to many fellows that his name should be John Bull. But he could not be angry with Bunter just then. There was a soft chuckle from the juniors behind John Bull, but he did not seem to hear it.

"I—I—my name is really Bull, you know," he said. "But never mind that. I've brought you something to eat, Bunter."

"I'm not hungry?"

"Eh?"

"I'm not hungry!" said Bunter.

"Oh, draw it mild!" murmured Bulstrode. "We can't quite swallow that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, you chaps!" said Wharton, frowning.

"Look here, Bunter," said John Bull, opening the bag. "I've got some of Mrs. Mimble's latest in tarts, and some cream puffs, and—and pork-pies! Look!"

"Here's a beautiful saveloy!" said Nugent.

"Look at this plum cake!" added Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter blinked at the comestibles. They would have made his mouth water at any other time. But he seemed to have lost his appetite along with his memory.

He shook his head and turned away.

"I don't want any!" he said.

"But—but they're ripping!"

"I'm not hungry!"

"Look at these tarts!"

"And these doughnuts!"

"Oh, take 'em away!"

"What!"

"I don't want them!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Bulstrode.

"That hatfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Singh. "The esteeemed Bunter has completely changed his spots, like the Ethiopian leopard!"

"My word, he has!"

"Quiet, you chaps!" said Wharton. "Look here, you'd better buzz off. I'm going to try and get him to sleep."

"Hush-a-bye, baby!" sneered Snoop.

Wharton's eyes gleamed, and he stepped towards Snoop.

"Get out, you cad!" he said in a low voice.

And Snoop got out.

Most of the juniors followed. Harry Wharton tucked the bedclothes in round Bunter, and the fat junior blinked at him the while.

"You'd like to go to sleep, old fellow?" said Harry.

"No, I wouldn't!"

"But—but——"

"I'm not sleepy!"

"But——"

"Look here, I'm not staying in bed!" said Bunter, suddenly sitting up. "It's not night-time! What the dickens should I go to bed for?"

"You're—you're ill, you know!" said Wharton feebly.

"I'm not ill!"

"Well, you see——"

"Who says I'm ill?"

"You—you've got a lump on your head, you know, and——"

"Well, I'm getting up!"

"Better lie down a bit," said Wharton urgingly. "It will do you good, Billy, old chap! Lie down and go to sleep a bit, and I'll stay with you in case you wake up, and —and then we'll go and have a feed in the study."

"I don't want a feed in the study."

"Oh!"

"I'm going to get up."

"Well, if you really want to——" said Harry hesitatingly.

Bunter settled all doubts upon that point by putting a fat leg out of bed. He blinked round him peevishly.

"Where are my clothes?" he exclaimed.

Wharton handed him his clothes and helped him to dress. He did not utter a further word of remonstrance.

Under the circumstances, he felt that it was better to allow Bunter to have his way unquestioned.

Bunter was soon dressed, and he rolled towards the door.

Wharton followed him, and with a curious uneasiness and anxiety in his heart which he had never expected to feel on account of

Billy Bunter, he accompanied the fat junior downstairs.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER
Bunter Must Be Ill!

NUGENT and the others had made a great difference in Bunter's study. The room, which had been the dismallest and untidiest in the Remove passage, had been newly swept and garnished. The table was clear, and covered with a nice red cover belonging to Study No. 1. There was a rug on the floor, taken out of No. 14. The grate was adorned with a brass fender borrowed from Bulstrode's room, and the dead ashes had all been taken away, and there was a cheerful fire burning.

It would not have been surprising if Billy Bunter did not know his own study now.

Wharton looked surprised himself.

"Well, I must say this is ripping!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, it's not bad," said Nugent, looking round with an eye of pride. "I must say we've made a difference."

"The differentfulness is terrific!"

"Whose armchair?" asked Wharton.

"Mine," said John Bull, with a grin. "I believe Bunter has a fancy for armchairs, so I've just wheeled it in."

"Good!"

"Sit down, Billy!"

Bunter had not forgotten that an armchair was comfortable. He sank down into John Bull's well-padded armchair with great comfort.

"Comfy, old son?"

Bunter grunted. The grunt could be taken to mean that he was comfortable.

"Now, what about tea?" said Wharton. "I suppose you're ready for tea, Billy?"

"Eh?"

"Getting peckish?"

Bunter seemed to consider.

"Oh, I don't know!" he said. "I've no appetite."

"Poor old Bunter!"

"Suppose we chat with him," suggested Bob Cherry.

"Oh, don't jaw!" said Bunter.

Bob smiled a sickly smile. Bunter's peculiarly gracious manners had evidently undergone no change.

There was a tap at the door, and Alonzo Todd inserted his head into the study. Then he came in cautiously on tiptoe.

"Is he better?' he asked in a hushed voice.

"About the same," said Wharton. "No need to creep about like a ghost. He's awake, and doesn't want to go to sleep."

"Very good, my dear Wharton. I was thinking," said Alonzo, "of reading aloud to Bunter. It is a thing that invalids usually like very much. I have brought a very interesting volume. It is called 'Sherrick; or, Bit By Bit,' and contains many very valuable lessons to schoolboys."

"My dear ass——"

"Perhaps you have never read the book, Wharton," said Alonzo reprovingly. "It clearly demonstrates that a boy may be very happy while he is reckless and wicked, and that as soon as he turns thoroughly good he dies of a painful disease. Such a book may be very useful to Bunter——"

"Fathead!"

"My dear Wharton——"

"Would you like Todd to read to you, Bunter?"

"Let him begin, that's all," said Bunter.

Bunter's tone could not be considered encouraging, even by Todd. Todd did not begin.

"My dear Bunter," he exclaimed, "I'm so sorry to observe that you have no taste even for improving literature. Perhaps you would like me to read you some extracts from the 'Dictionary of Scientific but Otherwise Useful Facts'? Some observations on the habits of the ichthyosaurus of ancient times appeared to me very interesting when I perused them myself, and——"

"Oh, cheese it, Todd!" said Bob Cherry.

"My dear Cherry——"

"Kick that lunatic out!" said Bunter.

"Oh, dear!"

"Buzz off, Todd! You bother the patient," said Wharton, grinning.

"Dear me! I'm so sorry to see Bunter in this state of mind. Perhaps, however, he may care for me to read to him to-morrow.

I'm sure, I'm always at his service. My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to—— Well, very well, I am going. You need not propel me towards the door in that somewhat rude manner, Bull. I am about to take my departure, and——"

But the closing door shut off the remainder of the remarks made by the Duffer of Greyfriars.

Bunter blinked at the juniors.

"I say, you fellows, why don't you sit down?" he asked. "I should think you'd get tired, standing up all the time."

The juniors fairly gasped.

It was the first time, since any of them had known Bunter, that the fat junior had ever expressed any concern for anybody but himself.

"My only hat!" murmured Nugent.

"Bunter, old man——" began Cherry, but his voice fairly failed him.

"Oh, sit down! Would you like the armchair?"

"Eh?"

"Any of you care to have the armchair?"

"My hat!"

"Great Scott!"

"Can't you answer?" asked Bunter.

"It's all right, old chap!" gasped Wharton. "The armchair was brought here for you, because you're rocky. That's all right."

"Oh, all serene!"

"Ready for tea, Bunter?"

"Well, I'm getting peckish, I think," said Bunter, rubbing his fat hand over his forehead, as if he were not quite certain of it. "I don't know. Did you say this was my study?"

"Yes."

"See if there's anything in the cupboard."

"Oh, we're standing treat!"

"You're not standing treat," said Bunter. "If you're coming to tea in my study, I'm standing treat."

"We shall hear about the postal-order next," murmured Bob Cherry.

"Eh?" exclaimed Bunter, whose ears seemed to be unusually quick, in spite of the shock his head had received. "What's that?"

"I—I—I wondered whether you were expecting a postal-order, that's all," stammered Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter wrinkled his brows. The words "postal-order" seemed to touch a chord in his shattered memory, but the effort to remember was evidently too much for him.

He shook his head.

"No; I'm not expecting a postal-order," he replied.

"What?"

"I'm not expecting a postal-order," said Bunter peevishly. "I never get postal-orders. There's nobody to send me postal-orders that I know of."

The chums of the Remove stared at him blankly.

Billy Bunter, all unconsciously, was telling the truth for once in his life. The juniors knew that Bunter was not himself just now, but they had never expected this, or anything like this.

"My only hat!" Bob Cherry murmured. "Bunter sick is better than Bunter well."

"What-ho!"

"I don't think I have any money about me," said Bunter, feeling in his pockets. "I'm afraid I shan't be able to stand treat, you chaps."

"It's all right. We're going to stand a feed."

"Not to me."

"B-b-b-but why not?"

Bunter shook his head. The juniors gazed at him, and then at one another. Billy Bunter picked up the poker and stirred the fire. Even that slight action added to the amazement of the chums.

Bunter had never poked the fire before of his own free will. He had always left that task for somebody else to do. He would never replenish the fire even; and even if he were the only fellow in the room, he would sit calmly by it and let it go out, unless somebody else put on coals.

Bunter had become considerate; Bunter had become independent; Bunter was thinking of others instead of wholly of himself. Certainly, Bunter must be very, very ill.

That was how the Greyfriars juniors looked at it.

"My hat!" said Wharton at last. "My only summer hat!"

Nugent gave a start.

"I know!" he exclaimed suddenly.

"Eh? You know what?"

"A dodge—to make him remember."

"Good! What's the dodge?"

"Bunter minor."

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER
Sammy Says "Spoof!"

HARRY WHARTON'S face brightened up.

"Of course!" he exclaimed.

He wondered that he had not thought of it before; but the strange alteration in Billy Bunter had occupied all his thoughts.

Bunter's minor was at Greyfriars—in the Second Form. Sammy Bunter was not a popular youth in his Form or out of it—he was too much like his major to be popular anywhere. Neither was he popular with his elder brother; in fact, there was very little love lost between major and minor.

Sammy was a younger edition of Billy, and so it was certain that they could not get on well together. Both wanted to borrow of the other; both wanted to get the better of every transaction; both were greedy and unscrupulous. Under the circumstances, brotherly love was not likely to flourish. And it didn't.

The two Bunters, after the first few days following Sammy's arrival at Greyfriars, had seen very little of one another. But now that Billy Bunter was ill, the chums naturally supposed that Sammy would be sympathetic, and if anything could bring back Billy to a recollection of old times, surely Billy could not forget Sammy.

Even with his memory gone as it was, surely Billy could not forget Sammy.

"Bunter minor!" repeated Bob Cherry "Good! It's rather curious that he hasn't been here, as a matter of fact. He must have heard about this."

"He must have, certainly."

"I should think he would have come."

Wharton shrugged his shoulders. He knew how much sympathy Bunter minor was likely to feel if he heard that Bunter major had had an accident.

"Well, suppose we call him in," he said.

"Good egg!"

"Bunter, old man——"

Billy Bunter blinked round.

"Yes. What is it?"

"Would you like to see your minor?"

Bunter looked puzzled.

"My minor?" he repeated.

"Yes. Sammy, you know."

"Sammy!"

"Yes. You haven't forgotten that you've got a minor at Greyfriars, I suppose, have you?" exclaimed Frank Nugent, in astonishment.

Bunter rubbed his forehead, as if to recall wandering thoughts.

"Sammy!" he repeated vaguely.

"Yes. Shall I call him in?"

"Better fetch him, anyway," whispered Wharton. "No good talking to Billy. He doesn't seem to understand."

"Right-ho! I'll have him here in a jiffy."

Frank Nugent left the study. He had a cloud upon his face now. He was sincerely concerned for Billy Bunter. If Bunter did not remember that he had a minor at Greyfriars, his state must be very serious indeed.

"Seen Bunter minor?" Nugent asked every fellow he met.

"Hasn't he been to see his major?" asked Bulstrode, with a sneer.

"Not yet."

"Nice, affectionate family, the Bunters!"

"Well, I'm going to take him to see Billy. Seen young Bunter, Ogilvy?"

"No," said Ogilvy.

"Faith, and he's in the Second Form-room, I belave!" said Micky Desmond. "I saw him go in with young Hop Hi."

"Oh, good!"

Frank Nugent made his way to the fags' Form-room. As he neared the door of the Second Form-room he heard the loud and excited voices within. There was some disturbance going on among the heroes of the Second, evidently.

Nugent grinned as he pushed open the door. He knew that Sammy Bunter was unpopular in the Second Form, and he would

not have been surprised if the Second had been ragging the younger edition of the Owl of the Remove.

He looked into the room. A group of excited fags surrounded Sammy Bunter, who was blinking angrily through his spectacles. He looked very like his major at that moment—that is, as the major had been before his accident.

Nugent minor—Frank's youngest brother—was brandishing a clenched and somewhat grimy fist in Bunter minor's face.

"Pig!" he roared.

"Beast!" shouted Myers.

"Rotter!"

"Fat toad!"

"My word!" murmured Frank Nugent. "It sounded like the Remove talking to Billy! Hallo, young shavers, what's the row here?"

The fags turned and glared at Nugent major. Dicky Nugent glared as much as the others. He was on the best of terms with his major. But none of the Second liked interference from a fellow in a higher Form.

"Mind your own bizney!" growled Myers.

"What's the row?"

"Oh, it's this beast Bunter minor!" said Dicky Nugent. "He's found out where we kept the grub we were going to have for a feed——"

"He nosed it out, the beast!"

"And he's scoffed it!"

"Scoffed every crumb!"

"Clean as a whistle—the beast!"

"The cad!"

"The porker!"

"I—I—I didn't, you know!" stammered Sammy Bunter. "I—I came across the parcel under the desk just by accident, and——"

"Liar!"

"Chuck it! Rats!"

"I give you my word——" stammered Sammy.

"Yes, your word's worth a lot!" said Gatty contemptuously.

"Bunter minor's wanted," said Frank, interrupting the dispute. "Come on, Samuel!"

"I hope it's to go to the Head for a licking," said Gatty viciously.

"No, it isn't!"

"Well, we're jolly well going to lick him," declared Dicky Nugent. "The fat bounder's scoffed all our tommy, and he's going to sit up for it."

"He won't pay for the grub!" howled Myers indignantly.

"Come on, Sammy! You must let him off this time, Dick. His brother's ill, and Sammy's to go and see him," said Frank.

Dicky snorted.

"He knows his brother's ill, but he doesn't want to go and see him!" he exclaimed. "I told him an hour ago that Billy was laid up."

"I—I—I—I do want to see him!" said Sammy, catching at a straw, as it were. "I—I feel very anxious about Billy—I do really, you know!"

"Rats!"

"Bosh!"

"Look here, I'm going to see Billy——"

"Come on!" exclaimed Frank Nugent, catching the fat Second-Former by the arm and hurrying him out of the room.

The fags made a motion to follow him. But Dicky Nugent restrained them.

"Plenty of time," he remarked significantly.

Which remark was not grateful or comforting to Sammy Bunter as he rolled away with Nugent major. He was evidently glad, however, to escape from the dangerous precincts of the Form-room. It was a respite, at least.

"Where's Billy?" he asked as Nugent led him to the staircase.

"In his study."

Bunter minor looked at the stairs.

"I don't know that it's worth going upstairs," he said. "It's a beastly fag climbing up a blessed staircase. Tell him I hope he's better."

Nugent looked at the fat fag.

"Don't you want to see him?" he asked.

"Well, I don't see that it will do him any good to see me, will it?" said Sammy Bunter argumentatively.

Nugent gave a contemptuous sniff.

"I don't see how it could do anybody good to see you," he replied. "But you're coming to see your major, in case he should want to see you. There's no accounting for tastes, and he might."

"Look here, Nugent major——"

"This way!"

Bunter minor stood squarely on his fat little legs, and looked at Nugent. He was so evidently turning over in his mind the chances of a successful bolt that Frank drew a step nearer to him, ready to grab him.

"Look here, Nugent major," repeated Sammy. "You lend me a shilling, and I'll come up and see Billy."



"Don't you know this chap?" asked Harry Wharton. Bunter blinked at Sammy and shook his head. "No, I don't know him," he said.
(*See Chapter* 9.)

"I'll lend you a thick ear if you don't come, you toad!"

"I'm short of tin. Billy owes me a lot of money," said Sammy, in an injured tone. "You lend me sixpence——"

Frank grasped the fat fag by the shoulder.

"This way, you fat worm!"

"Look here, it's all spoof, you know!" exclaimed Bunter minor, wriggling as the Removite grasped him. "Billy's only spoofing you! You know Billy! I don't want to give him away, as he's my major; but, as a matter of fact, he's simply pulling your leg. He's no more ill than I am, and he's no more lost his memory than you have."

"He is really ill——"

"Stuff!"

"And he's really lost his memory ——"

"Rats!"

Nugent changed his grip from Sammy's shoulder to Sammy's ear, and the fat fag gave an agonised squeal.

"Ow!"

"I'm not accustomed to having my remarks called stuff by fags," said Nugent wrathfully. "Now, you'd better come——"

"Yow-w-w-w! Leggo!"

"Are you coming?"

"Groo! Leggo! Oh!"

"Well, your ear's coming," said Nugent indifferently. "You can please yourself about coming along with it."

And he went upstairs, dragging Bunter minor by the

ear. There was no doubt that Sammy's ear was bound to go with Nugent, and after one tug Sammy decided to go with his ear. He went.

THE NINTH CHAPTER
Very Brotherly!

"I say, you fellows——"

The juniors in the study all turned towards Billy Bunter instantly. Billy Bunter was an invalid now, and the centre of all attention. The Removites did not seem to be able to make enough of him.

"Yes, Bunter?" said Wharton.

"What is it, old fellow?" asked Bob Cherry.

Bunter grunted.

"What's that row in the passage? Somebody's being hurt."

It was another surprise for the juniors. Certainly there was a sound of scuffling feet in the passage, and an occasional squeal, and an ejaculation once or twice of "Leggo my ear!"

But Billy Bunter was not wont to be affected by trouble befalling anybody but himself.

"I—I think it's Nugent bringing your minor," said Harry, a little awkwardly.

He opened the door of the study.

Nugent marched Bunter minor in, with a grip on his ear. The fat fag was looking very savage and sulky.

"Here he is!" said Frank cheerfully.

"Here's your minor, Billy!" said Wharton.

Billy Bunter blinked at his minor. His minor blinked back at him, with very little of brotherly love in his looks.

"Oh, I hear you're ill, Billy!" said Sammy ungraciously.

Bunter major blinked at him.

"Of course, I know it's all spoof," said Sammy.

"Eh?"

"Getting deaf in your old age?" asked Sammy pleasantly. "Don't play the goat. I suppose you're not going to try and take me in!"

Bunter looked bewildered.

"Who are you?" he asked.

Sammy stared at him.

"Oh, come, that's too rich!" he exclaimed. "You're not going to pretend that you don't know me, I suppose."

"Who is it?"

"It's your minor, Billy!"

"My m-m-minor!"

"Yes. Don't you know him?"

"Yes, your m-m-minor!" mimicked Sammy Bunter. "Your m-m-minor! What on earth are you playing this dodge for, Billy? Are you getting a feed out of it?"

"I don't understand you."

"What's the little game?"

"Game?"

"Yes. What axe have you got to grind?"

"Axe?"

"Blessed if he isn't taking to repeating things like a parrot, like that chap Todd!" exclaimed Sammy Bunter, in disgust. "Look here, Billy, it's no good trying to pull my leg. You can take these chaps in, but you can't expect to take me in, when I was brought up with you."

"A prophet is never without honour except in his own country," murmured Nugent.

Sammy stared round angrily at the juniors.

"Do you mean to say you take in this rotten spoof?" he exclaimed, with a scornful sniff. "Bah! He's only pulling your leg, I tell you!"

"Hold your tongue!" said Wharton.

"I tell you——"

"Shut up, unless you want a thick ear. Don't you know this chap, Billy?" asked Harry Wharton quietly and kindly, laying his hand upon Billy Bunter's shoulder.

Bunter blinked at Sammy, and shook his head.

"No, I don't know him," he said.

Sammy Bunter gave a long, low whistle.

"My only aunt!" he ejaculated.

Bunter continued to blink at him in a doubtful, puzzled sort of way. He was evidently trying to recollect something, but trying in vain.

But Sammy Bunter was far from believing that his major was doing anything but acting. As Bunter's minor, and his early companion at home, he knew even more of



"I wonder if Bunter would care for this beef tea?" asked Alonzo Todd. "Let's look at it." Alonzo held out a can containing a smoky-looking liquid. "I made it myself," he said. (*See Chapter* 20.)

the deceptiveness of Bunter's nature than the others did. And Sammy Bunter was armed strong in disbelief. He was not to be taken in. It was true this time, as it happened—but Bunter minor was not to be taken in, all the same. If Billy had perished, Sammy would probably have declined to believe that he was really dead. Upon one thing Sammy Bunter's mind was made up—whatever Billy did was a sham, and whatever he said was an untruth. His belief was founded upon long and intimate acquaintance with his major and his ways.

Sammy watched the varying expressions upon his major's face with a grin on his own.

"My aunt!" he exclaimed at last. "You do it well, Billy. I thought it was your usual swank when you said you could act. But you can act."

"Shut up!" said Bull.

John Bull had just come into the study with the things for tea. John Bull, who had heaps of money, had expended some of his funds very liberally in providing a dainty tea for Bunter.

He turned out the things on the table, and Sammy Bunter watched them with greedy eyes.

"I say, are you standing Billy a feed, you chaps?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, we are!"

"Because he's ill?"

"Yes."

"And because he's lost his memory?"

"Just so!"

"But it's all spoof!" said Sammy Bunter, in wonder.

"Oh, ring off that!"

Sammy looked at his major, and looked at the juniors. His eyes were wide open behind his round spectacles.

It seemed amazing to him, perfectly convinced as he was that his major was spoofing, that the other fellows could not see it.

"Do you mean to say seriously that you believe him?" he ejaculated at last.

"Yes, you young rotter."

"But he's pulling your leg."

"Oh, dry up!"

Sammy whistled.

"Look here, Billy, come off!" he exclaimed. "Why don't you own up? You know what an ass you are, and you'll give the show away soon—as you always do when you're spoofing. Why don't you own up?"

Bunter major blinked at him.

"I don't understand you," he said.

"Look here, you're telling these chaps you've lost your memory——"

Billy Bunter looked bewildered.

"Lost my memory?" he repeated.

"Yes. I know it's gammon!"

"I—I haven't said I've lost my memory," said Bunter, blinking in bewilderment. "Who—who said I said so? I——"

"It's all right, Billy! You'll be all right soon," said Wharton. "You've only had a shock. You'll be all right to-morrow."

"But I—I—I——"

"You get out, you hard-hearted young cad!" said John Bull, taking Bunter minor by the shoulder and jerking him to the door. "It won't do poor old Bunter any good to see you, anyway. Travel!"

Bunter minor rolled out under the grip of the sturdy junior. He blinked curiously at John Bull in the passage.

"You really believe that Billy has lost his memory?" he asked.

"Yes, of course."

"You don't think it's gammon?"

"No, you toad!"

"You're going to look after him?"

"Certainly we are!"

"And feed him?"

"Anything he likes to eat—certainly."

"My aunt!" said Sammy Bunter. "I wonder if they would do as much for me in the Second Form if I gammoned them?"

"You—you blessed Doubting Thomas!" exclaimed John Bull angrily. "Get out!"

He lifted his boot.

Sammy Bunter gave a yelp of alarm and started to run. John Bull's boot smote him behind and changed his run into a jump.

Bump!

"Yarooh!"

Sammy Bunter plunged wildly forward. He rolled on the linoleum, and then sat up and glared at John Bull.

"You beast!"

"Scat!"

"You rotter——"

John Bull made a rush at him. Plump as he was, Sammy Bunter was on his feet in a moment and bolting for the stairs. He scuttled down them at top speed, and at the bottom of the staircase paused, gasping for breath.

"Rotter!" he muttered.

John Bull was not pursuing him. Sammy panted and gasped, and gasped and panted. When he had fully recovered his breath he rolled away, with a peculiar gleam in his little piggy eyes. Some new idea was evidently working in the brain of Bunter minor.

THE TENTH CHAPTER
"How's Bunter?"

JOHN BULL re-entered Billy Bunter's study and closed the door. Nugent had spread a white tablecloth over the table, and the juniors were laying it for tea. Harry Wharton was poking the fire under the kettle. Bunter watched the preparations for tea with the same odd, absent expression upon his face.

"I say, you fellows, let me help!" he exclaimed.

"It's all right, old chap! There's no cooking to do!"

"I can help you lay the cloth."

"My hat!"

Bunter rose from the armchair.

They allowed him to help—they were too astonished to do anything else.

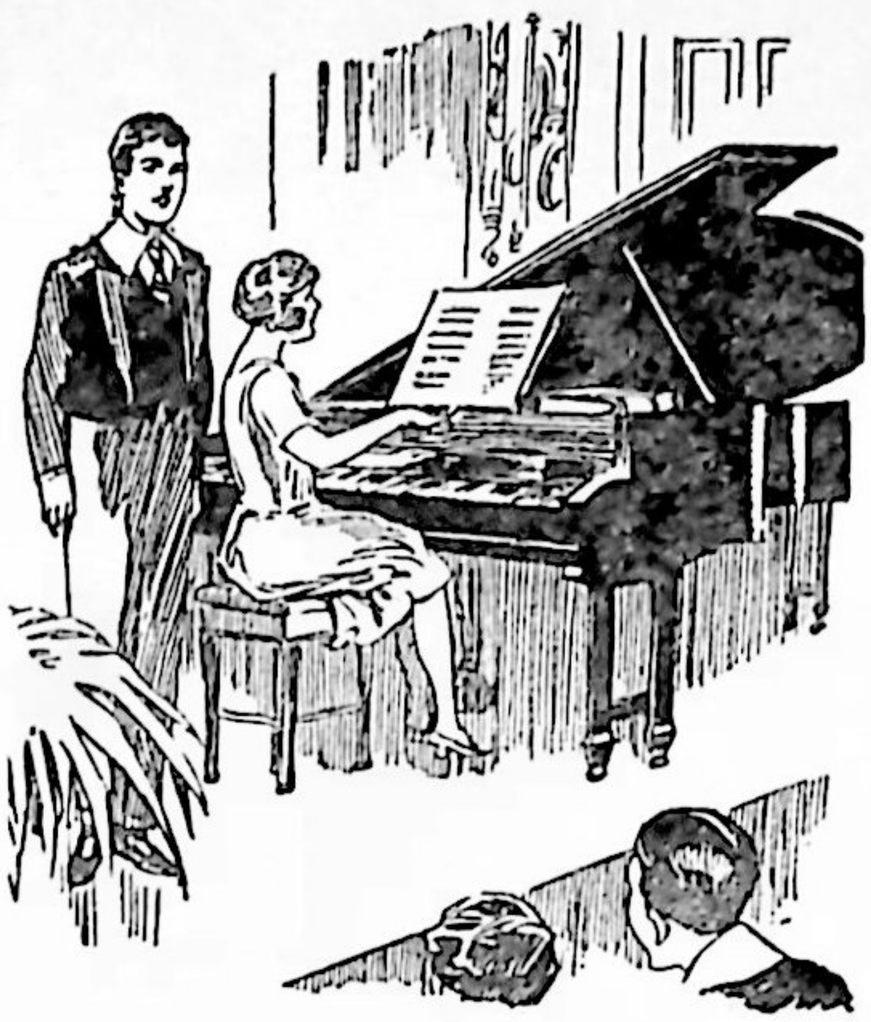
In a study feed Bunter had always been willing to lend a hand with the cooking. Bunter was a great cook, and fond of cooking—and in the process of cooking he would help himself to continual little snacks. But he had never been known to offer to do anything else.

It was clear that there was a great change in Bunter.

Wharton made the tea, and brought the teapot up to the table. Nugent had boiled the eggs, and a cheerful table it was, with fragrant tea and fresh eggs, and ham and crisp, fresh bread-and-butter, and cakes and tarts were piled on the table to finish with.

There was a knuckly rap on the door, and the head of Fisher T. Fish was projected into the study. The American boy grinned round genially.

Greyfriars Frivolities



THE SCHOOL CONCERT!

THE Concert Hall is fairly packed
With masters and with fellows;
And Horace Coker's voice so cracked,
And Bull's deep-throated bellows
Thunder upon reluctant ears,
And make us groan in chorus;
But soon the hall resounds with cheers,
When Nugent stands before us.

For Franky has a splendid voice,
Both mellow and melodious;
It makes his listeners rejoice—
Comparisons are odious!
To hear him warble, "Drake Goes West,"
And likewise "Annie Laurie,"
Is to be favourably impressed:
And when he stops, we're sorry!

Then Billy Bunter stands and sings
In a most squeaky treble,
A song about the pies and things
Prepared by Mrs. Kebble.
But, ere he reaches the refrain,
The missiles fly incessantly;
And Bunter bolts, with yelps of pain—
"Yarooo! I'll come back presently!"

And so the happy hours speed by
With many jests and jollities;
Even the masters are not shy
To join our gay frivolities.
And when to bed we yawn our way
(Though very loth to do so)
Bunter is proudly heard to say
That he's a new Caruso!

"Bunter better?" he asked.

"Just the same."

"I guess I'm feeling sympathetic some," said Fish. "I s'pose it will be all O.K. if I come in and keep him company a bit?"

"Certainly!"

"Yep? Right you are!"

"Had your tea?" asked Harry, with a smile.

"Nope."

"Will you have tea with us?"

"Yep."

"There's a chair."

Fisher T. Fish sat down.

A minute later the door opened, and Bulstrode looked in. He also had a very genial expression upon his face.

"Bunter better?" he asked.

"Just the same."

"I'm awfully sorry for Bunter," said Bulstrode, coming gently into the study. "How do you feel, Bunter, old man?"

"Eh?"

"Feeling better?"

"Who are you?"

"Eh? Oh, I'm Bulstrode—your old friend, you know!"

"Oh!"

"My hat, what a feed you've got there!" exclaimed Bulstrode, glancing at the table. "Ham and eggs and cold chicken and ham patties and cake and—— My word, who's going to eat that blessed mountain of grub?"

"It's a feed for Bunter."

"Hungry, Bunter?"

"Not very," said the fat junior, blinking.

"My hat! First time I've heard him say that. I thought I'd look in and keep Bunter company for a bit," said Bulstrode blandly. "No objection, I suppose?"

"Oh, no!"

"I'll bring in a chair for myself."

Bulstrode brought in a chair for himself. He made room at the table by shoving Fisher T. Fish a little aside.

"Had your tea?" asked Nugent.

"Not yet."

"Pile in!"

"Thanks awfully!"

The door opened again just as Bulstrode started. Ogilvy of the Remove looked in.

He seemed surprised at seeing so many fellows in the study; but he grinned genially and nodded to all of them together.

"Bunter better?" he asked.

"My hat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

He had been surprised at so much concern for Bunter. All the fellows were naturally sorry, but it was curious that they should call in and inquire after the Owl of the Remove in this way. But Wharton had "tumbled" now. The anxious inquirers after Billy Bunter's health had seen John Bull shopping in Mrs. Mimble's establishment, or else had spotted him bringing in the food.

The juniors were less concerned about Bunter's state of health than about the feed that was going on in the study.

"We're all rather anxious about Bunter," Ogilvy remarked. "I hope he's better now."

"Same as ever."

"You chums mind if I kept him company for a bit?"

The juniors burst into a laugh.

"Oh, come in and have tea!" exclaimed John Bull.

Ogilvy grinned.

"Well, since you're so pressing, I will!" he exclaimed.

And he did. There was no chair in the study, and no room at the table for it if there had been one. But the junior did not mind a little thing like that. He took a plate on his knees and sat on the coal-box.

"Well, I must say this is ripping ham!" he exclaimed. "I'm sorry Bunter is seedy. These eggs are done to a turn! It's rough on Bunter—but really this is splendid!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Brown looked in at the door. Hazeldene was with him. They looked in in rather an uncertain way at the grinning faces in the room.

"Bunter better?" asked Brown.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How's old Bunter?" asked Hazeldene.

The two juniors coloured and came in. Fisher T. Fish looked round with a grin.

(*Continued on page* 81.)

Doctor Snow Meets His Double!

A DARING JEST AT GREYFRIARS SCHOOL

THE year 1666 is memorable for the Great Fire of London—and the Great Jape of Greyfriars! At Greyfriars itself the Great Jape takes priority over the Great Fire! It was truly a merry jest, and this was the manner of it. On a drear December day, when the snow lay deep in the ancient Close, a number of Lower School juniors conceived the brilliant but daring notion of designing a snowman, in faithful imitation of Dr. Snow, the headmaster of that period.

Now, Dr. Snow was a stout, scholarly gentleman, whose favourite hobby was birching boys black and blue. He ruled Greyfriars with a rod of iron—or, rather, with a rod of birch-twigs—and he was severely "down on" japes of any description. Glancing one morning from his study window, he was startled by the apparition of himself, which stood glaring at him from the Close. Hurrying out to investigate, Dr. Snow found himself face to face with his "double"—a life-size model of himself, perfectly fashioned by the skilful hands of the juniors.

There was really no need for those young rascals to have affixed a placard to the snowman, bearing the Head's name; it was only too obvious whom the statue was supposed to represent. The stern and far from beautiful features; the large spectacles and quaint hat; the prominent bulge in the vicinity of the waistcoat; and the protruding birch-rod—all proclaimed Dr. Snow!

In a state bordering upon apoplexy he stood and surveyed his "double," while the perpetrators of the jape discreetly took to their heels. Finally, the infuriated Head committed assault and battery upon the snowman, pounding it with his fists till it was utterly demolished. He would have liked to commit assault and battery upon the merry japers also, but, fortunately for them, their identities were never discovered!

A Daring Jest at Greyfriars!



To face page 80.

Drawn by E. E. Briscoe.

Dr. Snow Meets His Double!

(*Continued from page* 80.)

"I guess you heard about the feed," he remarked.

"Ahem——"

"It's all O.K., sonny! That's what I came to inquire—for Bunter, I guess," said the American junior placidly. "And there's plenty of grub going, I guess."

"Sit down," said John Bull. "I can't offer you anything better than the floor to sit on, but there's plenty of grub."

"Surely!"

"Oh, all right!" exclaimed Tom Brown, laughing. "Since you're so pressing——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Brown and Hazeldene joined the feed. The study was now crammed. When the door opened again it knocked against Tom Brown's arm, and jerked his tea-cup, and he spilt half his tea on the carpet.

"Here, look out!" he shouted.

"Eh?" said Micky Desmond, looking in round the door. "Faith, and it's anxious for poor old Bunter I am intoirely. Is he any betther?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter, darling, is it feeling betther ye are?" asked Micky sympathetically. "Sure, and I'm anxious about ye."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Faith, ye gossoons, and what are ye cackling about entoirely?" demanded Micky.

"Squeeze in," said John Bull. "The ham and eggs are gone; but here's some cold chicken."

"Faith, but I came here to——"

"To inquire after Bunter, I know. So here's the cold chicken."

"You'll have to stand," said Harry Wharton, handing Micky a plate. "Stand close to the door, and keep the next bounder out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Faith, and I——"

"There's somebody already!" yelled Bob Cherry, as the door opened about three inches and then met Micky's foot.

A still small voice came in at the aperture:

"My dear fellows, how is Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"



"Don't you know Marjorie, Bunter?" asked Harry. Bunter, blinking hard at the fair face of the girl, shook his head. (*See Chapter* 14.)

"Is Bunter better?" repeated Alonzo Todd, rather puzzled by the laughter in the study. "I trust this unexpected and apparently unseemly merriment may be taken as an indication that Bunter's progress upon the whole affords satisfaction?"

"Bunter's all right!" roared John Bull. "The feed's growing the worse for wear, but you can come in if you can find room."

"My dear Bull, I was not thinking of the feed——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"As a matter of fact, I have brought Bunter some beef-tea, so I should be obliged if you would admit me to the study," said Alonzo. "My Uncle Benjamin always recommended beef-tea in case of illness. I have made some."

"Bring him in, Micky."

Micky moved aside, and Alonzo squeezed in. He looked round the study in surprise.

"Dear me! You are quite crowded!"

"Yes; all these chaps came to inquire for Bunter."

"How exceedingly gratifying to know that so many of poor dear Bunter's Form-fellows are so anxious about him," said Alonzo, with a beaming smile. "I see that Bunter has somewhat recovered his appetite. I wonder if he would care for the beef-tea?"

"Let's look at it."

Alonzo held out a can containing a smoky-looking liquid.

"I made it myself," he said. "The can has been used to keep sardines in, but the sardines were getting very high, so I threw them away. I fear that a slight flavour was left in the can, but I do not think that that will affect the nutritiousness of the beef-tea. I obtained a large piece of beef, and I have boiled it over the fire in the can. Jones minor mischievously poured in a little ink, but not sufficient, I think, to exercise any deleterious influence over the beef-tea. I am sure that it will do Bunter a great deal of good. Would you like to taste it, Bunter?"

"Ugh!"

"My dear Bunter——"

"Buzz off, Todd, old son! Take the beef-tea away and bury it, and put something heavy on the grave so that it can't get out!"

"My dear Cherry——"

"I guess it niffs," remarked Fisher T. Fish.

"The slight smell is merely due to the remnant of sardines——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Nugent led the Duffer of Greyfriars to the door and let him out. Then he closed the door. As he did so Russell and Morgan, of the Remove, came racing up the passage.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Russell breathlessly, as Nugent was shutting the door. "How's Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How's Bunter? Look out!" panted Morgan.

Nugent locked the door. The two juniors outside tried the handle, and then kicked. Then Russell bawled through the keyhole.

"I say! How's Bunter?"

"Oh, Bunter's getting on all right!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"The getting onfulness is terrific, my esteemed chum!"

"We'd like to sit with him a bit——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No room—you're too late," said Nugent through the keyhole. "Full—standing room only! Money returned at the box-office."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Russell and Morgan kicked at the door, and retired baffled. And during the next half-hour a dozen or more fellows came along the Remove passage and tried the door, and found it locked, and inquired anxiously after Bunter's health through the keyhole, and kindly offered to sit with him. The kind offers being declined with thanks, the anxious inquirers kicked at the door—very inconsiderately, considering how anxious they were for Bunter's health—and retired growling.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER
Sammy Bunter Loses His Memory!

SAMMY BUNTER paused in the passage with a gleam in his little round eyes. The idea that had flashed into his brain was working there. Sammy Bunter was very like his brother, but he was sharper in many things. His wits were keener, and moved more quickly. Sammy was far from believing in the reality of Billy Bunter's attack. He regarded the fat junior as having made things very easy and comfortable for himself by the simple process of "gammoning" the Remove.

Sammy would never have expected such a dodge to succeed. But it had succeeded with the Remove, who were keener fellows upon the whole than the fags in the Second. And fellows who disliked Bunter, fellows who

hadn't been able to tolerate him well, had rallied round Bunter ill, and were looking after him, and giving him a really royal time. The dodge that had worked with the Remove—why shouldn't it work with the Second?

That was Sammy Bunter's idea.

Sammy had not lived long enough yet to learn by experience that the truth, however strange it may seem, gets itself believed somehow, while a lie, though never so plausible, imposes upon nobody for long.

It seemed to Sammy Bunter a first-class wheeze, and if Billy had worked it, why shouldn't he? Sammy considered himself as being very much smarter than Billy. Indeed, he thought he had seen flaws in Bunter's action, though it had imposed upon the Remove. He felt that he could have kept up the "gammon" much better.

True, it seemed unlikely that the Second-Formers would be sympathetic towards him, even if he were ill. But it had seemed quite as unlikely that the Removites would prove sympathetic towards Billy, yet they had so proved.

Undoubtedly it was a good dodge, and if Billy made a success of it, why not Sammy? That was how Sammy looked at it.

"It's a jolly good wheeze!" Sammy murmured to himself. "The only thing is, how am I to get a shock to the system to destroy my memory without hurting myself?"

That was an important point.

No propect of feeding would have induced Sammy Bunter to fling himself head-first into a swimming-bath, as his major had done.

He could walk into a door or a wall and bump his head, but it would have to be a severe bump to make the fags believe in its terrible effects.

Sammy was turning the matter over in his mind when Loder, the prefect, came along the passage. Loder scowled at him.

Sammy had not offended Loder in any way. Loder scowled for a reason totally unconnected with Sammy. Blue Smoke, the favourite for the Great Swindell Handicap, had come in ninth or tenth instead of first, and Loder owed Mr. Cobb, of the Cross Keys, about five pounds in consequence. Betting on races was one of Loder's amusements, indulged in secret, and he found it, like most fellows, a very expensive one, though he was always just going to set matters right by bringing off a coup on a "dead cert."

It was really not Sammy Bunter's fault that Blue Smoke had come in tenth. Sammy Bunter had never even heard of Blue Smoke, or even of the Great Swindell Handicap. But he was handy to cuff, so Loder cuffed him.

Sammy set up a roar.

"Yow!"

"You fat young cub!" growled Loder. "Don't hang about the passages. Do you hear? Go and get some exercise."

And he cuffed Sammy Bunter a second time, harder than the first.

Sammy Bunter gave a wild, ringing shriek and dropped to the floor.

Loder stared at him angrily.

"Get up, you young fool!" he shouted.

Sammy Bunter lay quite still. He had caught sight of Dicky Nugent and Gatty, of the Second Form, coming down the passage. It was Sammy's chance, and he made the most of it. Loder, of the Sixth, had solved the difficulty for him.

"Get up, you fat rotter! Don't lie there malingering."

Sammy Bunter did not move or speak.

Loder stirred him with his foot. He did not know Sammy Bunter's "wheeze," but he knew that he was pretending to be injured.

"Get up, you cub!"

No reply.

"Hang it all, let him alone, you bully!" exclaimed Dicky Nugent, running forward.

Dicky Nugent was only a fag in the Second, but he had nerve enough to cheek a whole army of prefects.

Loder glared at him.

"He's shamming!" he exclaimed.

Sammy Bunter groaned.

"You've hurt him!" exclaimed Nugent minor.

"Rot! I just flicked him."

"It's only young Bunter," remarked Gatty.



Marjorie's sweet voice swelled softly through the study. Billy gave a great start as he listened. (*See Chapter* 14.)

"Well, he's not going to be kicked when he's down, even Fatty Bunter," said Dick Nugent. "Let him alone, Loder, or I'll yell out to Wingate."

Loder gritted his teeth. Wingate, the captain of the school, was in his study, and he was not on the best of terms with the prefect. There was no telling whether he might not take the fag's side in the dispute.

"You'd better get that fat humbug away from here," exclaimed Loder. "He's only pretending to be hurt."

And he strode into his study and slammed the door.

Dick and Gatty raised up Bunter minor. It was not an easy task, for the fat fag was very heavy, and he did not give them the slightest assistance. He threw his whole weight upon them as they raised him, and they fairly staggered under it.

"My word!" said Gatty. "He must be hurt, after all!"

"Looks like it."

"Loder's a beast!"

"Bunter! Sammy!"

Sammy Bunter did not speak. His eyes were tightly closed. Only a faint moan escaped from his lips.

Dick Nugent looked anxious.

"He may be badly hurt," he said. "You know what's happened to his major through getting a rap on the head. I dare say they have weak heads in the Bunter family."

"Shouldn't wonder. What are you going to do with him?"

"Get him to the Form-room."

And Nugent and Gatty half led and half carried Sammy Bunter to the Form-room. There was a yell from the Form fags as they brought him in.

"Here he is!"

"Here's the fat bounder!"

"Nugent minor's got him!"

And the fags crowded round for vengeance. Dicky Nugent waved them back.

There was a shout at once.

"Collar him!"

"Hold on, I say!" exclaimed Dicky Nugent, pushing back the excited fags. "There's something the matter with him. Loder has been going for him, and Bunter minor fainted or something."

"Phew!"

"What's the matter?"

"I don't know. Only his major has been ill through getting a bump on the napper, and has gone off his rocker. Perhaps——"

"He's coming to!" exclaimed Gatty.

Sammy Bunter's eyes opened.

The fags, hushed with alarm and surprise, gathered round almost in silence. They gazed in wonder and interest at Sammy Bunter.

The fat fag blinked through his spectacles with an unseeing gaze.

"Where am I?" he moaned.

"You're here." said Gatty.

This was pretty evident, without Gatty saying so. Dicky Nugent frowned him down, and replied:

"In the Second Form-room, Sammy."

"Eh?"

"You're in the Form-room?"

"What Form-room?"

"Eh? The Second Form—your own Form."

"My Form? I haven't any Form."

"What?"

Sheer amazement held Dicky Nugent silent. Sammy Bunter rolled his little round eyes behind his spectacles.

"Where am I?" he gasped. "What's this place?"

"Greyfriars."

"Greyfriars! I've never heard of it."

The juniors could only stare. The truth burst upon them all at once. Sammy Bunter, like his major, had lost his memory.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER
And Recovers It!

DICKY NUGENT gave a long, low whistle. Gatty ejaculated "My hat!" Myers gasped. The rest of the Second Form fellows stared blankly. It was amazing. Sammy Bunter had lost his memory, just like his major. Loss of memory appeared to run in the Bunter family.

"Well, my word!" said Nugent minor at last. "If this doesn't take the cake! All through that beast Loder giving him a cuff."

"It wasn't a very hard one, either," said Gatty.

"No. He may have bumped his head on the floor in falling, though."

Myers ran his fingers over Bunter minor's head.

"There isn't any bump here," he remarked.

"No bump?"

"Nothing at all."

"Bump might be inside," suggested Myers sagely. "I've heard about concussion producing internal injuries, you know. I suppose that means a bump inside."

"Ass!"

"Look here, young Nugent——"

"Let me lookee!"

It was the soft voice of Hop Hi, the younger brother of Wun Lung, of the Remove. Little Hop Hi pushed his way through the fags, his almond eyes blinking curiously. Chinaman as he was, Hop Hi was very popular in the Second Form. His unlimited pocket-money may have had something to do with it.

"You can look at him if you like," said Dicky Nugent. "He seems to be quite off his rocker, like Billy."

Sammy blinked at them.

"What's this place?" he repeated, just as if he had not asked the question before.

"Greyfriars," said Gatty.

"Is it a school?"

"My hat! Yes."

"You fellows belong to it?"

"Of course!"

"How did I come here?"

"My word! You've been here a long time."

"I—I feel a pain in my head," said Sammy Bunter, passing his fat hand over his brow. "Has—has anything happened to me?"

"You've had a cuff."

"Oh! I—I—I suffer very much."

"Velly stlange," murmured Hop Hi, "Buntee minee losee memolee, likee Buntee majee."

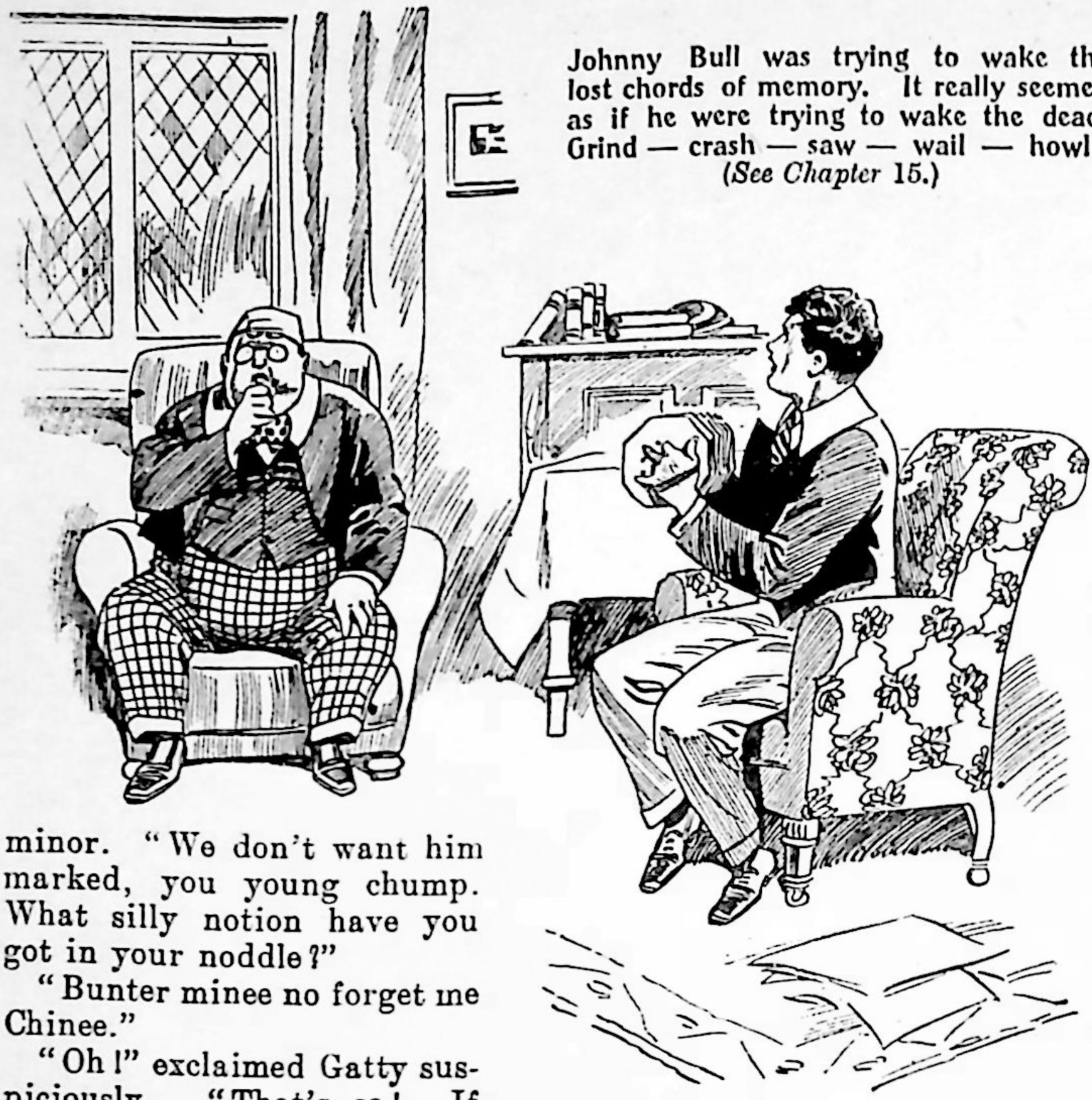
"Yes," said Dicky Nugent. "I suppose they're a weak-headed family. Only Bunter major had a fearful bump on his napper, and Sammy doesn't seem to have a mark at all."

"Soonee makee mark," said Hop Hi. "Me whackee with clicket stumpee."

"Keep that maniac off!" yelled Sammy Bunter. "You Chinese ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hold on, Hop Hi!" exclaimed Nugent



Johnny Bull was trying to wake the lost chords of memory. It really seemed as if he were trying to wake the dead. Grind — crash — saw — wail — howl!
(See Chapter 15.)

minor. "We don't want him marked, you young chump. What silly notion have you got in your noddle?"

"Bunter minee no forget me Chinee."

"Oh!" exclaimed Gatty suspiciously. "That's so! If he's lost his memory, how does he know a Chinee from anybody else?"

"Buntee minee explainee."

"I—I don't know him," stammered Sammy. "I've never seen him before. Oh, my head! The awful pain!"

And Sammy pressed a fat hand to his forehead.

The fags looked at Bunter minor very suspiciously now. They could see that the cunning little Chinee did not believe in the genuineness of his attack, and Hop Hi's doubt was spreading to themselves.

After all, it was very curious that Sammy Bunter should lose his memory on the very same day that Billy had lost his, and from so trifling a cause.

And the fags remembered what a determined and unrepentant spoofer Sammy Bunter was, quite equalling his elder brother in that line.

Sammy quailed a little.

Billy's "gammon," as he considered it, had gone down without raising a doubt. He was much cleverer than Billy, and the Second Form were certainly not any more brainy than the Remove. Surely he ought to have succeeded quite easily!

But he saw that there were breakers ahead now. The looks the fags cast upon him were suspicious and unsympathetic.

"Oh!" groaned Sammy. "The fearful pain! Oh! And I'm so hungry!"

"Hungry, are you?" said Gatty.

"Yes, fearfully. Oh, I think perhaps I might recover my memory if I had a really good blow-out!" groaned Sammy.

"Oh!" said Nugent minor.

"Velly luff on Buntee minee," said Hop Hi.

"H'm!"

"Buntee minee no lemembel himself or him name," said Hop Hi. "He not able to take legisteled lettel."

"A registered letter for Bunter minor?"

"He no able signee namee now."

Sammy Bunter started. He looked into the solemn, serious face of the little Chinee, which was full of sympathetic concern.

A registered letter for him—a remittance from home, of course. He had been expecting, or, at least, hoping for one for a long time. And it had come now, just when he had lost his memory, and could not, of course, recover it all of a sudden for the sake of getting hold of his remittance.

It was too provoking.

"I suppose it will have to be given back to the postman," remarked Myers.

"I suppose so."

"Oh!" groaned Bunter minor. "Oh, the awful pain! I—I—I feel as if I can remember something now. I—I—— Who am I?"

"You're Bunter minor," said Dick Nugent suspiciously.

"Oh, yes, of course! I—I—I'm Sammy Bunter!" exclaimed Sammy, blinking at the juniors. "I—I've had a fearful shock. I—I forgot everything. But—but it's all coming back now. The—the pain is going."

"Is it?"

"Yes. Oh, dear, I've had a fearful time!" groaned Sammy. "I—I forgot everything from the moment Loder knocked me down."

"How do you know it was Loder if you forgot?" asked Gatty.

"I—I—I've just remembered it."

"Blessed if I don't believe he was spoofing all along!" exclaimed Gatty. "It's just one of his rotten tricks."

"Look here, Gatty——"

"The fat fraud!"

"Isn't he just like his major, the bounder?"

"I—I think I'd better go and get that registered letter," mumbled Sammy. "I don't want it to be given back to the postman."

"Allee lightee," murmured Hop Hi. "No lettee."

"What?"

"No legisteled lettee."

Sammy Bunter glared at him through his spectacles with the glare of a basilisk. The cunning of the little Celestial dawned upon him, and it enraged him so much that he could hardly keep from springing at the grinning Hop Hi.

"You—you heathen rotter!" he yelled. "You've been lying!"

"Me no lie!" said Hop Hi warmly. "Me say if Buntee minee losee memoly, Buntee minee no able signee for legistled lettee. No say legisteled lettee comee."

The fags burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fairly caught!" yelled Dicky Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You heathen rotter!"

"Buntee minee lecover memoly," said Hop Hi maliciously. "Me so glad."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter minor groaned, as if the terrible pain in his head had returned. He pressed his fat fingers to his forehead.

"Ow! The pain! Oh!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Dicky Nugent. "It's come back, has it?"

"Yes. Ow! I—I feel very strange. Who—who are you?" mumbled Bunter minor.

"What?"

"What is this place?"

"This place!" murmured Dicky, dazed by the impudence of the fat fag. "My only summer bonnet! You're not trying to spoof us over again, are you?"

"I—I don't seem to remember——"

"I'll make you seem to remember, then," roared Dicky. "Bump him! We'll see if we can bump his memory back."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Yow! It's all right; I remember now!"

"Bump him!"

"I—I remember!"

"You remember a little too late," grinned Dicky Nugent. "We'll give you the bumping all the same. It may save you from losing your memory again."

Bump!

"Yow!"

Bump!

"Yarooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Sammy Bunter had the bumping.

Apparently it had the effect predicted by Nugent minor, for after that bumping in the Form-room Sammy Bunter showed no signs whatever of losing his memory.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER
Visitors from Cliff House.

HARRY WHARTON looked in at Billy Bunter's study a little later. The fat junior was staring vacantly out of the window.

He turned round, and blinked at Wharton as the latter came in. His brows were

puckered up in a puzzled, perplexed expression.

"Feel better, Bunter?" asked Harry.

"I'm all right."

"Hungry?"

Bunter blinked at him.

"How can I be hungry when we've only lately had tea?" he said. "I can't keep on eating all the time, can I?"

Harry Wharton smiled. It was clear that Billy Bunter's memory had not returned yet.

"I—I say, this place seems familiar, somehow," said Bunter, looking round with a bewildered expression.

"It's your study, Billy."

Bunter passed his hand over his head. He winced as his fat fingers came into contact with the bump there.

"Oh, you say I belong to this school?"

"Yes, rather."

"And I've been here a long time?"

"You were here before I came."

"I can't understand it."

"You must be stony, Billy. Shall I lend you something?"

"Money, do you mean?"

"Yes; a few bob!"

The Owl of the Remove shook his head. Accustomed as he was by this time to the vagaries of the new Bunter, Wharton was staggered.

"No, thanks!" said Bunter. "You see, I don't know when I should be able to repay it. I don't expect to get any tin?"

"You might get a postal-order?" suggested Harry.

"I'm not expecting one."

"Oh!"

"So I won't take a loan, thanks! Hallo, who's that?"

Hazeldene, of the Remove, looked in at the door. He watched Billy Bunter curiously, and the fat junior blinked at him with equal curiosity.

"Who's that?" he asked.

"That's Hazeldene."

"Oh, is it? I don't know him."

"Well, I'm Hazel," said Hazeldene, with a laugh. "You know me now. Isn't he any better, Wharton? Doesn't he remember anything yet."

Wharton shook his head.

"Sammy's been playing the same dodge in the Second Form," said Hazeldene, with a grin. "He's pretending to have lost *his* memory."

"Billy's not pretending."

"No, but Sammy was. I suppose he thought he would make a good thing out of it. The Second have been bumping him, and his memory's come back."

Wharton laughed.

"Serve him right!"

"But that isn't what I came to tell you," said Hazeldene. "My sister's come over to see me with Clara. Look here, Bunter knows her. He's a rotten little cad, and I never liked him speaking to Marjorie, but under the circumstances I think perhaps she may help to recall his silly memory."

"Good!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

Billy Bunter started a little. The name of Marjorie seemed to recall something to his mind. Wharton was watching him.

"You know Marjorie, Billy?" he said.

Bunter looked strangely perplexed.

"Marjorie!" he repeated.

"Yes; Hazeldene's sister—of Cliff House, you know."

"N-n-o."

"You don't remember?"

"I seem to know the name," said Bunter, with evident distress. "But—but——"

"Let him see her," said Hazeldene.

"Good! Where are they now?"

"In my study."

"Come on, Billy!"

Wharton linked his arm through Bunter's, and led him down the Remove passage. Marjorie Hazeldene and Clara were in Hazel's study. Bulstrode and Tom Brown, who also shared that room, had left it to Hazeldene for the occasion, as was the general etiquette among the Greyfriars fellows when a fellow had lady visitors.

The two girls looked very fresh and rosy after their walk in the cold wind from Cliff House. There was a kettle singing on the fire, and a cloth on the table. Hazeldene was making some preparations for tea; but,

DRAWN BY THE "MAGNET!"



IT DOES SEEM STRANGE —



— THAT —



A FEW QUIET LITTLE CHUCKLES



— SHOULD GRADUALLY —



— DEVELOP —



INTO SUCH



— A SURPRISING OUTBURST!!

C. H. CHAPMAN

as Hazeldene was in a perpetual state of "hard-up," his preparations were not very extensive. But he was doing his best. Except when he was on good terms with Vernon Smith—the Bounder of Greyfriars—Hazeldene was never flush of money. He had an allowance as large as most of the juniors, but he was always in debt.

Nugent was in the study, too, talking to the girls. Wharton dropped a whisper to him as he entered, and Nugent nodded and quietly departed.

Marjorie and Clara had been told about Billy Bunter's misfortune. They looked curiously at the fat junior as Wharton brought him in. They knew the untruthfulness of the Owl of the Remove so well that, without being suspicious, they did not believe in his sincerity this time, unless it was made clear to them that it was genuine. Miss Clara, indeed, was smiling with open scepticism.

"So poor Bunter is ill?" she said.

"Yes," said Harry. "He dived into the swimming-bath, and bumped his head on the tiles. There wasn't any water in it, you know."

"Poor Bunter!" said Marjorie softly. "What a dreadful bruise!"

"The worst of it is that the shock had made him lose his memory," said Harry.

"Doesn't he remember anything?"

"Nothing."

"Poor Bunter!"

"I dare say it will come back," said Harry. "I hoped that seeing you would make a difference. Don't you know Marjorie, Bunter?"

Bunter was blinking hard at the fair face of the girl.

He shook his head.

"Is that—Marjorie?"

"Yes, I am Marjorie," said the girl with a sweet smile. "Don't you know me, Billy? You surely can remember me?"

Another shake of the head.

"And you don't remember me?" asked Miss Clara.

"No. I'm sincerely sorry."

Miss Clara's eyes danced.

"Don't you remember that I owe you five shillings?" she asked.

"Oh, Clara!"

But Bunter shook his head still.

"No," he said. "Do you? Did I lend you five shillings?"

Miss Clara was nonplussed, if not convinced. The old Bunter would have claimed those five shillings without scruple, whether they were due to him or not. It was quite clear that a great change had come over Bunter.

"It's genuine enough," said Hazeldene.

"It looks like it," admitted Miss Clara. "But Bunter was always such a—a—a——"

"Story-teller!" said Miss Clara.

"Liar!" said Hazeldene cheerfully.

"But you can see that he is ill now," said Marjorie gently. "I am very, very sorry, Bunter. I hope it will soon be all right."

"Thank you," said Bunter.

Frank Nugent came into the study. He had a little bundle under his arm, and Hazeldene grinned as he saw it.

"There are your things, Hazel," said Frank carelessly.

"Thanks. Tea will be ready in a minute. You fellows are staying?"

"Certainly."

And a very cheerful party sat down to tea in Hazeldene's study. Billy Bunter was looking very cheerful, quite as much so as the others. There was still a bewildered expression lingering in his eyes, but the pain was almost gone from his damaged head, and he was cheering up wonderfully.

Just as tea was commencing—the second tea that afternoon for Wharton and Nugent—Bob Cherry put his head in at the door

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER
Music Wanted!

"HALLO—hallo—hallo!"

Bob Cherry joined the tea-party in Hazeldene's study. He was not likely to remain long in ignorance of the fact that Marjorie was at Greyfriars.

With the addition of Bob Cherry's cheerful conversation, tea was a very merry meal. Billy Bunter seemed to enjoy himself as much as anybody. Frank Nugent, looking at him, lowered his voice.

"Look here, Harry—about Bunter. I've got an idea!"

Tea was finished, and Bunter was put into the armchair before the fire. He was very comfortable there, and he stretched out his fat leg over the fender, and blinked at the fire, quite in his old way.

"Well, Frank?" said Harry.

"You know they say that music has charms to soothe the savage breast?" said Nugent. "Well, suppose that music might have the effect of bringing Bunter's memory back? It's quite possible! Some song, you know, that he used to know awfully well might set the works going again, or whatever it is that's needed."

Wharton nodded thoughtfully. He fully believed that the only way to restore Bunter was to wake somehow old associations in his mind.

"Jolly good idea!" exclaimed a voice at the door.

John Bull came in with his hands in his pockets, as usual. He took them out, however, as he saw that there were girls present.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "Excuse my popping in, but I heard what you said as I passed. That idea of restoring Bunter by means of music is simply ripping!"

"Glad you think so!" said Frank, rather drily. He suspected what was coming.

"Yes," said Bull genially, "it's splendid! I shall be only too pleased to play the poor chap a few tunes on my concertina——"

"Rats!"

"A few carefully selected, stirring melodies," said Bull obstinately. "You don't know what effect they might have."

"Fatal, perhaps!" suggested Bob Cherry.

"Look here, Cherry——"

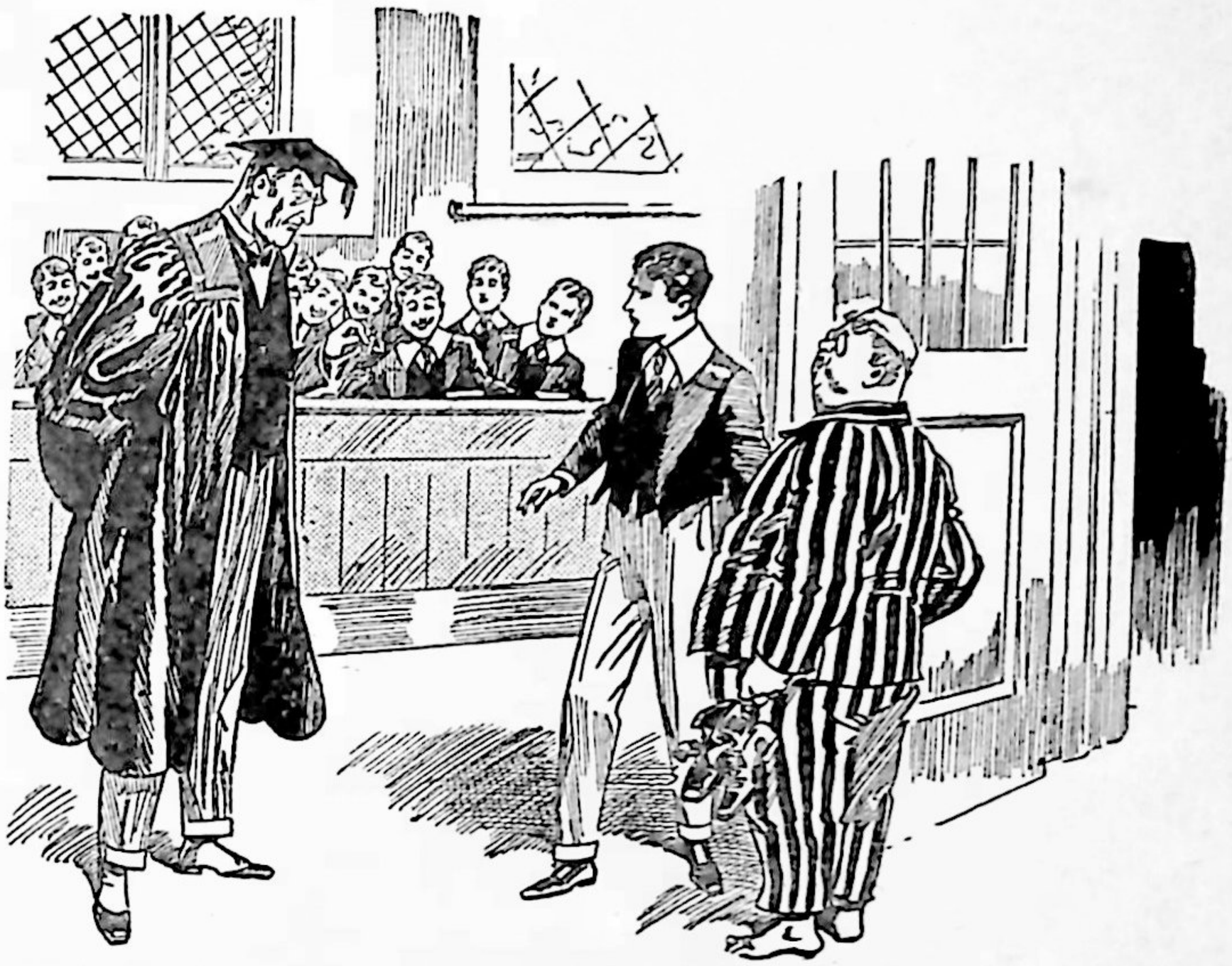
"It would be rotten to take such an advantage of Bunter in his present state!" said Nugent, with a shake of the head.

"Bunter, old man," said John Bull, after glaring at Nugent, "would you care to hear some music?"

"Certainly!" said Bunter.

"Shall I play my concertina to you?"

"Thank you very much."



Mr. Quelch stared in amazement at Bunter. Certainly it was an unusual sight in the Remove Form-room. A junior in his pyjamas has assuredly never been seen there before! (*See Chapter* 16.)

"My hat!" ejaculated Wharton. "He's jolly well lost his memory to the last atom! If he remembered Bull's concertina, he wouldn't ask him to play it!"

"Look here, Wharton——"

"I say, you fellows, I think it's a good idea to have some music," said Bunter. "Of course, I don't want it unless the other fellows do."

"H'm! We bar concertinas," said

Nugent. "My idea was for Wharton and Marjorie to sing their duet. Bunter's heard them sing it heaps of times, and he knows it by heart. It might work the oracle, you know."

"Better try the concertina."

"Oh, blow the concertina!"

"Look here, Nugent——"

"Good—the duet!" exclaimed Bob Cherry eagerly. "It will be a treat for all of us to hear Marjorie sing, whether it does Bunter any good or not."

Marjorie laughed. She had a fervent admirer of all her powers in Bob Cherry. If her singing had been very much worse than it was Bob would have considered it as leaving Tetrazzini's quite in the shade. But, as a matter of fact, Marjorie had a very clear and sweet voice, and sang very charmingly.

"Well, you'll want an accompaniment to sing to," said John Bull. "I can play concertina accompaniments first-rate."

"Oh, rats!"

"Look here, Hazeldene——"

"I'll accompany you on the comb and paper, if you like," said Bob Cherry.

"We can manage without that," said Harry, laughing. "It's all right, Bull, concertinas are barred. You can go and play to Dutton. He's the only chap who can stand it."

Dutton was the deaf fellow in the Remove. But it was on record that even Dutton had suffered pangs from Bull's concertina.

John Bull grunted.

"Well, I don't know that I want to play," he said. "I should like to educate you chaps in musical taste, that's all."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you sing, Marjorie?" asked Harry Wharton.

"If you all wish—certainly!"

"Hear, hear!"

Billy Bunter blinked at Marjorie as she stood up to sing the duet with Harry Wharton. The duet was "Tell Me What is Love," a very pretty and catching little song, which suited the two admirably. At more than one school concert they had delivered it, amid great applause, and Bunter knew it almost as well as they did, though he could not have sung a note of it. The fat junior had no voice, though, until his loss of memory, he had always considered himself what he called a "dab" at singing.

"Tell me—tell me what is love—
That sets the world a-sighing,
That makes a maiden shyly smile,
Or dims her eye with crying?"

Marjorie's sweet voice swelled softly through the study.

Billy Bunter gave a great start as he listened.

The juniors were watching him. It was evident that the melody touched some hidden chord in Bunter's dazed and confused brain.

The fat junior listened with intent ears as the duet was continued.

Harry Wharton's deeper voice rang out:

"Oh, love it is whene'er it comes,
The boon that all are needing,
Though wilful maidens often frown
When lovers true are pleading!"

Then the two fresh young voices were blended together.

As the last strains died away, Bunter rose from his seat. The juniors' eyes were fixed upon him.

"Bunter, old man!"

"I—I——" Bunter stammered. "I—I remember——"

He sank back into the chair again, and his eyes were closed.

Wharton sprang forward.

But Bunter's eyes opened immediately, and there was the same vacant stare in them.

"Bunter—you remember?"

"Eh?"

"You remember now?"

"I—I don't understand."

Wharton drew back, deeply disappointed. For a moment, he knew, memory had flickered in Billy Bunter's mind—the dead chords had been touched with life; but it had only been for a moment.

All was blank again now.

Bunter sat in the chair, with the same

perplexed look haunting his eyes, until the time came when Marjorie and Clara had to go. The girls bade him good-bye kindly and gently. They were very sorry for Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co. walked home to Cliff House with Marjorie and Clara. John Bull remained with Bunter.

The sturdy junior had said that he would stay with the Owl of the Remove till Harry Wharton came back. He stood at the window, watching the juniors in the dusk as they crossed to the gates with the two girls. Harry Wharton and his chums were not likely to be back for an hour at least.

John Bull smiled to himself as he turned back towards Bunter. The fat junior gazed at him with dull and uninquiring eyes.

"Bunter, old man, you liked that song?"

"Yes," said Bunter.

"You'd like to hear my concertina?"

"Certainly, if you like," said Bunter amicably.

John Bull looked out of the study. He did not want to leave Bunter alone. It was best for the fat junior not to be left too much to himself under the peculiar circumstances, and Bull had promised Wharton to look after him.

Fisher T. Fish came strolling along the passage, with his easy American saunter. He gave John Bull a nod, and stopped as the sturdy junior spoke to him.

"Come in a minute, Fishy, will you?"

"Yep."

"Busy?" asked John Bull.

"Nope."

"Will you stay with Bunter a few minutes while I go to my study to fetch something? I've promised Wharton not to leave him alone."

"Yep."

"Thanks."

Fisher T. Fish strolled into the study. He sat on the table and swung his long legs, and talked cheerfully to Bunter.

John Bull hurried along to Remove passage to No. 14. He had gone for his concertina.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER
Music Not Wanted!

FISHER T. FISH was still talking when John Bull returned to Hazeldene's study, and Billy Bunter was still in the armchair. Bunter was not replying; but that did not matter at all to Fisher T. Fish. He talked because he found a charm in the sound of his own voice; and if the charm was not perceptible to others, that was not Fish's fault, and did not worry him in the least.

"I guess we can do things over there!" he was saying. "If you lost your memory in New York, Bunter, I reckon we've got specialists that would fix you up with a new one within two hours! Yes, sir!"

"Oh, good!" said John Bull, with a grin, as he came in. "Or I suppose you could apply to the New York detectives, if you lost your memory, and they'd get it back for you."

"Yep," said Fisher T. Fish. "I—I mean——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess we're slick over there!" said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess—— Gee! What have you got there?"

"My concertina."

"You're not going to play it?"

"No; I'm carrying it about just for exercise," said Bull sarcastically.

"I guess I'm off if you start that," said Fish.

"I guess you're off anyway—off your silly chump!" said Bull. "I'm starting, anyway. You'd like to hear the concertina, Bunter?"

"Yes, please."

Fisher T. Fish slid off the table. He could stand many things, but he could not stand the musical endeavours of his study-mate.

"I guess I slide," he said. "When you turn on the music it's time to vamoose the ranch. But ain't it rather hard on Bunter?"

"Oh, buzz off!"

"I guess——"

Bull opened the concertina.

There was an agonised wail from the dreaded instrument, and Fisher T. Fish

promptly bolted. He slammed the door after him and ran.

John Bull paid no heed.

The beloved howl of his concertina was like a spur to him. He sawed the instrument up and down and in and out, to the accompaniment of wild howls and squeals.

Billy Bunter sat bolt upright in the chair.

There was no doubt that the music had some effect upon him. To judge by the expression of his face, it was not a pleasant effect.

But John Bull did not observe that. He was trying to wake the chords of memory. It really seemed as if he were trying to wake the dead.

Grind—crash—saw—wail—howl!

"Oh!" said Bunter.

"You know the tune?" asked Bull, with a beaming smile.

"No," said Bunter.

"You'll recognise it soon," said Bull, sawing away.

"Is it a tune?"

"Eh?"

"Is it a tune?" asked Bunter.

"Look here——"

"Would you mind stopping?"

"What?"

"It's awful!"

"Hey?"

"It gives me a pain in the head," said Bunter apologetically. "I'm not very well, you know. You might chuck it, old man."

Bull shook his head.

"That shows it's working," he said.

Billy Bunter looked puzzled.

"Working? I don't understand you."

"Working on your mind," explained Bull. "It's touching the chords of memory. As soon as you've listened to it a little while longer you'll be all right—you'll remember everything. Take my word for it."

"I—I—I'd rather lose my memory, thank you!" stammered Bunter.

"Oh, rot!"

Saw—saw—grind—wail!

"Oh, dear!"

"What do you feel like now, Bunter?"

"Awful!"

"Is it doing you good?"

"Ow! No!"

"Be patient," said John Bull. "You must consider this as a pleasant sort of medical treatment, you know."

"Pleasant?" gasped Bunter.

"That's it."

Groo—grind—yaup—howl!

"Oh, oh! Stop! I—I'll get out!"

"Now, look here, Bunter——"

The door of the study was flung open. Bulstrode and Tom Brown and Fish and Russell and several more fellows rushed tumultuously in. John Bull lowered the concertina for a moment, staring in an annoyed way at the intruders.

"What do you want?" he demanded.

"You ass!"

"You fathead!"

"Look here——" began Bull.

"Stop it!" roared Bulstrode furiously.

"Stop what?"

"That horrid row!"

"Look here, I'm playing to Bunter, and he's enjoying it——"

"Yah! Are you enjoying it, Bunter?" roared the juniors.

"Yow! No!"

"Isn't it awful!"

"Fearful!"

"It's a treatment," said Bull. "I'm trying to wake the chords of memory. By means of music, Bunter may be restored ——"

"Well, he won't be restored by that horrible row!"

"I guess not."

"Chuck it!"

John Bull set his lips firmly, and started again. There was a roar of angry protest from the Removites. The discordance of Bull's concertina could be heard the whole length of the Remove passage.

"Chuck it!" yelled Bulstrode.

He led a rush at the sturdy junior. John Bull's concertina was dragged away. Bull put up his fists and hit out. But he was overwhelmed by numbers, and he rolled on the floor of the study in the midst of a struggling. gasping crowd.

"Collar him!"

"Smash him!"

"Bump him!"

The fight was a terrific one. John Bull was as tough as nails, and he was as angry as any fellows there. He rolled about the study in his desperate resistance, dragging his assailants with him. All hands were needed to keep the sturdy junior down. The concertina — the cause of the strife—had rolled unheeded upon the heartrug.

But it was not unheeded for long. Billy Bunter caught sight of it, and, whether it woke a chord of memory or not, whether he remembered previous tortures with that instrument or didn't remember them, he acted promptly.

While the terrific combat was going on Bunter pounced upon the concertina and crammed it into the fire.

He beat it down into the midst of the red cinders with the poker, and the concertina was soon blazing away merrily.

Bunter kept it well poked, and in a couple of minutes that unfortunate concertina was past praying for. But Bunter continued giving it savage pokes to make sure of it.

Meanwhile, John Bull was fighting hard. So strong was the junior and so determined that he tore himself free of the odds against him at last and staggered to his feet. The burning concertina was sending showers of sparks up the chimney.

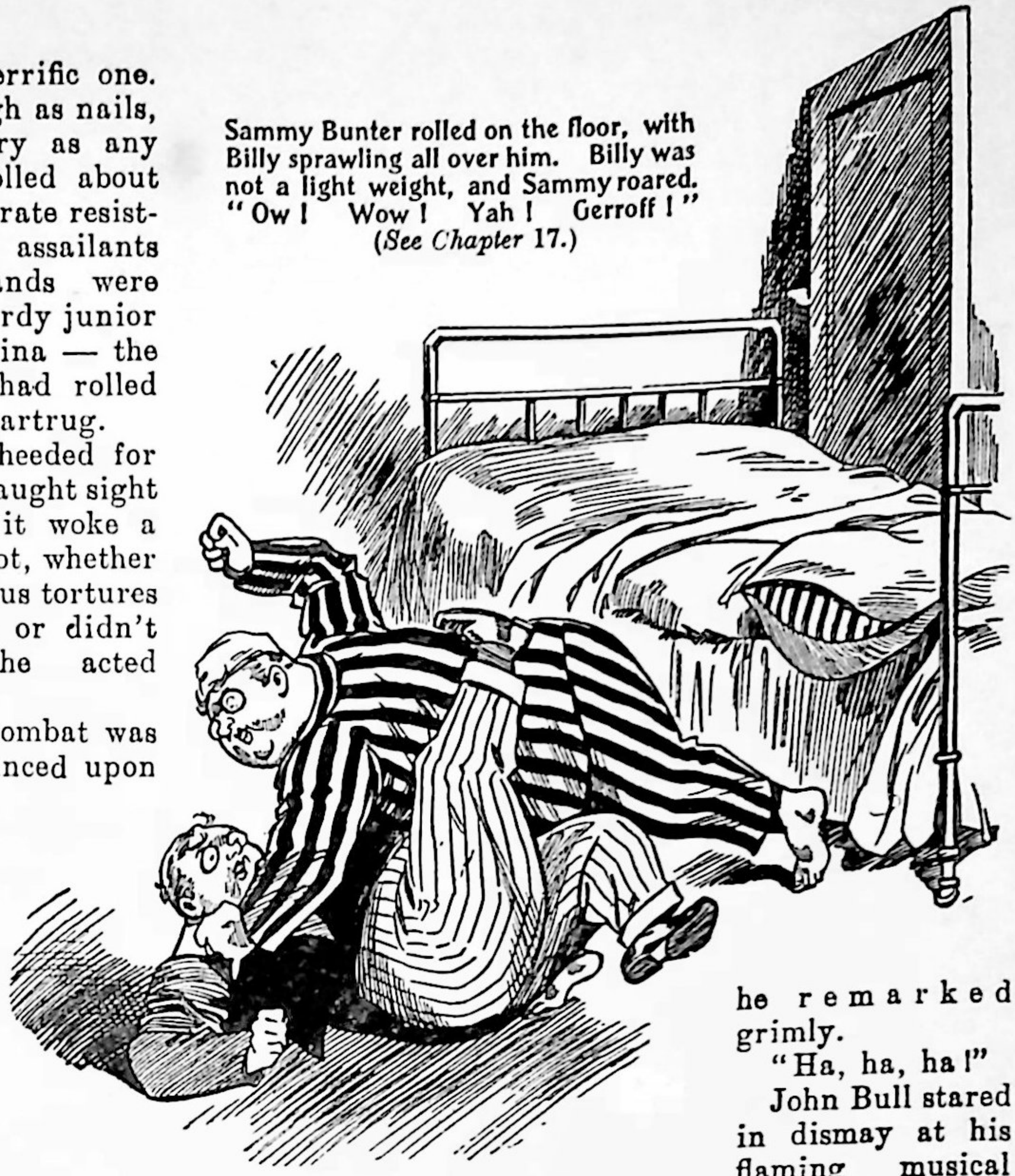
"Where's the concertina?" gasped John Bull.

Bulstrode staggered up.

"Don't let him get it! Ha, ha, ha! Good old Bunter! He's burning it!"

Bunter grinned.

"He won't play that rotten thing again!"



Sammy Bunter rolled on the floor, with Billy sprawling all over him. Billy was not a light weight, and Sammy roared. "Ow! Wow! Yah! Gerroff!" (*See Chapter* 17.)

he remarked grimly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

John Bull stared in dismay at his flaming musical instrument. There was no saving it now. Had Bunter been in a normal state of health he would have been knocked flying by the angry musician. But Bull, however angry he was, could not hit a fellow in Bunter's state. He simply glared at him.

"You fat villain!" he roared.

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

"I—I—I——"

"I've stopped that awful row, anyway," said Bunter.

"You—you——"

"Chuck the bounder out!" gasped Bulstrode.

John Bull was collared again. With the united efforts of the juniors he was hurled forth, breathless, into the passage.

"I guess we can look after Bunter," panted Fisher T. Fish. "Bunter's a trump! He's settled that rotten thing for good!"

And he slammed the door.

The juniors roared with laughter as they watched the remains of the concertina flare away. There would be no more discord extracted from that dreaded instrument.

Billy Bunter's loss of memory had gained him the sympathy of all the Remove. But his latest exploit made him popular as well. The Removites felt that a fellow who had burnt John Bull's concertina deserved well of the Form.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER
A Surprise in the Form-room

BILLY BUNTER was taken up to bed that night very tenderly by the chums of the Remove.

Mr. Quelch came into the Remove dormitory to see lights out, and he looked at Bunter as he lay in bed. Mr. Quelch was very much puzzled by Bunter's state. The doctor from Friardale had been to see him during the evening, but he could only say that Bunter was still suffering from shock to the system, and hope for the best.

"Good-night, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Good-night, sir!"

"Do you know who I am, Bunter?"

"No, sir."

"You do not recognise me?"

A painfully perplexed look came into Bunter's eyes, and he wrinkled his brows in an effort to remember.

"Never mind!" said Mr. Quelch hastily. "I will speak to you again in the morning, Bunter. You will not neglect him, Wharton?"

"Certainly not, sir!"

Mr. Quelch extinguished the light and retired.

There was a buzz of discussion among the Removites after he had gone. Bunter's curious condition interested them all, but there was not a fellow left now who thought that the fat junior was shamming. It was only too evident that Bunter's unhappy attack was genuine.

"My dear fellows," Alonzo Todd's still small voice was heard to observe, "I really wish some of you could suggest something that could be done for Bunter."

"I've an idea," said Bulstrode.

"What is it, my dear Bulstrode? Personally, I should be willing to do anything."

"Suppose you were to sit by his bedside and hold his hand all night?" suggested Bulstrode, with perfect gravity. "I think he would find that very comforting."

"Do you really think so?" asked Alonzo.

"I'm sure of it."

"In that case, I should be perfectly willing to do so. My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me to help the sick or unfortunate in every possible way," said Todd. "It would be a great pleasure to me."

"It's a ripping wheeze!" said Skinner. "It's done in all the 'Little Georgie' books. When little Georgie stops being bad and happy, and turns good and dies, there's always somebody sits by his bed and holds his hand while he snuffs out."

"That is a very coarse way of putting it, Skinner. 'Snuffing out' is a far from elegant expression, and I am sure you will not find it either in 'Sherrick' or 'Bit by Bit,' or in 'St. Fathead's' or the 'World of Fools.' I fear, Skinner, that you are too much addicted to slang, and I beg and implore you not to let this habit grow on you."

"Rats!"

"My dear Skinner——"

"Look here, Todd," said Bulstrode, "Bunter's suffering all the time you're talking. Aren't you going to sit by his bed and comfort him?"

"Oh, certainly!"

And Alonzo jumped out of bed.

There was a yell of laughter in the dormitory as the Duffer of Greyfriars was heard to turn out.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see the cause of risibility," said Todd. "Is it directed against me, my dear schoolfellows?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear Cherry——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shall certainly hold Bunter's hand the whole night if he wishes it," said Alonzo Todd firmly. "Bunter, my dear fellow, shall I hold your hand, and speak to you gently at intervals?"

"You ass!"

"Eh?"

"If you start pulling my leg, you ass, you'll get a thick ear!" growled the invalid.

"My dear Bunter, I did not mean to pull your leg," said Todd, in astonishment. "I was suggesting holding your hand."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut up!"

"My dear Bunter——"

"Oh, go to bed, fathead!"

Alonzo went back to bed. Under the circumstances, he did not see how he could sit by Billy Bunter's bed and hold his hand. Bunter did not encourage him. Besides, Alonzo realised that his feet would get very cold.

Billy Bunter slept soundly that night, and he was still sleeping soundly when the rising-bell clanged out in the morning.

The fat junior did not wake.

Harry Wharton looked at him when he turned out. The fat junior was sleeping very peacefully, and Wharton decided not to wake him.

"He won't have to attend classes this morning," he remarked. "He may as well have his sleep out. It may do him good."

"I suppose Quelchy will let him off," Bob Cherry remarked.

"I'll explain to Quelch. Don't make a row, you fellows. Let Bunter sleep as long as he likes."

And the Removites were very quiet in dressing. The Form went down and left Billy Bunter still fast asleep.

Harry Wharton explained to Mr. Quelch at the breakfast-table, as the Remove-master noted Bunter's absence.

The Form-master nodded in reply.

"Quite right, Wharton. Let him sleep, by all means."

The juniors went into the class-room at the usual hour, Bunter's place being vacant. There was an unusual gravity on the Remove that morning.

Bunter's empty place in the Form reminded them of the fat junior, and of his curious state, quite as much as his presence could have done.

Mr. Quelch left the Form-room during lessons for a short time, to go up to the dormitory and look at Bunter.

"Is Bunter all right, sir?" asked Wharton, when the Form-master returned.

"He is still asleep, Wharton."

"Thank you, sir!"

The juniors were dismissed at eleven o'clock for the usual recess. Mr. Quelch went to speak to the Head, and when the Remove reassembled for lessons the Form-master had not yet returned.

Bunter had not appeared.

"Blessed if it isn't all right being a giddy invalid!" said Oglivy. "Bunter is getting out of all the work."

"Faith, and ye're right!" said Micky Desmond. "I'll get somebody to punch my head and make me lose my memory—— Yarooh! You spalpeen!"

He yelled as Ogilvy rapped his head.

"Faith, you gossoon! What did you do that for?" roared Micky.

"Well, you asked for it!" said Ogilvy. "Have you lost your memory yet?"

"You—you——"

"Shall I give you a harder one?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Faith, and I——"

Micky Desmond doubled his fists. The Form-room door opened, and there was a general alarm.

"Cave!"

But it was not the Form-master.

It was Billy Bunter who entered. He had evidently just risen, and he was still in his pyjamas, his head still bandaged. He carried his boots in one hand, and he looked round the Form-room with a dazed expression.

Wharton ran to him.

"Billy!"

"I—I say, you fellows," stammered Bunter, "I—I heard the bell and——" He broke off.

Wharton understood. Bunter had heard the bell for classes, and it had touched some

chord in his dazed mind. He had got up, and come to the class-room.

"My word!" said Nugent. "If Quelch comes back——"

"Come back to the dormitory, Billy," said Wharton gently.

"But—but——"

"Cave!"

Mr. Quelch entered the Form-room. He stared in amazement at Bunter. Certainly it was an unusual sight in the Remove Form-room. A junior in his pyjamas had assuredly never been seen there before.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Wh-what does this mean?"

"Bunter's come down, sir!" said Wharton helplessly

"Take him back to the dormitory."

Wharton led Billy Bunter from the room. The fat junior went quietly, dazedly. But there seemed to be a new gleam of intelligence in his face. Was the dormant memory waking up at last?

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER
Sammy Gets His Whack!

SAMMY BUNTER came into the Remove dormitory after classes were dismissed that morning. The fat fag blinked round, and then came over to his major's bed. Billy Bunter was lying back on a heap of pillows, staring at the ceiling.

""I say, Billy!"

Bunter turned his head and blinked at his minor without speaking.

"I'm alone here," said Sammy.

"Who are you?" asked Billy Bunter.

"Oh, don't gammon me!" said Sammy peevishly "You know jolly well who I am, as well as I know who you are—the biggest spoofer at Greyfriars. I tell you I'm alone here, and you can tell the truth."

"I don't understand you."

"You see, I'm not taken in with this gammon," Sammy explained. "I know you are spoofing the Remove!"

"Oh!"

"I suppose you're doing pretty well out of it," went on Sammy, "or you wouldn't be keeping it up so long. Blessed if I know how you're doing it. You've taken in your Form-master as well as your friends. I never thought you had it in you, Billy, really!"

And Bunter minor blinked at his major in unwilling admiration.

Billy Bunter was watching him all the time with the same puzzled stare, without uttering a word. He seemed to be trying to follow his minor's remarks, but without being able to understand them.

"But there's no need to keep it up with me," went on Sammy. "You don't think I'd give you away, do you?"

"I don't understand you."

Sammy snorted.

"Oh, come off!" he exclaimed contemptuously. "Look here, come out into the open. Don't keep it up with me. It's all in the family, ain't it?"

Billy Bunter blinked at him silently.

"I dare say I can help you with the dodge," said Sammy "I've tried it myself in the Second Form, but somehow it didn't work. That little Chinese beast, Hop Hi, bowled me out, the little rotter. But you're going strong, and I think you ought to let a brother share in the loot."

"Eh?"

"I suppose you're piling up grub, or borrowing money, or something," said Sammy. "You're not taking all this trouble for nothing, or merely to miss lessons, are you?"

"I don't know."

"Now, look here, Billy. I've told you I admit you do it well, so chuck it now!" Sammy explained impatiently "Can't you see it's not wanted with me? I'm not going to give you away, and you can trust me. Besides, you can't take me in, anyway!"

Bunter did not speak. His minor surveyed him with growing wrath. According to Sammy, Billy Bunter was persisting in a useless deception, instead of trusting his minor, and Sammy was getting very exasperated.

"Look here," said Sammy, raising his voice—"look here, Billy, I'm getting fed up with this! Are you going to let me into the wheeze?"

"I don't understand you."

"You—you whopping crammer! Do you



"I'll teach you to make plans for me!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—take that! And that!" Whiz! Boff! Biff! Tarts smote Alonzo right and left.
(*See Chapter* 18.)

want me to yank you out of bed, and mop up the floor with you?" roared Sammy.

Billy Bunter only blinked.

Sammy laid hold of the bedclothes.

"Now, then, you're coming out!" he exclaimed. "If you can't own up to your own minor, you're going to be jolly well shown up! You always were a pig, Billy, trying to keep things to yourself instead of letting another fellow have his whack!"

"Leggo!" exclaimed Billy, clutching at the clothes.

"Yah! Rats!"

Sammy Bunter yanked at the bedclothes, and they came off. Bunter rolled out of bed after them, and laid hold of his minor. Excepting for the big bump bandaged up on his head and the loss of his memory, Bunter could not be called ill. He certainly did not seem ill as he went for the fat fag who had jerked his bedclothes off.

Bump!

Sammy Bunter rolled on the floor, with Billy sprawling over him. Billy was not a light weight, and Sammy roared.

"Ow! Yow! Yah! Gerroff!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as he came in with Harry Wharton and John Bull. "What the dickens——"

"What's the row?" exclaimed Wharton.

"It's Sammy!"

"Sammy, you young rascal——"

"Yow! Help! Yopp! Oh!"

The chums of the Remove rushed forward, and dragged Billy Bunter off Sammy. Bunter was pommelling his minor in the most business-like manner.

"Lemme get at him!" roared Bunter.

"Here, hold on!"

"He's had enough."

Sammy Bunter staggered to his feet.

"Ow! Ow!" he gasped. "Yow! I—I ——"

"What did you come here bothering Billy for?" demanded Wharton sternly. "You know he's not well."

"Gammon!" roared Sammy.

"Look here, you young ass——"

"I—I only wanted a whack in the loot," snorted Sammy. "He went for me. He's only gammoning you. He's no more lost his memory than I've lost mine. Yah!"

"Oh, get out!"

"If you let him take you in, you're a set of chumps! Why——"

"Outside!" said Bob Cherry.

He took the fat fag by the ear, and led him, squealing, to the doorway. There he helped him into the passage with his boot, and Sammy Bunter rolled away.

Bunter major sat on his bed, gasping. After the excitement of the tussle with his minor, he was breathless and exhausted.

"You're not hurt, Billy?" asked Wharton anxiously.

Bunter put his glasses straight.

"No," he panted. "I—I'm tired. The young beast pulled the bedclothes off me. Is it time to get up yet?"

"It's half-past twelve."

"Oh! I'd better dress then!"

"Let me help you."

The chums of the Remove helped Billy Bunter to dress. The fat junior went downstairs with them, and he was eyed with great curiosity by all who saw him. Several of the Sixth, who had heard of his queer state, looked at him with great interest. The seniors were as slow to believe in Bunter's illness as were the juniors. Loder, the prefect, stopped him in the passage.

"Bunter!" he exclaimed.

Billy Bunter blinked at him.

"Look here, Bunter. I hear that you're fooling your Form with some lie about losing your memory," said Loder, in his polite way. "You can't impose on me, you know."

"Eh?"

"You know who I am, well enough."

"I don't know you."

"You don't know my name?"

"No," said Bunter.

"Well, you've nerve enough," said Loder, in astonishment. "How long are you going to keep this rot up, Bunter?"

"I don't understand you."

Loder frowned angrily, and reached out for Bunter's ear. Harry Wharton stepped forward, and knocked his hand aside.

"None of that," he said quietly.

Loder glared at him.

"Wharton! How dare you interfere with me?"

"You're not going to touch Billy while he's in this state," said Harry Wharton quietly but resolutely. "He's got friends to protect him—while he's ill, at any rate."

Loder laughed scoffingly.

"He's only fooling you, you young idiot! This is another of his lies, that's all."

"I thought so at first," said Bob Cherry; "but it isn't. It's genuine enough."

"Rot!"

"Well, let him alone, anyway," said Wharton.

"I shall please myself about that," said Loder.

And he made a motion towards the fat junior. Bunter promptly slid behind Wharton. The latter did not budge an inch. He faced the towering senior with his fists clenched.

"Line up, you chaps!" said Harry quietly.

Five or six of the Remove lined up. Loder breathed hard with anger; but just then Mr. Quelch came along the passage, and the prefect, muttering something beneath his breath, went into his study.

Mr. Quelch paused. He glanced after Loder and glanced at the juniors, but made no remark on the subject of the hostile attitude he had observed them in.

"Bunter," he said, "I hope you feel better."

"I feel all right, sir."

"You are excused lessons for the present," said Mr. Quelch. "You will please yourself about coming to the class-room or not."

"Thank you, sir."

Bunter rolled out into the Close with the chums of the Remove. He grunted several times, as if there were something on his mind. Finally, he looked at Harry Wharton in a sidelong way.

"I—I say, you know——"

"Yes, Billy?" said Wharton at once.

"I—I—I'm hungry."

The chums of the Remove exchanged glances of satisfaction. As Bunter had missed his breakfast by staying in bed, it was not surprising that he was hungry. But to hear him say so was like hearing the voice of the old Bunter. It was a sign that he was recovering; at all events, the juniors hoped so.

"This way to the tuckshop," said Nugent. "Come on, Billy!"

"I—I say, you fellows, I—I don't think I've got any money——"

"That's all right, Billy. It's my treat."

"My dear fellows," exclaimed Alonzo Todd, calling out from the door of the School House—"my dear fellows, I have something very important to say to you——"

"Another time, Toddy."

"Impossible, Wharton! My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me never to put off striking the iron while it was hot till to-morrow while it could be done to-day——"

But the rest of the wisdom Alonzo had imbibed from his Uncle Benjamin was lost as the Remove chums piloted Billy Bunter away towards the school shop.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER
Todd Has a Plan

HARRY WHARTON & Co. marched Bunter into Mrs. Mimble's little shop, and planted him upon a high stool at the counter. Mrs. Mimble, for once, met Bunter with an agreeable look. Billy Bunter was her best and her worst customer. The best, because he was willing to give unlimited orders; the worst, because he never paid for anything if he could help it. But Mrs. Mimble had heard of Bunter's misfortune, and her kindly heart had been moved—even to the extent of letting him have half a dozen tarts on credit if they had been required. But they were not required. Wharton was in funds.

"What would you like, Billy?" he asked. "It's my treat, Mrs. Mimble."

"Yes, Master Wharton."

Bunter cast one of his old looks round the little tuckshop.

"I—I think I'll begin with some pork-pies," he remarked.

The juniors grinned. Bunter did not say he would begin with a pork-pie, but with some pork-pies. It was quite the old Bunter.

"Pork-pies, please, Mrs. Mimble."

The good dame handed out the pork-pies.

Bunter commenced operations upon them.

The fat junior might have lost his memory, but he had not lost his appetite—on this ocasion, at least.

He wired into the pork-pies, as he would have expressed it, with great energy, and they vanished at a record rate of speed.

"Good old Bunter!" murmured Bob Cherry. "He's getting to be himself again."

"Yes, rather."

"The ratherfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "It is the great and boonful pleasure to see the esteemed Bunter resumefully becoming more like his old and esteemed self."

"And he is—— By Jove!"

There was no doubt about that. The third pork-pie was already gone, and the fourth was following fast.

"My dear Wharton——"

Alonzo Todd came rushing into the tuckshop breathlessly. The Duffer of Greyfriars was evidently spurred on by a new idea.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Have a pork-pie?"

"Thank you very much, Cherry; but no. As I shall shortly be consuming my regular midday meal, I must not eat a pork-pie now. My Uncle Benjamin always impressed upon me very much to be perfectly regular in my meals."

"Have a jam-tart, then?" said Nugent.

"My dear Nugent, a jam-tart, taken immediately before dinner, would, in all probability, exercise as deleterious an effect upon the digestion as a pork-pie."

"Go hon! Have a dictionary!"

"My dear Wharton! To come to business," said Alonzo, "I have hit upon a splendid plan for curing Bunter. I will explain it to you. I remember my Uncle Benjamin——"

"Yes; we know you remember him, Todd. You've mentioned him before."

"My dear Wharton——"

"Have a bun, Toddy?"

"Thank you very much, Cherry, but I fear the results upon my internal organisation. As I was saying I have a splendid——"

"Internal organisation?"

"No; a splendid plan, Nugent. About Bunter——"

"Have some caraway seeds, Todd?"

"Thank you, no. My plan——"

"Will you have some cherry-stones?" asked Nugent. "Magpies eat them—other magpies."

"My dear Nugent——"

"I say, you fellows, I think I'll have some pudding now," said Bunter.

"Richard's himself again!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pudding for Bunter, Mrs. Mimble. Give him anything he wants."

"Yes, Master Wharton."

"You are very kind to Bunter," said Alonzo Todd, "but I hardly think that this is the best way to restore his lost memory. I think that my plan is much the better. I have been reading a scientific medical book on the subject of contusions, concussions, and shocks to the system."

"How good! Will you have some doughnuts?"

"Thank you, no; not just before dinner. As I remarked, my Uncle Benjamin always cautioned me to be careful in that respect. I have studied the subject of injury to the brain by means of violent concussions, and I find that loss of memory, more or less complete, is by no means an unusual result of such an accident. But what I wish to direct your attention to specially is this—that many cases have been known in which a memory, lost through a concussion upon the head, has been restored by means of another concussion."

"My hat!"

"Such cases are by no means rare," said Todd. "In this book I am referring to, Dr. Softes gives several well-known cases that have come under his experience in hospitals. There was a famous case of a patient in his hospital who entirely forgot his name, and where he had come from. It turned out afterwards that the man was a well-known criminal, wanted by the police."

"Nice convenient loss of memory," said Bob Cherry.

"There was another case in his own knowledge of a page-boy who was entrusted with a five-pound note to change, and who was utterly unable to account for the change, owing to a sudden loss of memory."

"Go hon!"

"Many more such convincing cases are cited in this book," said Todd earnestly, "and Dr. Softes mentions the undoubted and extremely interesting fact that loss of memory through one concussion has been known to be cured by another concussion on a different spot. Thus, there was a man who was found with his hand in the pocket of a coat in a cloak-room. He explained that he had fallen and knocked his head, and had been in a dazed state, and did not know what he was doing. The owner of the coat thereupon struck him violently upon the nose, and the man immediately recovered and took his departure."

"I say, you fellows, I think I might try the tarts," said Billy Bunter.

"Good old Bunter! Go it!"

"Now, my dear Form-fellows," went on Alonzo Todd, "Bunter has lost his memory through a concussion between his head and the bath floor. My idea is that another similar concussion would cure him. I suggest, therefore, taking Bunter to a swimming-bath and dropping him in, head first!"

"What?"

"The second concussion would probably undo the work of the first, and restore our dear friend Bunter quite to himself," said Todd.

The juniors stared at the Duffer of Greyfriars. They could do nothing else. They

(*Continued on page* 103.)

Greyfriars Frivolities



THE PILLOW FIGHT!

THE darkness deepens in the dorm,
  Tense is the midnight silence;
The dreaming youths in Temple's form
  Have not a thought of violence.
When suddenly, all unaware,
  Rush Harry Wharton's raiders,
Brandishing pillows in the air—
  A host of keen invaders!

The curtain rises on the fray,
  And all is noise and bustle;
"A raid!" cries Temple, in dismay,
  "Turn out, you fellows—hustle!"
Fourth-formers, bounding from their beds,
  Are soon seen smiting busily;
And the Removites duck their heads,
  Or reel and stagger dizzily!

But Wharton rallies all his men,
  "Now, comrades! all together!"
His strength is as the strength of ten,
  The fiercest blows he'll weather.
Boldly he darts into the fray,
  Knocks Fry into the fender,
Where Temple joins him, sad to say,
  With gasp of "We surrender!"

And now the victors bid farewell
  To the defeated mortals;
And from the dorm they dash pell-mell
  With chuckles and with chortles.
"Another feather in our cap!"
  Cries Harry Wharton merrily;
"It was a really ripping scrap!"
  And all exclaim, "Yea, verily!"

(*Continued from page* 102.)

had not expected this wisdom, even from the Duffer.

"Well, you ass?" said Bob Cherry at last.

"My dear Cherry——"

"You fathead!"

"My dear Wharton——"

"You chumpful duffer!"

"My dear Inky——"

Billy Bunter was blinking at Alonzo through his spectacles, and he had ceased eating the jam tarts for a moment. He had taken up a couple of them—one in each hand—but not to eat. He was blinking at the Duffer of Greyfriars with a deadly blink.

"You're talking about me?" he asked.

"Yes, my dear Bunter. I have a plan for restoring your lost memory," said Todd, with a beaming smile, "by dropping you, head first, into the swimming-bath. I hope——"

"You—you chump!"

"My dear Bunter——"

"I—I'll teach you to make plans for me!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—— Take that! And that!"

Whiz! Biff! Biff!

"Yarooh!" yelled Alonzo.

The tarts smote him one in each eye, one after the other, and Alonzo Todd staggered back, with a wild yell.

"Groo! Oh! Yah! Ugh!"

"You fathead!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Alonzo Todd, blinded by jam, gouged the sticky substance out of his eyes. He blinked frantically at the juniors with eyelids trying to stick together.

"Oh! Ow! My dear Bunter! I——"

Biff! Biff!

Tarts smote Alonzo right and left. Billy Bunter was very reckless with the tarts, probably because Wharton was footing the bill. Alonzo Todd made a dash for the door. Another tart biffed on the back of his neck, and another clung lovingly to his ear as he rushed out.

The chums of the Remove roared with laughter. Billy Bunter turned to his feeding again, and kept on steadily till the bell rang for dinner. When the juniors went

into the dining-room, Alonzo Todd was there, and he blinked at them reproachfully. But he did not make any more suggestions for restoring Billy Bunter's memory.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER
A Sudden Surprise!

AFTER school that day, Harry Wharton & Co. took Billy Bunter in charge when they came out of the Form-room. There had been a fall of rain, and the ground was not in a fit state for footer practice. Billy Bunter had shown little sign of improvement during the day, and the chums of the Remove felt that they had to look after him.

"Hungry, Billy?" Nugent asked.

"Yes, rather," said Bunter.

It was clear that the Owl of the Remove was recovering, although his memory had not come back. The juniors had begun to think that it never would come back.

Bunter had been in this strange state now for a long time, and his Form-fellows were ceasing to expect a change.

And, as several of the Remove observed, it wasn't wholly desirable that Billy Bunter should recover.

Bunter now was a much more decent fellow than the Bunter of old; and by losing the memory of what he had been he was enabled to make a fresh start and to turn over an entirely new leaf.

Certainly he was much easier to get on with now that he was not trying to borrow money of every fellow who had any, and to insinuate himself into every feed that was stood in the lower school at Greyfriars.

"Come to the tuckshop?" said Wharton.

"Right you are!"

Billy Bunter sat in Mrs. Mimble's shop and consumed another feed. He did quite as well as he had done on the previous day.

The rain was falling fast as the juniors were about to leave the little shop to cut across the Close to the School House. They turned up the collars of their coats. Billy Bunter blinked out into the rain and drew back his head like a snail withdrawing its horns.

"It's jolly wet," he remarked.

"Yes; we shall have to run."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Go on, Billy."

"I don't want to get wet, you know."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"None of us do," he replied. "But we shan't get very wet, Billy. We can run. Come on, and make a dash for it!"

"Yes; but I say, couldn't one of you cut across first and get an umbrella?" said Billy Bunter.

The chums of the Remove looked at him.

This was the old Bunter, with a vengeance. It did not matter if they went out into the rain and were wetted so long as an umbrella was fetched for him. It was the Billy Bunter of old, with a vengeance! His memory was not coming back, but his original nature was.

"Well, my hat!" said Bob Cherry.

"Come, make a run for it," said Harry Wharton briefly.

"Oh, really, you know, I don't feel fit to run just after eating, and I've had a good blow-out, too," said Billy Bunter.

"I'll get an umbrella, then," said Wharton quietly. "You fellows may as well stay, and I'll bring yours at the same time."

"Oh, rats!" said Bob Cherry. "Let Bunter stay here till the rain's over. He can go on feeding."

"Well, perhaps I could go a few more tarts," said Billy Bunter thoughtfully.

"Go it, then," said Harry. "Give him whatever he wants to-day, Mrs. Mimble, and charge it to me."

"Yes, Master Wharton."

Bunter resumed his seat on the stool at the counter, and recommenced operations upon the tarts. The chums of the Remove dashed across the Close with their collars turned up, and ran into the School House.

There were a crowd of juniors in the house, looking out disconsolately at the rain.

"I guess we could get up a game of footer in the Common-room," remarked Fisher T. Fish. "I could show you how we play footer over there."

"Rats! We know how you play footer," said Frank Nugent. "Still, it's not a bad idea to have a punt about in the Common-

room, if we don't make too much row and bring in the prefects."

"I've got a ball," said John Bull.

"Good egg!"

Bull brought down a footer, and the juniors closed the door of the Common-room and lined up for sides. As nearly all the Remove were there, and a great many of the Upper Fourth, the teams were very strong in numbers, like the old-fashioned sides at Rugby. It was the fun the juniors were after, not scientific football.

The game was soon going strong.

The fireplace was one goal, and the window at the opposite end of the Common-room was the other; and goals were frequently kicked, with disastrous results to the diamond panes of the window. But as breakages were always charged to the juniors responsible for them, that was not a serious matter. It meant items on bills, but not lickings.

The game was getting fast and furious when the door of the Common-room opened.

Billy Bunter entered.

The fat junior stood and blinked in surprise at the scene of uproar. As he stood there, the ball had been passed across with a whiz, and it was shooting straight for Bunter. There was a yell of warning as Fish, for whom the ball was intended, missed it by yards. The ball had bounced high, and before Bunter understood what the yell meant it had struck him on the chin with a violent shock.

The fat junior staggered back and fell.

"Stop play!" shouted Wharton.

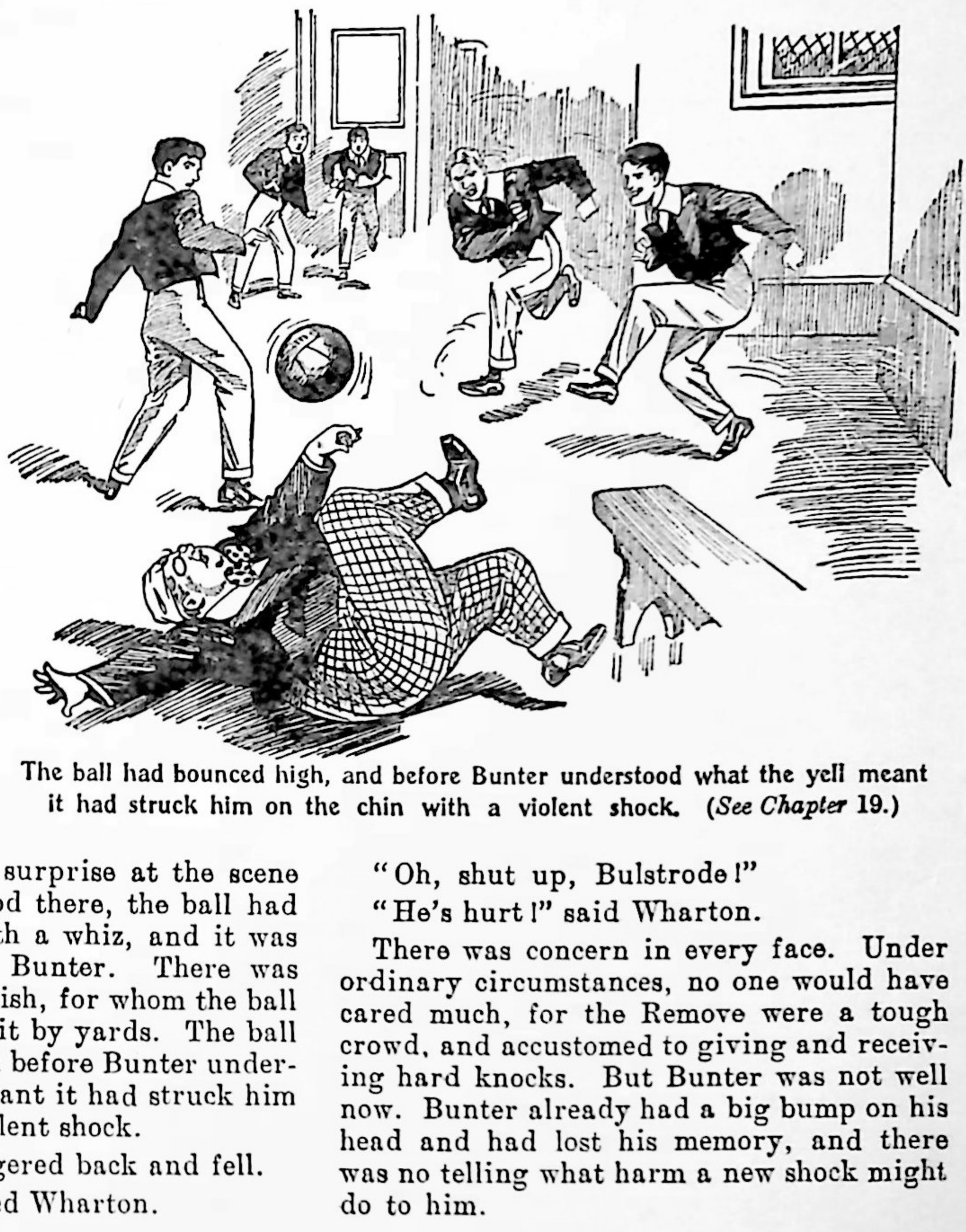
The juniors crowded round Bunter.

Harry Wharton was the first. He raised the fat junior in his arms. The concussion of the footer had not been hard enough to hurt anybody, but Bunter, always clumsy, had struck his head against the wainscot as he fell.

The Owl of the Remove lay quite still.

"My hat!" said Nugent in dismay. "He's hurt!"

"Just like Bunter to come in and catch the ball with his head," growled Bulstrode.



The ball had bounced high, and before Bunter understood what the yell meant it had struck him on the chin with a violent shock. (*See Chapter* 19.)

"Oh, shut up, Bulstrode!"

"He's hurt!" said Wharton.

There was concern in every face. Under ordinary circumstances, no one would have cared much, for the Remove were a tough crowd, and accustomed to giving and receiving hard knocks. But Bunter was not well now. Bunter already had a big bump on his head and had lost his memory, and there was no telling what harm a new shock might do to him.

"Billy," said Harry as he raised the fat junior's head. "Billy, old man!"

Billy Bunter did not reply.

He was unconscious.

"My word!" said Nugent. "It was only a tap, too. It wouldn't have sent anybody else off. Poor old Bunter!"

"The poorfulness of the old Bunter is terrific."

"Help me get him up to the study," said Wharton. "We'll look after him there and bathe his head. It's only a tap, but if he doesn't come to at once we shall have to send for the doctor."

"Right you are!"

Three juniors took up the Owl of the Remove. In the midst of a crowd of them, he was carried up to the Remove passage without exciting attention, and put in the armchair in Harry Wharton's study.

Nugent fetched a bowl of water and sponge, and Bunter's collar was loosened, and Harry began to bathe his face.

"Give him room," said Wharton, pushing back the crowding juniors. "We don't want to suffocate him. Keep back!"

The juniors crowded out of the study. Some of them waited in the passage to hear how Bunter went on.

Wharton bathed the head of the Owl of the Remove. Bunter's eyes opened, and he blinked at Wharton dazedly without his spectacles.

Harry drew a deep breath of relief.

"He's coming to!"

"Thank goodness!"

"The thankfulness is terrific."

Bunter blinked at the chums of the Remove. He did not seem to be able to make out where he was, or what had happened to him.

"I—I say!" he gasped.

"Lie still, Billy! You're all right!" said Harry Wharton gently. "You've had a bump on the napper, but you'll be all right!"

"I—I—— It was your fault!"

"Eh?"

"It was all your fault. I suppose there wasn't any water in the bath!"

"The—the bath?"

"Yes," said Bunter peevishly. "I shouldn't have come such a cropper if there had been any water there, I suppose. I should have seen it was empty if you rotters hadn't been chasing after me."

The juniors stared blankly at Billy Bunter. Had he lost his memory again, or was he mad—or what?

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER

Alonzo Was Right!

HARRY WHARTON was silent for a full minute, looking steadfastly at the fat junior. He was too surprised for words.

Billy Bunter was growling, and feeling the bump on his head. He, too, seemed to be in a dazed state, but his wits were returning.

"What's all this water over me for?" he demanded.

"I—I've been bathing your head, to bring you round!" stammered Wharton.

Billy grunted.

"Well, you might give a chap a towel, then," he said disagreeably.

Nugent silently handed Bunter a towel. The fat junior mopped his face and head, and threw the towel aside.

"Where are my glasses?"

"Here you are!"

Bunter replaced the glasses on his little fat nose. He blinked discontentedly at the juniors.

"I've got an awful bump on my head!" he growled. "It aches fearfully. The pain won't be gone for days. Yow!"

"The bump hurts?" asked Harry.

"Yes, awfully! Ow! Do you think you wouldn't be hurt by bumping your head on the floor of a bath?" demanded Billy Bunter.

"But—but——"

"I—I say, how did I come to have these clothes on?" exclaimed Bunter, looking down at his fat person in astonishment. "I was in my swimming things when I dived into the bath."

"You—you——"

"Do you mean to say that you dressed me while I was off?" demanded Bunter. "What a silly trick! More sense to shove me in bed, I should think."

The juniors exchanged glances.

Amazing as it was, there was no doubt as to what had happened.

Billy Bunter had woke up from his second insensibility with his memory restored; there had been an element of truth, after all, in the seemingly absurd theory which Alonzo Todd had extracted from his scientific book. For not only had Bunter recovered his memory, but all that had happened since the accident in the swimming-bath was a blank to him.

He had taken up his life again, as it were, from the point where it had broken off, when he was stunned by his fall into the bath.

What had happened since was lost.

It was amazing, but the fact.

The juniors hardly knew how to explain. But that there must be some explanation was evident, for Bunter was beginning to look alarmed.

"Look here, you fellows," he exclaimed, "what does this mean? I suppose I was stunned when I fell into the bath, wasn't I? I don't remember anything since."

"Yes," said Wharton.

"What did you dress me for?"

"You see——"

"Why didn't you get a doctor?"

"You see——"

"Nice chaps you are to look after a chap, I must say!" snorted Bunter, in quite his old manner. "I might have been brained, I suppose, and you wouldn't care twopence. Look here, have any letters come for me while I've been lying here?"

"Letters?"

"Yes, I'm expecting a postal-order."

The juniors could not restrain a chuckle. It was the old Bunter, quite himself again; there was no mistake about that.

Bunter blinked at them indignantly.

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" he growled. "I'm expecting several postal-orders, as a matter of fact; one of them from a titled friend of mine—a chap I'm very chummy with."

"Good old Bunter!"

"Look here, you fellows, how long have I been lying here?" demanded Bunter, with a vague uneasiness in his manner.

"Only a few minutes," said Wharton.

"Oh! It seems longer somehow," said Bunter. "Some duffer has put that calendar on to Thursday. It's Wednesday."

He was blinking at the little movable cardboard calendar on the mantelpiece, just in front of him. Wharton glanced at it.

"It is Thursday," he said.

Bunter snorted.

"What's the good of talking rot like that?" he demanded. "Do you think I don't know which day of the week it is?"

Wharton coloured.

"It's Thursday, Billy," he said, as gently as he could. "You've been ill!"

"Ill?" repeated Bunter.

"Yes. After that biff in the swimming-bath, you lost your memory."

Bunter stared at him.

"Lost my memory?"

"Yes."

"What rot!"

"Look here, Bunter——"

"I know jolly well I never lost my memory," said Bunter peevishly. "You're trying to pull my leg. What rot!"

"You did lose it," said Harry quietly, though the unpleasant manner of the fat junior was putting a great strain upon his temper. "You forgot all of us, and even your own name. You have been going about the school knowing nothing of what happened before that bump in the bath."

Billy Bunter looked incredulous.

"Oh, draw it mild!" he exclaimed.

"It's true, Bunter," said Alonzo Todd, coming forward. "I assure you, my dear Bunter, that the account Wharton has imparted to you is correct in every particular. Wharton is incapable of departing from the straight path of strict veracity, my dear Bunter!"

"Oh, cheese it!"

"Ahem! What has happened, my dear Bunter, has carried out a suggestion made by myself. It was my plan to restore your memory by a second shock similar to the first—and my idea was to drop you head first into the swimming-bath when there was

no water in it, of course. By this means ——"

"You—you beast!" gasped the Owl of the Remove.

"My dear Bunter——"

"You dangerous lunatic!"

"Ahem! My plan has been carried out by chance. The football biffed you in the Common-room—h'm!—I mean it smote your chin with a concussion of considerable violence, and you were hurled to the floor, your head coming into contact with the wainscot——"

"Look here——"

"This second shock has apparently restored you, and it bears out the scientific theory elaborated in the volume of Dr. Softes, entitled 'Amazing Recoveries of Patients Attended by Myself.'"

"Oh, buzz off, Toddy!" said Harry Wharton. "Cheese it! You don't want to make Bunter ill again, you know. I heard of a man once who was talked to death."

"My dear Wharton——"

Alonzo was gently pushed into the passage. The news had passed round by this time that Billy Bunter had recovered, and fellows were crowding from far and near to see him. Among the rest came Sammy Bunter, of the Second Form.

Sammy was grinning. He did not believe that his major had lost his memory at all, and so he naturally did not believe that he had recovered. He squeezed into the study as Billy Bunter was fastening his collar. Billy Bunter blinked at him with a far from affectionate gaze.

"So you've come round," said Sammy.

"Yes," growled Billy.

"Did they find you out?"

"Eh?"

"Did you chaps bowl him out?" asked Sammy. "Of course, I knew that it was gammon all along. I told you so, didn't I?"

"You did," said Harry Wharton. "But it wasn't gammon—it was genuine, and Billy has recovered. You ought to be glad, you young rascal!"

"Oh, I wasn't taken in, you see. I know Billy has been living like a fighting-cock

Greyfriars Frivolities



TOBOGGANING!

THE snow lies deep upon the hills,
And crowns the country hedges;
Bidding us taste the thrills and spills
Of sliding in our sledges.
So off we set, a cheery band,
And "Inky," moved to mirthfulness,
Declares tobogganing is grand—
"The finest sport on earthfulness!"

Bunter comes toiling in the rear,
As up the slope we scramble;
Poor Billy is no mountaineer,
And you may safely gamble
That long before we reach the top
He'll puff and snort like bellows;
Result of too much ginger-pop—
"Hi! Wait for me, you fellows!"

Soon we are speeding through the snow
Faster and ever faster!
And cheeks are tingling, faces glow—
Then comes a dire disaster.
Bunter's toboggan, spinning round,
Ejects the Owl with vigour;
Deep in a snowdrift he is found,
A sad, pathetic figure!

Here's to the sport that schoolboys love
In wild and wintry weather;
When snowflakes, whirling from above,
Descend on hill and heather.
When sombre snowclouds hide the sun,
And temperature's at zero,
Tobogganing is splendid fun
For every schoolboy hero!

ever since he lost his memory; but what has he dropped it for, if you hadn't bowled him out? Did you lose your nerve, Billy?"

"Eh?" said Bunter. "Living like a fighting-cock! What do you mean?"

"Well, the fellows have been standing you unlimited feeds, and making a lot of you," said Sammy. "Of course, that was your little game. But why have you chucked it, without being found out?"

Billy Bunter blinked at Sammy in dismay. Sammy's disbelief in his strange attack did not trouble Billy at all. It was another reflection that was worrying him.

His thoughts were quite visible in his face, and the chums of the Remove burst into an irresistible roar of laughter. Billy Bunter did not know, till Sammy had told him, that he had been living like a fighting-cock while his memory was lost; and his look showed only too plainly that if he had known it he would not have been in such a hurry to recover. It had not occurred to the fat junior, under the circumstances, to conceal the fact that his memory had returned simply because he had not known that it was ever lost till he was told. It was an opportunity for "spoofing" such as would never occur twice in a lifetime; and Billy Bunter had allowed it to pass him.

""I—I say, you fellows!" stammered Bunter, "I——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You were an ass!" said Sammy, with brotherly frankness. "You might have kept it up for a week, or for the whole blessed term! I'd have helped you—I offered to, if you'd let me take my whack in the loot —— Ow!"

Billy Bunter, thoroughly exasperated, let out a fat fist, and Sammy staggered to the door. Nugent pushed him out and closed the door after him. Billy Bunter blinked at the chums of the Remove in an uncertain sort of way.

"I—I say, you fellows! I—I feel very strange. I—I think I'm having a relapse. I—I think I'm losing my memory again!"

The juniors roared.

"I—I forget who you are!" said Bunter. "I—I don't recognise you, Wharton. I don't even know your name—I mean——"

The juniors simply shrieked.

""Look here, you beasts!" roared Bunter. I tell you——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the juniors walked away still laughing. Billy Bunter glared after them and snorted. But he did not lose his memory again. He might keep it up his sleeve, as it were, as a card to be played on some more favourable occasion in the future—but for the present it was useless. There was no sympathy left now for poor old Bunter!



THE END



My Fag!

By George Wingate
(Captain of Greyfriars)

Who wakes me up at half-past six,
And starts performing monkey-tricks,
Dragging my bedclothes in a mix?
My Fag!

Who burns my toast until it's black,
Breaks every plate upon my rack,
And brings me bellowing on his track?
My Fag!

Who comes at six, instead of three,
And makes me wishy-washy tea,
Then loudly squeals across my knee?
My Fag!

Who bags my MAGNET and my GEM,
And makes me scour the school for them,
Evading me by stratagem?
My Fag!

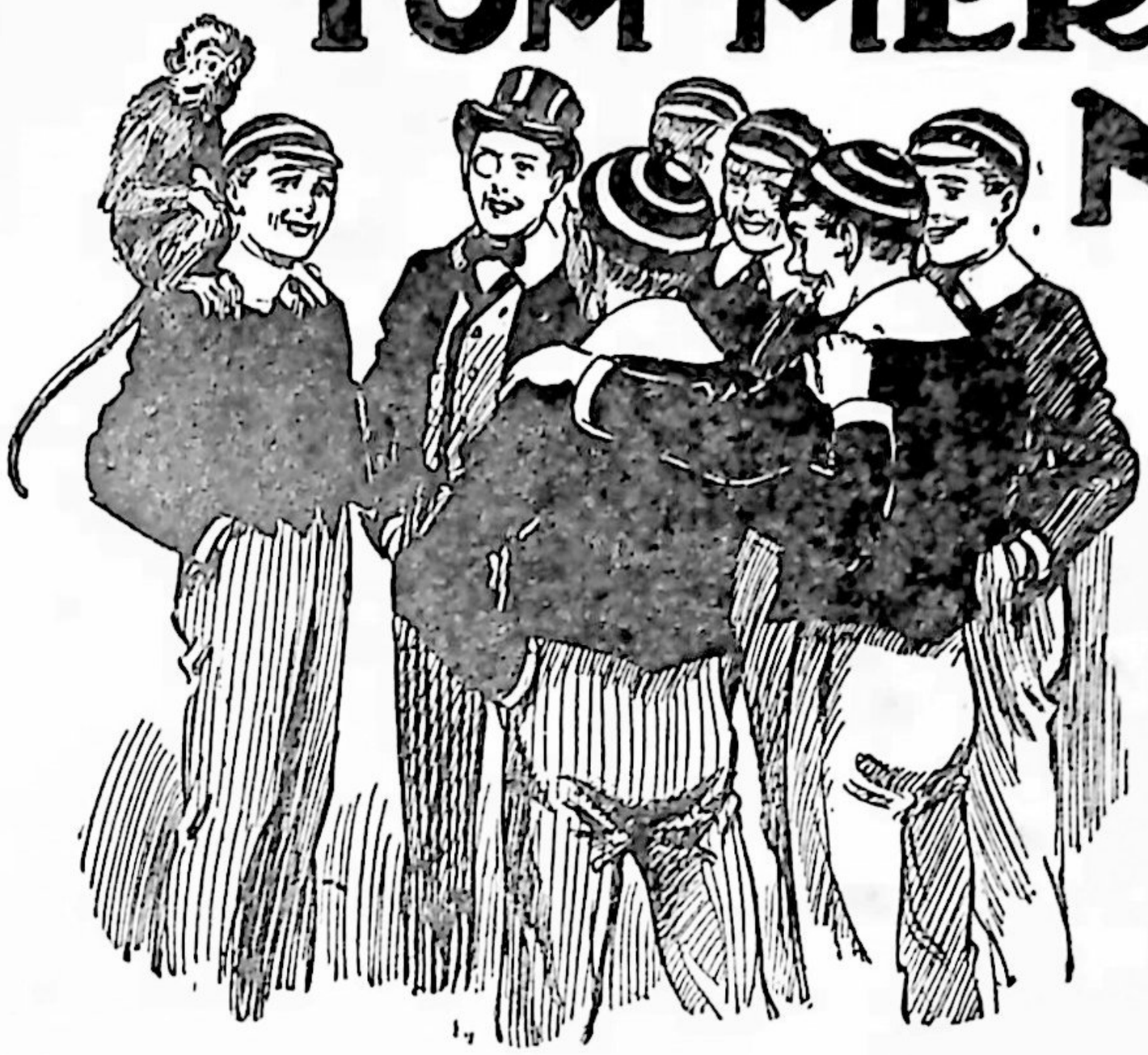
Who asks me to correct his Latin
(A language that he isn't pat in)?
Who stands and sniggers when I'm battin'?
My Fag!

Who asked his fellow-fags to dine
In my apartment, after nine,
And "cleared" my cakes and ginger-wine?
My Fag!

Who went on strike, the cheeky cub,
Demanding extra pay and grub,
Then, when chastised, began to blub?
My Fag!

Who, though no saint in alabaster,
And often causing dire disaster,
Won't hear a word against his master?
My Fag!

TOM MERRY'S MINOR!



By
MARTIN CLIFFORD

Mike, a new-comer to St. Jim's, causes much fun—and no little trouble—amongst the juniors of the School House.

THE FIRST CHAPTER
Hats Off !

"My hat!"

Tom Merry jumped as he uttered the exclamation.

The Terrible Three—Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther of the Shell—were sitting on a grassy bank close by the boat-house of St. Jim's.

The river before them gleamed in the setting sun. Behind them was the wood that bordered the towing-path, thick and dark and shady. The chums of the Shell were leaning against gnarled trunks as they discussed ginger-beer and dough-nuts from a bag that was open on Monty Lowther's knees.

Tom Merry's hand went up to his head. He was wearing a straw hat—the last straw of summer as Monty Lowther put it—and his hat had suddenly vanished.

Tom ran his fingers through his curly locks. He glanced round him in amazement. His first thought was that Manners or Lowther had jerked off his hat by way of a joke. But Manners was drinking ginger-beer, and Lowther was eating dough-nuts, and neither of them was in possession of a superfluous straw hat. Tom Merry looked at the wood behind him. It looked too dense for anyone to have stolen through to snatch off his hat from behind. Over him were low-hanging branches, thick with foliage, with birds twittering among the leaves high up.

"My hat!"

"What's the matter—" yawned Lowther.

"Somebody's collared my hat!"

His chums stared at him.

A minute before Tom Merry had been wearing a straw hat, and now he was bare-headed. The hat was certainly gone, and there was no one in sight excepting half a dozen juniors some distance away on the landing-raft.

"Is that a joke?" asked Manners. "You've put it behind you, I suppose. Tommy, my son, your sense of humour is feeble—very feeble."

"Ass!" exclaimed Tom warmly. "I tell you I didn't touch it! It suddenly vanished

off my head! I felt it move, and it was gone!"

"Extraordinary!" yawned Lowther.

"Look here, you fathead——"

"Must have mistaken itself for an aeroplane, and flown away," said Lowther. "I've known hats do that—I don't think. Or perhaps your old strawyard was a Boojum!"

"A—a what?"

"A Boojum! Don't you remember the queer habits of the Boojum, as related by Lewis Carroll?"

And Lowther quoted lazily:

"'In the midst of the thing he was going to say,
In the midst of his laughter and glee,
He had suddenly, silently vanished away,
For the Snark was a Boojum, you see!'"

"Oh, don't be a silly ass!" said Tom Merry. "Some chump has sneaked behind me and collared my straw. I'll thump him when I find him. Pass the dough-nuts!"

Lowther passed the dough-nuts, with a grin. But a moment or two later the grin vanished from his face, and he gave a jump.

"Let my cap alone, you fathead!"

"Eh? What's the matter with your silly cap?" asked Tom Merry, looking round.

"It's gone!" yelled Lowther.

"Wha-a-at!"

It was certainly gone. Monty Lowther was bareheaded. He jumped up, and scanned the dark wood behind him; but there was no sign of a marauder. He ran his fingers over his carefully-parted hair and snorted.

"One of the New House bounders japing us, I suppose," he growled. "By Jove! I'll wallop him for giving me such a start! Where is the beast?"

"Perhaps your cap is a Boojum, too!" Tom Merry suggested sarcastically.

"Oh, rats!"

Lowther sat down again. The cap could wait, and the ginger-beer and dough-nuts couldn't. Manners was chuckling.

"Must be Figgins or Reddy, or one of those bounders!" he remarked. "I don't quite see how they got at your giddy headgear, though!"

"I don't see any joke in it, myself!" growled Lowther.

And he frowned over his dough-nuts. Manners refilled his glass with ginger-beer, and was drinking it, when he gave a sudden jump, and the ginger-beer swamped out of the glass.

"Look out!" roared Lowther as he received half of it on his knees. "What are you swamping my bags with ginger-beer for, you silly chump?"

"My cap!"

"Blow your cap!"

"It's gone!" roared Manners.

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Somebody jerked it off all of a sudden!" exclaimed Manners, jumping up. "Where is he? I'll scalp him! I'll——"

Manners glared round in search of the practical joker.

But there was no practical joker to be seen. Save for themselves, the towing-path was deserted, and the deep wood behind them was silent and still. It was quite uncanny, and the chums of the Shell exchanged amazed glances.

"Blessed if the place doesn't seem to be haunted!" ejaculated Manners.

An elegant junior came sauntering down from the direction of the boathouse. It was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of the Fourth Form. D'Arcy looked a picture, as usual, from the tips of his shining boots to the crown of his glossy topper. He paused to look at the Terrible Three, and carefully adjusted his eyeglass in his right eye, the better to survey them.

"Bai Jove, deah boys!" he remarked. "Have you joined the hatless bwigade, or are you settin' up as nuts?"

"Do you know anything about it?" demanded Lowther heatedly.

Arthur Augustus looked surprised.

"That's accordin', deah boy. I know a gweat deal about a good many things. Wathah! But what are you specially alludin' to?"

"Some silly ass has jerked off our caps somehow, and taken them away!"

"Bai Jove! How funnay!"

"I don't see anything funny in it!" growled Lowther. "It's about the most idiotic joke I've ever heard of!"

"Yaas; and you know a lot about idiotic jokes, considewin' that you do the Comic Column in the 'Weekly,'" agreed D'Arcy.

"Oh, don't you start being funny!" snapped Lowther. "You were born funny enough. I want to know what silly fathead has collared my cap!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, image?" demanded the Terrible Three together, glaring at the swell of St. Jim's.

"It's wathah funnay, deah boys! Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you've come here looking for a thick ear, Gussy ——"

"Or a blue eye——"

"Or a bumping——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" trilled Arthur Augustus.

The Terrible Three made a movement towards him. Arthur Augustus backed away, still laughing; and as he did so, something whisked out of the low branches overhead, and the elegant junior's topper vanished from his head. It was gone in the twinkling of an eye. Arthur Augustus ceased to laugh, and his hand flew to his head.



In the twinkling of an eye something whisked out of the low branches above, and the elegant junior's topper vanished from his head. (*See Chapter* 1.)

"Bai Jove! Where's my toppah?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Terrible Three. "Funny, isn't it?"

Arthur Augustus looked excited.

"I do not wegard it as funnay to play silly twicks with a chap's toppah. Where is my toppah gone? I want my toppah!"

The chums of the Shell gazed upward into

the low, thick branches. They had seen D'Arcy's topper whisked from his head, but it had happened so quickly that they could hardly be certain how it had gone.

"There's something—or somebody—in the tree!" said Tom Merry. "They don't grow monkeys in Rylcombe Wood, or I should think it was a monkey!"

"Oh, wats! It's some uttah ass playin' a silly pwank——"

"It was a monkey," said Lowther. "I saw his tail whisking."

"How on earth could a monkey get here, in the wood?" said Tom Merry, puzzled.

"Might have escaped from an organ—or it might be one of D'Arcy's relations paying him a visit."

"Weally, Lowther, you ass——"

"'Skuse me, 'ave you seen a monkey along 'ere?"

It was a rough voice, and the juniors turned at once to see the speaker. He was a roughly-dressed man, with a mottled face, and his breath exhaled a rich odour of rum as he spoke. He wore a dirty fur cap on the side of his head, and an equally dirty clay-pipe stuck out of the corner of his mouth. His gait was a little unsteady as he came along the towing-path.

"Have you lost a monkey?" asked Tom Merry.

The man in the fur cap nodded.

"Yes, I 'ave. He got away from the orgin while I was in the Green Man gettin' somethin' to—to eat. Name of Mike. I'll give 'im a beltin' when I get 'old of him," added the gentleman in the fur cap, gritting his teeth on the pipe. "'Tain't the first time as he's run orf. Mike! Mike!"

"There's a monkey in this tree, I think," said Tom Merry. "We've just had our hats snatched off our heads, and I think I saw a monkey——"

"That's 'im!" said the man in the fur cap. "Jest one of 'is tricks. I'll give 'im a beltin'."

"Oh, don't whack him on our account," said Tom hastily. "I suppose he doesn't know any better. And it did no harm, anyway."

"Not at all, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus quickly.

Even for the sake of his beloved topper, D'Arcy would not have liked to see an animal cruelly treated.

The man in the fur cap grunted.

"I'm goin' to belt 'im for runnin' away," he said. "Broke 'is chain, 'e did, the warmint. I'll tan 'im till 'e can't crawl! Mike! Mike!"

There was a sound of chattering in the tree. The unseen animal had evidently heard and recognised the voice of his master. There was a whiz in the air, and two caps, a straw and a silk hat, came rushing down and fell in the grass. The juniors picked up their headgear. The unfortunate Mike was evidently trying to make peace by restoring the articles he had purloined.

"Mike! Come down, you blighter! Kim 'ere!"

Chatter, chatter, chatter from the branches.

"Mike!" roared the man in the fur cap.

A little, hairy body dropped from the tree into the grass at his feet. It was a small, nimble monkey, black as the ace of spades, with a collar riveted round his neck, to which a short length of chain still hung. Mike, mischievous as he was, dared not disobey the dreaded voice.

The man in the fur cap muttered an oath, and grasped the monkey by the collar. Then he jerked a short, thick strap from his pocket and whirled it in the air. The monkey gave a terrified squeal. He knew what was coming, and he seemed to shrink to half his size in the savage grasp of his master.

Arthur Augustus started forward involuntarily.

"Pway don't thwash him, deah boy!" he exclaimed, in distress. "The poor little beast doesn't know any bettah, you know. Pway don't be wuff!"

"You mind yer own business," said the man in the fur cap.

D'Arcy flushed with indignation. The man was half intoxicated and wholly a hooligan.

The anger and disgust in the faces of the

A Day in the Life of a Cowboy!



juniors had only the effect of making him more savage in temper. The strap descended with savage force, and there was a shrill squeal of pain from the monkey. Then again and again the cruel strap descended, while the wretched animal writhed and wriggled and screamed with pain.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Mike Finds a New Master!

TOM MERRY sprang forward.

The monkey was the property of the man in the fur cap, and perhaps he had a right to punish it for breaking its chain and escaping, but no one could have a right to use an animal with such cruelty. The man was wreaking his drunken rage upon the unfortunate victim, and Tom Merry could not stand it.

"Let that monkey alone!" Tom exclaimed sharply.

The man in the fur cap snarled.

"You mind your own business, young gentleman, and I'll mind mine," he said. "This 'ere is my monkey, ain't it?"

"You have no right to beat him like that."

"That's my business."

And the strap rose again. Tom Merry clenched his fists.

"If you touch that monkey again, I'll knock you down!" he said, between his teeth.

The man in the fur cap grinned. He was head and shoulders bigger than the junior of St. Jim's. He did not think for a moment that the boy would carry out his threat. The strap came down with savage force, and the monkey squealed in anguish.

Tom Merry's blood was up now, and he kept his word. His fist lashed out straight from his shoulder.

Biff!

"Ow! Ow! Yah!"

The man in the fur cap went down into the grass with a crash. The monkey jerked loose, and scuttled to the foot of the tree, where he crouched, chattering and grimacing. He was too terrified to climb into safety.

The half-intoxicated ruffian leapt to his feet.

"You 'it me!" he roared, his coarse features working with rage.

"I'll hit you again if you touch that monkey," said Tom Merry passionately. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, you hulking scoundrel."

The man rushed towards him, but he paused as the other fellows lined up with Tom Merry. He was big enough to make things very warm for one of the juniors, but he would have had no chance against the four, and he halted in time.

"Orlright," he said sullenly. "You've 'it me. P'r'aps I'll meet you some night and make it square, young fellow-me-lad! And as fur that monkey, I'll take 'im 'ome, and I'll belt 'im till 'is skin comes orf! That's all the good you've done by interferin', my fine feller!"

He lurched towards the monkey.

The unfortunate Mike made a spring towards Tom Merry, and clambered up to his shoulder, as if seeking protection.

"Give me my monkey!" roared the man in the fur cap.

Tom Merry hesitated.

It was clearly against all law to keep the man's monkey away from him, but the ruffian's words made Tom hesitate. He knew that he would fulfil the threat he had made; what he could not do to Tom Merry he would inflict upon the monkey as soon as the wretched animal was wholly in his power again. And Mike knew it as well as the juniors, and clung to Tom Merry's curly hair with somewhat painful force. He knew what he had to expect from the man in the fur cap.

"Are you goin' to give me my monkey?" demanded the ruffian.

"I—I suppose you'll have to let him have his property, Tom," said Manners, in a hesitating voice.

"Look here, my man," said Tom, as calmly as he could, for he was boiling with anger. "You're not fit to have an animal. Will you sell me this monkey?"

"No, I won't!"

"I'll give you ten shillings for him."

"I wouldn't take ten quid!"

"I'll make it a pound," said Tom Merry. "You fellows can lend me the rest?"

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I tell you I ain't sellin' that monkey. I'm goin' to take 'im 'ome, and belt 'im till 'e can't crawl about!" said the man in the fur cap, rolling the words on his tongue with great relish as he saw how they made the juniors wince. "I'll belt 'im till he's next door to a goner, you bet! Now, 'and 'im over."

Tom Merry's eyes blazed.

"I won't!"

The ruffian glared at him.

"You won't give me my monkey?"

"No, I won't!" said Tom, drawing a deep breath. "You're a cruel beast, and you're not fit to keep an animal, and you shan't have him!"

"Yaas, wathah! Stick to him, deah boy!" chirped Arthur Augustus. "I'll back you up! I've a gweat mind to give that howwid wuffian a feahful thwashin', anyway."

"You—you—you're goin' to steal my monkey?" roared the man in the fur cap.

Tom Merry flushed.

"I've offered to buy him from you. If he's worth more than I've offered, I'll pay you a fair price."

"I ain't selling him. I get my living with that monkey. I ain't parting with him. Give me my monkey, or I'll have the law on yer."

"Very well! We'll let it go at that," said Tom Merry. "I belong to the school yonder, and you can come there and claim him. And when you do it, I'll see that you're prosecuted for cruelty to animals."

The man in the fur cap ground his teeth.

"It's stealing!" he howled. "Give me my monkey!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"You're goin' to keep my monkey?"

"Yes, I am. I'm going to take care of him, and see that he has a better time than he's had with you, you scoundrel!"

"I—I say, that's rather high-handed, Tommy," murmured Lowther. "I back you up, but—but it's his property, you know."

"Nobody has a right to keep an animal unless he treats him well," said Tom.

"I know; but—but that isn't the law, you know."

"Well, if he wants the law on the subject, let him go to the police-station about it," said Tom Merry. "He looks the kind of chap the police would like to see."

That remark seemed to strike home. The man in the fur cap gave a kind of quick, suspicious look around him, as if he expected to see a burly form in blue coming down the towing-path.

"Are you goin' to give me my monkey?" he said again.

"No, I am not. I'll pay for him, if you like, a fair price, but I won't give him to you to be beaten, you brute!"

"If you don't 'and him over, I'm goin' to take him."

"You're welcome to try."

"Fur the last time——"

"Rats!"

The man in the fur cap made a spring at the junior, and clutched at the monkey. Tom Merry hit out, and the ruffian reeled, but then his strong grasp closed on the junior. They struggled, and Mike chattered away at a fearful rate. But in a moment more Manners and Lowther and D'Arcy had their hands upon the man in the fur cap. He was dragged over and bumped down heavily on the ground.

Monty Lowther caught hold of the strap.

"Hold the beast, you fellows!" he said. "He seems so fond of this strap, he may as well have some of his own medicine!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Yaas, wathah! Pile in, deah boy! I'll hold the beast!"

"'Ere, you leggo! Lemme gerrup! I'll 'ave the law on yer!" roared the gentleman in the fur cap.

"Sit on his head, Gussy!"

"I wefuse to sit on his beastly head! It would make my twousahs dirtay!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus indignantly.

Fur Cap struggled violently.

But the juniors held him fast, and as he rolled over Monty Lowther brought down the strap with terrific force. A roar like that of a maddened bull burst from the man in the fur cap. But Lowther was not done

with him yet. He thought that very likely trouble would follow the rescue of the monkey, and he determined to make Fur Cap pay for it in advance. He lashed the ruffian till he roared and howled with pain.

Fur Cap made a terrific effort, and broke away from the juniors. He rolled down towards the river, and picked himself up there, convulsed with rage, and shaking his fist at the panting juniors.

"Pile in, deah boys!" shouted D'Arcy excitedly. "Pile in! Thump him! Thump the wottah! Huway!"

"Duck him in the river!" shouted Manners.

"Good egg!" Lowther hurled the strap into the middle of the Rhyl. "Now send him in after it!"

Fur Cap did not wait to be sent in after his strap. As the juniors rushed at him he dodged and fled. He disappeared up the towing-path.

"Stole away, bai Jove!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, we've got the monk," said Lowther. "What on earth are you going to do with him, Tom?"

"I'm going to get him to let go of my hair first, if he will!" said Tom Merry ruefully.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We're allowed to keep pets," said Tom. "I'll keep him."

"Not other people's pets," grinned Manners.

"He's mine now. I'm willing to pay for him. There ought to be a law to take animals away from rotters who can't treat them well."

"There ought to be, but there isn't, my son. I'm afraid we shall hear of Fur Cap again. Anyway, he's got something to remember us by! I'll bet he's never had such an awful walloping in his life before—unless he's had the cat in prison some time," said Lowther, with a chuckle.

"Pwetty neahly time for aftahnoon lessons, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus, consulting his famous gold ticker. "Bettah shove the monk into the shed where we keep the pets, Tom Merry, and put a dog-chain on him."



"Give me my monkey!" roared the man. Tom Merry hesitated. It was clearly against all law to keep the man's monkey away from him, but the ruffian's words made Tom hesitate. (*See Chapter* 2.)

"Or you could send him into the Fourth-Form room, along with the others," Monty Lowther suggested humorously.

"Weally, Lowthah——"

"I'll put him in the menagerie," said Tom Merry. "Reilly used to keep a monkey, and I don't see why I shouldn't keep one. I shall have to teach him to let people's hats alone, that's all. I dare say he's been taught that trick."

And the chums of St. Jim's walked away to the school, Tom Merry carrying his new acquisition upon his shoulder.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

Tom Merry Minor!

TOM MERRY'S appearance in the quadrangle of St. Jim's with a black monkey on his shoulder attracted a good deal of attention.

Quite a large number of the fellows kept pets of one sort or another, but members of the monkey tribe were rare. Reilly, of the Fourth, had had a monkey, but after his monkey had clawed the few remaining locks of Mr. Ratcliff, the New House-master, Reilly had considered it judicious to send him home. Mike was a very small monkey, and his keen, glittering eyes were full of intelligence. He blinked at the juniors as he sat crouched on Tom's shoulder.

"What on earth have you got there?" demanded Blake, of the Fourth. "I didn't know you had a minor, Tom Merry."

There was a roar of laughter at once.

Blake's remark was a happy hit, and Mike was christened on the spot "Tom Merry Minor." The owner of the name turned pink.

"Oh, don't be funny!" he exclaimed. "This is a monkey I've found!"

"Findings keepings—eh?" said Levison, of the Fourth, with his disagreeable grin. "That's sometimes called stealing, Tom Merry."

Tom Merry took no notice of the cad of the Fourth.

"We wescued him," said Arthur Augustus, addressing the interested crowd. "He had a bwute of a master, who was wallopin' him fwightfully, and we've taken him away."

"Pretty cool, by Jove!" said Figgins, of the New House.

"What were we to do, deah boy? We couldn't leave the poor little monk to be pulverwised by a dwunken wuffian."

"No fear!" said Tom Merry emphatically. "I offered the rotter a pound for him, and the offer's still open if he likes to come for the money. That's good enough."

"Yes, rather!" said Kangaroo, of the Shell. "The poor little beast still looks frightened."

"Levison's face, perhaps," suggested Lowther. "Turn it the other way, Levison."

Levison scowled.

"You'll get into a row if the owner comes for it," he sneered. "Stealing monkeys isn't allowed."

"Lucky for you, or you'd get popped into a show in no time," said Lowther cheerfully. "I've thought of a good dodge. If Fur Cap comes back, we'll offer him Levison instead. Nobody would miss him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where are you going to put your minor, Tommy?" asked Bernard Glyn, of the Shell, with a chuckle.

"Don't be a funny ass!" roared Tom Merry, exasperated. "If you call him my minor again I'll punch your silly head!"

"These minors are a frightful trouble!" grinned Blake. "D'Arcy's minor is just as bad. Might shove him into the Third Form-room with Wally."

"Weally, Blake——"

"I'm going to put him in the shed," said Tom Merry. "Will you lend me a dog-chain, Herries? I don't want him to wander away."

"Right-ho!" said Herries, of the Fourth. "Better chain him up out of reach of my bulldog. Towser doesn't like monkeys, and I shouldn't like Towser to eat him. He doesn't look over clean."

"Why, you silly ass——" said Tom Merry indignantly.

"Well, I don't want Towser to be ill, you know. He was ill after he bit Levison."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry walked away to the shed

behind the house, with the monkey on his shoulder. He was followed by an interested crowd. Herries produced a dog-chain, and Tom Merry fastened it to the monkey's collar. Mike declined to get down from his shoulder at first. Apparently he had taken a fancy to Tom Merry, and found his perch there quite comfortable. He was persuaded down at last, and a box was found for him, with a heap of straw, to make him a comfortable bed. He curled up in the straw, and lay blinking at the juniors.

"You'll have to give him a wash, Tommy," Lowther remarked. "Fur Cap didn't believe in keeping animals clean. Looks as if there are insects about him. You can't have your minor in that state."

"You silly ass!"

"Look out! Here comes Pongo!"

Pongo, the ragged mongrel belonging to Wally D'Arcy—the minor of the great Arthur Augustus—slunk into the shed with a bone in his jaws. But at sight of the monkey Pongo dropped the bone, and made one jump for Mike. Tom Merry had just time to interpose his boot, and Pongo howled and retreated, barking furiously. D'Arcy minor followed his ragged pet into the shed.

"What's the row?" he exclaimed. "What are you doing to Pongo?"

"The beast wants to bite my monkey!" said Tom Merry warmly.

"Well, why shouldn't he if he wants to?" growled Wally. "Don't you shove my dog, or there will be a row! It's all right! That blessed ape couldn't hurt Pongo. Pongo's teeth would rip him into ribbons in no time!"

"I don't want my monkey ripped into ribbons, you young ass!" yelled Tom Merry.

Wally sniffed.

"Rather niffy, that monkey! Why don't you wash him?"

"I haven't had time."

"Tom Merry's minor has only just arrived," Blake explained.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry made a rush at Blake, and the Fourth-Former dodged out of the shed, laughing.

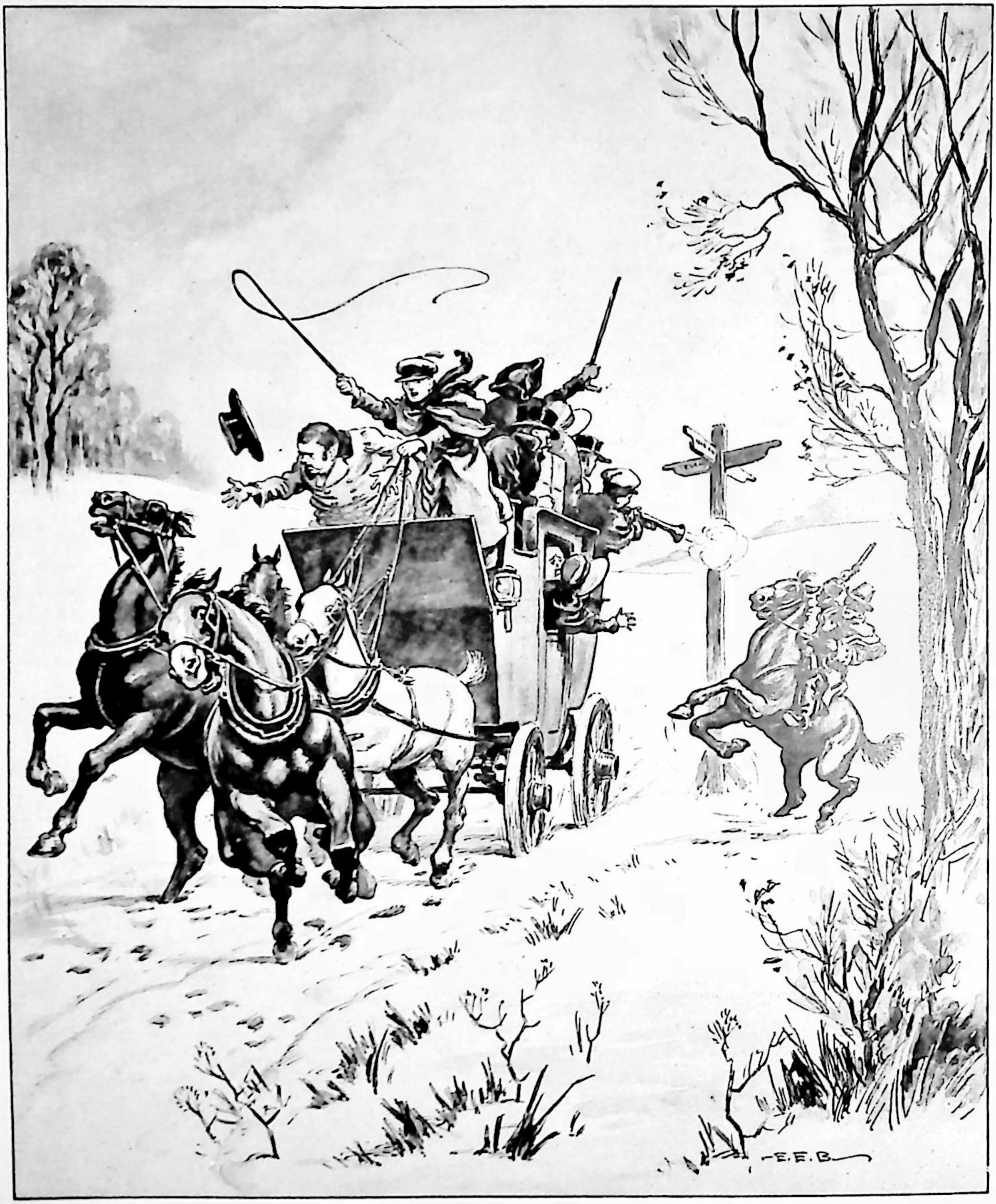
"I suppose I shall have to chain Pongo up," growled Wally. "I shouldn't like him to get too close to that miserable-looking beast. Come on, Pongo!"

"I wonder if he's hungry?" said Tom Merry, surveying his new pet. "I suppose monkeys live on nuts, don't they?"



"All together!" roared Tom Merry. "One, two, three—Go!" Fur Cap whirled through the air. Splash! (*See Chapter 4.*)

A Holiday Hold-up!



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Drawn by E. E. Briscoe.

How Two St. Jim's Boys Saved the Coach.

HOW TWO ST. JIM'S BOY'S SAVED THE COACH!

THE highways of rural England are sometimes voted unsafe to-day, because of the menace of the reckless motorist; but over a hundred years ago they were decidedly less safe, owing to the highwaymen and footpads who infested the land. It was quite a common occurrence for coaches to be held up at cross-roads, and for their startled occupants to be called upon to "Stand and deliver!"

More often than not, the highwayman would succeed in "getting away with it"; but there was a notable exception to this rule in the winter of 1792, when it was a case of the holder-up being himself held up by a couple of plucky schoolboys, whose names will ever be remembered with pride in the annals of St. Jim's.

Power and Percival, two senior boys, were the heroes of this exciting episode. On breaking up for the Christmas vacation, they caught the coach at Wayland, in order to proceed to Power's place in Hampshire. The coach was packed inside and out with Christmas travellers, and all went well until the cross-roads were reached. Here the vehicle was beset by a masked highwayman, who had been waiting in ambush. The rascal called upon the driver to draw rein, and the occupants of the coach to dismount, and to deliver up their money and valuables.

The coach-driver, scared out of his wits, had no thought but surrender and submission. But Power and Percival had other views! The former snatched the reins and whip from the driver's trembling hands, and urged the horses into a gallop. Meanwhile, Percival relieved the quaking guard of his loaded blunderbuss, which he turned upon the highwayman, opening a deadly fire. The "gentleman of the road" was taken completely by surprise at this unexpected resistance. Wheeling his rearing steed, he galloped away over the snowy fields, leaving the coach to proceed on its way unmolested. A Governor of St. Jim's happened to be among the passengers. He gave publicity to the plucky conduct of Power and Percival, who received a handsome reward.

"Anybody got any nuts for Tom Merry minor?" called out Glyn.

"Look here!" roared Tom Merry, as the juniors yelled. "I don't consider that a joke. What are you silly idiots cackling at?"

The juniors trooped off, laughing. Tom Merry shook his head sorrowfully at the unconscious Mike. He could foresee a whole hurricane of jokes and chipping on the subject of his minor, and he was not wholly glad that he had come into possession of Mike. But it was not Mike's fault, and Tom Merry patted him affectionately before he left him curled up in the box.

Kildare, of the Sixth, met Tom Merry as the Shell fellow came into the School House.

"I didn't know you had a brother, Merry," he said.

"I haven't," he said. "I'm the only specimen."

"Then what's this talk about your minor coming to St. Jim's?" demanded Kildare.

"It isn't my minor," he growled. "It's a monkey, Kildare. That is an idiotic joke."

"A monkey! Ha, ha, ha!"

With a heated countenance, Tom Merry made his way to the Shell Form-room.

Skimpole, of the Shell, came towards him, blinking through his big spectacles.

"I was just asking where you were, my dear Merry," Skimpole exclaimed. "I hear that you have a monkey that strongly resembles you—so strongly that the fellows call it Merry minor——"

"Shut up, you ass!"

"My dear Merry, there is nothing to get excited about," he said soothingly. "It's a very interesting circumstance—very! Do you not see that it is a living proof of the theory of the descent of man from an ape-like species? It is probable that you yourself, my dear Merry, are descended from the same stock as that very monkey. Yarooh! Yah! Ow! What did you hit me for?"

Skimpole sat on the Form-room floor and blinked at Tom Merry in astonishment.

Mr. Linton entered the room.

"What is this?" he exclaimed severely. "Fighting in the Form-room?"

"No, sir!" gasped Skimpole, staggering

up. "I am not fighting. I was explaining to Merry that the theory of evolution is backed up, sir, by the remarkable resemblance that exists between him and his monkey——"

"What?"

"And Merry became suddenly excited, sir, for what reason I do not know."

Mr. Linton smiled.

"Go to your places, my boys," he said. "And you would do well, Skimpole, to pay more attention to class-work and a little less to foolish theories."

"But evolution isn't a foolish theory, sir," said Skimpole, in surprise. "The greatest of modern scientists proclaim their descent from the monkey tribe, and, indeed, declare that their descent from monkeys is self-evident——"

"Go to your place, Skimpole!"

"Certainly, sir; but I should like to point out——"

Mr. Linton picked a cane off his desk, and Skimpole went to his place without pointing out anything further.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER
Fur Cap!

TOM MERRY wore a somewhat worried look as afternoon lessons proceeded.

When Mr. Linton's attention happened to be elsewhere, the fellows whispered and giggled on the subject of Tom Merry minor. Gore drew a picture of an impossible monkey on a page of his exercise-book, and labelled it "Tom Merry Minor," and passed it along the Form. The giggles that followed drew Mr. Linton's attention, and he promised to detain the whole class an hour if there were any more of it.

There was no more of it after that, and the juniors settled down to work, leaving the chipping of Tom Merry till a more convenient time.

But afternoon lessons were not destined to finish without interruption. Mr. Linton was taking the Shell upon a personally-conducted tour among the antiquities of Rome when there was a sudden sound of disturbance through the quiet afternoon.

"Get hout!" It was the well-known voice of Taggles, the porter. "Hout with you, you tramp! Houtside, I say!"

"I ain't going without my property!"

Tom Merry started.

The voice came clearly through the open windows of the Form-room, and he recognised the hoarse tones of Fur Cap.

"Phew!" said Manners softly. "He's come for his giddy monkey."

"Houtside!"

"Yah!"

Bump! There was the sound of a heavy fall, and then the voice of Taggles, the porter, rose in anguished tones.

"'Elp! Ow! 'Elp!"

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mr. Linton.

He strode to the Form-room window and looked out. Some of the juniors ventured to leave their places and follow their Form-master.

Taggles was rolling on the ground, and Fur Cap, evidently very much under the influence of liquor, was sprawling over him and punching him.

The juniors waited to see no more.

Tom Merry made a rush for the door, and his chums rushed after him, and they dashed out of the house at top speed. Fur Cap had almost reached the house when Taggles had pursued him and run him down —with disastrous results for Taggles.

But the sudden rush of the juniors forced the ruffian to cease his thumping of the wriggling, yelling porter.

Hands were laid upon him on all sides, and he was dragged off his victim.

Taggles staggered up.

"Thanky kindly, young gentlemen," he gasped. "'Old him! He's a dangerous ruffian, he is. I'll set my mastiff loose in a minute! 'Old him!"

Taggles rushed away for his mastiff.

"We'll see him out, Taggy!" said Tom Merry. "Now then, you chaps, all together! Bring him down to the river!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Hurray!"

Some of the prefects had come out of the School House at the sound of the disturbances. But they had no time to interfere. The Shell fellows rushed the ruffian towards

the school gates. With so many hands upon him Fur Cap had no chance to struggle. He could only writhe and gasp out threats.

"You lemme go! I want my monkey! I'll 'ave the law on yer! Ow, ow, ow!"

Right through the gateway he went.

Down the path to the river the juniors bore him, and along the towing-path to a spot where the water was shallow.

"'Elp!" shrieked Fur Cap. "Don't chuck me into that water! Ow! 'Elp!" It was clear that the gentleman in the fur cap had a horror of water in any shape or form. "'Ow! 'Elp! Perlice!"

"All together!" roared Tom Merry. "One, two, three——"

The wriggling ruffian swung to and fro in their arms.

"Go!"

Fur Cap whirled through the air.

Splash!

A mighty spurt of water rose where the ruffian descended into the river, and he disappeared under the surface.

He came up at the next moment, gasping and spluttering.

The water was only waist-deep, and the man was in no danger; but he looked a sorry sight. His fur cap was a limp rag on his head, and his stubbly chin glistened with water-drops. The cold contact with the water had sobered him, but it had not diminished his rage. He came struggling and splashing out of the river, trampling up mud in the shallow water.

"We'll shove you in again if you come out here," said Tom Merry.

"'Old him!" roared the voice of Taggles. "I've got the mastiff 'ere!"

As the drenched ruffian scrambled out of the water, Taggles came running along the towing-path with a big and powerful mastiff at his heels.

"That's 'im!" yelled Taggles. "Seize 'im, Cæsar! Seize 'im!"

Cæsar made a rush at Fur Cap.

The infuriated ruffian might have charged at the juniors; but he did not venture to argue with the mastiff.

He gave a whoop of terror, and ran for his life down the towing-path, and Cæsar dashed after him in hot pursuit.

"Oh, my heye!" gasped Taggles. "I 'ope Cæsar will git him! Comin' shovin' 'is way into the school, talkin' about monkeys, or somethink! I'll give him monkeys! If Cæsar gets 'old of him, it will stop his monkey tricks!"

Dog and man vanished down the towing-path.

"I don't think he'll come back!" grinned Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha! No!"

And the juniors trooped back to the school. Ten minutes later the mastiff came home and trotted cheerfully into Taggles' lodge with a huge fragment of check cloth in his mouth. Taggles chuckled gleefully as he saw it. It was evident that Cæsar had obtained a hold upon the fugitive, and Fur Cap had only escaped by leaving that considerable portion of his lower garments in the mastiff's jaws.

Tom Merry & Co. returned to the Form-room. They were a little apprehensive as to how Mr. Linton might regard their sudden outbreak; but the master of the Shell only told them to go to their places. It had been necessary for somebody to go to the rescue of Taggles, and the Shell fellows had been first in the field.

But Tom Merry was very thoughtful when classes were dismissed and he came out of the Form-room with his chums.

"That rotter doesn't mean to let me keep Mike without a row," he remarked. "I'm afraid we haven't seen the last of him!"

"I don't think he'll face the mastiff again!" grinned Manners.

"I don't see why he can't part with Mike," said Tom. "Why can't he sell the monkey? He isn't fond of him, or anything of that sort. He treats him like a brute. Why can't he sell him at a fair price?"

"Obstinate beast, most likely!" said Manners.

"Well, he's not going to have Mike!" said Tom Merry determinedly.

"Suppose he goes to the Head?"

"Then we shall explain to the Head, and he'll get prosecuted by the Society for the



Tom Merry turned a crimson face towards his tormentors. "Will you shut up?" he roared. "We're only watching the circus!" grinned Levison. (*See Chapter 5.*)

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals!" said Tom Merry triumphantly. "He knows that, and I don't think he was coming here to see the Head. I think he was tipsy, and he came here to steal the monkey!"

"Steal it! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, to collar it! I'm going to take care of it. The little beast is quite fond of me already——"

"Touching thing, family affection!" murmured Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry glared.

"If you're going to be funny——"

"My dear chap, I'm quite serious. It's a ripping thing to see a minor fond of his major. Very rare in schools, too!"

"You silly ass——"

"Ha, ha, ha! I suppose you don't mind if we call you Merry major now?" yelled Monty Lowther.

And he fled, shrieking, as Tom Merry charged at him.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER

Washing Day!

LOWTHER and Manners went down to footer practice, leaving Tom Merry to look after his new pet. When they came in to tea, some time later, they found a crowd in the Shell passage. Outside the door of the study they shared with Tom Merry, the passage was crammed. The chums of the Shell surveyed the scene of commotion in surprise.

"What's up?" exclaimed Lowther. "Not a fire?"

"Ha, ha! No!"

"If it's a rag, you——"

"It isn't a wag, deah boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "We're watchin' Tom Mewwy, that's all!"

"What are you watching Tom Merry for, ass?"

"I wefuse to be called an ass!"

"He's washing his monkey!" grinned Kangaroo, of the Shell. "It's worth watching. Come and look! Ha, ha, ha!"

Manners and Lowther pushed their way through the crowd of juniors, and stared in at the doorway of the study.

Tom Merry was very busy.

The study table was pushed into a corner, and in its place stood a tin bath of steaming water, with several old newspapers spread under it, to protect the carpet.

Tom Merry, in his shirtsleeves, was kneeling beside the tin bath, very red in the face with his exertions, and very much splashed with water.

Mike, the monkey, did not seem to take kindly to water.

Probably he had never been washed before, and he may have looked upon it as some form of torture, or perhaps he shared his former master's horror of soap.

He was certainly getting plenty of soap. Tom Merry had put him into the bath, and was lathering soap upon him with a heavy hand. Mike squealed dismally under the infliction. He had almost disappeared under the lather, and looked like a white ghost of a monkey. The juniors in the passage were encouraging—or, rather, exasperating—Tom Merry with a continual flow of remarks.

"Go it, Merry major!"

"Keep your minor clean!"

"Are you going to shave him?"

"Wash and brush-up, twopence!"

"Put your beef into it, Merry major!"

"Why don't you wash your minor like that, Gussy? He needs it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry turned a crimson face towards his tormentors.

"Will you shut up?" he roared.

"We're only watching the circus!" grinned Levison. "This is as funny as the cinematograph, and cheaper!"

"Yaas, wathah! I'm vewy pleased to see you bwingin' up your minah in the way he should go, Mewwy majah!"

"Give him some more soap!" chuckled Blake. "He hasn't had enough. You've only used about a couple of bars on him!"

"I say, you're making the study in a pretty muck!" said Lowther, in dismay.

Tom Merry snorted.

"Didn't you say the monkey wanted washing?" he demanded indignantly.

"Well, yes; but——"

"Then come and lend a hand, instead of grinning like a hyena! The little beast won't keep still. He doesn't seem to like being washed! He may have got some soap in his eyes. He won't keep his silly head still!"

"Get Lowther to sit on his head, and Manners to hold his tail——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Manners and Lowther nobly went to their chum's aid. Mike was decidedly a handful. He was wriggling and splashing in the water, and scattering it in spurts over the carpet. His tail whisked about and thrashed the water, and sent it in drenching splashes over his unfortunate master.

"My knees are soaked through!" gasped Tom Merry. "He's drenched my blessed waistcoat! Why don't he keep still?"

"Cheeky young beggah!" said D'Arcy. "But it's the same with all these minahs—they won't do as their majahs tell them!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Manners and Lowther grasped the monkey. Manners caught his tail, and held it fast, and Lowther grasped the metal collar. Then Tom Merry swamped water on him, and washed off the soap. The water was getting decidedly discoloured, and Mike was getting proportionately cleaner. He was muttering and chattering at a great rate, and making wild efforts to get loose.

"Hold him!" ejaculated Lowther as the collar was jerked out of his hand. "He's

loose, the beast! Hang on to his tail, Manners!"

The monkey whirled round on Manners, and the Shell fellow let go the tail as the wet, hairy body bumped on him. The monkey made a spring to escape, and the Terrible Three all grasped at him together. Manners bumped on Lowther, and he reeled over the bath. He caught at Tom Merry to save himself, and brought him down—right in the bath!

Splash!

"Oh!"

"Groooh!"

Tom Merry and Lowther were head and shoulders in the bath. It rolled over as they struggled madly out, and the water swamped over the study floor, a wave of it catching Manners and drenching him to the knees. There was a hysterical yell from the juniors in the passage. They were almost in convulsions.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Oh! Yah!"

"Groogh! I'm wet! Huh! Groogh!"

"Where's that blessed monkey?"

"Groogh! Blow the monkey! I'm soaked! Ow! My mouth is full of soap—groogh!—and hairs! Gruggggggg!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Kangaroo. "Look after your minor, Tom Merry! He's trying to get out of the window!"

Tom Merry, with soap and water running down his face, made a bound to the window. Mike slithered up the curtains in a twinkling. They were pretty chintz curtains, a present from Tom Merry's old governess, Miss Priscilla Fawcett; but they were not pretty any longer when Mike had clambered over them. He tore great gashes in the chintz, and left a trail of soap and water and dirty claw-marks.

He sat on the curtain-pole at the top of the window, and chattered and grinned at terrific speed.

Tom Merry shook his fist at him.

"Come down, you beast! Come and be caught, you rotter! You silly asses, to let him get loose! Come down at once, Mike! Oh, crumbs!"

"Look at my bags!" roared Manners.

"Blow your silly bags! Come down, Mike!"

"Look at me!" yelled Lowther. "I'm soaked! I'm drenched! I'm dripping! I've got soap in my nose! Yow!"

"Blow your nose! Come down, Mike, old man!"

Chatter, chatter, chatter from Mike; but he declined to come down. Evidently he considered that the washing was a joke that had gone quite far enough.

"My hat! I'm beginning to understand why Fur Cap lathered the little beast!" panted Tom Merry. "Mike, old man, do come down! I won't wash you any more! Come down, you grinning little imp! Oh, crumbs! Somebody get me a pole or something!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mike, Mike—Micky! Come down, old chap!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry almost tore his hair. The monkey had obeyed the brutal, threatening voice of Fur Cap, but Tom Merry could not speak in the tones of that gentleman. And Mike was not inclined to obey Tom Merry. He had not yet learned obedience to his new master. The animal, too, was scared and worried by the unaccustomed washing, and by the soap that had found its way into his eyes and nose. He clung to the curtain-pole and chattered at Tom Merry. The top of the window was open, as usual, and Tom was in momentary fear that the ape would take it into its excited head to escape out of the room. A chase after Mike out of doors was likely to prove more exciting than pleasant.

The yells of laughter from the juniors in the passage only excited the monkey more. Tom Merry shouted to them to shut up, and they yelled the louder.

"He'll catch cold if you don't towel him!" yelled Reilly. "Faith, and phwy don't ye put some salt on his tail, and catch him?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get Finn to lasso him for you."

"I guess I could do it," said Buck Finn, the American junior in the Shell. "I reckon I could rope him in in short order."

"I'll get on a chair," said Tom Merry. "Stand ready to catch him if he dodges. I can reach him on a chair."

He dragged a chair under the window and mounted on it. He reached out his hand for Mike, and caught one leg. Mike squealed and whisked out of the top of the window, and as Tom Merry clung to him the chair reeled under his feet. Mike jerked himself loose, and disappeared out of the top of the window, and Tom Merry made a wild effort to maintain his balance, and failed—and came down backwards. Fortunately, he threw out his arms and caught Manners and Lowther in time—fortunately for him, that is to say, but not so for Manners and Lowther. The Terrible Three bumped on the floor together, and a loud roar rose from them.

"Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Do that again!" yelled Kangaroo.

"I reckon this beats buck-jumping!" roared Buck Finn.

The Terrible Three scrambled up. They grasped a cricket stump, a chair, and a poker, severally, and charged at the yelling crowd in the passage. And the crowd of laughers stood not upon the order of their going, but went at once.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

Roped In!

"WHAT on earth are you kids up to?" demanded Kildare, pausing as he came in from the football field towards the School House.

There was a crowd of Shell fellows and Fourth-Formers outside the House, gathered round Buck Finn, the American junior. Buck Finn hailed from the Western States, and he had spent his boyhood among the cowboys on the great plains of Arizona. He had brought a peculiar training with him to St. Jim's. He was a wonderful rider, a dead shot with any kind of firearm, and uncannily expert with the lasso—or the riata, as he called it.

Some of the juniors had taken instruction from Finn in the difficult art of throwing the lasso, and some had become quite expert; but Finn was easily first. Just now, Finn had a noosed rope in his hand, and half a dozen of the juniors round him had clothes-lines and blind-cords, and other kinds of ropes, and were making nooses in them.

Kildare stared at them.

"It's all right, Kildare," said Blake reassuringly. "We're not going on the warpath against the New House this time, and we're not going to hunt the Sixth and catch 'em wild in their studies."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tom Merry's minor has escaped," explained Kangaroo. "We're going to help him catch him. There was a lot of trouble when Reilly had a monkey, and he escaped. He clawed old Ratty's top-knot——"

"Whose?" said Kildare severely.

"Mr. Ratcliff's, I mean. If Tom Merry's minor should get into the Head's study and claw the Head, there might be trouble."

"I think it's pretty certain there would be trouble," grinned Kildare. "You had better get that monkey caught as quickly as possible."

"We're going to. Merry major and Manners and Lowther are stalking him down now, but they can't catch him. Merry major can't climb like his minor, you see. So we're going to rope the little beast in."

Kildare grunted and went on up the steps of the School House. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy whirled his lasso round his head, to make a trial cast, and there was a fiendish yell from Jack Blake as the rope caught him across the face.

"Yarooh! You fathead——"

"I wish you would not get in the way of my lasso, Blake——"

"You—you—you——"

"I am goin' to lasso the stone urn at the end of the balustrade, deah boys. Pway stand cleah!"

Whiz!

The lasso flew. The rope uncurled, and the noose settled down—not on the stone urn which adorned the balustrade, but over the head and shoulders of Eric Kildare, who was

just going into the House, a dozen yards from the object of D'Arcy's aim.

D'Arcy dragged excitedly on the lasso. The tautening of the rope proved that he had caught something, and he did not see for a moment what it was.

"Wippin', bai Jove! First twy——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let go, you ass!" roared Blake. "You've caught Kildare!"

"My hat!" gasped Kildare, as the rope dragged him down the steps. "You young villain! I—I—oh, leggo! Great Scott!"

He lost his footing on the steps, and came rolling down, and curled up in the rope. Arthur Augustus rushed forward in a state of consternation.

"Bai Jove! I'm awf'ly sowwy, deah boy! I didn't mean——"

Kildare sat up dazedly on the lowest step.

"You young sweep——"

"My deah chap, I'm feahfully sowwy! It was quite an accident. I——"

"Undo me!" roared Kildare.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Kildare was rolled up in the rope, and his arms were pinioned to his sides. Otherwise, his hands would have been busy upon D'Arcy already. The juniors stood by and yelled as the swell of St. Jim's unrolled the rope. They could guess what D'Arcy would get as soon as Kildare was loose.

"There you are, deah boy!" panted D'Arcy, at last. "Pway allow me to wepeat that I am vewwy sowwy, and say—— Yawooh! Gwooh! Gwooh! Yah! What are you doin', you fwightful ass? Leggo my eah! I wefuse to have my eah pulled! Ow!"

Thump, thump, thump!

"Gweat Scott! Yawooh! Dwaggimoff!" shrieked D'Arcy.

"There!" said Kildare breathlessly, as he finished by pitching D'Arcy into the quad. "Now let me catch you playing fool tricks with a lasso again, and I'll give you a real hiding."

And he went into the House.

Arthur Augustus sat on the ground.

"Bai Jove! I wegard it as uttahly wotten of Kildare to be so watty about a simple accident——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see any reason whatevah for wibald laughtah. I am considewably hurt. I am weally too exhausted to wise."

"Sit still," said Herries. "We'll practise on you with the lassoes."

"Good egg!"

"I wefuse to allow anythin' of the sort!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus, jumping up very quickly, in spite of his exhaustion. "I wegard you as wottahs!"

"Come on," said Kangaroo. "We've got to catch that giddy monkey before dark."

And the army of lassoers marched off to the assistance of the Terrible Three, who were stalking Mike in the quadrangle.

Mike had scuttled along the ivy on the School House, and reached a low wall, where he chattered and grinned at his pursuers. Tom Merry had rushed off for Taggles' ladder, and planted it against the wall. By the time he mounted it, however, Mike had departed for fresh fields and pastures new. Along the wall he reached the gymnasium, and he climbed to the roof, and grinned defiance at the juniors. The ladder was not high enough to reach the roof of the gymnasium, but a shower of stones drove Mike squealing from his new quarters, and he escaped into a tree. In the branches of the elm he clung on and chattered afresh.

"Come down, Mike! Come here, Micky, old fellow!" implored Tom Merry.

Micky, old fellow, chattered at a terrific rate, but declined to come down.

"I'll climb the tree," said Tom Merry. "You chaps watch for him, and keep him from getting back to the gym. if he dodges me."

"Right-ho!" said Manners and Lowther.

Tom Merry clambered actively into the tree. Mike promptly ascended to the highest branches, and Tom followed him resolutely.

Mike clambered along a branch which was not strong enough to bear the junior's weight, and squatted at the end of it, grinning. It really looked as if the mischievous

(*Continued on page* 130)



Tom Merry clung desperately to the branch. The juniors rushed at D'Arcy and forced him to slacken his efforts. "You dangerous ass!" spluttered Blake. "Are you trying to hang Tom Merry?" (*See Chapter* 6.)

Greyfriars Frivolities



THE MIDNIGHT FEAST!

IN the half-darkness of the dorm,
White forms are flitting eerily;
The slackers still are tucked up warm,
Asleep, or yawning wearily.
But all the gay and sprightly boys
Leap up with animation;
All eagerness to taste the joys
Of a fine celebration!

Candles are lighted in the gloom
As to and fro we scamper;
And from the nearby lumber-room
We drag a hefty hamper.
Then Billy Bunter's hungry eyes
Behind his specs. are gleaming;
"I say, you chaps! What perfect pies!
Delightful past all dreaming!"

We squat in blankets on the floor,
And "fall to" with avidity;
Bunter's for ever mumbling "More!"
He eats with such rapidity!
O, what a feast of food—and fun!
No banquet could be cheerier;
And presently the last cream-bun
Has passed to realms interior!

Then, from our ever-watchful scout,
Comes a sharp, whispered warning;
If we are caught by Quelch or Prout
We'll suffer in the morning!
Back to our beds we blithely bound,
And Quelchy, on his duties,
Comes creeping in—he merely found
A set of Sleeping Beauties!

(*Continued from page* 128)

little brute was enjoying the chase, and was determined to keep it up for the fun of the thing. Tom Merry sat astride of the branch where it joined the trunk, and coaxed Mike to come to him. But Mike turned a deaf ear to the voice of the charmer.

Just then the lassoers arrived on the scene.

"It's all wight, deah boy!" called out Arthur Augustus. "We're goin' to wope him in for you. It's all wight!"

"I reckon you'd better leave it to me," said Buck Finn.

D'Arcy shook his head.

"Bettah leave it to me, deah boy! I've pwactised a good deal with the lasso, you know, and I weally think I can manage it."

"Mike won't be so easy to rope in as Kildare!" grinned Blake.

"Accidents will happen, deah boy. Stand cleah!"

"You bet!" grinned Buck Finn. "I reckon I'm going to stand jolly clear while you handle the riata."

The juniors crowded back as D'Arcy swung the coiled rope round his head.

"You watch me, deah boys," said D'Arcy. "This sort of thing is quite easy when you know how to do it. All you've got to do is to get the noose to settle ovah the object you are twyin' to lasso, then you dwag on the wope, and it tightens up, and the animal is a pwisnah. Quite simple."

"Oh, buck up!" growled Monty Lowther.

"Pway don't huwwy me, deah boy. This kind of thing is quite simple to a chap that knows how to do it, but it wequires tact and judgment."

Whiz!

The lasso flew and the rope uncoiled, and the noose settled over Tom Merry's neck.

Arthur Augustus dragged excitedly at the rope.

"Got him! Help me dwag him in, deah boys——"

"Ow! Help! Murder! Help!"

Tom Merry clung desperately to the branch. The juniors rushed at D'Arcy and forced him to slacken his efforts, or it really

looked as if he would have succeeded in dragging Tom Merry's head off.

"You dangerous ass!" spluttered Blake. "Are you trying to hang Tom Merry?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, putting up his eyeglass, and surveying the unfortunate captain of the Shell in great surprise. "Tom Merry has got his head into the lasso! What have you done that for, Tom Mewwy?"

"I—I'll show you in a minute," panted Tom Merry.

"I was twyin' to lasso your minah, not you, Mewwy majah. I must say it was wathah clumsy of you to get your silly head into the wope."

"Hold him till I get down," said Tom Merry sulphurously.

"Weally, deah boy——"

Tom Merry succeeded in getting his head out of the lasso. Then he slid down the trunk of the elm. He had forgotten the monkey for the moment. The pressing need he felt just then was to get to close quarters with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Sowwy, deah boy," said D'Arcy, as the Shell fellow clambered down. "I'll twy again, and if you don't put your clumsy head in the way, pewwaps I shall get your minah this time. I say—look here—bai Jove—ow!"

Tom Merry grasped the lasso and coiled it into a bunch, and started on Arthur Augustus, using it not as a lasso, but something in the manner of a blacksmith's hammer. The swell of St. Jim's roared and dodged.

"You uttah ass! Stoppit! Chuckit! Yah! Leave off! Dwag him away, deah boys! He's spoiling my jacket—yah! Bai Jove—ow! Ow!"

Whack! whack! whack!

"Bai Jove! He's dotty!" shrieked Arthur Augustus, hopping about frantically in his wild efforts to avoid the slashes of the coiled rope. "Dwaggimoff! Gweat Scott!"

And the swell of St. Jim's fairly ran. After him went Tom Merry, still slashing away with the coiled rope, and the swell of St. Jim's ran and roared, and roared and ran, while the juniors under the elm-tree rocked with laughter.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER
Lynch Law.

TOM MERRY came back, panting. He found the juniors in convulsions.

Mike, in the meantime, had dropped from the branch and scuttled away, and had vanished from sight. Tom Merry was looking very red, and a little cross.

"Where's that blessed monkey?" he demanded, staring up into the tree.

"He's gone, I think!" sobbed Blake. "Ha, ha, ha! Oh, these minors!"

"Where's Gussy?" asked Figgins, who had joined in the hunt, with a crowd of New House fellows, all eager for the fun.

"He's locked himself in his study."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nothing to cackle at. Where's that blessed monkey? He's got to be caught."

The search for the elusive Mike recommenced. He was spotted on the school wall, and half a dozen lassoes were launched at him, and got considerably mixed with one another. Mike grinned and scuttled along the wall, and reached the roof of Taggles' lodge. The juniors gathered round the lodge, and some of them climbed on the wall to cut off Mike's escape that way. Taggles came out, with a frowning brow.

"Wot's all this 'ere?" he demanded.

"Tom Merry's minor is on your roof!" exclaimed Kangaroo.

"I won't have you young raskals climbing on my lodge!" declared Taggles. "I'll report yer! I'll—oh, lor!"

The monkey, from the roof of the lodge, had reached down and clawed Taggles' hat from his head. Taggles jumped as his ancient tile vanished.

"Who's grabbed my 'at?" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's Tom Merry's minor!"

"I'll report 'im!" roared Taggles. "I won't 'ave it! I'll report—— Oh, lor, it's a monkey!" he gasped as he caught sight of Mike on the roof, clutching the ancient hat.



Fur Cap dashed down the lane at top speed, clutching the trembling Mike. "The rotter! He's stolen the monkey!" shouted the juniors, as they sped after him in hot pursuit. (*See Chapter* 7.)

"Come down, Mike!" shouted Tom Merry.

Chatter, chatter, chatter!

Whiz! whiz! whiz! went the lassoes. They did not settle over Mike's elusive head, but they whacked upon him on all sides, and Mike squealed and fled. The hat came rolling to the ground, and Mike took refuge on the chimney-pot. He soon found that coign of vantage a little too warm, however, and squealed and scuttled off it. He slithered away from the lodge and clambered on the old stone arch of the gateway. As the juniors rushed to pursue him there, he dropped into the road, and hopped away across it towards the hedge.

There was a sudden shout from a man in a fur cap who was slouching along the lane. He made a run at the monkey.

"Mike! Come 'ere!"

Mike heard the dreaded voice of his old master and stopped, shivering. The man in the fur cap sprang at him and grasped him, and then turned a glare of defiance on the crowd of juniors who were streaming out of the gateway.

"Got 'im!" he yelled triumphantly. "Now, you git 'im if you can!"

And Fur Cap dashed down the lane at top speed, clutching the trembling Mike.

"The rotter!"

"He's stolen the monkey!"

"After him!"

The juniors pelted after the ruffian in hot pursuit.

But Fur Cap was running hard. He did not mean to part with his prize, after recapturing him so unexpectedly. Tom Merry & Co. ran their hardest and kept pace with him, but they could not gain. Down the lane they went at a rush, Fur Cap well ahead, and heading for the village. Tom Merry gritted his teeth. Once within the walls of the Green Man Fur Cap would be safe from pursuit, and the monkey would be lost for ever, and then the cruelty of the ruffian would have free play upon his helpless victim.

"Hold on!" muttered Buck Finn. "I reckon I can do it. Stand clear!"

The American junior lifted his hand, with the lasso in it.

Whiz!

The long rope flew and uncoiled in the air.

Down came the noose, settling with deadly exactness over the head of the running man.

Buck gave a yell of triumph.

"Roped in, by thunder!"

Fur Cap gave a yell, too—of surprise and terror. He did not know what had caught him. But he was caught. The tautening of the rope dragged him suddenly backwards, and he bumped heavily upon the hard, unsympathetic ground.

"Yow! Ow!"

The rush of the juniors overwhelmed him before he could struggle to his feet. Mike had fallen from his grasp as he sprawled, and the monkey flew at once to Tom Merry's shoulder, as if to his natural protector. And Tom Merry took a firm grip upon his collar. He did not mean to give Mike a chance of getting away again.

Fur Cap sat up and swore. He had a fine flow of language, and the language he used was lurid enough to turn the atmosphere purple. Buck Finn put a sudden stop to it with a jerk of the lasso, which laid the ruffian sprawling in the road again.

"Shut up, you beast!" exclaimed Blake, in disgust.

"I'll out yer! I'll——" Fur Cap recommenced.

"Yank him along!"

"Hurray!"

A crowd of juniors grasped the rope, and Fur Cap was dragged along in the dust. He struggled wildly, but the noose was tight now, and he could not possibly release himself. He went rolling and tumbling along the road at the end of the rope.

"Lemme go!" he roared. "Ow! Yow! Lemme go! Perlice! 'Elp!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The language Fur Cap used was simply dreadful.

"I reckon I'll stop that," chuckled Buck Finn. "We'll lynch him."

"Wha-at!"

"Hanging's too good for him," said Manners, "and it's against the law here, Finny, whatever it may be out in Arizona."

"I reckon we'll lynch him all the same."

Buck Finn threw the end of the rope over a branch that overhung the road.

"Now, hang on it—all together," he commanded.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good egg!"

As the noose was tight round the ruffian's body, and not round his neck, there was no danger to him in lynching him, as Finn suggested. The juniors piled their weight on the rope, and Fur Cap was dragged struggling into the air.

He swung to and fro six feet from the ground, spinning round at the end of the rope, struggling wildly and spluttering.

The juniors surrounded him, giving him an occasional push to keep him in motion.

"Lemme down!" spluttered Fur Cap. "Ow, ow, ow! I'm 'urt! Ow! Perlice!"

"Serve you right, you scoundrel!" said Tom Merry.

"You won't be let down till you've promised to be a good boy," said Jack Blake, giving the ruffian a playful dig in the ribs. "Are you sorry for using those naughty words?"

"I'll—I'll——"

"Are you sorry?"

"No!" roared Fur Cap. "I'll out yer! I'll——"

"Fasten the rope, and leave him there,' said Blake.

"Hear, hear!"

"I—I say, you let me down!" exclaimed Fur Cap in alarm. "I can't 'ang 'ere. I say, young gents, don't be 'ard on a cove! Lemme down!"

"Are you sorry?" said Blake sternly.

"No—yes. Yes!"

"Are you awfully sorry?"

"Yes!" shrieked Fur Cap.

"Are you awfully, fearfully sorry?"

"Ow! Yes."

"Will you promise to be a good boy?"

"Ow! Yes!" gasped Fur Cap, with a murderous glare, which did not say much for the sincerity of his promise.

"And you'll promise not to try to steal the monkey again?"

"Steal 'im!" spluttered Fur Cap. "Why, he's mine! He——"

"Will you promise not to steal him?"

"Ow! Yes."

"Then you can come down!"

The rope was released suddenly. Fur Cap bumped into the road and roared. Buck Finn loosened the lasso and detached it.

"Now you can vamoose the ranch," said Buck Finn. "If you ain't lighted out in one second, you go into the ditch."

The one second was enough for Fur Cap. He went down the road and the grinning juniors returned to the school, Mike safe upon Tom Merry's shoulder.



As the Terrible Three entered the study they gasped. "Oh, my hat! Great Scott!" Mike was sitting on the floor in the midst of a mass of torn papers and books. He was evidently not an idle monkey! (*See Chapter* 9.)

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER
A Case of Attempted Burglary.

"GR-R-R-R-R!"

"Bow-wow-wow!"

Tom Merry sat up in bed in the Shell dormitory in the School House.

It was past midnight, and St. Jim's was fast asleep. But the silence of the night was broken by the voices of the dogs, and Tom Merry, as he sat up and rubbed his drowsy eyes, distinguished the deep, fierce growling of Herries' bulldog and the loud, sharp barking of Pongo.

The shed where the pets were kept was at some distance from the School House; but in the silence of the night the sounds were quite audible—too audible, in fact. They had awakened Tom Merry, and a yawn from Monty Lowther's bed showed that he was awake, too.

"Blessed row those beasts are making to-night!" growled Lowther.

"It's queer," said Tom Merry. "Towser is generally quite quiet, and Pongo has been taught not to bark at night."

"Your blessed minor worrying them, perhaps. He stole a bone from Pongo this evening. He is at his tricks again."

Bow-wow-wow-wow-wow!

"It may be Mike, but he's chained in his box," said Tom Merry. "He couldn't get near the dogs, Monty."

"Perhaps they don't like his niff," grunted Lowther. "Mike wants a lot more washing before he'll be very pleasant at close quarters."

"I wonder——"

"Hallo, where are you going?" demanded Monty Lowther, as he heard Tom Merry slipping out of bed.

"I'm going to see what's the matter."

"Oh, rot! You'll get into a row if you're found out of the dorm, and somebody else may come down to see what the dogs are making that row for."

"I'll risk it. It might be Fur Cap again. He's quite rascal enough to try to burgle my monkey."

Lowther chuckled.

"Your monkey!" he murmured.

"Yes, my monkey," said Tom Merry firmly. "I don't suppose Fur Cap came to him honestly, in the first place. If he could prove his claim to him, why doesn't he apply to the police? There's plenty of law in this country, if he wants it. I think very likely he's sneaked in to steal my monkey. I'm going to see."

"Hold on a minute! I'll come with you. If that ruffian's there, you don't want to tackle him alone. I'll call Manners."

"I'm awake, ass!" came Manners' voice. "Do you think I can sleep with dogs barking in one ear and silly asses jawing in the other?"

And Manners turned out of bed.

From the distance, the growling and the barking came almost without interruption.

The Terrible Three dressed themselves hurriedly. Several other fellows in the dormitory had awakened, and probably in the other dormitories, too. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther stole out into the passage on tiptoe and descended the stairs. The house was very silent. If anyone else had been awakened by the barking, he had not yet turned out to investigate the cause of it. The three juniors reached the lower hall, and Tom Merry undid the fastenings of the window.

"Hold on a minute," murmured Lowther. "If we're going burglar-hunting, we'd better take something with us."

"There's Railton's stick in the stand," whispered Manners.

"And Lathom's gamp."

The juniors chuckled, and despoiled the hallstand. Tom Merry took Mr. Railton's heavy stick, Manners the Fourth Form-master's umbrella, and Lowther the beautiful, gold-headed cane belonging to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Thus armed, the juniors dropped into the quadrangle and hurried round the house.

The Terrible Three came in sight of the shed, wrapped in darkness and looming up dimly. The door was open, and in the doorway they caught a glimpse of a slinking form. A low, hoarse voice came to their ears:

"Good dog! Good doggie! Oh, you blighted beast! I wish I could get a lick at you with this 'ere cudgel! I'd stop your yowling! Good doggie!"

The juniors recognised the voice.

"Fur Cap!" murmured Lowther.

"We'll capture him," whispered Manners. "He ought to be put in prison—attempted burglary, you know."

"Attempted kidnapping, you mean!" grinned Lowther. "It's kidnapping to take away Tom Merry's minor."

"Shurrup, ass!"

"But I say, you can't charge a chap with burglary for trying to get his own monkey," Lowther whispered. "Better give him a hiding."

"Good!" said Tom Merry.

The juniors advanced.

Fur Cap was apparently in a difficulty. He could not get into the shed, of which he had succeeded in picking the padlock, without passing the bulldog. Towser was on a long chain, which enabled him to guard the entrance. Pongo was chained out of reach, and he could not get at the intruder and was apparently barking away merely for the fun of the thing. Fur Cap might have dodged past the growling bulldog into the shed, but then his difficulties would have been greater. He would have been within reach of Pongo, and would have had to dodge past the bulldog again to get out. Towser was not likely to let him pass unscathed twice, if even once.

Fur Cap was relieving his feelings by cursing under his breath; but, excepting as a relief for the feelings, his strong words did not get him any "forrader."

"Now!" whispered Tom Merry.

The juniors made a sudden rush.

Fur Cap gave a sharp yelp of surprise, and was dragged back heavily to the ground. His cudgel was yanked out of his hand before he had a chance to use it.

Monty Lowther caught it, and sent it whirling over the nearest wall with a swing of his arm.

"Here we are again!" he said cheerfully.

Fur Cap ground his teeth.

He was on the ground on his back, and Tom Merry's knee was planted on his chest, and he wriggled and struggled in vain.

"Now, what are you doing here?" said Tom sternly.

"'Ang yer, I'm after my monkey!"

"You are a burglar!"

"I ain't a burglar! I defy yer to charge me with burglary!" howled Fur Cap. "I'm 'ere arter my monkey, wot is my property!"

"Now, look here," said Tom Merry. "I'll repeat my offer of giving you a quid for the monkey. Otherwise, you'll get a hiding for coming here. Take your choice."

"I ain't selling that monkey. It's wallyble."

"You've got Gussy's cane, Monty?"

"Here it is!"

"Lather him!"

"You bet!"

Tom Merry and Manners rolled the ruffian over, and Monty Lowther started operations with D'Arcy's cane. Fur Cap gave a fiendish yell.

"Ow, ow, ow!"

Lash, lash, lash!

"Leave orf!" said Fur Cap sulphurously. "I'll go quiet. Leave orf!"

He wriggled under the lashes of the cane, and yelled in a curious, suppressed way. The juniors understood his motive. He did not want to awaken the house. Although he might not fear a charge of attempting to steal the monkey, he probably had a good many reasons for not wanting to be handed over to the police. There were probably other matters that might be raked up most unpleasantly for him, if the strong arm of the law once enfolded him. Tom Merry felt pretty certain of it, for if the man had had a clean record he would probably have applied to the Head of St. Jim's for his monkey to be restored, and risked a prosecution for cruelty to animals. It was not likely that so utter a brute had a clean record. Cruelty and crime go hand in hand.

"Chuck it a minute, Monty!" said Tom.

"Why?" said Lowther. "I'm just getting into a regular swing. This is as good as Indian clubs as an exercise."

"Hold on a minute!" chuckled Tom Merry. "Look here, Fur Cap. I don't know your name, but that will do. Look here! I believe you are a dishonest scoundrel, as well as a brute, and very likely you stole that monkey in the first place. I shall keep him unless a decent owner turns up. But I'm willing to buy him of you, and I'll give you a quid."

"'Ang you! I ain't sellin' 'im!"

"Then you'll be handed over to the police. Get a rope, you chaps, and we'll tie him up, and ask Mr. Railton to telephone to the police-station."

"'Ere, you 'old on!" muttered Fur Cap, in alarm. "I've said I'll go away quiet."

"Will you sell the monkey?"

Fur Cap hesitated. It was evident that he would have sold whole forests full of monkeys rather than make any closer acquaintance with the police. A cunning gleam shot into his little ferrety eyes.

"You'll let me go if I do?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Then 'and over the quid, and he's yours!"

"Hold on, Tom!" muttered Manners as the captain of the Shell fumbled in his pocket. "The villain means to take the money, and steal him afterwards."

Tom Merry laughed.

"I know he does. But I'm going to pay for the monkey so as to have the right to keep him. You fellows are witness that I've bought him."

"Good egg!"

Tom Merry made up the pound with a ten-shilling note of his own, and a loan of five shillings each from his chums. Fur

Cap took the money and slipped it into his pocket. He was allowed to rise to his feet.

"Now we'll see you off the premises," said Tom Merry. "The monkey's mine, and if you try to touch him again, I'll give you in charge."

"You wait!" muttered Fur Cap.

The juniors marched him to the school wall, and he clambered over it and dropped into the road. Lowther yawned portentously.

"Bed now—hey?" he said.

"Wait a bit. I've got to get Mike."

"What on earth for?"

"That rotter will come back in an hour or two and try again," said Tom Merry. "Towser may not keep him out next time. The monkey isn't safe there."

"But what are you going to do with him?"

"Take him into the dorm."

"Oh, crumbs!"

Tom Merry fetched Mike from the shed, and came back with the monkey on his shoulder. The Terrible Three returned into the House, Tom Merry carefully fastening the window after them. They made their way back to the Shell dormitory quietly.

"Found anything?" yawned Kangaroo as they came in.

"Yes. That rotter was trying to get my monkey."

"Your monkey?" chuckled the Cornstalk.

"My monkey now. I've bought him and paid for him. We gave Fur Cap a quid and a hiding."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Chatter, chatter, chatter from Mike.

"Phew! Have you got the little beast there?" exclaimed Kangaroo, sitting up in bed and blinking through the darkness.

"Yes; he's safe here."

"Pets ain't allowed in the House," grinned Kangaroo. "He won't be so safe when the prefects find him in the morning!"

"Well, Glyn's allowed to keep a silly parrot in his study, so I don't see why I shouldn't have a monkey in mine. I shall ask the Head."

"He can't refuse to let you have your own minor in your study," came Gore's voice.

"Oh, rats!"

And Tom Merry chained Mike to the leg of his bedstead and turned in.

THE NINTH CHAPTER
Making Himself at Home!

MIKE was sleeping quite comfortably the next morning when the rising-bell clanged out and roused the juniors. Tom Merry sat up in bed and regarded the monkey. Whether Fur Cap had returned to the shed or not the previous night, the monkey was quite safe. And Mike had made himself very comfortable during the night. He had scouted round to the length of his chain on all sides, and collected up the clothes of the Shell fellows from all the chairs within reach. With the trousers, jackets, waistcoats, and other articles crumpled up in a heap under him, Mike was sleeping the sleep of the just.

"Oh, my hat!" Tom Merry ejaculated.

"Hallo! Where are my bags?" exclaimed Lowther.

"And mine?" howled Manners.

"My clobber's vanished!" roared Gore. "What silly ass has been playing silly tricks with my clobber?"

"I'm afraid it's Mike," said Tom Merry ruefully. "He's got mine, too. They're not damaged—only a bit crumpled."

"Only a bit crumpled!" yelled Gore, as he dragged his clothes away from under Mike, sending the monkey sprawling and squealing. "Look at this! My jacket's covered with hairs, and my bags—look at them!"

"Sorry!"

"Sorry! I'll make your minor sorry!" howled Gore, picking up a boot and hurling it at the offender.

Tom Merry struck up his arm just in time, and the boot whirled away in another direction. It was said that every bullet has its billet, and certainly the boot found one. A loud yell from Kangaroo announced where the boot had fallen. The Cornstalk jumped out of bed, holding his head with both hands.

"Ow! Yow! Who chucked that boot at me?" he roared.

"Sorry!" gasped Gore. "I meant it for the other monkey. I mean——"

"Chucking it at a monkey, were you?" demanded Kangaroo, grasping the boot.

"Yes. You see——"

"Then I'll do the same!"

Whiz! Gore caught the boot on his chin, and sat down on the floor of the dormitory. He jumped up in a fury and ran at Kangaroo, and they grasped and pommelled one another furiously.

"Lot of excitement over nothing," remarked Tom Merry. "Mike, old man, you shouldn't do that. Gerroff my clothes."

Kangaroo and Gore separated, both of them looking somewhat damaged. Gore made a rush towards the monkey, but Tom Merry interposed.

"Hands off!" he said quietly.

"He's mucked up my clothes!" yelled Gore.

"Well, he didn't know any better. I'm going to teach him to behave himself. Now, let him alone, Gore, or there will be a row."

Gore thought better of it. Mike was chattering away at a great rate, and at Gore's threatening aspect he jumped to Tom Merry's shoulder, a place he had evidently learned was the safest of places for him. Gore turned away, growling.

"Get down, Mike, you beast!" said Tom Merry. "Leggo my hair!"

He sat the monkey on the bed and dressed himself. His clothes were so crumpled and hairy that he took fresh garments from his box to dress in. His everyday Etons required a good deal of brushing. Mike sat on his bed, and regarded him with his curiously intelligent eyes as he dressed.

"Hallo! Look at that blessed monk!" yelled Lowther all of a sudden.

All eyes were turned upon Mike, and there was a roar of laughter. Imitation is the strongest characteristic in a monkey, and Mike was evidently no exception to the rule. He had taken Tom Merry's discarded trousers, and was pulling them on as he had seen Tom Merry do. They were too long for him, and they trailed on the floor under him as he stood in them. But Mike was easily satisfied. He was putting on the waistcoat now, which met twice round him easily.

Tom Merry laughed till the tears rolled down his cheeks. The aspect of the monkey was irresistibly comic. And Mike was not finished yet. Monty Lowther, who always wore his trousers turned up—being a little bit of a knut—was performing that necessary operation, and Mike spotted it, and copied him immediately. He rolled up the trousers round his legs in ludicrous imitation of Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mike, you bounder, let those things alone," gasped Tom Merry, and he yanked the clothes off the monkey, and threw them into his box.

When the juniors were ready to go down, Mike jumped on Tom Merry's shoulder as he made for the door. He refused to budge, in spite of Tom's persuasions.

"He wants to go down with you," chuckled Manners. "Touching thing—family affection."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't shove your minor like that, Tom Merry!" shouted Bernard Glyn. "Don't you bully your minor, Merry major."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I suppose he's got to come down with me," said Tom Merry. "My hat! I'm beginning to think that Mike will be more trouble than he's worth. He can't come into the Form-room, anyway."

The juniors shrieked at the idea. They could imagine Mr. Linton's face at the introduction of a monkey into the solemn precincts of the Shell Form-room.

Tom Merry went downstairs with the monkey on his shoulder. There was a general yell from the fellows who saw him.

"Here they come—major and minor!"

"So that's your minor, Tom Merry?" grinned Kildare.

"That's my monkey," said Tom Merry.



The door opened and a peculiar figure entered. It looked like a junior, only it was too small! Mr. Linton staggered back; it was the first time he had seen Mike. "G-g-goodness gracious!" gasped the Form-master. (*See Chapter* 10.)

"You mustn't have him in the house, you know."

"Don't turn Merry minor out of doors, Kildare," implored a dozen voices. "His major will miss him."

"Shut up!" roared Tom Merry. "I say, Kildare, there's a rotter who's been trying to steal my monkey, and I'm going to ask Mr. Railton to let me keep him in the study. He's a jolly nice little monkey, and won't give any trouble."

"Well, you can ask Mr. Railton," said Kildare, laughing.

Tom Merry went at once to the House-master's study. Mr. Railton was not there, but Tom Merry found him in the quadrangle. Taggles had drawn his attention to the fact that the padlock on the shed had been broken.

"May I speak to you a minute, sir?" said Tom Merry.

"Certainly!" said the School House-master, with a curious glance at the monkey.

Tom Merry plunged into the subject at once. He did not conceal anything, but related how he had come into possession of

Mike, and what had followed. Mr. Railton's face was very grave as he listened.

"I had to keep him, sir," urged Tom. "That ruffian was half killing him, and he said he was going to do worse if he got him away."

"H'm!" said Mr. Railton. "I'm afraid it was a somewhat serious step to take the monkey from his owner, Merry. However, you say that the man has accepted a pound for the animal now, and sold him to you."

"Yes, sir. Manners and Lowther were witnesses of the transaction."

"Then he no longer has any claim, certainly. If he sold the monkey under pressure——" Mr. Railton coughed. "In that case, he must return the pound if he claims the monkey. Unless he applies to the Head, and returns the money you paid him, Merry, he can have no claim to the animal, and you are entitled to keep him."

"Thank you, sir. But—but I'm afraid the brute will try to—ahem!—steal him. May I keep him in my study, sir? I keep him chained, and he can't do any harm. And he's thoroughly good-tempered, and—and—and a ripping little beast, sir."

Mr. Railton smiled.

"You may keep him in your study for the present, Merry, so long as you take proper care of him there, and do not allow him to become a nuisance."

"I'll take jolly good care of that, sir!"

"Very well, then."

And Tom Merry marched Mike triumphantly into his study in the Shell passage. When the juniors went in to lessons, Mike was left chained in the study. Immediately morning lessons were over, the Terrible Three hurried upstairs to see how Mike was getting on in his new quarters. The length of the chain—which had been shortened—allowed him the run of half the study.

Mike had made the best use of it.

He was sitting on the floor in the midst of a mass of torn papers and books. Mike was evidently not an idle monkey. Whatsoever his hands had found to do, that he had done, and with all his heart. He had gathered up a cushion, the hearthrug, and a portion of the study carpet, and ripped them to pieces, and added to the ruin all the books and impot-paper he could collect. He was busy upon Lowther's Latin dictionary when the chums of the Shell looked in.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Great Scott!"

"That's my dic.!" yelled Lowther.

"And my 'Manual of Photography'!" shrieked Manners.

"And my 'History of Rome'!" groaned Tom Merry.

"And the cushion——"

"And the carpet——"

Manners seized a cricket stump, and Lowther the poker. Tom Merry ran between them and the cheerful and innocent Mike.

"Hold on, you chaps!"

"I'm going to slaughter him!" roared Lowther.

"Hold on! He doesn't know any better, you know. Perhaps I had better whack him a bit," said Tom Merry ruefully. "He must learn, I suppose. Poor old Mike!"

"Better drown him!" said Manners crossly. "Look at my Photography Manual!"

"Look at my Latin dic.!"

"Well, it won't happen again," said Tom Merry soothingly. "I'll teach him manners!"

Tom Merry held the monkey's head close to the torn heap, and gave him a mild cuff. Mike squealed dismally, and cowered at his master's feet and cringed. Tom Merry's heart smote him.

"Dash it all, I can't whack him!" he said. "Look here! He'll learn to leave the things alone in time!"

"And how much is it going to cost us in Latin dictionaries until he learns?" demanded Monty Lowther.

"You can have mine."

"Yours, you ass! There's yours, in bits!"

"Well, it can't be helped. If he does it again, I'll give him another hiding."

"Another hiding!" snorted Lowther. "Do you call that a hiding, fathead? You hardly flicked him!"

"It's hurt his feelings, poor old chap."

"Oh, blow his feelings!" said Lowther crossly. "If he tears up any more of my things, he'll get it in his neck, instead of his feelings."

Mike whimpered, and Tom Merry, instead of the hiding the monkey undoubtedly deserved, found himself soothing the little beast instead. But Mike was very intelligent, and he was very much attached to Tom Merry. Manners and Lowther had to admit that a look of displeasure had more effect upon Mike, when it came from Tom Merry, than any number of whackings would have had. Mike had learned that lesson already, and he did not seek to tear up anything more in the study. When Tom Merry let him off the chain, Mike curled up in the chair and went to sleep.

THE TENTH CHAPTER
Mike Turns Up for Lessons!

Fur Cap had apparently resigned himself to the loss of the monkey. Tom Merry heard nothing from him during the next few days, and he began to think that he was done with the ruffian. The man was still hanging about Rylcombe, as some of the juniors had seen him, engaged in the laborious duty of supporting the corner of the Green Man with his shoulders. But he did not come near.

Meanwhile, Mike was getting on famously.

He had learned not to tear up things, and to leave people's hats on their heads. He regarded Tom Merry's study as his natural home, and he had made a comfortable abiding-place on top of the bookcase. In looking after him, teaching him, and keeping him clean, Tom Merry had a good amount of occupation for his spare time. But Mike was quick to learn, and after a time he would allow himself to be washed and brushed without raising objections. Tom Merry ventured at last to leave him off the chain. It seemed hard on Mike to be chained up all the time that Tom Merry could not spend with him, and he had grown so well behaved that Tom thought he could trust him.

"We shall find the study a giddy wreck when we come back," Manners prophesied. the first day Mike was left at complete liberty.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"He'll be all right," he asserted. "I never saw an animal learn so quickly."

"Majors don't often take so much trouble over their minors," Lowther agreed.

"Ass!"

Tom Merry closed the study door when he went down. It did not occur to him that Mike, intelligent as he was, knew how to turn the handle of a door. The juniors went into the Form-room for afternoon lessons, and Tom speedily forgot all about Mike in the deep interest of Julius Cæsar and the Gallic war.

Mr. Linton was a little cross that afternoon. Gore had been worrying him with false quantities, and if there was anything that Mr. Linton could not stand it was a false quantity.

So Tom Merry was very much on the alert when the Form-master turned a gleaming eye upon him.

But just then there came a rattle at the handle of the door.

Mr. Linton turned round irritably.

"Come in!" he called out.

The door-handle rattled again, but the door did not open. The juniors glanced in that direction in surprise. If anybody had business in the Form-room, he might have been expected to knock and come in.

Mr. Linton frowned darkly. The idea of anybody venturing to bother him during lessons by rattling the handle of the Form-room door was more than enough to rouse his ire.

He strode to his desk and picked up a cane.

"Come in!" he repeated angrily.

The door-handle rattled once more.

"Who on earth is it?" muttered Kangaroo. "Some silly ass is going to get it in the neck. Look at Linton's chivvy."

The Shell-master's brow was like a thundercloud.

He strode towards the door, grasping the cane.

But before he could reach it the door opened.

A peculiar figure entered.

It looked like a junior, only it was too small to be a human being at all. It was clad in trousers very much turned up, and an Eton jacket that nearly reached the floor behind. Round its neck was a collar at least five or six times too large, and on its head was a silk hat, pushed well back, so as not to engulf the head that was very much too small for it.

Mr. Linton gazed at the apparition speechlessly. From the Shell came a hysterical giggle.

"Mike!"

"Tom Merry minor!"

"Oh, my hat!"

It was Mike. He had taken advantage of his new-found liberty to carry out an idea that had probably been working a long time in his active brain.

The monkey advanced gravely into the Form-room.

Mr. Linton staggered back, the cane dropping from his hand. It was the first time he had seen Mike—and it was a surprising meeting.

"G-g-goodness gracious!" gasped the Form-master.

From the juniors came a wild yell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mike!" gasped Tom Merry. "Get out! Oh, dear!"

Mike grinned cheerfully, and hopped along to Tom Merry's desk. Monty Lowther gurgled and made room for him, and Mike calmly seated himself on the form beside his master. Tom Merry had a book in his hand, and Mike promptly picked up a book and held it open, as Tom Merry was doing. He held it upside down, but that did not matter to Mike. Even Mike, intelligent as he was, could not read Latin, so it did not matter.

Mr. Linton seemed to come out of a dream.

"What—what—what is that?" he spluttered.

"It's Tom Merry's minor, sir," came a half-dozen replies at once.

"What!"

"It's my monkey, sir," stammered Tom Merry.

"Your—your monkey!"

"Yes, sir. I—I didn't know he would come here. Shall I take him away, sir?" murmured Tom Merry.

Mr. Linton gazed at the monkey. Mike's silk hat had fallen off; it was very much too large for him. The sight of the monkey, in baggy Etons, sitting on the form with the book in his hand, was too much even for the grave and severe master of the Shell. He tried to frown, but he could not, and his severe face gradually relaxed, and he smiled—and the smile became a laugh.

"Dear me!" ejaculated Mr. Linton. "This is—is too absurd! What an extraordinary creature! Surely you did not dress him like that, Merry?"

"No, sir. He watched me dressing the other day, and he's learned to do it by himself. He must have got the clothes out of my box in the dorm.," said Tom Merry ruefully.

"Dear me! You had better take him away, Merry."

But Mike, in spite of his training, had not wholly learned the lesson of obedience apparently. He clung to the desk, and declined to budge, and when Tom Merry jerked him off, he skipped away, and darted to the easel supporting the blackboard, and climbed to the top of it. Tom Merry paused in dismay. Mike chattered away at a great rate at the top of the easel, out of reach.

Mr. Linton laughed heartily.

"Never mind, Merry," he said. "He will do no harm there. You may leave him, and take him away after lessons, but you must take care that he does not come into the Form-room again."

"Oh, certainly, sir," said Tom Merry. And he went back to his place, considerably uneasy in his mind as to what Mike's next antic might be.

The lesson proceeded, Mike remaining an interested spectator on top of the easel.

Presently, finding himself undisturbed,

he hopped down, and sat in a more comfortable posture on the Form-master's desk. Then he blinked and grinned at the juniors, disturbing their gravity considerably.

Mr. Linton, who was expounding Roman History just then, did not notice him. He had his back to Mike. But the juniors were looking directly towards him, and they could not help seeing the monkey's antics.

Mike was imitating every movement of the Form-master.

When Mr. Linton raised a hand, Mike raised a paw; when he opened his book, Mike opened his book; when he talked, Mike chattered. Mr. Linton had a way of moving to and fro, his gown rustling behind him, when he was expounding a subject. Mike hopped down off the desk, and, keeping in the wake of the Shell-master, moved to and fro after him.

The sight was so utterly ridiculous that the juniors suddenly burst into a roar of laughter.

Mr. Linton started. He did not understand for a moment. Certainly, Roman History was not a laughing matter!

Then he spun round and saw Mike.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mike, encouraged by the laughter, strutted up and down, holding the book with his left paw, and making gestures with his right.

"G-g-goodness gracious!" gasped Mr. Linton, turning quite purple. "What—what——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"



Mr. Linton spun round and saw Mike. He was strutting up and down holding the book with his left paw, and making gestures with his right. "G-g-goodness gracious!" gasped Mr. Linton, turning purple. (*See Chapter* 10.)

"Silence! Merry, take that absurd animal out of the Form-room at once!" exclaimed Mr. Linton, in a thunderous voice.

Tom Merry pounced upon Mike, and dragged him squealing out of the Form-room.

He returned a few minutes later, having locked Mike in his study, and resumed his place. But it was in vain that Mr. Linton endeavoured to restore the proper gravity of the class. The juniors persisted in breaking out into hysterical giggles every few minutes. They could not help it. Every gesture of Mr. Linton recalled the antics of Mike, the monkey, and they simply could not keep serious.

By the time the Shell were dismissed they had earned quite a rich crop of lines, but, as Lowther said tearfully, it was worth it. And after lessons the juniors visited Mike in the study, and fed him on nuts till he could eat no more.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER
A Mysterious Disappearance!

"I WEALLY do not appwove of jokes of this sort!"

Thus Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of the Fourth.

Blake and Herries and Digby, who were doing their preparation in Study No. 6, a few days after that peculiar incident in the Form-room, raised their heads and looked inquiringly at their elegant chum.

"Hallo! Who's been pulling your noble and titled leg now?" demanded Blake. "Have you been trying the lasso again, and getting walloped?"

"Weally, Blake——"

"Or has Tom Merry's minor borrowed your topper? Remarkable how like you he looks in a topper, isn't it?" Blake said reflectively.

"I wefuse to weply to such a fwivolous wemark, Blake. I wepeat that I do not appwove of jokes of this sort."

"What sort, fathead?" asked Herries.

"I wefuse to be called a fathead. Suppose you should lose it, or bweak it?" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy exclaimed indignantly.

His chums regarded him with an expression of bewilderment that almost amounted to idiocy.

"Lose it!" murmured Herries.

"Break it!" said Digby.

"Lose or break a joke," said Blake. "How can you lose or break a joke? Are you going right off your silly rocker—quite dotty?"

"I was not alludin' to the joke, you silly chumps. I was alludin' to my watch."

"Your watch?"

"Anything happened to your watch?" yawned Blake. "I believe I noticed once that you had a watch—a Waterbury, wasn't it?"

"You uttah ass! You know vewy well that it was a wippin' gold tickah that my patah gave me one birthday. You are perfectly aware——"

"Well, what's the matter with it?" demanded Blake. "Won't it go?"

"It has gone!"

"Well, watches were made to go," said Blake, comfortingly. "Your watch has simply fulfilled its destiny. No good crying over spilt milk or gone watches. Shut up, and let's do our prep."

"I wefuse to do anything of the sort. I wequire to wind my watch to-night, and therefore it must be weturned to me. I wepeat that I do not appwove of these jokes. A chap's toppah or his tickah ought to be wespected."

"Quite dotty," murmured Herries. "Let him run on."

"I wefuse to be wegarded as dottay; and I insist upon my watch bein' weturned at once by whichevah of you boundahs has hidden it."

"Oh," said Blake, "I underconstumble at last! You've lost your watch?"

"I left it here when I changed my waistcoat," said D'Arcy. "I left it lyin' on the table. One of you silly wottahs has hidden it, of course. I do not weally wegard that as a joke. I wegard it as asinine."

"For goodness' sake produce his watch, or he'll run on all night," said Blake plaintively. "Blessed if he isn't worse than Tom

Merry's gramophone! Give him his watch, and he may dry up in the course of time."

"I haven't got his silly old watch," said Herries.

"And I haven't either," said Digby.

"Ass!" said Blake. "We don't know anything about your Waterbury——"

"My gold tickah——"

"Well, it isn't on the table now, and it isn't hidden by anybody belonging to this study," roared Blake. "If it's been hidden, the joker has come along the passage and done it. Go and look for it. You were jawing the other day about your wonderful powers as a giddy Sherlock Holmes. Go and track down the watch."

"Weally, Blake——"

"A jolly good idea," said Digby heartily. "When you see the thief you can tell by the colour of his whiskers whether he likes fried onions, and then you can trail him down by the smell of onions. That's how Sherlock Holmes does it."

"Weally, Dig——"

"Run away and look for your watch, Gussy!" implored Blake. "It may have taken a stroll along the passage. It may have jumped out of the window. Every watch has a spring in it, you know."

"If you fellows assuah me that you have not played any silly twick with my tickah ——"

"Upon my word of honour as a man and a brother," said Blake solemnly.

"These hands," said Herries, holding them up for inspection. "These hands have not lighted upon thy watch. I swear it by my halidom. The only hands that have been upon thy watch are the hands provided by the watchmaker."

"Jamais!" said Digby, with equal solemnity. "Jamais je n'ai touché votre montre. Shall I put it in Latin?"

"I wegard you as thwee silly asses," said Arthur Augustus witheringly. "But I suppose it was some othah silly ass who has hidden my watch. I will go and inquiah aftah him——"

"Hurrah!"

"And when I discovah him, I considah that I had bettah give him a fearful thwashin'."

And Arthur Augustus marched wrathfully out of the study.

It was true, as Blake had said, that watches were made to go, but Arthur Augustus did not like his famous gold ticker going in this manner. And he inquired after it up and down the whole length of the Fourth-Form passage.

But nobody seemed to know anything about the watch.

Levison, indeed, suggested that D'Arcy had omitted to pay the instalment due upon it, and that the hire-purchase firm had taken it back—a suggestion which was received with yells of laughter by the other juniors, and which very nearly caused a case of assault and battery.

But the watch was not to be found.

Arthur Augustus went farther afield, and inquired of the Shell fellows after the missing ticker. But the Shell knew nothing of it. The Terrible Three were doing their preparation, with Mike sitting on the bookcase and watching them solemnly, when the swell of St. Jim's looked in.

"Have you seen my watch, deah boys?" asked D'Arcy.

"Certainly," said Lowther.

"Bai Jove, that's wippin'!" exclaimed D'Arcy, in great relief. "I was beginnin' to think it was lost for good. Where did you see it, Lowthah?"

"In your hand," explained Lowther blandly.

"Wha-a-t!"

"You told me the time by it this morning, you remember."

"You uttah ass! This is not a time for wotten jokes. I left my watch on the table in my studay, and it has disappeahed."

"I hope you're taking care of the ticket," said Lowther seriously.

"The ticket! What ticket?"

"When a chap's watch disappears, he generally gets a ticket in exchange. If you don't take care of the ticket, you won't be able to get the watch out again."

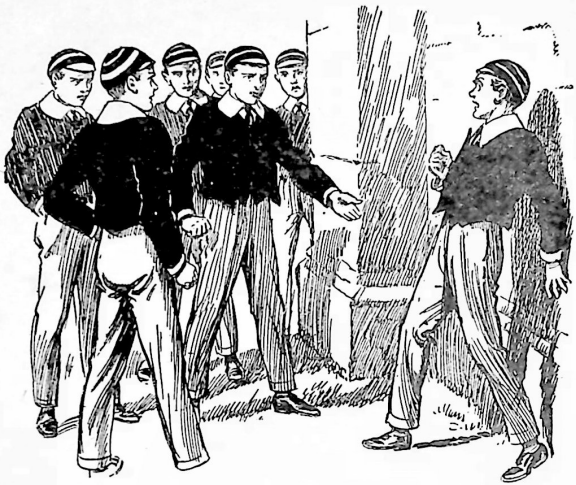
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You feahful ass!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "If you insinuate that I have pawned my beastly watch——"

"Then you haven't?" asked Lowther, in surprise.

"Of course I haven't, you fwightful chump. Some sillay ass has taken my watch off my studay table and hidden it for a wotten joke. I am twyin' to find out what sillay ass it was. I thought it might be one of you chaps."

"Thanks," said Tom Merry, laughing. "But there's only one silly ass in this study—and he's only just come."



"If you like to hand back the watch now, without any more fuss, D'Arcy is willing to look on the whole matter as a jape," exclaimed Tom Merry. "Wha-a-at!" stuttered Levison, staggering back against the School House wall. (*See Chapter* 12.)

"Then you haven't seen anythin' of my watch?"

"Not a hide nor a hair."

"It may have rolled away somewhere," Lowther suggested.

"Wats! How could it woll away?"

"Well, rolled gold would naturally roll, I suppose——"

"You silly chump, it was not wolled gold!" shrieked Arthur Augustus. "I wefuse to discuss that mattah with you any furthah."

And he retired from the study, and closed the door with a slam; and the chums of the Shell chuckled and went on with their preparation.

Arthur Augustus' next visit was to the Third Form-room. It was hardly possible that a mere fag would have had the audacity to play jokes on the elegant Augustus; but he left no stone unturned in his inquiry. Wally & Co., however, knew nothing of the watch, and all the inquiries were fruitless. They had one effect, however—to acquaint the whole of the School House with the fact that Arthur Augustus' famous gold ticker was missing, and that whoever had removed it from his study declined to own up and produce it. And when bedtime came, and the watch was still missing, a somewhat unpleasant effect was produced.

To hide a watch for a joke was foolish enough, but to take it away and refuse to give it back to the owner when he inquired after it laid the joker under the suspicion of intending to keep the article. In other words, it began to look as if D'Arcy's twenty-five guinea gold ticker had been stolen.

When Kildare, the head prefect, saw lights out in the Fourth-Form dormitory, he referred to the matter. It had reached his ears by that time.

"I understand that your watch is missing, D'Arcy?" he said.

"Yaas," said D'Arcy.

"How did you lose it?"

"I didn't lose it, deah boy. I left it on my studay table after changin' a waistcoat. You see, I was twyin' on some new waistcoats——"

"You should not be so careless with a valuable watch," said Kildare, frowning. "Leaving such a thing about is tempting a dishonest person to steal."

"Oh, bai Jove! That's wubbish, deah boy!"

"What!" roared Kildare.

"I—I mean it's wubbish to think that there could be a thief in the school, deah boy. I never thought of such a wotten thing for a moment. It is a wotten joke, that's all."

"In that case the joke is being carried too far. Let me know to-morrow whether you have found your watch or not. If not, the House-master must be told about it."

"Vewy well, deah boy."

And Kildare put out the lights and left the dormitory, frowning.

"My hat!" said Blake, in a hushed voice. "It does look rotten, now Kildare puts it that way. There was a thief in the school once—but he was a New House chap, and they expelled him. Nothing of that sort in the School House."

"Wathah not."

"Then what's become of the watch?" asked Levison, who had a marked taste for anything of the nature of a scandal, and was more disposed to stir up trouble than to allow it to settle down. "Somebody must have taken it!"

"I suppose you didn't take it, Levison, deah boy?"

"I!" yelled Levison.

"Yaas. What I mean is, you are the biggest wascal in the House, you know," Arthur Augustus explained innocently. "If anybody turned out to be a dishonest wottah, I pwesume it would be you. You admit that, I suppose."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you—you—you idiot!" spluttered Levison furiously.

"I wefuse to be called an idiot. I was only statin' a fact, and all the fellows will beah out that you are more likely than anybody else to do a dirtay twick."

"Hear, hear!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Levison. "As the watch was stolen in Study No. 6, it's up to that study to explain what's become of it. And if it doesn't turn up, the fellows will want Blake, or Herries, or Digby to explain."

"What!" roared Blake.

"I'm only stating a fact, and all the fellows will bear me out," chuckled Levison, in imitation of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy's remark.

"I won't bear you out—I'll kick you out if you say anything like that again, ye spalpeen!" growled Reilly.

"Shut up, Levison!"

"Rotten! Dry up!"

Levison "dried up"—he was content to do so. His poisonous suggestion had been made, and it would bear fruit. He knew that. When the fellows came to think about it, they would naturally regard it as the business of Study No. 6 to explain what had become of the watch, since it was in that study it had disappeared. And the chums of that famous study settled themselves to sleep in an uncomfortable frame of mind.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER
A Dog With a Bad Name!

THE next morning Arthur Augustus found that the disappearance of his watch was the one topic in the School House.

As a subject of conversation among the juniors it surpassed even the forthcoming match with Greyfriars.

All the House knew how it had happened, and when it had happened. Mr. Railton, the Housemaster, called the four chums of the Fourth into his study after morning lessons and questioned them. Arthur Augustus had left the watch and chain on the study table, and ten minutes or so after he had left the study Blake and Herries and Digby had gone in to do their preparation. They had not seen the watch. It had disappeared during those ten minutes.

Mr. Railton rated the elegant junior soundly for his carelessness. Arthur Augustus listened to him meekly, but he did not agree with the House-master's views. As he remarked afterwards to Blake, he had a right to suppose that his property was safe in his own study, and it naturally never crossed his mind that there could be a thief in the place. And he did not believe that there was one now. He persisted in his theory that it was a silly practical joke.

"That's all rot," said Blake decidedly. "A joker would have handed back the watch before now. He wouldn't let the matter come before the House-master."

"He may have lost it, deah boy, and may be afwaid to own up, for feah of bein' supposed to have stolen it," said D'Arcy sagely.

"Rats! How could he lose it? Only you are idiot enough to lose a gold watch."

"Weally, Blake——"

"Somebody's taken it for keeps," said Herries. "It's rotten, but there must be a thief in the place. I suppose it was Levison."

"Bai Jove, that's wathah a wuff thing to say, Hewwies!"

"Well, I don't trust Levison. You know once he imitated Brooke's hand, and got him into a fearful row. That was practically forgery. A fellow who would do that would do anything. Then he's cruel to animals, too."

"A chap might be cwuel to animals without being a thief, deah boy."

"I don't know. If a chap's one kind of a rotter, why shouldn't he be another kind of a rotter as well?" demanded Herries. "Towser never liked him. Levison was expelled from Greyfriars for some dirty trick or other, that came out after he had come here, though he kept it a secret at first. If I'd been the Head, I wouldn't have let him stay. You remember that the day he came Towser went for him—wanted to bite him."

"But weally, Hewwies——"

"You can always trust a dog. Dogs know!" said Herries oracularly. "Towser knew that he was a rotter through and through."

"Bai Jove! It does look wathah black against Levison," said Arthur Augustus. "Of course, as I wemarked in the dorm. last night, he is natuwally the chap who would be suspected first. He is certainly a wottah!"

"Better wait for some proof before we say anything like that outside the study," said Digby uneasily. "Give a dog a bad name, and you may as well hang him, you know. And Levison is a dog with a bad name, and no mistake! But it's an awfully serious thing to suspect a chap of stealing."

"Yaas; even Lewison ought to be given a chance," agreed Arthur Augustus.

"I suppose you're quite sure the watch is really lost?" grunted Blake. "You're ass enough to put it in another pocket and forget all about it."

"I thought of that, deah boy. I've gone thwough all my pockets and all my boxes and things this mornin'. The watch is weally gone."

"If it doesn't turn up, Railton will very likely send for a detective," said Blake, with a shiver. "It will be horrible! The New House rotters will chip us about having a thief in the house, too!"

"Yaas, it's beastly!"

The Terrible Three looked into the study. They were looking serious enough now, and even Monty Lowther no longer saw anything humorous in the matter.

"Not found the watch?" asked Tom Merry.

"No, deah boy."

"We've been talking it over," said Tom Merry. "If anybody took the watch it was Levison. Mellish isn't any better than he should be, but I don't think he'd do a thing like that; and he hasn't nerve enough. Levison has nerve enough for a Raffles. I don't like to be down on a fellow without proof, but if it wasn't Levison, who was it?"

"He was trying last night to throw suspicion on our study," said Blake, frowning.

"Yes; that's what he would do. I was going to suggest that we talk to Levison, and put it to him plainly. If he gives the

watch back, we'll agree to treat it simply as a jape, and say no more about it. That's better than a disgrace."

"Good egg! We can try, anyway."

And the chums of the School House looked for Levison. Levison was in the quadrangle, talking to a group of juniors when they found him. There was a grin of enjoyment on Levison's face. He was speaking on the subject of the purloined watch, and explaining that it was obvious that Study No. 6, or some member thereof, must know what had become of it. He ceased as the Co. came up.

"Go on, Levison!" said Kangaroo, of the Shell. "You were just saying——"

"Ahem!" murmured Levison. He did not care to go on with what he had been saying in the presence of the chums of Study No. 6.

"We want to speak to you, Levison!" said Tom Merry abruptly.

"I don't know that I want you to particularly," yawned Levison. "But you can go ahead. Has the watch been found?"

"Not yet."

"We're aftah it, deah boy," said D'Arcy. "We want to speak to you about it. Pway come up to the studay."

"Rats!" said Levison. "If you've got anything to say to me, you can say it here, I suppose? I don't mind the fellows hearing."

"Better come up to the study," said Tom Merry quietly. "We only want to have a jaw with you. It's not a rag—honour bright!"

"Oh, rot! Say what you've got to say, and don't be so jolly mysterious about it!" said Levison. "I'm not afraid of speaking out before the fellows, for one. I don't see what you've got to be afraid of, either."

"We're not afraid, you ass!" said Blake angrily.

"Looks to me as if you are," sneered Levison. "Out with it!"

"We'll speak out here, if you like," said Tom Merry. "But I warn you it would be better for you to have it in private."

"Rats!"

Tom Merry's eyes flashed.

"Well, if you want it before all the fellows, you can have it!" he exclaimed. "We want to know what you have done with D'Arcy's watch, Levison."

"Wha-a-at!"

"If you like to hand it back now, without any more fuss, D'Arcy is willing to look on the whole matter as a jape, and we'll do our best to make it all right with Railton. But it's gone far enough, and you've got to hand over the watch!"

"Yaas, that's how it is, Levison!"

Levison staggered back against the School House wall, his face growing deadly white. For the moment he seemed overwhelmed, and in his white, startled face it seemed to the juniors that conscious guilt was only too clearly written.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

Taken for Granted!

THERE was a grim silence, while Levison gasped for breath.

It was some moments before he found his voice.

"You—you accuse me?" he panted at last.

"I'm not accusing you. We've talked it over, and we've come to the conclusion that you have taken the watch. We're willing to look upon it as a silly jape—one of your rotten tricks—if you hand the watch back. D'Arcy doesn't want to accuse you of stealing it."

"No feah!"

"But the joke—if it is a joke—has gone far enough. It's becoming a regular scandal. The New House fellows have got hold of it, and Mr. Railton will be sending for the police, very likely, if it isn't cleared up soon. I know you like causing trouble and worrying people, and stirring up unpleasant things; but I want to warn you that if you do it this time it will mean trouble. If the watch is searched for, and found where you've hidden it, you will be accused of stealing."

"You can't expect anything else," said Blake, with a shake of the head.

Levison panted.

"I've not seen the watch!"

"Oh, rats!"

"Yaas, wats, deah boy! Don't play the gidday goat. Hand ovah the watch, and we'll agwee to call it a joke."

"Better hand it over and own up, Levison," said Kangaroo. "It's the most sensible thing to do, you know."

"You fool, I haven't seen the watch! How can I hand it over when I don't know where it is?" howled Levison.

"Sure, if you didn't take it, who did, intoirely?" asked Reilly.

"One of the chaps in Study No. 6 took it, of course! You all know it!" screamed Levison. "Blake or Herries or Digby has it, of course!"

The three juniors named clenched their fists, but Tom Merry interposed.

"Hold on! Hold on!"

"Do you think I am going to let that worm call me a thief?" demanded Herries furiously.

"No; but——"

"You're calling me one!" yelled Levison.

"That's different. You are one!"

"Yaas, wathah! You see, Levison, you are the only chap in the House who's wottah enough to do such a thing."

"There are lots of fellows who might have taken it!" exclaimed Levison. "There's Brooke! You all know he's hard up."

"Oh, shut up!" said Tom Merry. "It's no good throwing round rotten accusations. There isn't any actual proof against you, but it's pretty clear that you did it. It's just like you."

"You'll say this is a joke on Gussy when the watch is found in your trousers' pocket, or hidden up the chimney of your study," said Blake, with a sniff. "That is, if you don't try to make out that it was Mellish or Rook or Lumley-Lumley who hid it there, as they share your study. But we shall know what to believe."

"If you've shoved that stolen watch in my study——" began Levison.

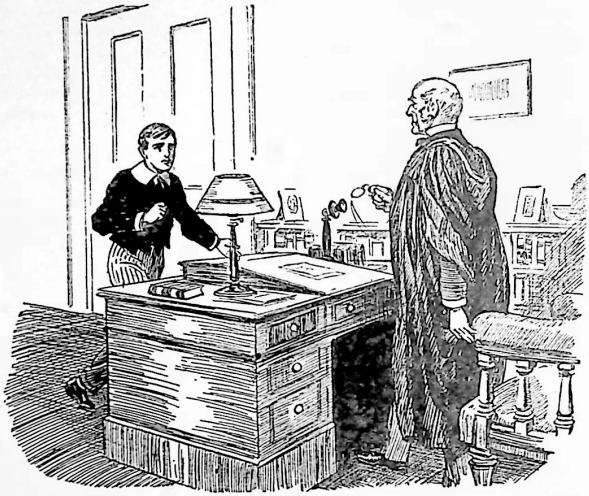
Blake burst into a roar.

"What!"

"Hold on, Blake! I tell you this isn't a matter for punching," said Tom Merry. "It's got to be cleared up. Look here, Levison, if the watch is found, and you say it was a joke on Gussy, nobody will believe you. If you hand it over now, we're willing to drop the whole matter where it stands."

"And that's a jolly good offer," growled Herries.

"I tell you I don't know anything about the watch," said Levison desperately. "If



Levison burst into the study, hardly troubling to knock before he entered. Dr. Holmes rose majestically to his feet, fixing a severe glance upon the intruder. "Levison, how dare you——" (*See Chapter* 14.)

it's found, it will be found where the thief has hidden it."

"Yes; and you're the thief!"

Levison cast a wild look round. There was condemnation in every face. Against any other fellow in the school mere circumstantial evidence would not have been regarded. But Levison, by his own conduct, had prepared this pit for his own feet. The fellows knew what he had done on previous occasions. As for his protestations, they went for nothing. He had protested before, with equal excitement, when he had been proved to be lying. Levison was a dog with a bad name with a vengeance, and he was so false that he could not expect his word to be taken.

"It's some of those rotters have done this, for revenge on me!" he panted at last. "They've planned it among them to get me sacked!"

"Bai Jove!"

"No good talking rot like that," said Kangaroo. "We all know that they wouldn't do anything of the sort. What I can't understand is why you don't own up now that it's quite clear against you!"

"Yaas, wathah! Own up, deah boy."

"I've got nothing to own up to. I tell you——"

"Oh, rats!"

"Bosh!"

"Rubbish!"

"It will be too late soon," said Tom Merry quietly. "When the matter comes before the Head, it will be too late to try to pass it off as a joke."

Levison set his teeth.

"You're welcome to search me if you like, and my study, and all my things," he exclaimed. "If you find the watch, I'll eat it!"

"You mean you've hidden it where it can't be found?"

"I haven't—I didn't! I—I——"

"Well, if you choose to let the matter go on you will have to take the consequences," said Tom Merry. "We've done our best for you. The best thing you can do is to own up now, and save trouble. The Head will suspect you first of all when he knows about it."

"I say, you chaps"—Lumley-Lumley, of the Fourth, joined the excited group of juniors in the corner of the quadrangle—"I suppose none of you has been borrowing anything out of my study?"

"Oh, gweat Scott! Have you missed a watch, too, deah boy?"

"Not a watch," said Lumley-Lumley. "But I guess somebody's pinched my pocket-book."

"Anything in it?"

"Only letters. I shouldn't have left it lying in the study, I guess, if there had been any money in it. I'm not a howling ass, like Gussy!"

"Weally, Lumlay——"

"But it's a jolly valuable pocket-book, and it cost my pater six guineas," said Lumley-Lumley. "Blessed if I know what a thief could do with it. It's valuable leather, but it's got my monogram stamped on it as large as life, and it couldn't be sold. I've left it in the study often enough, when there was nothing in it. But it's gone now. I just looked for it because I've had a remittance, and I carry paper money in my pocket-book when I've got any. But it's gone."

"You've searched for it, I suppose?" said Tom Merry, with a troubled look.

"You bet! It's not in the study now, unless——" Lumley-Lumley paused.

"Unless what?"

"Unless Levison may have locked it up in his own desk by way of a joke. He's very fond of playing little jokes of that sort with other fellows' things."

All eyes were turned on Levison again. Levison shared Lumley-Lumley's study, and in the case of D'Arcy's watch he had himself declared that suspicion naturally turned upon the occupiers of the study where an article was lost. His hasty accusation was another piece of evidence against himself now.

"Well, what have you got to say, Levison?" demanded Tom Merry.

Levison gave a choked cry.

"You rotters! You're putting all this

on me to ruin me!" he shrieked. "I've got this to say, I'm going to the Head to ask him to investigate."

And Levison rushed excitedly towards the house.

"Gammon!" said Herries contemptuously.

"I guess he's not going to any old Head!" remarked Lumley-Lumley.

But Lumley-Lumley "guessed" wrong. For Levison hurried directly to the Head's study, and Wally, of the Third, who saw him going in, brought out the news to the juniors.

"Sheer cheek!" said Herries. "Taking the bull by the horns, that's all. He knows the Head will take the matter up, and he wants to have first whack."

And that was the general impression.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER
The Discovery!

DR. HOLMES was surprised, and still more displeased, when the excited junior burst into his study, hardly troubling to knock before he entered.

The doctor rose majestically to his feet, fixing a severe glance upon the intruder.

"Levison, how dare you——"

Levison panted almost hysterically.

"I had to come to you, sir. They all suspect me——"

"What!"

"D'Arcy has lost his gold watch, and Lumley-Lumley his pocket-book, sir, and the fellows all say I've stolen them!" gasped Levison. "I—I want you to find out who did it."

"Calm yourself!" said the Head quietly. "This is the first I have heard of the matter, Levison. There has been a theft?"

"Yes, sir; and all the fellows say——"

"They suspect you of the theft?"

"Yes, yes. And I——"

"Why do they suspect you?"

"I—I—I——"

"Have the things been found in your possession?"

"No!" shrieked Levison. "They haven't been found at all, sir. They suspect me without an atom of proof."

"Then it can only be from their knowledge of your character, Levison."

"I—I—— It's not fair, sir. I don't know anything about the matter. I haven't seen the things. I believe it's a plot against me——"

"Nonsense!"

"I'm innocent, sir. I——"

"I hope you are innocent, Levison," said the Head coldly. "I cannot, however, forget your past conduct. I cannot help remembering that once you abstracted an article from Mr. Lathom's study and concealed it in a trunk belonging to Merry, of the Shell."

"That was a joke, sir."

"I did not believe at the time that it was a joke, and I do not believe it now. If a theft has been committed, it is only natural that your schoolfellows should suspect you, Levison, after what you have done, and the record you have earned for yourself in the House. However, you shall have justice. I promise you that."

"That's all I want, sir."

"You shall have it. I will invesigate the matter immediately."

The Head rang and sent for Mr. Railton. The School House-master came into the study, looking very grave.

"Levison tells me that thefts have been committed in the House, and that the boys suspect him, Mr. Railton," said Dr. Holmes.

Mr. Railton coughed.

"I must say, sir, that my own thoughts turned upon Levison," he said. "He is the only boy in the House whose character—ahem!—justifies such a suspicion."

"I'm innocent!" gasped Levison. "I'm ready to be searched, and to have all my belongings searched, sir."

"I suppose there had better be a search, sir," said Mr. Railton, glancing at the Head. "The lost articles must be found."

"Undoubtedly."

"I understand that to-day Lumley-Lumley, of the Fourth, has missed a valuable pocket-book. Levison shares his study. The search had better begin with Levison's property, I suppose."

"Quite so. If nothing is found, I sup-

pose it must be extended. For the sake of all the boys the matter must be cleared up. Pray oblige me by taking charge of this very distressing affair, Mr. Railton."

"Certainly, sir."

Mr. Railton made a sign to Levison, and left the Head's study. The cad of the Fourth followed him, with a wretched face.

In the passage Mr. Railton paused, and fixed a sharp and scrutinising look upon the pale face of the Fourth-Former.

"I suppose you persist in denying any knowledge of the missing articles, Levison?" he asked quietly.

"I don't know anything about them, sir—on my word!"

"Unfortunately, your word cannot be relied upon," said the House-master drily. "If you are innocent, Levison, you may see now the result of your dishonourable conduct on other occasions. You have made a bad reputation, and you cannot expect to be believed, even if you are telling the truth. Follow me!"

Levison followed him in miserable silence.

Ten minutes later the Fourth Form passage was crammed with fellows, while Taggles the porter was engaged in searching Levison's study.

Nothing was discovered there.

But no one was disappointed; no one had expected anything to be discovered there.

They all knew that Levison was too cunning to have concealed the stolen articles in his own quarters, if he had indeed taken them.

Followed by the excited crowd of juniors, Taggles moved along the passage from study to study, but in the Fourth-Form quarters nothing was found.

"Shell studies next!" murmured Kangaroo. "Tremble, ye Shell-fish!"

But no one smiled. The matter was too serious. Study after study was ransacked by the industrious Taggles without result. As the search-party came to Tom Merry's study, there was an alarmed chattering from Mike, the monkey. He blinked and grinned at them from the top of the bookcase, apparently alarmed by the sudden excitement at the study doorway.

"Quiet, Mike, old man!" said Tom Merry. "Shurrup!"

Chatter, chatter, chatter!

Taggles began the search of the study.

He looked in the boxes and the drawers, and as he pulled open the drawer of the table a sudden peculiar change came over his rugged face.

"There's a watch 'ere, sir," he said.

"Oh, that's mine!" said Tom Merry. "It doesn't go—and I've left it there till I send it to be repaired."

"Is your watch a gold one, Merry?" asked Mr. Railton, looking into the open drawer.

"No, sir; silver."

"There is a gold watch here as well as a silver one."

"Wha-a-at!"

There was a buzz from outside the doorway. It was a find at last. No one of the Terrible Three possessed a gold watch. If there was a gold watch in the study, it did not belong to them.

"Look at that watch, D'Arcy, and say whether it is yours," said Mr. Railton, handing out the timepiece to the swell of St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus nodded as he took the watch. It was undoubtedly his famous gold ticker. All the juniors knew it by sight.

"Yaas, sir; that's mine."

"There is a russia-leather pocket-book here also, stamped with the monogram of 'J. L. L.,'" said Mr. Railton.

"I guess that's mine, sir," said Jerrold Lumley-Lumley.

"They were hidden under these 'ere papers, sir," said Taggles.

"That will do, Taggles. I need not trouble you further."

And Taggles departed.

Mr. Railton fixed his eyes upon the Terrible Three of the Shell, who were looking red and indignant.

"The stolen property has been found," he said. "Can you explain how it came to be in your study, Merry—or you, Manners and Lowther?"

"Yes, sir," said Monty Lowther hotly.



"There's a watch 'ere, sir," said Taggles. "Oh, that's mine!" said Tom Merry. "It doesn't go—and I've left it there till I send it to be repaired." (*See Chapter* 14.)

"I can account for it quite easily. The thief put them there, sir!"

"That is certainly the case," said the House-master. "The only question is, who was the thief?"

"We all know who it was, sir," said Blake.

"I suppose no one will suspect Lowther and Manners and me of stealing the things?" said Tom Merry disdainfully. "We all use that drawer in the table at times, and if one of us put stolen things there the others would know. I don't think anybody present would like to say that we stole the things."

"Wathah not. It would be widiculous!"

"Utter rot!" said Kangaroo. "The things might just as well have been found in my study, or anybody else's—only Levison has a special dislike for this study."

"What have you to say, Levison?"

"I don't know anything about the things, sir," said Levison. "I—I don't believe Tom Merry stole them. It's a rotten trick of somebody's. But I didn't put them there—I swear that!"

"It would be exactly the same as a wicked twick you played upon Mewwy once befoah, and for which you were flogged by the Head."

"But I shouldn't be idiot enough to do it again, even if I wanted to," gasped Levison. "I'm not a fool. I should know that nobody would believe Tom Merry had taken them."

"If the things were not deliberately placed here by the thief to inculpate the owners of this study by Levison, they can only have been stolen by one of these three juniors."

"And we know that's rot!" said Blake.

"I don't know who did it, sir," groaned Levison, "but *I* didn't."

Mr. Railton looked at him hard.

"I hope that is the truth, Levison. But if you are innocent, there is another boy in the School House who is guilty."

"Nobody else would do it, sir!" exclaimed Blake.

"You're all down on me," muttered Levison. "But I—I'm innocent. I don't know anything about it."

There was a long pause.

"I cannot decide immediately," said Mr. Railton at last. "I will go now and consult with the Head, and acquaint him with what has been discovered. I do not condemn you, Levison. The matter must remain in abeyance till some decision is reached."

And Mr. Railton strode away.

Levison looked round at the juniors.

"You believe I did that?" he muttered.

"We know you did!" said Tom Merry.

"I swear——"

"Oh, dry up!" said Blake. "What's the good of that?"

"On my honour——"

"Your honour!" said Blake. "Don't be funny!"

Levison did not reply. He staggered out of the study, white as a sheet. Innocent or guilty, he was condemned by all the House—and, innocent or guilty, he had only himself to thank for it.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER
Condemned!

THE rest of that day was like a nightmare to the cad of the Fourth.

He had half expected to be ragged by the School House juniors, but there was nothing of that kind. Tom Merry & Co. would have stopped it. They had not the slightest doubt of Levison's guilt, but his punishment was likely to be heavy enough. He was already sent to Coventry; even his own chum, Mellish, turned his back upon him.

"He'll have to go," said Blake. "He's been a disgrace to St. Jim's long enough, and now he's got to get out. If the Head doesn't sack him, we'll make him glad to go; but let the rotter alone till we know."

And that was agreed upon.

The Terrible Three came in from football practice to tea, looking more serious than usual. They could not be sorry for Levison, and yet his downcast looks affected their spirits somewhat. He had brought it upon himself certainly, but it was their way to feel for a fellow who was down.

"Well, it's no good looking glum about it," said Monty Lowther, as he jammed the kettle on the fire for tea. "It will be better for him, as well as us, if he clears out. He may take this as a lesson, and start better somewhere else."

"I wonder——" said Tom Merry.

"There's no doubt he did it, if that's what you mean. I suppose we can't suspect ourselves of having done it?"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Well, hardly," he agreed. "Where have you shoved Mike's nuts, you bounders?"

"Table drawer," said Manners, who was busy opening a jam-jar.

"Right!"

Tom Merry opened the table drawer, and then uttered a sharp exclamation:

"My hat!"

"Hallo! What's the matter? Somebody pinched Mike's nuts now?" demanded Lowther.

"No. But look here!"

Manners and Lowther hurried over to him. In the table drawer lay a large ivory paper-knife, which all the juniors knew belonged to Mr. Railton. The Terrible Three gazed at it in wonder.

"My only hat!" said Lowther at last, with a deep breath. "Isn't Levison satisfied yet? What has he done that for?"

"He must be balmy in the crumpet," said Manners. "Why, he's left it lying plain in view, not even hidden under the papers. He must have known that we'd find it the minute the drawer was opened."

"It must have been Levison, I suppose."

"Who else?" said Lowther.

"Might be some silly ass's idea of a joke," said Tom Merry. "Levison is a rotter, but I can't understand his being such a crass idiot as this. I'll take this back to Mr. Railton. The sooner the better."

Tom Merry picked up the paper-knife, and took it out of the study. Blake met him as he went down the passage to the stairs.

"Hallo! Been borrowing Railton's giddy paper-knife?" Blake exclaimed, in astonishment. "I hope you mentioned it to him first."

Tom Merry shook his head.

"We've just found this in our study," he replied.

Blake whistled.

"Levison again, of course? But what ——"

"I suppose so," said Tom Merry. "I'm beginning to think he's out of his senses."

"He's in his study," said Blake. "Come in and ask him."

He opened the door of Levison's study. Levison was alone there, sunk in an atti-

tude of utter dejection in the armchair. He looked dully at the two juniors.

"Did you put this into my study, Levison?" asked Tom, holding up the ivory knife.

Levison grunted.

"Of course I didn't. What do you mean?"

"I've just found it there!"

"I've been in this study ever since lessons," growled Levison.

"And everybody else out of the house," said Blake significantly. "I'm blessed if I understand you, Levison. What did you do it for?"

"I didn't do it!" howled Levison. "There's a thief in the house. I know that!"

"We all know that!" said Blake drily.

Levison sprang to his feet.

"I tell you there's a thief in the house, and he's trying to put it on me! I've missed something myself now. Somebody's taken my fountain-pen."

Blake sniffed.

"Think of something better than that," he suggested contemptuously. "Do you expect anybody to swallow such a yarn as that?"

"No," groaned Levison, "I don't! But it's true. I wasn't going to mention it. I knew nobody would believe me. But it's true all the same."

Tom Merry looked at him curiously. It seemed to him that for once there was a ring of truth in the voice of the Cad of the Fourth.

"Have you really lost a fountain-pen?" he asked.

"Yes; it was a birthday present, and cost a guinea," said Levison. "It was the most valuable thing I had. I left it here on the inkstand, and now it's gone. Of course, nobody will believe I've lost it."

Tom Merry wrinkled his brows in thought.

"There's a thief in the place, and he's taking advantage of my being in the Head's black books to pile it on me," said Levison bitterly.

"Rot!" said Blake. "A thief takes things to keep, I suppose. What would be the good to him of stealing things and sticking them where they're sure to be found? I'll bet your fountain-pen will turn up in Tom Merry's study—if you've really missed it—and you're the chap who put it there. Why should anybody else do it?"

"I'm going to see," said Tom. "Come with me, Blake!"

"Right you are!"

They hurried to Tom Merry's study. Manners and Lowther were getting the tea. Tom Merry pulled open the table drawer.

"This seems to be Levison's favourite place for putting things," he remarked. "I'll look here first."

"What are you looking for?" asked Manners.

"Levison says he's lost his fountain-pen."

"Rubbish!"

"Hallo! Look here!"

Tom Merry had turned over a heap of old papers in the drawer. Underneath them reposed a fountain-pen.

"Not ours!" said Monty Lowther.

"Regular receptacle for stolen property, this study," chuckled Blake. "Lucky for you fellows we know it's Levison."

Lowther knitted his brows.

"Isn't he fed up with it yet?" he exclaimed. "My hat! I'll jolly well hammer him for shoving his things in this study."

The Terrible Three and Blake returned to Levison's study. Tom Merry threw the fountain-pen on the table.

"Is that yours, Levison?" he demanded contemptuously.

Levison nodded glumly.

"Yes, that's mine! Where did you find it?"

"Where you put it—in my study," said Tom Merry wrathfully.

Levison passed his hand across his brow.

"I don't understand it," he muttered. "I can't understand it. I'll swear I never put it in your study. I just missed it—that was all!"

There was a shout from the passage.

"Look out, Levison!"

"What's the row?" asked Tom Merry, looking out of the study.

Wally, of the Third, had dashed upstairs in a state of wild excitement.

"The police!" he gasped.

Levison gave a cry.

"The police!"

"Yes; Inspector Skeat, from Rylcombe!" yelled Wally. "You ass, why didn't you own up when you had a chance?"

Levison flung himself into his chair with a sob.

"I'm innocent—I'll swear I'm innocent!"

The juniors looked at him. They felt no desire to rag him now. They left the study quietly, and Tom Merry took the paper-knife to Mr. Railton's room. The Housemaster was not there, so no explanation was needed, and Tom Merry was glad not to have to say anything more against Levison at that moment. Mr. Railton was at the door, speaking to the burly police-inspector from Rylcombe.

Inspector Skeat and Mr. Railton passed into the Head's study together. In the hall, the fellows clustered in excited groups, seniors and juniors. There was no doubt in any mind that the Head had telephoned for the police, and that Inspector Skeat had come in response to look into the matter of the thefts in the School House. The fellows waited in anticipation of Levison's being sent for.

The Head's bell rang, and a few minutes later Toby, the page, came along. There was a general exclamation.

"Levison's in his study, Toby."

"The 'Ead don't want Levison," said Toby.

"Not Levison!" exclaimed Blake. "Who, then?"

"Master Merry!"

There was a gasp from all the juniors.

"Tom Merry!"

"Me!" exclaimed Tom Merry, in amazement.

"Yes, Master Merry. You're to go to the 'Ead's study at once! Inspector Skeat wants to see you."

"My hat!"

Tom Merry's countenance was crimson now. Levison, who had come downstairs, with a face like chalk, turned on him with a snarl.

"You—you——" he cried. "It's you, Tom Merry! The Head doesn't want me—Inspector Skeat doesn't want me! They want *you!*"

"Bai Jove! It's vewy queeah!"

"And please, Master Merry, you're to take your monkey," said Toby.

That was the climax! The juniors simply yelled with astonishment. They could understand the Head wanting to see Levison, or even Tom Merry; but what in the name of all that was miraculous did he want to see Tom Merry's monkey for?

"My only chapeau!" said Digby. "It's Tom Merry's minor who's in trouble, then."

"I—I think I guess," muttered Tom Merry. "Fur Cap has gone to the police about the monkey, perhaps. But he can't claim him. He sold him to me."

"And we're witnesses of it," said Manners and Lowther together.

Tom Merry went up to his study, and came down with Mike on his shoulder. And the crowd buzzed with eager excitement in the passage as Tom Merry passed into the Head's study with Mike.

All sorts of suggestions were put forward as to the probable consequences to Tom; but Tom Merry was not worrying.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER
Light at Last!

TOM MERRY entered the study with perfect coolness.

Mr. Railton and the fat inspector were with the Head. Tom Merry had no doubt that the inspector's visit was in connection with Fur Cap and his claim to the monkey. If it had been in connection with the thefts in the School House, Mike would hardly have been sent for. Tom Merry was glad now that he had confided the whole matter to Mr. Railton.

"Toby says you wanted to see me, sir, and my monkey," said Tom Merry.

"Yes, Merry," said the Head, while the inspector glanced curiously at the little creature on Tom Merry's shoulder. "Mr.



As Mr. Railton and Tom Merry reached the study doorway they caught sight of Mike. He was carefully packing the watch away in the study-table drawer! (*See Chapter* 16.)

Railton tells me that you explained to him how you came into possession of the monkey. Kindly explain to Merry, Inspector Skeat."

"You had that monkey from a man named Michael Hadd, Master Merry?" the inspector asked.

"I don't know his name, Mr. Skeat. We called him Fur Cap. He was a ruffianly-looking rotter—ahem!—I mean person—and wore a dirty fur cap."

"That's the man," said the inspector, with a smile. "His name is Hadd. He is a criminal, and the police in the next county have been looking for him for a long time. He came this way to carry on his little game with his monkey in a new quarter, but we've spotted him from his description. He sold you that monkey—eh?"

"Yes, sir. I made him!"

The inspector smiled.

"He declares that you took it by force."

"So we did in the first place, Mr. Skeat. He was ill-treating it in a brutal way. But I offered to pay for it, and afterwards I paid him, when he tried to steal it, and he agreed that the monkey was mine. If he claims it——"

"He won't be likely to claim anything for the next two years," said the inspector, laughing. "He was very keen to get that monkey back, wasn't he?"

"Very keen indeed, sir."

"His living depended on it," the inspector explained. "The monkey was trained to steal. He carried him about on an organ, under pretence of his being an ordinary performing monkey; but the animal was an expert thief. He would nip into open windows, or run into rooms in places where the rascal stayed, and steal things and take them to his master. We have found a good deal of stolen property on Hadd, especially watches and handy things like that."

Tom Merry started.

"We learned from Hadd that you had the monkey," said the inspector. "I have come for him, but as you have bought him, your claim will hold good. A rather dangerous pet, however, I should say, unless he has got out of his old habits. Has he stolen anything while you have had him?"

The Head and Mr. Railton exchanged a quick glance.

The same thought occurred to both of them at once.

Inspector Skeat smiled, and took out his watch, detached it from the chain, and laid it on the table. The monkey's eyes were upon it at once.

"If you turn your heads, he will nip up that watch and run for it," said Mr. Skeat. "If you have lost any property here, as I suppose from your expression, gentlemen, you will most likely find it in the same place as that watch, when he has taken it away."

"My only hat!" said Tom Merry involuntarily.

They turned their backs on the monkey. Mike slipped down from Tom Merry's shoulder, and as the junior also turned away, in a twinkling the monkey had pouched the watch and scuttled out of the study.

"Find out where he puts that watch, Merry, please, and bring it back," said the Head.

"Yes, sir," said Tom.

Mr. Railton also followed the monkey. They reached Tom Merry's study, Mike being out of sight; but as they entered the study doorway they saw him again. Mike was carefully packing the watch away in the table drawer in the study.

"My word!" murmured Tom Merry. "I suppose he saw me put my watch there, and he's as imitative as—as—as a monkey!"

Mr. Railton smiled.

"I think this explains the mystery of the thefts, Merry," he said. "This very fortunate discovery clears Levison."

They returned to the Head's study, Tom with the monkey on his shoulder again. The Head listened with obvious relief to what they had to tell him.

"Your visit here has come at a very fortunate moment, Inspector Skeat," he said cordially. "There have been thefts in the house, and one of the junior boys was under suspicion. The stolen articles were discovered in the same drawer as that in which that monkey placed your watch. I am very grateful to you for this. It has prevented a great injustice from being done."

"I am very glad of it, sir," said the inspector. "After this, I suppose Master Merry will raise no objection to my taking the monkey away."

"I could teach him better, sir," Tom Merry said, looking appealingly at the Head. "I've taught him lots of things, and I could teach him to be honest now, I know."

"Perhaps," said the Head. "Inspector Skeat must take the monkey now, as he is required in the case against this ruffian Hadd; but doubtless he will be returned to you, and if you can cure him of his peculiar habits you may keep him."

"Thank you, sir," said Tom Merry.

And when Inspector Skeat departed, Tom Merry was surrounded by an excited throng simply thirsting for information.

"Explain, you ass!"

Tom Merry waved his hand.

"Silence for the chair! Skeatey came here for Mike. Fur Cap is in prison, waiting for trial, and Mike is wanted in the evidence. The rotter trained Mike to steal things. That was why he wanted him back so badly. It was Mike who stole those things and planted them in the table drawer in my study," announced Tom Merry.

"Wha-a-at!"

Levison gave a violent start.

"The—the monkey!" he panted. "It was the monkey! Oh!"

"Yes, and jolly lucky for you we found it out," said Tom Merry. "It's quite true, you fellows. Skeatey knows all about him. He let Mike pinch his watch, and Mike scuttled off and shoved it in the drawer in my study, and Railton and I watched him. There isn't any doubt that Mike put the other things there now. Of course, I didn't think of Mike. It was so natural to suspect Levison of doing anything rotten!

"Still, I'm glad it's been cleared up. Levison, my son, you depart from this court without a stain on your character, excepting the old stains, which won't wash out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Levison stalked away, scowling. That was all the sympathy he received. It wasn't much, but it was as much as he deserved.

THE END



The Rogue!

By CECIL FANSHAW

Adventures, fast and furious, keep Dick and his uncle company in a great elephant trail in wildest Africa!

THE FIRST CHAPTER
The Trail of the Monster.

"IT must be a whacking great brute, uncle!" gasped young Dick Pain, leaning forward from his saddle, to stare down at enormous footprints in the red sand. "It must be the biggest elephant in Africa—in the world! You surely won't chuck up the hunt now!"

Old Ben Pain, Dick's uncle, and an expert African elephant hunter, eyed the huge circular tracks anxiously.

They were as big round as hip-baths, and the fact that the scorching wind hadn't yet blotted them out proved that the monster which had made them couldn't be very far ahead.

"Yes, Dick, we're on the tracks of a giant bull, for sure, an' I reckon his tusks would scale above a hundred pounds apiece! But he's goin' strong. There's no knowin' when a rogue'll stop goin', and we're gettin' mighty short o' grub!"

The old hunter turned in his saddle, glancing back anxiously at the dozen tired-looking black porters, who had just emerged from a belt of thorn scrub.

They were headed by a sullen-faced native, wearing ragged khaki garments and a red fez, and carrying old Ben's heavy rifle. The whole bunch seemed a bit dejected, which was not surprising, for old Ben and his nephew had been following the huge elephant for three weeks in terrible, sun-scorched bush country. Besides, they had seen no buck to shoot for meat.

"A rogue, uncle?" cried Dick. "I thought a rogue elephant didn't mix with the herd. This big fellow's trekking along on his own now, it seems, but the tracks showed us he was moving with a herd a few days ago."

"He was followin' th' herd, my lad, not movin' with it," corrected old Ben. "I bet he was out for a scrap with some young bull if he got a chance. Rogues are old, vicious elephants that have been cast out of the herd by the others; but they often hang around close, tryin' to kill any smaller beast they can catch."

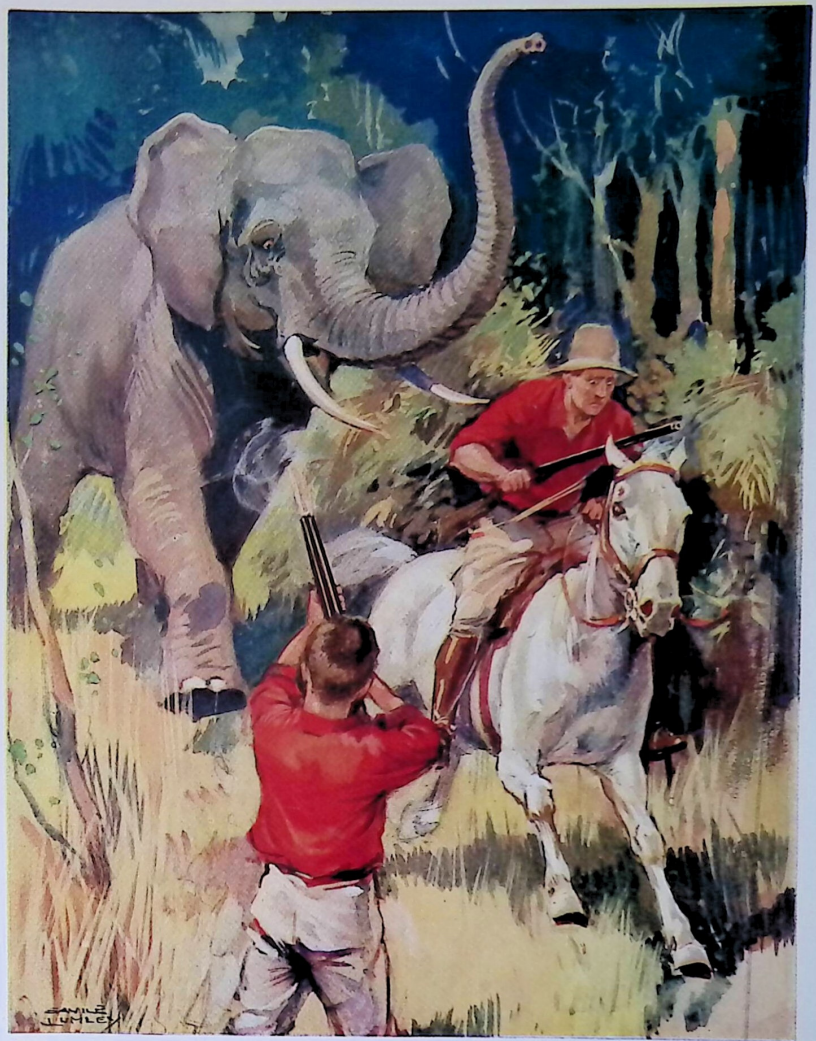
"The brutes!" exclaimed Dick. "Then you think we're following a rogue—a real savage killer?"

"I reckon so, my lad, but I'll make certain."

Old Ben beckoned to his gun-bearer, the native in the rags and red fez, who shambled forward, revealing teeth filed to sharp points through his slightly-parted thick lips.

"You think this feller elephant um rogue, Gobo?" old Ben asked, pointing to the tracks. "He no stop? He go trek, trek, trek altogether?"

For a moment Gobo stared hard at the ground, glanced at the surrounding bush,



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A TIGHT CORNER!

which showed no signs of the passage of a herd, then made clicking noises with his tongue and nodded.

"Yes, bwana, him rogue," croaked Gobo. "Him done leave um herd, march away to mountains, march for many moons mebbe. Me think no use follow any more."

Dick let out a sigh of disappointment.

"It's jest what I feared, my lad," muttered old Ben, rubbing his grizzled chin. "Th' porters ha' only got enough food for fourteen days—and 'twould take us quite ten to trek back from here to Nairobi. But we'll keep on for four more days, and maybe we'll shoot some buck for meat, which would sure help us. If we don't——" And old Ben broke off with an expressive gesture.

"Tell um porters"—he turned to his surly gun "boy"—"that we follow big feller elephant four more days, if we no done shoot him then we go back one-time. If porters trek along fast now, I make um promise extra pay."

At once the trailing of the monster bull was resumed through the hot, sun-scorched thorn scrub; the hunters wary and alert, in case the brute should be standing hidden somewhere, waiting to charge out like a thunderbolt.

Old Ben and his nephew rode in front on their tough Somali ponies; close behind them slouched Gobo, with old Ben's heavy rifle, for the grizzled hunter found it a burden on account of his age, and carried only a light Mannlicher. Dick cast several glances back at Gobo.

"I don't quite take to that fellow, uncle," the lad said in low tones. "He's an awful surly kind of chap, always stirring up trouble with the porters."

"Gobo ain't as bad as he looks, my lad," laughed old Ben. "He's a Wakamba, and the porters are all Kikuyus. Th' two tribes don't mix well, consequently——"

He broke off abruptly.

"What's that?"

Old Ben whipped up his light rifle, Dick gripped his heavy Express tightly, and both reined in, to stare anxiously through the parched scrub.

To their ears had come the wild drumming of galloping hoofs, growing rapidly louder. A second later, both saw a terrified horse burst through the bush and come dashing towards them, eyes bulging, nostrils wide, and with the stirrups of an empty saddle banging its flanks.

Dick spurred forward, caught the runaway's flying bridle, and brought the beast to a standstill.

"Just look at the gash on its flank, uncle!" the lad shouted in horror. "The poor brute's been wounded!"

"By a lion!" roared old Ben, charging up to his nephew. "Those are claw marks, m' lad, and mebbe th' fellow who owns this horse is lyin' close somewhere, bein' torn ——"

He broke off, yelling to Dick to follow him, and dashed off at full speed. Dick slung the reins of the wounded beast to Gobo, rammed home his heels, and tore after his uncle at a hand-gallop.

Following the hoofprints left by the animal, nephew and uncle spurred through the bush, ducking under low branches, their khaki clothing catching every moment in the thorns. Suddenly they heard shouts, headed their mounts towards the sounds, then burst out into a large glade, to see a grim sight.

In the branches of a mimosa tree, which stood by itself, they saw a swarthy white man, who was gripping a bough for dear life, and letting fly shrill yells of fear.

Beneath the tree they saw a lion and lioness, glaring hungrily upwards; saw a second lioness making terrific bounds at the man above. Her leaps brought her slashing claws within a few inches of his dangling feet!

"Good heavens!" yelled Dick. "She'll drag that fellow from his perch in a second!"

At the sound of voices, all three lions whipped round, glared at the newcomers, then roared defiance. Away sprang Dick's horse, rearing in terror, but the plucky lad sprang to the ground, then levelled his heavy weapon at the black-maned lion.

"Don't shoot at th' lion, m' lad!" bawled old Ben, who knew all about lion-

hunting. "Plug a lioness—they're th' fiercest brutes!"

Things were happening at racing speed.

Even as Dick heard his uncle shout, he shifted his aim. He glared along the sights at the nearest lioness, saw the brute drop its head, yellow eyes agleam, saw its tail switching in fury. Came a shattering roar, then Dick saw the brute flying right at him, jaws wide.

Bang! Dick let fly with his right barrel, and reeled back at the shock of the discharge, almost deafened by the ringing explosion.

But his aim was good. Struck square between the eyes by the heavy bullet, the lioness collapsed in mid-air, and struck the ground, with a loose thud. Then lay motionless.

"Got it!" whooped Dick.

But the yell of triumph died on his lips, for out of the corner of his eye he saw the second lioness tearing up the ground in blind fury. Old Ben, also forced to dismount as his horse reared, had just wounded it. But he hadn't managed to kill it with his light rifle, and the horrified Dick saw the beast charge his uncle like a streak of lightning.

Bang! Old Ben fired again, inflicting a mortal wound.

It takes a knock-down blow, however, to stop a charging lioness, and the brute rushed on. But Dick's left barrel boomed like a cannon in the nick of time, and the second lioness turned a double somersault, landed in a heap, clawed the sand savagely for a second, and then collapsed within a yard of old Ben.

Dick whirled to see what the lion was doing, but the heavy-maned, fierce-looking monster had fled!

"Nailin' fine work, nevvy!" cried the old hunter, snatching off his hat and mopping his forehead. "I reckon that beast would ha' mauled me badly in her death struggles if you hadn't let drive so smart! But always plug the lioness first, my lad—then th' chances are th' lion'll bolt. Th' lionesses always charge home."

"Bravo! You savea my life!" broke in a harsh voice from the branches of the mimosa, then uncle and nephew saw the man they had rescued come slithering down.



Dick spurred forward, caught the runaway's flying bridle, and brought the beast to a standstill. *(See Chapter 1.)*

He hurried towards the hunters, gabbling thanks, and Dick saw that he was a yellow-skinned, slightly-built man, but sinewy-looking, with a nose like an eagle's beak, and with alert, piercing eyes. He looked what he was, a Portuguese from the coast.

"Ah! I thanka you both!" he repeated, reaching for their hands excitedly. "I am Gomez—Pinto Gomez from da South. Da

lions attack me, and one seize my 'orse, which just manage to escape. I droppa my rifle, but jump to da tree in time, and all my ' boys ' climba da trees, too. If you 'ad not come, I thinka da lioness soon 'ook me out. But 'ow did you finda me?"

" Met your horse and caught it," laughed Dick. " Here it comes."

To the delight of Gomez, old Ben's gun-bearer, Gobo, came thrusting through the bush at that moment, leading the Portuguese's horse; and behind Gobo came the hunters' scared-looking porters, who had caught the hunters' terrified horses.

Gomez seized his mount's bridle, saw the wound on the flank was not severe, then turned back to old Ben and Dick with more thanks.

" But who are you?" he asked in his rasping voice. " Don' you know zis is da country of da Masai chief, Wembi? He is da most bloodthirsty savage in East Africa, and I advise you to makea da clear-out quick.

" Didn't know we were in Wembi's country," rumbled old Ben. " Anyway, me an' my nevvey here ain't goin' back empty-handed if we can help it. We're close on th' trail of a mighty big rogue, and we're out to get his tusks. Nothin' but shortage o' grub'll turn us back."

"Bet your life it won't!" broke in Dick determinedly.

" Ah! You ees elephant-hunters," nodded Gomez. " Well, I don' thinka da rogue you hunt is anywheres close, and again I warn you against da Chief Wembi. Me—I 'ave founda da gold, and I hurry off with it fast, and I advise you to make da haste back, too. It is vair dangerous here. Da scouts of Wembi is all around."

But neither old Ben nor Dick would be put off. They reckoned the huge rogue wasn't far ahead, and meant to bag the monster if their grub held out.

" Thanks for th' warnin', Mr. Gomez," rumbled old Ben. " But we're goin' on."

" You mus' do as you please." The meagre-framed Gomez shrugged his shoulders. " But you 'ave save me from da lions, so I give you da warning, and I 'ope Wembi not catch you. But me—I go fast, vair fast, out of Wembi's country!"

The Portuguese picked up his fallen rifle, swung on to the back of his scarred horse, then started slating his "boys" in their own lingo. His " boys " had just descended from their perches, and were picking up their dropped bundles. Gomez was plainly in a mighty hurry to be off.

A few seconds later he rode off with his outfit, shouting farewells and warnings to his rescuers.

"He's a rotten sort of bounder to ride that horse of his after it got hurt," Dick exclaimed hotly, as he stared after the vanishing party.

"It was only scratched—more frightened than hurt, my lad," rumbled old Ben. " But you're sure right. Dagoes like Gomez ain't decent-natured fellers by any means. Well, let's get movin' after th' rogue, nevvy. We can forget Gomez, but we'll keep our eyes skinned for Wembi's scouts in case they're about, which I don't quite believe. I guess Gomez is a scarey feller."

But old Ben Pain was making an error when he thought Gomez could be forgotten!

THE SECOND CHAPTER
The Stampede.

"I HOPE the deuce Gobo didn't understand all that Porteygoose johnny was saying, uncle. You say that you don't believe Chief Wembi's men are anywhere close, but if Gobo tumbled to what that Dago said, he'll make trouble with our porters. He'll get the silly idiots so windy they'll want to bolt."

Dick voiced his uneasiness as he and his uncle sat over the glowing embers of their fire shortly after dusk. In vain they had followed the tracks of the giant rogue for hours, and had at last been forced to camp.

From the dark bush came the laughing cries of hyenas and wails of jackals. Close at hand sounded the jabbering of the porters, huddled over their own fire, listening to the red-fezzed Gobo spinning yarns.

" Gobo's all right, nevvy," laughed old Ben, kicking the cinders with his boot. " I don't think he understood Gomez. Why would he want to scare th' porters, anyway?"

" To get 'em to demand more extra pay for going on, uncle," grinned Dick. " Part of which I bet he'd snaffle for himself."

" He might," old Ben rumbled, with a smile at Dick's sagaciousness. " But they'll get no more out o' me. I bargained with 'em to trek for four more days, and they'll thumping well have to! I reckon you're too set against Gobo, my lad. He's an ugly scoundrel, but you can't expect a 'Kamba gun-boy to have a face like a film-actin' dude!"

Dick laughed and said nothing more. He secretly thought that his uncle, being as straight as a die himself, thought everyone else equally honest, and was too trusting.

Time passed. The two hunters turned in; the croaking of Gobo ceased, and soon all the porters were sleeping, too.

Dick awoke suddenly, to hear an alarming crackle, to see half the sky glowing a fiery red, and to smell the pungent odour of vegetation burning.

" Fire, uncle!" he yelled, leaping up and flinging off his blankets. " The bush is a-fire!"

Up leapt old Ben, and up sprang all the sleeping porters, with shouts of alarm. For the crackling was rapidly growing to a roar, and the whole party heard the crash of trees falling, saw distant flames shooting skyward.

The whole bush was lit up, and the smell of burning grew stronger and stronger, brought down by a hot wind.

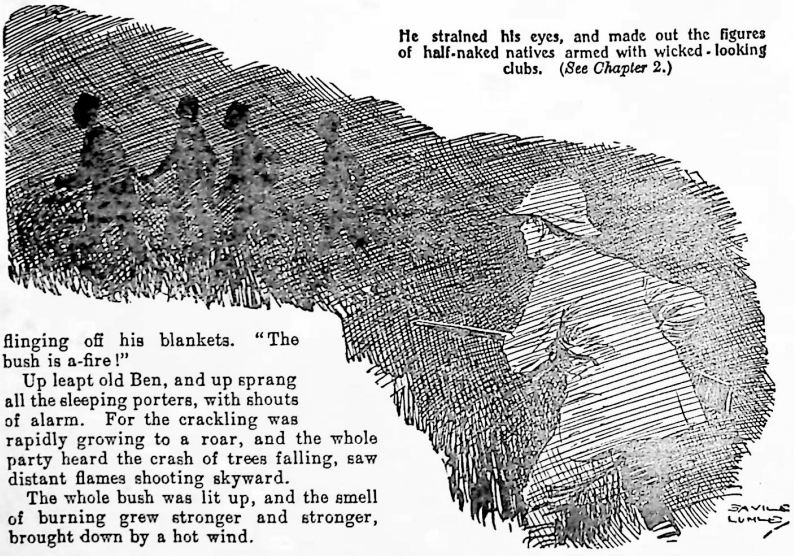
What the dickens could have started the blaze?" Dick yelled. " By gosh, the porters'll hook it soon!"

Dick could see the panic-stricken natives grabbing up their bundles. He started towards them, to urge them to retreat calmly, but old Ben's booming voice was already assuring them that they could stop where they were.

" Th' fire won't reach us, Dick!" he shouted to his nephew as both ran towards the porters. " I've just remembered sightin' a river down yonder before we camped. No bush blaze could cross that stretch o' water. A bush blaze ain't like a forest of big trees burning."

And such was old Ben's power of persuasion, so effective was his calm assurance, that the scared porters squatted down again, watching the orange glow in the sky.

All at once, however, came a new sound. It was the drumming of vast feet, a thunderous tattoo that made the ground shake, and old Ben was alive to the danger.



He strained his eyes, and made out the figures of half-naked natives armed with wicked-looking clubs. *(See Chapter 2.)*

"Elephants, Dick!" he roared. "A herd's been stampeded by th' blaze—headin' this way, too! Run, my lad!

"Leave yo' loads, Kikuyus!" he bawled to the porters. "Elephants comin'! Run!"

There was really no need for the order. The porters, too, had heard the dreadful drumming, and took to their heels like one man.

But panicking elephants move like galloping horses. Even as old Ben and Dick dashed back to their rifles, which were lying by their blankets, they heard the leaders of the stampede splashing through the river.

The night rang with sound. The blazing bush crackled fiercely; the elephants made thunder with their feet, and their shrill trumpeting seemed to split the air.

The din increased, changing from the dull roll of muffled drums to the roar of ocean breakers smashing on rocks. It was a tempest of sound, pounding rhythmically.

Dick saw the porters go flying past, black scattering figures whooping with fear. He snatched up his rifle, looked round, to see the maddened herd come bursting from the bush.

By the light of the blaze beyond, he saw a shadowy mass rollicking and tossing like a wild sea, saw gleaming tusks, countless upflung trunks.

"No use tryin' to shoot, my lad!" roared old Ben. "You couldn't turn that mob! Run for your life!"

Indeed, it was each man for himself, for the wild herd thundered down on the camp like an avalanche. Dick saw the two horses break away, saw his uncle running, then found himself running, too, half-deafened by the din.

In a second the lad was in the bush, heard the smashing of great bodies against trees, heard a wild trumpeting. Then he heard a jangling roar as the elephants stormed through the deserted camp, stamping chop-boxes flat, crushing cooking-pots and stores.

The whole bush seemed bursting with life, elephants everywhere. Dick, gripping his heavy rifle, didn't know how long he ran, ducking and stumbling; but at last the herd drove on and the sounds ceased.

The frenzied trumpeting died away; to Dick's ears came only the dull boom, boom of the panicking herd, sweeping westward, growing fainter, then vanishing.

"Gosh! What a storm!" gasped Dick to himself. "The fire wasn't dangerous, thanks to the river, but it drove that mad mob clean on top of us. I never got much chance to see if the big rogue was with 'em!" He laughed shortly. "But I hope uncle and the porters got scot free all right."

Sweating, scratched, his clothes rent by great thorns, the plucky lad started to make his way back to the wrecked camp.

It was now dark in the bush, for the fire, checked by the river, had swept away northwards, and Dick could hardly see his way. But he guessed the direction of camp, and struggled forward, halting every few yards to listen.

"I can't be far off now," the lad muttered at last. "I guess I'll try shouting."

He opened his mouth, but no sound burst from his lips. That very instant he saw dim, shadowy shapes creeping ahead of him, strained his eyes, and made out the figures of half-naked natives, armed with wicked-looking clubs.

"Are those some of the Masai bounders Gomez warned us about?" Dick gasped, clutching his rifle. "I'll give that bunch of black beggars beans if they reckon they're going to loot our gear!"

He stole foward, but just then he heard the natives laughing amongst themselves, speaking in a lingo he understood.

"All done finished!" one chuckled grimly. "Old feller white man and him white youth not live for hunt any more. Elephant catch 'um for sure, me think, so——"

A gasp of horror rose in Dick's throat. Despite the darkness, he felt sure he recognised the speaker. Wasn't it Gobo, his uncle's surly, red-fezzed gun-bearer? If so, what was the scoundrel doing with these savages?

"Gobo, you rotter!" Dick howled, and charged forward, forgetting caution.

At once the four natives swung round abruptly, and Dick saw gleaming teeth,

flashing eyeballs, saw upraised clubs. But he rushed on, thinking he had caught Gobo leading savages to loot the wrecked camp.

A yell of fury greeted his approach.

"The white cub lives! Kill 'um!"

"Come on and try, then!" yelled Dick.

He saw the natives rushing at him, heard fierce hisses, then fancied he saw the first speaker dashing off. Was it Gobo, in his red fez? Owing to the bad light, Dick was not quite certain, and at that moment was savagely attacked.

A flung club sang through the air. Dick ducked, heard the missile whistle past his head, then leapt up, brandishing his rifle.

Crack! The heavy weapon came down on a woolly head, and Dick saw its owner stagger back with a howl; saw another come at him, felt a painful thud on his shoulder, then lashed out again with his butt.

Full into the teeth of the second scoundrel smashed Dick's steel-shod wood, knocking the fellow endways, to reel against his staggering comrade.

"Hyenas! Rob a wrecked camp, would you?" roared Dick.

Plainly the lad's hurricane attack surprised the ruffians, for the one who looked like Gobo had fled immediately, and now the damaged pair bolted as well; but the fourth, a strapping big savage, leapt on Dick with a blood-curdling yell.

Dick saw the fellow tower above him, saw the whirling club; tried to guard with his rifle-barrel. He saved his head; but the terrific blow beat his weapon down, and the head of the club thudded on his chest.

"Gosh! Ugh!"

With a strangled shout, the lad staggered backwards; saw the big savage come on with a whoop, and dodged sideways in the nick of time. There was a rush of feet, but the half-naked ruffian missed his aim, and stumbled past Dick blindly.

"Take that, you big brute!" gasped Dick, and lunged with the muzzle of his Express, heard a thick grunt, then saw his attacker double up, winded.

Determined to capture one of the scoundrels, the plucky lad leapt in to grapple. But the savage, though winded, proved a powerful ruffian, and Dick found himself gripped by steel-like hands.

In vain the lad tried to wield his rifle. The savage had dropped his club, but he seized Dick's rifle-barrel with one hand and gripped the lad's left shoulder with the other.

For a few seconds they wrestled grimly, gasping, churning up the sand with their feet. Dick saw a ferocious, scarred face close to his own, felt the rifle being torn from his grasp, felt himself being forced to his knees. The plucky lad was really no match for a steel-muscled savage.

With a mighty wrench he tore himself free, stood gasping, and the savage leapt in with a shout of triumph.

But at that instant sounded shouts, the hoarse shouts of old Ben searching for his nephew, and promptly Dick's assailant whipped round and made off.

"This way, uncle!" the lad yelled in relief, and tried to give chase.

But he was breathless and battered from the fight, and the hefty savage, running like a stag, vanished in the darkness.

Swiftly the pattering footfalls faded, and the baffled Dick was forced to give up pursuit. He swung round, making towards his uncle, shouting to make his whereabouts known.

"But I've seen that big brute somewhere before," he told himself fiercely. "I recognised that scar on his cheek! Who? Where? Why, I've got it! He was the head porter of that Dago's outfit—of Gomez, the Porteygoose, whom we saved from those lions!

"Then that bunch, sneaking towards our camp, must have all been the Dago's men—and Gobo was with 'em! Yep, I'm nearly sure I spotted Gobo. What the thump does it mean?"

His brains in a whirl, Dick struggled on to meet his uncle, and soon saw the grizzled old hunter striding through the dim bush towards him.

"Thank goodness you're O.K., uncle! Did all our porter johnnies escape that mad mob of elephants? By gosh, it was like forty earthquakes and an avalanche happening at once!"

" Everyone's safe, m' lad," boomed old Ben. " Though th' brutes made hay o' our camp, an' I'm afraid your hoss has gone for keeps."

" My horse gone!" yelled Dick, in dismay.

Old Ben nodded.

" I fear so, my lad." he rumbled. " My grey beast has come back, but there ain't a sign o' yours anywhere. I thought I heard you bawlin' at somebody, Dick," he went on, but stopped abruptly, then shouted in surprise: " Great guns! What's happened to you, m' lad? You sure look as though you'd been in a gosh awful scrap!"

" You bet I have, uncle," Dick replied, with a grim smile.

" Who with? Did you run against any of those Masai blackguards that Gomez warned us against, my lad? Did you beat off a bunch of Masai single-handed?"

Dick shook his head.

Since thinking to have recognised his hefty assailant to be the Dago's head man, the lad had been racking his brains. And suddenly he thought he had solved the problem which had baffled him; but he asked his uncle a strange question to make sure.

" What sent that mad mob of elephants down on us, uncle?" he cried. " D'you think they'd have come for us if the fire hadn't started?"

"I'm sure they wouldn't have come, my lad," was the surprised reply. " Of course, th' big rogue might ha' stirred 'em up and made 'em fightin' mad if he'd been there, but he wasn't. No, th' fire stampeded th' brutes on us."

" And what started the fire?" cried Dick.

" Blowed if I now, m' lad!" old Ben exclaimed irritably. " Mebbe some wanderin' natives started it by accident. Oh, by gosh! Mebbe Masai blackguards did it a-purpose, to blot us out!"

" You're wrong, uncle!" cried Dick. " I bet 'twas Gomez!"

" Gomez! That Portuguese feller we rescued!"

" Yes, Gomez!" Dick nodded grimly. " I reckon he wants us out of the way for some rummy reason, uncle. What's more, I'm almost certain that Gobo—your gun-boy—is in with the bounder!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER
The Bullet Speaks True!

THERE was a moment's dead silence. Old Ben stared blankly at his dishevelled nephew, wondering if the lad had been hurt in the awful stampede, and his brain been affected. Then he burst out:

" What in thunder makes you think Gomez is hangin' about, an' tryin' to fix us, Dick? As for Gobo, I've just seen th' fellow at our camping-ground, tryin' to clear up th' mess and round up th' porters."

" Because he hooked off when I spotted him, uncle!" cried Dick. " But the other beggars came for me. The biggest was a hefty black scoundrel, and I'm sure I recognised as the Dago's boss ' boy.' I recognised a scar across one cheek. I tried to hang on to him, but he was as strong as an ox, and made a bolt when he heard you shouting."

Dick described the scrap, relating how he had seen the natives creeping towards the wrecked camp, and how at first he had thought they were out for plunder.

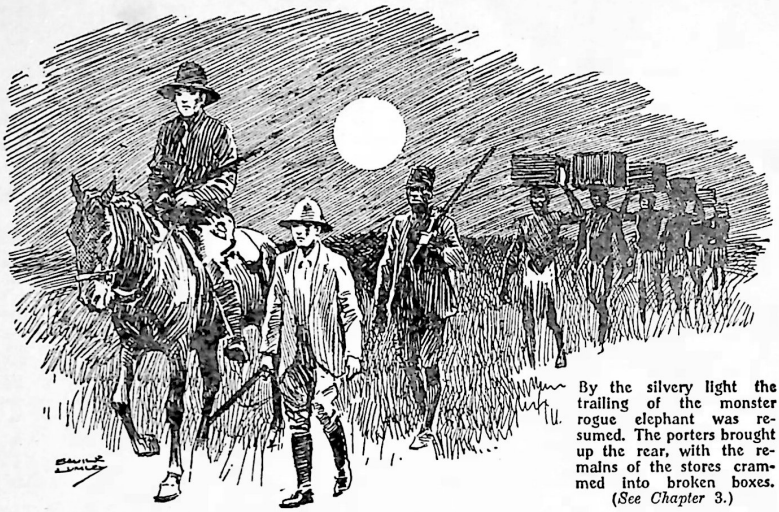
" But I heard one rotter laughing because he reckoned the elephants had scuppered us both," the lad ended angrily. " So it's plain the herd was driven down in hopes that it would smash us. And the rotter I heard laughing was Gobo!"

Old Ben uttered a gasp of anger, then he swung round and beckoned Dick to follow him.

" If you're right, my lad," he barked, " I'll give Gobo a thunderin' good hiding and sack him instanter."

Hastily, both forced their way back to their camping ground through the dim, spiked thorn-bush. Soon they heard voices, then emerged to see the porters amongst the wreckage of broken cases, dismally trying to pick up the pieces. And they saw the red-fezzed Gobo in the midst, snarling, and growling to the fellows to hustle.

" Oh, yes, you do um plenty fine work



By the silvery light the trailing of the monster rogue elephant was resumed. The porters brought up the rear, with the remains of the stores crammed into broken boxes. (*See Chapter* 3.)

now, Gobo," Dick yelled, leaping forward. " But what for you skulk along bush with um Porteygoose's fellers?"

Round spun Gobo, and Dick fancied he saw a look of alarm and surprise on the scowling gun-boy's face. Doubtless, he told himself, Gobo thought the other natives had settled him in the bush.

But Gobo's face became a blank mask in a second.

" Me go along bush, master?" he croaked. " Me no understand. No see Porteygoose's men. Me run from elephants along with um porters; bring um back here, then live for work one-time."

Dick glared at the gun-boy, wondering if he could possibly have made a mistake.

" You see, my lad?" broke in old Ben. " Gobo denies your charges. Can you swear you saw him?"

"It was too dark to be dead certain, uncle," Dick growled in perplexity. " But I'm almost certain! I reckon Gobo spotted Gomez hanging on our tracks while we were still trailing the big rogue, and he guessed the Dago was up to some monkey tricks. It would be easy for him to slip off while we slept, and tell the bounder just where we had camped. And I'm plumb sure I recognised the Dago's boss ' boy.' "

" But you can't swear to Gobo, my lad," old Ben persisted. " So you can't accuse him on chance. As for th' ruffians who attacked you, they may ha' been Masai, after all. Plenty o' Masai ha' got scars on their faces, an' Gomez warned us against th' beggars.

" Anyway, Dick," he ended decisively, " why should Gomez want to blot us? Th' fellow can't have any grudge against us. Why, we saved him an' his outfit from th' lions!"

Dick couldn't answer that question. Although he racked his brains, he could think of no reason why the Portuguese should want to get rid of them. Without a motive, the charge against Gomez seemed indeed thin.

Nevertheless, Dick secretly felt certain that Gomez was up against them, that he knew of the presence of the elephants, and had sent his men to start a bush fire to

windward of the herd. He told himself that Gobo was in the Dago's pay, had sold information of the exact locality of the camp, and had brought the fellow's men round after the stampede to make sure that himself and his uncle had been crushed to death.

But Dick could prove nothing, so he resolved to hold his tongue at present.

"But you'd best watch Gobo, uncle," he declared. "I've got a hunch he means to play us a trick the first chance he gets."

"I guess you made a mistake owin' to th' darkness, my lad," rumbled old Ben. "Gomez can't have anythin' against us either. It looks to me as though you were attacked by Masai—scouts o' Chief Wembi's—so th' sooner we bag that big rogue and clear out o' this country th' better."

Dick was all for pushing ahead again on the monster rogue's trail, so the wreckage of the camp was cleared up as fast as possible. With some of the porters, Dick made a frantic search for his horse, but the terrified beast had plainly gone for good.

Old Ben, meanwhile, scouted round for the rogue's tracks, and soon picked them up. Then hurried back to his nephew.

"It's just as I told you, nevvy," he boomed. "Th' big rogue never went near th' herd—must ha' been miles from here when they stampeded on us.

"Rogue elephants seldom mix with herds, as I told you before; and the one we're after is sure a surly, vicious old brute, sloggin' off on his own. But he must be a whopper!"

"Then let's get on, uncle!" Dick whooped eagerly.

The big African moon had risen, hanging low in the blue-black sky, like a Japanese lantern; by the silvery light the trailing of the monster rogue elephant was resumed.

In front rode old Ben, his light rifle ready across his saddle, Dick walking at his uncle's side, gripping his heavy double-barrelled Express. Close behind the hunters slouched Gobo, carrying old Ben's heavier weapon, his black face absolutely expressionless. The porters brought up the rear with the remains of the stores crammed into broken boxes.

There was even greater need for haste now, for some of the party's food had been ruined in the stampede. Also old Ben feared that Masai might be on their tracks; but Dick told himself that Gomez was the only enemy. He was sure that Gobo was a traitor, and cast several glances back at the gun-boy.

The rest of the night passed uneventfully, however. The tracks of the huge rogue elephant were quite easy to see by moonlight, and the party trailed on at a smart pace.

Towards dawn they found themselves nearing mountainous country. The bush gave place to belts of thick jungle, with broad grass-covered glades in between. Trampled grass and broken trees told of the rogue's passage, and suddenly old Ben pulled up with a warning hiss.

"I reckon we're gettin' close to th' brute now, Dick," he whispered. "These tracks look quite fresh to me, so keep your eyes and ears skinned, my lad. Th' brute might be waitin' for us!"

Old Ben twisted in his saddle, took his heavy elephant gun from Gobo, chucked over his light rifle, and motioned to the porters to keep well back.

Stealthily the hunters went on again, and young Dick thrilled in every nerve. They were close on the monster's heels. Gomez, Gobo, and possible Masai raiding parties were temporarily forgotten.

In a few minutes the eastern sky grew grey, then pink. Then the African sun shot above the tree-tops like a ball of fire, revealing patches of dense jungle all round.

"I shouldn't be surprised if th' brute's skulkin' in yonder patch," old Ben breathed softly. "Rogues are mighty cunnin'——"

A wild scream of pain cut old Ben short. It rang out from behind a clump of trees on the hunters' right, wild and hair-raising.

"Great guns!" roared old Ben. "Th' brute must be circlin' round, an' has collared a native. "Come on, Dick!"

Away galloped the old hunter, Dick pounding alongside as hard as he could, with Gobo panting in the rear. Louder grew the wild screams, sounding as though the

rogue elephant had caught some native and was tusking him to death.

Horrified, Dick tore on, rounded the belt of trees almost together with his uncle; then came on a sight that made him shout.

For the two hunters saw no elephant at all! Instead, they saw half a dozen miserable natives, tied together with ropes round their necks, being flogged along by two fierce-looking savages.

And behind the roped natives strode a swarthy little man in white man's clothing, beating the prisoners on with his rifle-butt. It was the screams of the prisoners that had drawn Dick and his uncle that had also drowned the sounds of the hunters' approach.

At the latters' shouts, however, the "white" man spun round, revealing a yellow, hawk-like face.

"Gomez!" howled Dick.

"Gomez it is! You were right, my lad!" boomed old Ben. "And the scoundrel's a slave-driver! He's hooked those poor wretches out o' some kraal."

Gomez, the Portuguese, it indeed was, and he let fly a yell of fury.

The cat was out of the bag with a vengeance. Plainly Gomez was a slave-hunter, raiding kraals, selling his captives to wandering Arabs—hence his keen desire to remove Dick and old Ben from his path.

"Aha! You 'ave come!" he screamed.

Even as he yelled the swarthy Dago whipped up his rifle, aimed swiftly at Dick, and pulled the trigger. But Dick ducked, the bullet whistling past his head. Dick took a pot-shot at the Dago's legs, missed by an inch, then charged on, together with his uncle.

Immediately the two spearmen fled, and Dick saw the rescued prisoners turn on the Dago with fierce yells. But Gomez evaded them, took to his heels and ran like a hare.

"Great guns! He's running up th' rogue's trail!" shouted old Ben. "If th' brute's in there, he'll—— Stop! Stop, you fool, Gomez! I guess there's a rogue elephant in those trees!"

But Gomez tore on, not listening to a word. Old Ben thundered in pursuit, determined to catch the scoundrel if possible, and Dick pounded along in the rear.

Hrrmph! Hrrmph! The shrill trumpeting of a furious elephant sounded from the trees, followed by a mighty crashing; then Dick saw the jungle burst apart, saw a giant slate-grey monster come charging out. Then it sighted the Dago, and thundered down on him.

Dick heard Gomez shriek, saw him twist aside, bolting for his life like a hunted rabbit. He saw the monster charge down relentlessly, tusks gleaming, his great feet making thunder on the earth. Then——

A last yell burst from Gomez's lips. But before uncle or nephew could fire, the rogue was on its victim. Dick saw the trunk sweep down, saw it wrap round the Dago like a steel cable, then saw the wretch swung skyward, arms and legs kicking helplessly.

Crash! Gomez was hurled far, struck the ground with a thud, and then lay motionless.

Old Ben reined in, whipping up his heavy rifle. Dick, still running on, got his own ready. That very instant the rogue swerved, sighted new victims, and began a fresh charge.

"Plug the brute, uncle!" roared Dick, breathlessly.

And Dick saw his uncle raise his weapon, saw the great beast thundering down, but—heard no report!

Something seemed wrong with old Ben's rifle, and the horrified Dick saw his uncle was helpless!

For a second old Ben's grey horse seemed spellbound with fear, then whipped round, to come galloping back towards Dick, with old Ben helpless on its back!

It was a nerve-racking sight, for the screaming monster was gaining on the old hunter at every stride.

"Out o' th' way, Dick!" bawled old Ben. "I'm done! Climb a tree!"

But Dick stood his ground, teeth clenched, eyes flashing! He saw horse and rider whirl up abreast of him, saw the terrible monster within a few yards of the horse's heels.

Boom! A dull thud told of the hit. It was a blow delivered by a modern Express cordite rifle, and the monster was checked, stricken through his lungs.

Boom! Again thundered Dick's rifle, the shock of recoil causing the lad to stagger.

But the bullet sped true. With a dull crash the elephant stumbled to his knees, rolled over, then lay motionless. Dick's second bullet was in his brain, and he was stone-dead before he hit the ground.

"Got him!" yelled Dick. "Got the rogue, uncle! By gosh, look at his tusks!"

The rogue's tusks were enormous, and old Ben swung to the ground and came running to grip his nephew's hand and thump him on the back.

"Fine, Dick! If you hadn't stood your ground I'd ha' been a goner, my lad! An' you've bagged th' biggest elephant in Africa—in the world!"

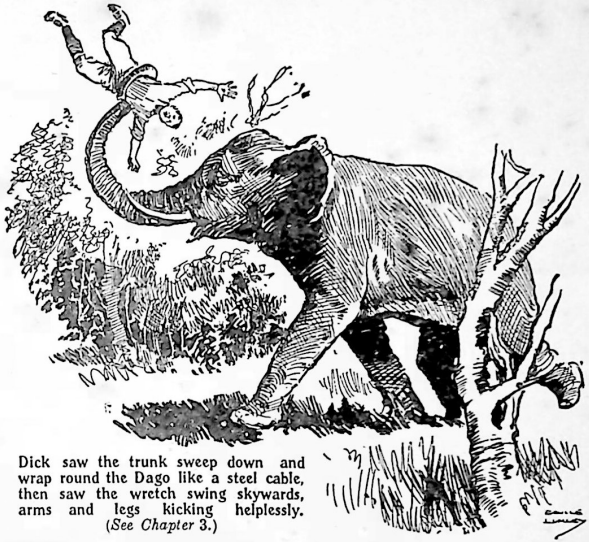
"But what happened to your gun, uncle?" Dick cried.

Old Ben broke his heavy weapon open, revealing an empty breech!

"Look there! No cartridges, my lad!" he roared. "Gobo took 'em out before he gave me the gun, for I know I loaded it. You must ha' been right about Gobo all along, as you were about Gomez. He was a rotten traitor, and wanted me to be done in.

"And, of course, the reason for Gomez wantin' to get rid of us is plain. Being a slave-raider, he feared we'd queer his games, and his yarns about Chief Wembi and Masai scouts were all lies. You were right all along, my lad, and I wish I'd believed you. It nearly cost me my life that I didn't!"

But not until the two hunters had gone back and found Gobo's body did they find proof of Gobo's treachery. A number of Portuguese coins trickling from the wretch's pockets told that he must indeed have been bribed by the Dago, who had accidentally shot him!



Dick saw the trunk sweep down and wrap round the Dago like a steel cable, then saw the wretch swing skywards, arms and legs kicking helplessly. (*See Chapter* 3.)

"To give away our campin'-ground, Dick," snorted old Ben. "And to hocus my gun. Of course, Gomez sent th' herd down on us, too!

"No matter! Africa's well rid of a slave-raidin' Dago, and you've bagged th' biggest rogue that ever walked!"

Then they rounded up the porters, hacked out the mighty tusks, and started back for Nairobi with enough elephant meat to see them through, thanks to Dick's pluck and smart shooting.

The Battle of Greyfriars!



It was a summer evening;
Old Gosling's work was done.
Glum and morose, he walked the Close,
Watching our schoolboy fun.
Then he perceived that he was beckoned
By Master Nugent, of the Second.

"Oh, Gosling, look what I have found!"
Exclaimed the little fellow.
And Gosling took a pensive look
At something hard and yellow.
"'Tis some poor fellow's tooth," said he,
"Who fought in that great victory.

"I find them often in the Close,
For there's many hereabout;
An' when I sweep in snowdrifts deep,
My broomstick turns 'em out.
For many an ivory tusk," said he,
"Was lost in that great victory."

"Now tell me what 'twas all about!"
The eager fag, he cries;
And there he stands, with outstretched hands
And wonder-waiting eyes.
"Now tell me all about this war,
And what they fought each other for!"

"'Twas the Removites," Gosling said,
"Who put the Fifth to rout;
But why they fought, an' fiercely wrought,
I could not well make out.
"But everybody said," quoth he,
"It was a famous victory!

"I watched the battle from my lodge;
The Fifth were soon in trouble,
For eyes were blacked an' heads were cracked,
An' noses swollen double!
But things like that, you know, must be
At every famous victory.

"They say it was a shockin' sight
After the Fifth's surrender,
An' Doctor Locke had such a shock
He birched each chief offender.
A painful sequel, you'll agree,
To that most famous victory!"

BILLY BUNTER'S ANNUAL!





It's a busy life, an Editor's! But judging from the expression on Billy Bunter's face, he enjoys it. He seems to find the editorial chair quite comfortable—he certainly fills it out well!

IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN.



By BILLY BUNTER.

"ONCE more into the breach," dear friends—

Much water has rolled across the mighty Atlantic since King Alfred used those famus words, but they are applikable to the prezzent occasion, for it is eggsactly a year since I had the plezzure of presenting Billy Bunter's Annual for your delectashun. But here it is again full to the brim and running over, so to speak.

Of course, the Editor of the Holiday Annual will never see eye to eye with yores truly. When I remonstrated with him and deklared that eight pages was not suffishent for a wunderful Annual like mine he had the awdacity to say that it was eggsactly eight pages two much! Would you beleeve it? As most of you fellows know, I'm used to this petty jealousy at Greyfriars; no one is generus-minded enough to acknowledge my claim to being the best footbawler, the finest cricketer, the cleverest skolar, the pluckiest boxor, wrestler, etsetra, etsetra, that Greyfriars has ever known. Why? Because they're all jealous!

It's a hard world we live in and it needs a follow of pluck, determinashun and resauce to hold his own. But I'll let you fellows into a sekret that has helped me to snap my fingers at the bows and arrows of outrageous fortune: always lay a solid foundashun. In other words, "live to eat" not "eat to live." The chap who was responsible for that latter rendering was off his crumpet.

You chaps wouldn't beleeve how eggshausting is the work of running a famus annual like mine. Of course, all the contributions you see in my Annual are highly interesting in their finished state, but if you could see them in the roar you'd have a fit. Some of the spelling is awfull, and the punktuation fritefull; it takes me hours and hours to put these little matters write and even then the printers have the awfull cheek to ignaw my extensive alterations.

Still, I have put my foot down with a firm hand in this Edditorial. I have insisted that my chat should appear just as I had ritten it in the original, so that reeders may see for themselves that their is at least one fellow amongst the contributors of Billy Bunter's Annual who is a finished jornalist and Edditer.

In conclushun, I shall hope to see you all in next year's Annual!

Till next yeer, then, deer frends.

BILLY BUNTER.

THE TALE OF TUBBY!

By TEDDY GRACE.



When Tubby Muffin went in to bat,
His three stumps stood up straight, like that:

I I I

Then Tubby made a shocking miss,
And the three stumps lay flat, like this:

— — —

Tubby's shortsightedness causes fun,
He sees three balls, instead of one:

O O O

You know, it really is not wise
To play at cricket with weak "eyes":

i i i

Alas! for Tubby Muffin. He
Will never make a century:

100

He always has the awful luck
To see, upon the board, a "duck":

O

When he's not bowled, the ball soon lands
Into the fieldman's waiting hands:

( )

And sometimes when he makes a miss,
His stumps are sideways knocked, like this:

/ / /

His schoolmates always chip and chaff,
And cry, "You are an ass! Not 'half'!"

½

As far as cricket goes, we say
That Tubby is a silly jay:

J

DIRGE TO A DYING BLACKBEETLE!

BEETLE, wriggling on your back
Just outside my study door,
Do you find the outlook black?
Are you feeling bruised and sore?
Can I give first aid or massage
To revive you once again,
While you're prostrate in the passage,
Racked with pain?

Beetle, as you lie and kick,
Tell me how this came about!
Did some fellow heave a brick
As you crawled, and knock you out?
Did the heavy boot of Bunter
Trample on you unawares?
Were you hurled by some mad stunter
Down the stairs?

Beetle, you are sinking fast.
See, your kicks are growing faint!
Helpless, here I stand aghast,
Exercising my restraint.
Hardly can I keep from sobbin'
As your helpless plight I view.
Talk about "Who killed Cock Robin"—
Who killed YOU?

Beetle, you no longer kick.
Limp and lifeless here you lie.
If I knew who threw that brick
I should smite him in the eye!
If I knew the callous fellow
He would tremble at the knees,
And I'd surely make him bellow:
"Mercy, please!"



I am sorry to have to inclood this rotten story in my Annual, but Dicky Nugent gave me ten doenuts for doing so.—Ed.

"LICKHAM, old pal, lend me a tanner!"

Dr. Birchemall, the revered and majestick Headmaster of St. Sam's, spoke in beseeching axxents. Not for the first time in his life he was stony-broke.

Mr. I. Jollywell Lickham, the master of the Fourth, grinned roofully.

"I would sertainly lend you a tanner if I could, sir," he said, "but unforchunately at the moment I myself am harts of oak—or to put it in the funicular, I am suffering pekewniary embarrasment."

There was an awkward silenso. The Head stared gloomily out of his study window, while Mr. Lickham fidgitted nervussly.

"Look hear, Lickham!" said Dr. Birchemall at last. "Something's got to be done——"

"Somebody's got to be done, you mean, sir!" interrupted Mr. Lickham meaningly.

"Eggsactly! It amounts to the same thing," assented the Head. "Hear am I, the Headmaster of a grate public school, feeling absolootly famished!"

"You don't say so, sir!" eggsclaimed Mr. Lickham, quite shocked.

"But I do say so! Since lunchtime to-day I have only had a paltry half-dozen cream buns, a pound of toffy, and a bottle of ginger-pop to sustain myself. And there's still another hour to go before we got our tea!"

"How dreadful!" mermered Mr. Lickham simperthetically. "But surely, sir, the tuck-shop dame will give you tick?"

"I've tried her already," groaned the Head, "and the old cat won't here of it."

"Dear me! Then it sertainly looks as if you'll have to tighten your belt and wait till tea-time then!"

Dr. Birchemall's eyes gleemed.

"Does it?" he asked, sneeringly. "Well then, if that's the only sujjestion you have to make, Lickham, you can buzz off! A fat lot of good your Oxbridge edducation has done you, I must say! Hop it, before I am tempted to sling this inkwell at yore dile."

"Oh crikey! I'm going!" gasped Mr. Lickham, and, looking very crestfallen, he went.

Left alone, the Head paced up and down his study in a very thoughtful manner. He was feeling desidedly peckish, and he did not like the feeling. Any ordinary headmaster would have been sattisfied with a snack of cream buns, toffy and ginger-pop to tide him over from lunch-time to tea-time. But Dr. Birchemall had the appetite of an ostrich and boa-constricktor rolled into one. And he was not sattisfied.

As he paced up and down he could see, through his study window, the distant tuck-shop, nessling under the old elms. The sight almost drove him frantick.

"Oh, for a joocy stake-and-kidney pie!" he muttered allowed. "Oh, for half a duzzen of the tuck-shop dame's tuppeny doenuts! The meer thought of them makes my mouth water!"

Suddenly he ceased his aimless wanderings and jammed his mortarboard on his anshunt head with a air of determinashun.

"No good staying hear, anyway," he mermered. "I will hop over to the tuck-shop and see what's doing. Perchance some of the boys will offer to stand treat for me!"

Hope springs internal in the human beast, and there was renewed hope in Dr. Birchemall's hart as he turned his footsteps in the direcktion of the school tuck-shop.

As he drew near his objecktive he could here the cheerful larfter of some jewniors, who were enjoying a friendly glass of ginger-pop at the counter.

"I wonder if they will take pity on there old headmaster?" mewsed Dr. Birchemall. "Well, nothing venture, nothing gain, as Spokeshave trooly observed. Hear goes!"

Assowming an air of jeniality which he was far from feeling, he walked into the tuck-shop.

Inside the little shop, Jack Jolly, the kaptin of the Fourth, and his pals, Merry and Bright, were thoroughly enjoying themselves. Duzzens of doenuts and crates of ginger-pop were piled up in front of them. They looked round without enthewsiasm as the Head strolled in.

"Good afternoon, sir!" they cried, "capping" the Head respecktively.

"Good afternoon, boys!" answered Dr. Birchemall. "Did I here you ask me to have a doenut, Jolly? Thanks, I will!"

He calmly helped himself from Jack Jolly's plate, while the heroes of the Fourth looked at him in dismay.

"Hear, what's the giddy idea, sir?" asked Jack Jolly grimly. "Something the matter with your ears, I should think. I didn't say anything about helping yourself to my doenuts!"

"Kindly speak more grammatackally, Jolly!" said the Head, an ugly look coming into his dile. "What you mean, I presoom, is that you never said nuthink about it! Ho, so that's it, is it?"

"Eggsactly, sir," said Jack quietly. "I don't want to be disrespecktive, sir, but I've had quite enuff of your tuck-sneaking already. Sovveral times lately you and your

pal Bounder, of the Sixth, have raded my study for tuck, and now you have the barefaced impudence to beard me in the tuck-shop itself and take a doenut out of my mouth!"

"I never raided no grub from yore study, Jolly, reely I never did!" said the Head. But he cullered as he spoke, and Jack Jolly & Co. could tell by the yellow look on his dile that the gilt was his. And there lips curled as they regarded him.

"Anyway, whether you did or did not, I'm not providing free doenuts for you, sir, and that's flat!" said Jack Jolly with emphassis. "You may flog me black and bloo, but not another doenut of mine shall you tutch!"

Dr. Birchemall clicked his false teeth with rage.

"You dispertinent young cub!" he roared. "I'll birch you till you can't stand! I'll——"

He stopped suddenly. The thought had occurred to him that p'raps he would be going a little too far if he fulfilled that threat. He would have loved to do it, of course, but if the Guvverners ever got to here of it there would be the very dickens to pay. The rules of St. Sam's sertainly aloud him to birch boys who didn't invite him to tea now and again. But no provision was made for birching boys who refewsed to buy him doenuts in the tuck-shop.

"P'raps I won't birch you this time, Jolly!" he muttered, glaring ferochusly at the kaptin of the Fourth. "But Alf Birchemall duzent forget an injury, and I'll make you sorry for this laiter on!"

With that kryptic remark he hopped it.

Jack Jolly & Co. shrugged their shoulders philosofically, and turned to their doenuts again, and in a phew minnits they had almost forgotten the eggsistence of Dr. Alfred Birchemall.

But the Head had not forgotten Jack Jolly & Co. As he returned to the School House his brows was dark with rage, and an evil light gleamed in his ferrety little eyes.

"I'll learn 'em!" he muttered savvidgely. "I'll make their lives a misery to them before I've done!"

The thought of Jack Jolly's doenuts farely prayed on the Head's mind. He was angry over his loss, and, like the profit of old, he felt that he did well to be angry. He felt ravenously hungry, and he was completely fed up.

"Ureeka!" eggsclaimed Dr. Birchemall, all of a sudden. "The very idea!"

Evvidently some bright wheeze for having his own back on the Fourth Formers had occurred to Dr. Birchemall. A grin replaced the frown on his dile. He rubbed his bony hands together quite cheerfully.

"It's a long time since I rigged up a booby-trap, but I don't suppose I've lost my old skill yet!" he mewsed. "It would be a fare treat to see Jack Jolly and his pals receive a paleful of soot and water over them. I'll try it!"

Having maid up his mind, the Head soon got to werk. He sprinted up to Jack Jolly's study, stopping only to fill a handy pale with water. "on root," as the Frenchies say.

Once inside the study, he became very busy. First he scraped several shovelfuls of soot from the chimney and emptied them into the water. Then he pored in the contents of a



Dr. Birchemall calmly helped himself from Jack Jolly's plate!

bottle of ink and a pound pot of jam from the cubboard. A quantity of fish-glew completed the mixture, and the Head then stirred the evil-looking mess for a bit, and at length plaiced it over the doorway in such a mannor that the unforchunate people who came into the study first would get the paleful over their heads.

"Revenge is sweet!" gloated the Head, as he proudly survaid his handywerk. "Now I'll wait and watch the fun! Jack Jolly & Co., you're soon going to get what's coming to you, if only you know it!"

Dr. Birchemall had fondly imajined when he took the pale of water into Jack Jolly's study that he had not been seen.

Even if he had been, he wouldn't have worried much. Owing to the servant shortage, the Head often spent an afternoon cleaning windows or scrubbing floors, and it was no uncommon sight to see him in cap and apron, wielding a broom and dustpan like an eggspert.

As a matter of fact, on this particular occasion, he had been seen.

Tubby Barrell, who was just coming out of his own study, had spotted him going into Jack Jolly's room, and had taken particular note of the pale.

"Funny!" mermored the fat member of the Fourth, nitting his brows, "Wonder what the old beast is up to!"

He cawtiously cropt up to the door of the kaptin's study and applied his eye to the keyhole. He turned quite pail as he saw the stayed and dignified Head mixing up soot and jam and fish-glew in a pale.

"Grate pip!" he gasped. "A booby-trap! I must warn Jack Jolly & Co., immediately."

He rolled off in a state of grate eggsitement, to put the chums of the Fourth on their guard.

In the meantime, Jack Jolly & Co. had kwitted the tuck-shop and were returning to the House. Just as they came in by the mane entrance, a sevcer-looking arristocratic jentleman joined them, and they recognised Sir Frederick Funguss, the Chairman of the Board of Guvvernors.

"Hallo, my pippins!" he eggsclaimed, in cultured axxents. "Seen Alf lately?"

"You mean our Headmaster, sir?" sujjested Jack Jolly.

"Well, I suppose that's what he calls himself," assented the newcomer. "I should prefer to call him a ring-master, myself; this plaice is more like a giddy sercus than a school! Where is he, anyway?"

"Follow your leaders, sir!" said Jack grashusly. "We'll find him for you, or perish in the attempt!"

It was at that moment that Tubby Barrell rolled up. He "capped" Sir Frederick respectively and joined the crowd. And as they walked through the Hall, he eggsplained to the chums of the Fourth, in eggsited whispers, what he had seen.

Jack Jolly & Co. grinned as they lissened.

"So that's his little game, is it!" mermored Jack Jolly. "Thanks for the warning, Tubby! Is he still in the study, do you say?"

Tubby nodded.

"Good! Come along with us then, and you'll see something that will do your hart good!"

"Grate pip!" whispered Merry. "Surely you're not thinking of ——"

"Not a werd!" grinned the kaptin of the Fourth. "I think this is where we score!"

"Well, boys, do you know where the old scoundrel is, yet?" asked Sir Frederick.

"Yes, sir! Tubby, here, tells me he saw him going into my study upstairs!" answered Jack. "We'll show you the way, sir!"

"Good egg!" said the old arristocrat. "Lead on, Macduff!"

Like a lamb being led to the slauter, Sir Frederick toddled up the stairs after the jewniors. When they reached the Fourth-form passage, Jack Jolly & Co. diskreetly dropped into the rere. They did not want to be the first to enter the fatal doorway.

"This is the study, sir!" said Jack Jolly, when they arrived at their destination. "Go right in!"

"Thanks, old sport!" said Sir Frederick, opening the door. "I must say—yaroooooo!"

Probably that wasn't eggsactly what Sir Frederick had intended to say. But that was what he did say, anyway. As soon as he opened the door, there was a terrific crash, as the pale tipped over him. A moment later, the quiet, ellegantly-dressed arristocrat had been converted into a howling nigger minstrel.

"Who-o-o-o-oop! Groooooooo!



A quantity of fish-glue completed the evil-looking mixture.

Yarooooo!" Sir Frederick farely shreeked with rage. The evil mixture which the Head had prepared cuvvered him from head to foot. The jewniors had never before seen such a feersome-looking object.

In the study, the Head had lissened with baited breth to the approach of his viktims. And as the door opened and the booby-trap operated, he roared with larfter.

"Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!" he yelled historically. "What a sight you look, Jack Jolly! Ha, ha! Oh, my giddy aunt!"

The larfter dyed away from the Head's lips suddenly. He stared at his howling viktim with eyes that began to bulge with horror. For through the open door he could see the cheerful diles of Jack Jolly & Co., and it began to dawn on him that if Jack Jolly was outside, the booby-trap had descended on somebody else.

"Grate pip!" he gasped. "What the merry dickens have I done?"

"Groooooooo!" spluttered Sir Frederick Funguss, gowjing the dredful mixture out of his eyes.

It was now the turn of Jack Jolly & Co. to larf. And larf they did! They larfed till the rarfters farely ekkoed.

The Head continewed to stare in frozen horror at Sir Frederick Funguss, who was quite unrecognisable in his present condition.

"What have I done? Tell me who you are, that's the mane thing!" he cried horsely.

He nearly fell down when the reply came in fewrious axxents:

"I am Sir Frederick Funguss!"

"G-g-grate pip!" groaned Dr. Birchemall. "Now I've cawsed it, and no mistake!"

Now that he realised that his viktim was none other than the Chairman of the Board of Guvvernors, he fawned over Sir Frederick like the sicofant he really was.

"Pray sit down, Sir Frederick!" he cried. "There has been some garstly mistake! Let me brush you down, Sir Frederick!"

"Stop putting your pause on me, Alf Birchemall!" hooted Sir Frederick. "I suppose you intended this booby-trap for these boys?"

"That's right, Sir Frederick!" said the Head eagerly. "I didn't intend no harm to you. It was those boys I wanted to cop. And I'll never do it again, if you'll let me off lightly!"

"Well, well! Don't cry!" said Sir Frederick, a little less seveerly. "I won't sack you this time, Alf. I'll let you off with a public flogging in Big Hall."

"What!" shreeked the Head.

"And I think you're getting off very lightly," said the Chairman of the Guvvernors. "Will you boys run off and tell Fossil the porter to toll the bell for a general assembly?"

"Sertainly, sir!" corussed the jewniors cheerfully; and they scuttled off and told Fossil, who told the bell.

And ten minnits later the school witnessed the unpresidented sight of Dr. Birchemall being flogged by Sir Frederick Funguss. The Head's trechery had come back on his own head like a boonerang. He was in the sad position of being "The Biter Bit!"

THE END

'AN ODEFUL POEM ON GREYFRIARS SCHOOL!

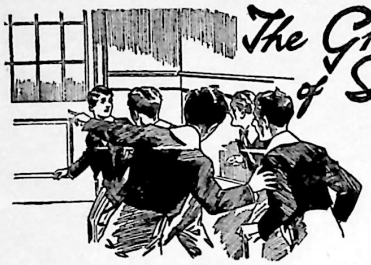
By HURREE SINGH.

Magnificent and stately pile,
Mighty and towering spirefulness,
I'll sing thy praises for awhile
With the divine inspirefulness.
Oh, how I love thy noble sights,
Thy Closefulness and Cryptfulness:
Thy passages, where on dark nights
Our feet perform the slipfulness!

Thy cricket-field, on which we play,
Is covered with the greenfulness;
We flock to it on summer day,
Terrific is our keenfulness.
Thy box-room, from whose window wide
The follows slip out nightfully,
Claims my affection and my pride
I worship it delightfully.

Thy hall, it is a mighty place,
So also is thy gymfulness,
Where boxers oft stand face to face
And exercise their limbfulness.
Thy tuckshop is an oasis
Where thirsty souls halt stopfully,
To masticate the bun of bliss
And gurgle ginger-popfully!

Thy praises I will neatly tell
In smart and skilful rhymefulness,
Sweet school that I admire so well,
And where I spend my timefulness.
The time for prep has now arrived
So I must finish tersefully:
I'm proud to think that I've contrived
To sing thy praises versefully!



The Ghost of St Jim's!

By MONTY LOWTHER.

'LISTEN!"

Tom Merry stopped short suddenly in the passage, and Manners and I followed suit.

We strained our ears to listen, but there was no need for us to do so, for even a deaf mute could not have failed to hear the piercing scream which echoed through the building.

"Sounds like somebody being scalped!" said Manners, with a shudder.

Again the scream rang out, like that of a soul in torment.

Tom Merry turned pale.

"No human being could raise the roof like that!" he said. "I'm not a believer in spooks, but——"

"You think the St. Jim's ghost is on the prowl?" I asked.

"Seems like it. Hark!"

There was another terrible scream which made our blood run cold.

"I'm off!" said Manners promptly. "I don't mind facing anything in flesh and blood, but I've a perfect horror of spooks!"

Manners darted away in the direction of the Junior Common-room, and Tommy and I followed, for the screams seemed to be drawing nearer.

No sooner had we taken refuge in the Common-room than a crowd of white-faced fellows rushed in.

Cardew and Clive and Levison, Glyn and Dane and Lumley-Lumley—fellows who were afraid of nothing in the ordinary way—now looked scared out of their wits.

"Did you hear it, dear boys?" panted Cardew.

Tom Merry nodded.

"What do you imagine it is?"

"I was thinking it might be a spook."

"That's no spook!" said Levison, with conviction. "It's some sort of wild beast that's escaped from its keepers, and found its way to St. Jim's!"

"My hat!"

"Listen!" said Clive suddenly.

A fierce, snarling sound came to our ears, and we conjured up visions of some terrible monster hungering for human prey.

"Better lock the door," said Glyn, with chattering teeth.

Before we could do so a further crowd of fellows burst into the Common-room. They were in a state of panic.

"Lock the door—quick!" gaped Herries, who was one of the newcomers. "The—the thing may be after us!"

Digby turned the key in the lock, and we exchanged wondering glances.

Jack Blake was the first to pull himself together.

"No use waiting here in a state of suspense," he said. "I'm going to find out what it is!"

"Don't be an ass, Blake!"

"You'll be taking your life in your hands!"

"You might be mauled to pieces!"

"I'm off to investigate, anyway," said Blake.

And he went out of the Common-room.

We waited, in a state of breathless suspense, for Jack Blake's return. Some of us couldn't help thinking that he might not return at all.

But he did. There was a broad grin on his face when he rejoined us in the Common-room.

"It's all right, you fellows!" he said.

"You've discovered what caused that unearthly row?" said Tom Merry eagerly.

"Yes. It wasn't a spook and it wasn't a wild beast."

"Then what——"

"It was merely our friend Gussy practising his tenor solo!" was the calm reply.

IF I HAD £1,000!

Celebrities of Rookwood answer the question "What would you do with £1,000?"

JIMMY SILVER:

I WOULD invest it, of course! Although not a miser, I believe in putting something aside for the proverbial rainy day. After all, a thousand pounds is far too big a sum for a schoolboy to play with. In later life, it can be expended wisely and well.

VAL MORNINGTON:

If the skies were suddenly to open and disgorge a thousand pounds, and I had the good fortune to be waiting underneath to pick it up, I should pat myself on the back and say, "Morny, old man, you are in clover! Here is a small fortune; mind you make good use of it. Don't stick it under your pillow, or smuggle it in a sock. Spend it, man—spend it! Induce the Head to give you a month's leave of absence, and go to the South of France. It's ripping on the shores of the Mediterranean. There's bathing, and dancing, and everything the heart can desire!" And, believe me, if I didn't get through that merry old thousand in a month, I'd eat my Sunday topper!

TUBBY MUFFIN:

What would I do with a thousand pounds? Buy up the school tuckshop, of corse! And then proseed to live on the fat of the land for the remainder of my schooldays. One thousand pounds' worth of tempting tuck! By Jove, it fairly makes a fellow's mouth water! If only one of my rich uncles would send me a fat remittance. But alass! There is not much likelihood of him doing that.

ALGY SILVER:

If i had a thowsand pounds i'd buy an airoplain and a moter-car and cut a rare dash. i should spend munney like water, and life would never be dry. i should have a high old time, and be the envy of Rookwood. But what's the use of wishing?

THE HEAD:

If I were to receive the sum of one thousand pounds, over and above my income, I should place two-thirds of it in the bank, and distribute the remainder among the deserving poor.



Tubby Muffin wins a prize in the Beauty Competition—but it is the booby prize!

WELL, the other day sumboddy suggested a Beauty Contest, in which members of the Fourth Form (Clasical Side) were to kompoot. Bulkeley of the Sixth prommist to be the judge, and the first prize was to be a free feed at the tuck-shop. We all had to pay an entranse-fee of a tanner to go in for the kompetition, and the hole of the tanners were lumped together in order to provide the free feed.

Of corse, I new I should win hands down, for their's noboddy in the Fourth who can hold a candle to me for good looks.

Still, I wanted to make absolutely sertain of bagging the prize, so I konsulted sum of the advertissments in a weekly perioddical.

"Hansom men," I was told, "are slightly sunburnt." I took that to inklood boys as well, so I sent for a tin of "Bronzo" with which to tan my face. (I've often had my hands tanned before now, but not my chivvy!)

I then came across anuther advertissment which said, "Be manly, and kultivate a military mistosh! Apply a little 'Sprouto' to yore upper lip, and you will have a fine manly mistosh within a cupple of days! 'Sprouto' is wunderfull stuff, and you can buy a tin for forepense. Turns boys into men!"

I borroed a foropenny stamp from Kit Erroll, and sent for a supply of "Sprouto."

By return of post I reseeved two parcels. One kontained the "Bronzo," and the other the "Sprouto." I retired to the sollychewed of my studdy early in the mourning, and tanned my face with the "Bronzo." Then, after reeding the direckshuns on the tin, I applide some "Sprouto" to my upper lipp.

When I went in to mourning lessons, Bootles said to me:

"Why, Muffin, what ever have you been doing to yore face? You look even more unprepossessing than usual!"

"Ahem! I must have caught the sun, sir!" I stammered.

"Are you a krikoter, Muffin?" asked Bootles.

"Yessi!"



As the hares dropped on to the cloth, I trembled like a fritened rabbit, for I was afrade the barber mite cut me!

"A smart feeldsman?"

"Of corse, sir!"

"Then I must kongrattulate you on yore remarkable feet of catching the sun!"

At this there was a titter from the class. (It's always discreet to larf at a master's feeble joaks.)

Bootles maid no forther reverence to my face until two days later—the day of the Beauty Contest.

By this time my upper lip was covered with hares, and Jimmy Silver & Co. rored with larfter whenevver they saw me.

"Good gracious, Muffin!" gasped Bootles. "I hardly rekkernized you when you came into the Form-room! Yoore appearance is eggstrordinary! What is the meoning of that peculiar growth on yore upper lipp?"

"Don't call it a growth, sir," I said, in pained toans. "It's a mistosh!"

"Good 'Evans!" gasped Bootles. "It is perfekktly loodicruss for a boy of yore tender yeers to have a mistosh! Why, you look five yeers older than you reely are!"

I did not regard that remark as very komplimentary.

"I don't mind looking old, sir," I said, "so long as I look manly."

"Manly!" echoed Bootles. "Why, you look as if you had just been released from a kommic opera!"

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

And then Bootles maid anuther feeble joak.

"I shall have to introduce a sort of Daylight Shaving Act, Muffin," he said. "In other wurds, you must go down to the villidge, and have those absurd hares removed at wunce!"

"Oh, crummns! But I shall want them, sir, for the Beauty Contest!"

"You are an utterly absurd boy, Muffin!" said Bootles. "You cannot possibly hope to win a Beauty Contest with a face like that! You will proseed at wunce to the barber's, and have that appology for a mistosh taken away; and then you will give yore face a good skrubb, and remove the tan."

Very reluctantly I went down to the villidge, and got the barber to shave my upper lipp.

As the hares dropped on to the cloth, I trembled like a fritened rabbit, for I was afrade the barber mite cut me. He weelded the razer in a very careless manner.

Howevver, I escaped without a skratch, and when I got back to Rookwood I spent an hour in the barf-room getting the tan off my face. After which I was my normal self wunce more.

In dew corse the Beauty Contest took plaice, and the prize was awarded to R. Muffin.

But it wasn't the first prize; it was the booby prize, and it konsisted of a putty meddle!

THE END.

EXTRACT FROM THE ST. JIM'S "DICTIONARY OF SLANG"

By that Comic Card—MONTY LOWTHER.

"BEAK."—One who is set in authority; a master or prefect. A person we avoid when breaking bounds, or playing midnight pranks.

"CAT'S LICK."—An apology for a wash. Baggy Trimble performs a cat's lick every morning. It consists of moistening the face very slightly with a teaspoonful of cold water, and then drying vigorously with a towel.

"CHUMP."—A dolt; a fool; an imbecile; an arrant duffer. George Alfred Grundy provides an excellent example.

"DOPE."—The name applied to the quinine and other horrible concoctions given us by Miss Marie Rivers when we go to the sanny.

"FATHEAD."—A first-rate idiot.

"GORGER."—One who feeds to excess; one who is guilty of orgies. The biggest offenders in this respect at St. Jim's, are Fatty Wynn and Baggy Trimble.

"JAMMY."—The nickname of Koumi Rao, the Indian junior in the New House.

"JABBERWOCK."—A jay; a foolish person: a prize duffer.

"KNUT."—One who keeps abreast of the fashions, and dresses extravagantly. One who swaggers and swanks, and gives the impression that he has just stepped out of a bandbox. One whose conversation is chiefly confined to "Haw!" and "Bai Jove!" and "Yaas, wathah!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy is a perfect example of the complete knut.

"LICKING."—A defeat; a form of chastisement. The result of an interview with an angry "beak."

"MIDGIES."—A term meaning "marbles." This expression is confined to the babes of the First and Second.

"MONEYBAGS." — A fellow who is rolling in money. One who worships the golden calf. Aubrey Racke is the "Young Moneybags" of St. Jim's.

"MUGWUMP."—See "Jabberwock."

"OLD BEAN."—A term of endearment or familiarity. It is varied in many ways, such as "My perfectly priceless old grape-fruit!" etc.

"PORPOISE."—A tub: a barrel; a fellow of unwieldy dimensions. Baggy Trimble is our choicest sample.

"POTTY."—Mad; "up the pole"; having bats in the belfry.

"RATTY."—The nickname of Mr. Horace Ratcliff, the sour, ill-tempered master of the New House.

"RIPPING." — Splendid; excellent; grand; delightful.

"SOUP."—That which a fellow often finds himself in, after a misdemeanour.

"STINKS." — The science of chemistry.

"SCRAP."—A fight; an affray; a display of fisticuffs.

"SHELLFISH."—A member of the Shell Form—the most honourable and esteemed Form at St. Jim's!

"SPOTTED DOG"—A conglomeration of flour and water sprinkled, at very occasional intervals, with currants. Served up at dinner once a week under the heading of "Currant Roly-poly."

"SUICIDE DUFF."—The name given to a certain boiled pudding which is served every Saturday. It is regarded as suicidal to tackle more than one portion.

"TRAPS."—Luggage; parcels.

"TORTURE - CHAMBER." — The Head's study.

"WHEEZE."—A jape; a lark; a stunt; a scheme whereby we hope to put it across our rivals.

(The author wishes clearly to point out that the foregoing are merely extracts. The complete dictionary of slang may be seen in Study No. 12, Shell Passage.)

THE MUSICIAN

By BAGGY TRIMBLE.



My tallents as a fine musician
Are reely quite above suspicion.
No one to me can hold a candle,
I am a sort of second Handel!

With joy and rapcher you would grin
To hear me play the violin.
You'd never crittieise or carp
To hear me pracktiss on the harp.

You'll never see a fellow scoot
While Baggy Trimble plays the floot.
Nor will you hear a groan of woe
When I produce a piccolo!

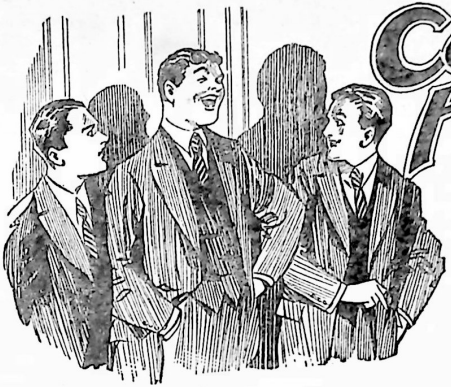
For miles and miles the people come
To hear me beat the kettle-drum.
And every reely honest fellow
Says I'm a champion with the 'cello!

At concerts I shall always shine,
For see, what priceless gifts are mine!
Why, I can play, and I can sing
The very cream of everything!

I'm organising, understand,
A reelly fine St. Jim's brass band.
Grundy, and Gunn, and Fatty Wynn
(And Gussy, too) are coming in.

We'll play each evening in the quad.
No doubt the Head will think it odd.
And at his window he'll appear,
And gasp, "Dear me! What have we here?"

Then I shall say, in tones of pride,
"My band is famus far and wide,
And wider still its fame shall spread!"
Then we'll play ragtime to the Head!



Coker the Humorist!

By William Green.

The "funny" man of Greyfriars School needs a lot of convincing that he is more humorous than humorist!

THE first indication Potter and I received of Coker's new form of madness occurred one evening in the study. We had been jawing about the prospects of the First XI. in a coming Soccer match against Rookwood, and I had just expressed the hope that Wingate would include me in the team. It was then that Coker butted.

"Yes," he remarked, "but you haven't been practising enough this season. You're green! Ha, ha, ha!"

And with that Coker went off into a howl of laughter.

Potter and I stared at him in surprise, and Coker, after quietening down, looked at us with quite a pitying expression.

"Don't you see the joke, you fellows? You're Green, and you're green! Two greens, you see! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Great Scott!" murmured Potter. "So that's the joke, is it? Green—green! My hat!"

"Mean to say you didn't see?" asked Coker cheerfully. "I always said you were a couple of brainless idiots! Well, what are we doing for the rest of the evening? I suppose we don't want to potter round the study till bedtime? Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker fairly yelled, while we looked at him more in sorrow than in anger.

"Now tell me you didn't see that one!" chuckled Coker. "George Potter—potter round the study, you know! Ha, ha, ha!"

In this manner did we learn that Coker was setting up as a humorist.

Now Coker is, and always was, a humorist—without intending to be so. The more seriously he takes himself, the more screamingly funny he seems to other people. As a cricketer, or a footballer, in the Form-room, or even on his beloved motor-cycle, no comedian or circus-clown can compete with him.

But when it comes to being intentionally humorous, all that is funny about Horace Coker departs from him. And, judging by the behaviour of Coker after his two initial puns had been perpetrated, it undoubtedly was his intention to shine as a humorist. The prospect was quite alarming.

All the rest of the evening Coker was making the most wretched puns. To say that it was exasperating would be putting it mildly. By bedtime we felt like slaughtering the silly cuckoo!

We went to bed, sincerely hoping that by the following morning the phase would have passed.

But it hadn't, as we quickly found out.

"Coming for a sprint round the quad?"

asked Potter, innocently enough, as the three of us trooped downstairs.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker.

We looked at him in blank astonishment. Neither of us could see anything to laugh at in that remark.

"Well, what's the joke?" asked Potter gruffly.

"Why, I was just thinking that if we were at Dartmoor we shouldn't be allowed to!" chortled Coker.

"What the dickens——"

"Don't you see? Quad—quod! Quad. meaning our quadrangle and quod meaning chokey—prison, you know. Ha, ha, ha!"

"M-m-my hat!"

That's about all we could say. Coker as a humorist was getting a bit thick!

"Well, the sooner we forget that the better," grunted Potter. "Are we having a sprint or not? There's young Wharton and his crowd hoofing it round already!"

"Cheeky fags!" remarked Coker, with a frown. "They had the nerve to cheek me yesterday. Talking about quod, let's go over and give 'em a few hand-cuffs to teach 'em their manners!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Hand-cuffs! You know! Meaning cuffs with the hand, or bracelets. Ha, ha, ha!"

We turned in to brekker without our sprint that morning. Coker's witty remarks left us with no heart for exercise!

All that day we had to endure an unending stream of similar jests from the humorous lips of Coker. By the time the day had ended both Potter and I were nearly frantic.

Try as we might, we could not induce him to abandon his new rôle. The fact that we made no pretence of laughing did not interfere in any with Coker's enjoyment of his own jokes. He even grew rather chirpy about it during the day, thinking that we were unable to appreciate his subtlety, that his brains were vastly superior to ours!

"Something must be done," said Potter to me, just before we retired that night. "The limit has been reached!"

"Nem. con.!" I replied, with enthusiasm. "Of course, Coker has redeeming features. He has tons of money!"

"And doesn't mind spending it, either," said Potter, with a nod. "But money's not everything, and unless this business of Coker as a wit finishes pretty soon, I'm going to finish with Coker!"

"Me, too! But half a minute!"

An idea had just occurred to me—an idea that seemed at first glance to offer little chance of success for us, but nevertheless an idea.

I explained it to Potter, who pursed his lips a little thoughtfully.

"Sounds a bit thin to me." he said. "He's such a thick-skinned ass that I doubt if he'll be put off like that! I should prefer something more concrete, and therefore more likely to appeal to his limited intelligence—something with boiling oil in it, for instance!"

However, there was no boiling oil available, and, anyway, that would have been a little fierce, perhaps, even for the exasperating Coker. So we put my simple little wheeze into effect instead.

Our opportunity came as we were trooping out of the class-room after morning lessons on the following day. Coker, walking between us, was chuckling very merrily, evidently at the recollection of one or other of the painful jokes he had been inflicting on the long-suffering Fifth during the preceding two days.

"I say, you chaps," he began, "did you hear me pulling old Bland's leg after brekker this morning?"

I closed one eye at Potter. This was just the kind of opening we wanted.

"I turned round to him," continued Coker cheerfully, "and I said: 'I say, old man——'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker's explanation came to an abrupt finish as Potter and I burst into a roar of laughter. It was now Coker's turn to stare at us.

"Ha, ha, ha!" we roared in unison.

"Gone off your rockers?" asked Coker politely.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, chuck it, you idiots!" he



Coker, walking between us, was chuckling merrily, evidently at the recollection of one of his painful jokes. (*See previous page.*)

exclaimed wrathfully. "What the dickens are you laughing at, anyway?"

"Why, your joke, of course," I replied. "Fancy you turning round and saying that to Bland! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, you grinning idiots!" roared Coker. "I haven't told you the joke yet!"

"Oh, sorry! Our mistake!"

"Well, anyway," resumed Coker, regarding us rather suspiciously now, "I said to Bland: 'I say, old man, do you believe in being bland?'"

Coker paused to give us an opportunity to laugh, but we simply looked at him like a couple of boiled owls. However, he was accustomed by now to our inability to appreciate his quips, so he went on, quite cheerfully:

"Well, Bland turned round, and——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Potter and I, at my signal, simply roared, while Coker, with consternation on his face, simply blinked at us.

"'Bland turned round'!" gurgled Potter, as though that remark contained some screamingly funny gem of wit. "That's rich! Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's rich?" howled Coker. "Blessed if I can understand you! I suppose this is a fat-headed jape to put me off my stroke!" Coker added, showing somewhat unusual understanding—for him. "Not having the brains to appreciate my wit, you don't want to listen to it, eh? Nice pals you are—I don't think!"

Anyway, the wheeze worked all right, and Horace announced his intention of devoting himself to the serious side of life. And from that moment Horace Coker became really funny again!

THE END



A LONG RUN HOME

A Thrilling, True-to-Life Nature Story

By CLIVE R. FENN

As he dashed into the shelter of the covert the fox heard the sound of the hunting horn far off down the valley. It was music that was most distasteful to his ears, but he breathed again in the rough sanctuary beneath trees where the tangle of bronzed brambles afforded a chance of concealment.

It had been a hard run, quite a touch-and-go business, and there had been moments when the fox had given up all hope of getting away. He listened, ears twitching uneasily. The chase had been hot, and even he, a remarkably cunning representative of his race, had had all his work cut out to show a clean pair of heels. Far off in the misty distance once more he heard the call, and shivered, then started again, loping through the dense woodland.

Here and there was a gap bathed in yellow sunlight, and here the silver gossamer threads flashed in the light, making shining pathways out beyond the covert, right across a big ploughed field. The fox shrank from the open stretch, and dropped like a red shadow into a gully. Here he stopped and sniffed again.

They were after him still. He saw a mile away the gleam of something. It was a pink coat, and the fugitive trotted on, making straight for the swollen, brawling stream, flooded by the heavy autumn rains. This river cut through the woodland. The fox splashed across it, and a knowing-looking waterfowl regarded the hunted one thoughtfully before darting into a forest of reeds.

The fox gained the further bank, shook himself, looked back furtively, and then continued his flight. Things seemed a bit more hopeful now, but he felt he had had enough. A brilliant-coloured pheasant gazed at him as he passed a clump of dead bracken, and then went off in clumsy fright. But there was no cause for alarm. It was not the fox's day for game. His intention was to get round by Tagg's Corner, and so make one more point homeward. This corner was dangerous, for it meant exposing himself on two lanes.

Tagg's Corner boasted a signpost which had seen better days. It had been blown flat the previous March. Someone had kindly stood it up again, but had omitted to put it the right way; not that this signified to any considerable degree, as all the writing had been washed away by years of rain. The

peculiar advantage of this little oasis in the lanes was that from out of the bushes in the centre a clear view could be obtained of the surrounding country. With his keen, bright eyes flashing in the dusk of the shady look-out, the fox surveyed the land.

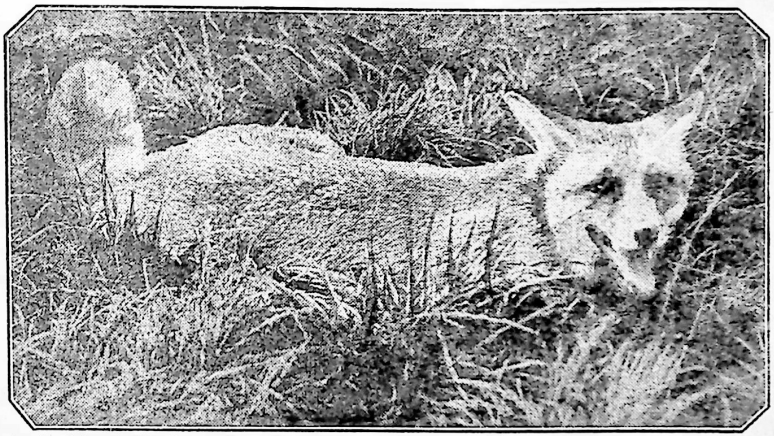
Not out of the wood yet! He snuffled uneasily. Borne on the soft, warm wind the fox heard the hounds. For a brief moment the fox crouched there, panting, his tongue hanging out. Just behind where he hid rose a green hill, spangled with gorse and dotted with stone patches. Then, as far below he heard a sharp bark, the fox was off, slipping across the narrow lane, gaining a green track, and making straight for Gaffer Tapper's farm. Many a plump fowl had the fox gleaned from the well-stocked yard, but now he was otherwise engaged. As he slid into view, the geese, getting fat for Christmas, raised a deafening noise.

"That dratted fox again!" shrilled Mrs. Tapper, a stout lady, dashing out of the house, where she had been ironing, in her hand a business-like-looking flat iron, all hot.

She gazed this way and that. The prize geese chattered thirteen to the dozen, and shook themselves vigorously, but Reynard had vanished. Mrs. Tapper shook her head. She had lost her best goose at Michaelmas. But her fears were groundless this time. The fox had streaked for the glebe lands, half a mile on. Beyond that lay safety, for he knew once he had gained the wild country and the chalk cuttings all would be well—for him; though it would be bad for the geese, some day when he was disengaged!

As Mrs. Tapper went back to her ironing-board the fox was gazing at her from behind the wood-pile, alongside the homestead. All was well. Nothing had given the game away. But he was only just in time, for as he darted past the garden boundary the cocker spaniel, who was getting old and lay dreaming by the kitchen fire, started up and barked, for he smelt the intruder. But the dog was too fat and lazy to do more than run to the door and show his zeal by another bout of barking.

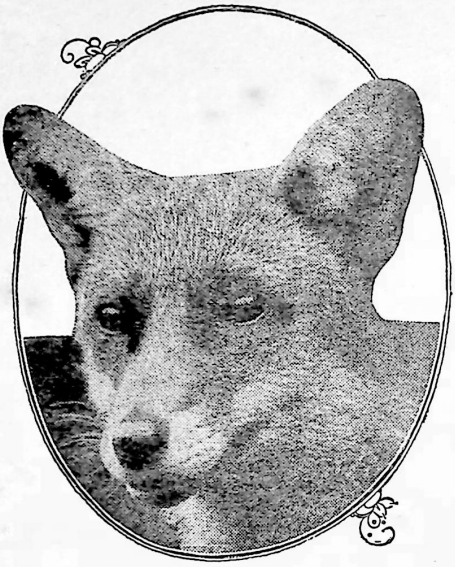
The fox raced through a dip in the ground, and then risked everything by taking the open hillside. Here the grass was



A wily fellow is Mr. Fox! Some think he enjoys a good hard run with the horsemen and hounds full-tilt after him. But *does* he?

so poor that even the sheep would have nothing to say to it. Here the tough little brown butterflies still pretended it was summer-time; here a drowsy bee still hovered in the tiny pink heath blooms.

From behind came a volley of barks. A couple of hounds had sighted him, and were thundering in his wake. He leaped a narrow ravine, but his enemies were hot in pursuit, and came up with him as the fugitive gained the spot he had been making for all the time. Here there was a sharp descent, right at the crest of the sun-bathed hill, as if cut with a knife. As he sprang, the foremost hound leaped, too; but the quarry had been too smart. This chalk cutting was the emergency entrance to his burrow, and he knew the way. A minute later and the fox was gone; hounds were frantically tearing at the loose chalk. They could do nothing. The quarry was energetically scuffling through a tunnel in the chalk, the myriad windings of which he understood in every detail, and he chuckled vastly as he reached his lair in safety, after a *very* adventurous run!



A fine head, this—sharp and intelligent! Yes, Mr. Fox has all his wits about him!

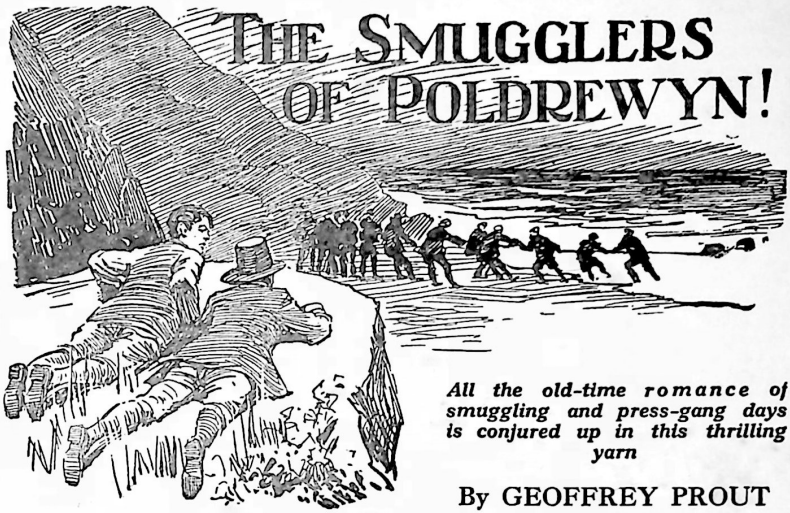
But one thing was clear as noonday. There was no doubt that Reynard had escaped more peril than even he had reckoned for. To hear Mrs. Tapper relate the incident to her friends, it was evident that it was mere touch-and-go that the fox had not been carefully ironed, brush and all, with the flat-iron the good woman carried!

The members of the hunt cursed the chalk pits. Long after the quarry had gone to earth—or chalk—the agitated geese in the Tapper farmyard made as big a clatter of their fears and nerves as the historic birds in the Capitol at Rome. But the fox, safe in his comfortable headquarters, cared for none of these things. He laughed over the whole business as he discussed a turkey, lifted the previous week from an outlying farm, with a friend who dropped in, just about supper-time—curiously enough!

"There is no doubt about it," he said, "these brisk runs are most healthy—keep one in the pink of condition." But the guest shivered at the word "pink," for it conjured up the huntsmen, in their gay coats, who refuse to let an honest fox grow fat in peace at the farmer's expense.

. . . . .

Rumour has it that our wily fox is still living in his snug headquarters in the chalk hill, making nightly pilgrimages up and down the countryside. If you happen to be that way, you may hear soft rustles by the hedgerow, and catch a glimpse of his shadow in the misty moonlight of autumn-time. There will be a quick scuffle amidst the dead leaves and ferns, and Reynard will have vanished. Mrs. Tapper will continue to tremble for her chickens in the yard!



All the old-time romance of smuggling and press-gang days is conjured up in this thrilling yarn

By GEOFFREY PROUT

THE FIRST CHAPTER
The Free Traders !

"HIST, Rodney ! There's someone !" Jack Winter's fingers tightened over Rodney Tremayne's forearm as he whispered the words. The boys were lying full-length on a flat rock, overlooking the beach at the foot of Kemyell Cliff, on the coast of Cornwall.

"I saw nothing," replied Rodney, under his breath.

"Watch !" said Jack. "I saw two dark figures flitting across the sand. I be dead sure of it !"

The boys watched intently, straining their eyes in endeavour to see shapes in the darkness before them. But there was no movement save the white wash of the surf. All around were gaunt, black rocks, silent and still, awe-inspiring.

The two friends worked together in a corn merchant's office at Poldrewyn, and to-night they were out on the watch for smugglers. Winter's father was an exciseman of the district, and that there *were* smugglers at work some nights he well knew. It was Mr. Winter's duty to find them out and convict them. But Jack and Rodney were anxious to have the rascally band caught for other reasons than that the men were cheating the revenue.

"I be sure that Kemyell Beach is where they land most of their runnings hereabouts," said Jack. "Father says little, but I know he rules out Kemyell Beach. I must have been mistaken just now. But I be dead sure we'll see them to-night. When I told father I overheard Dirk Westaways say 'Kemyell' he just laughed at me, and told me to leave the matter to those whose business it be. But—— Rod, I be proper mazed if that be not figures moving along on the beach !"

Jack's voice had dropped to a hiss again, and his fingers once more clutched at his friend's arm.

"You needn't pinch a lump of flesh out of my arm, for all that," returned Rodney.

As he spoke he suddenly stiffened and watched, his limbs trembling slightly with

excitement. Jack, too, was keenly alert, and the breathing of the boys was heavy and slow, testifying to the strain of the moment.

For three figures had moved out across the beach, and now were standing close together. Hardly perceptible in the gloom, the boys almost doubted they were there till one of the men moved again. And then suddenly the little group was momentarily lit up by the sudden flare of a torch. The flame went out almost on the instant it was lit.

Instinctively the boys looked out to the blackness at sea, for well they knew the smugglers' methods. And there, sure enough, so flitting as almost to leave them doubtful that they had seen anything, a pin-point of light had appeared, and as suddenly vanished.

The answering signal! They were to see something this night! So they huddled close together and watched, not now daring even to whisper.

It seemed an age before anything happened. Then movement on the beach was again seen. Men ran down to the line of ghostly surf, and as the friends strained their eyes they saw the men heaving in a boat.

More men ran down the beach from the shelter of the rocks, and formed up into a long line, as in single file. Then the men bent their backs and pulled. They were hauling on a rope silently, steadily. Hauling, hauling, and never a word was uttered.

The friends shivered slightly. It all seemed so uncanny. A rousing: "Yo! Y'ho, heave-ho!" would have relieved the tension. But there was none of it—just the black figures hauling, hauling.

And then something mysterious and ghostly was seen out in the blackness that was the sea. A pale green, shimmering light appeared, drawing nearer and nearer, and becoming stronger and stronger till black, round objects could be discerned in the phosphorescent glow.

"Barrels! Strings of them, being towed ashore!" breathed Jack. "Oh, if father could only know of this!"

"Hist!" breathed Rodney. "You don't know who is near! Keep quiet!"

The barrels were now in the surf, and the long string of them began to jumble together, the washing water lopping them about to right and left till they were all bumping on the sand. Then the smugglers dropped the rope and scattered, dashing into the surf and detaching the barrels from the towing-rope.

Rodney and Jack, as they watched, saw each dark form heave up two of the kegs, which were fixed together with ropes, slip his head between the ropes, then settle the kegs comfortably, one on the chest and one on the back. In this way they would carry the contraband up to one of their stores or to waiting carts, and by the morning the spirits would be distributed over twenty miles of country.

The fitful glare of a torch signal again was made from the beach, and the friends could just see the towing rope snaking back along the sand towards the surf, evidently being coiled in on the smuggling vessel, lying-to off the shore.

Before the rope had quite disappeared into the surf, the smugglers had gone, flitting off like the silent shadows they were.

Rodney put his lips close to Jack's ear.

"News for your father!" he said, merely breathing the words. "What discipline! What perfect organisation!"

Jack nodded, the moisture dripping from the hard brim of his glazed cocked hat as he did so.

"Ay, and father shall know more!" he whispered back. "I be going to follow the smugglers and see what they do with the contraband!"

Cautiously, thrilling with excitement, the friends picked their way along the rocks till they came to the path that led to the top of the cliff. Up this they cautiously made their way, and when at the top they lay flat down on the ground to see the skyline beyond, and so be able to detect movement.

No sooner were they down than they gasped again with excitement, for the smugglers were moving to the left in a long,

ragged line, clear against the sky, the barrels on chest and back clearly outlined.

"They are making for Rush Bottom Lane!" breathed Jack. "There goes the last! Let us follow!"

The boys ran at the stoop across country, with the idea of lying in wait for the band half-way along Rush Bottom Lane, and so, perhaps, being able to recognise some of the smugglers as they passed. They got safely into position behind the hedge, and there they waited silently till the swift tramp, tramp, tramp! of burdened men at the double came to their ears.

Another sound came to their ears, too. That was the steady clop, clop-clop, clop! of a walking horse, and the horse was coming from the direction of Poldrewyn. The boys watched breathlessly, dividing their attention between the upper and the lower part of the lane.

The sounds grew stronger. The horseman, whoever he might be, was very near. At last they saw him outlined for an instant against the sky.

"Father!" gasped Jack. "'Tis father, out on his ride. But this be his night the other side of Poldrewyn."

"He believed more of your information about overhearing Dirk say 'Kemyell' than he made out," breathed Rodney in reply.

Jack was white as a sheet. Rodney could just see his face in the darkness.

"He'll hold them up! He'll—— Ah!"

Mr. Winter had reined in his horse suddenly. The animal came to a stop, almost down on his haunches, and his forehoofs beat a sudden tattoo on the gravelly surface of the lane as he tried to turn away from the advancing smugglers.

The ride officer swung round, and the friends gasped as they saw a big horse-pistol in his hand, outlined with ghostly dimness against the sky. He was urging with rein and heels to make the horse face the band.

The smugglers suddenly became aware of an obstruction ahead. A low, weird call went down the line, and the men made a break for the hedge bordering the lane.

But Mr. Winter had spurred on by this time, and came at the band at the gallop.

"Surrender, in the King's name!" ordered the exciseman, his ringing voice seeming to wake the echoes. And he dashed straight at the smugglers.

Rodney and Jack scrambled to their knees, watching breathlessly. All seemed a confused jumble of barrel-burdened men in the lane, covering their faces with their hands and trying to get away, the exciseman's horse plunging in the mêlée, and Mr. Winter towering above them all, the cocked pistol bobbing about above him.

"Scatter! Separate action! Every man for himself!"

The cry rang out, and the boys recognised Dirk Westaway's voice. And, the whole occurrence taking less time than the writing of it, a blinding flash sent a weird glare of colour lighting up the bush-tops, the smugglers and their barrels, the flying sleeves of the exciseman's great-coat, which he wore buttoned at the neck but with the sleeves free, as was the custom of the day. And then came the explosion.

There sounded a gasp or two, some muttering, a low moan, and the smugglers broke through the hedge and ran across the fields as the exciseman crashed to the ground and lay there, still and silent, while his horse caracoled about him for a second or two, then stood quietly, muzzling about at the body on the ground.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Brutal Vengeance!

JACK, reckless of danger, had sprung up. He leapt down into the lane and ran to his father, Rodney close on his heels.

The boys knelt beside the still form. Jack's trembling fingers were undoing the buttons at his father's throat. Rodney picked up the pistol, which Mr. Winter's nerveless fingers had dropped.

"Your father did not fire," he said. "'Twas the smugglers were armed. I thought at first 'twas your father's pistol, knocked up and fired at that instant."

"Here! Help me!" gasped Jack, his face white to the lips. "He breathes heavily. Where be the shot-wound?"

The lads searched about for signs of blood, and so anxiously intent were they on their work that they did not see the bushes bordering the lane part, and the cruel face of Dirk Westaways appear. The man looked down into the lane, and a smouldering fury appeared in his eyes. But he made no sound. He merely half turned to the rear and beckoned into the darkness.

Two more men crept up. They were ruffianly-looking fellows, with squat glazed hats on their heads. A tarred pigtail stamped one as a sailor. But Dirk Westaways was a man of far different stamp. He stood there between his companions, his arms akimbo, his dirty canvas trousers split at the bottom, six inches short of the rusty buckles of his shoes, his woollen jolly-bag of a hat pulled over a shock of matted hair which was like a lump of oakum.

"At 'em, mates!" ordered Dirk hoarsely. "Blindfold—lash their hands behind 'em! We'll teach childer not to break away from their mothers' apron-strings and spy on free traders! Ah, do ye?"

Rodney, hearing the hoarse order, turned suddenly. But before he could see anything, a great, knotted fist shot out and caught him full in the face, sending him flying backwards, half-blinded by the force of the blow.

Jack swung round, with a cry. But his arms were pinioned to his sides. He yelled, and kicked and struggled, and gnashed with his teeth at the cloth which someone was trying to tie round his eyes.

Rodney heaved himself to a sitting position, then to his feet, swaying there like a drunken man. He could see blurry forms before him, heaving and surging in a tremendous struggle. And, his brain clearing and a sudden rage gripping his heart, he leapt in with clenched fists and struck out at the dark, brutal faces he could see before him.

Muttered curses came from the men. Then, as one held Jack in a firm grasp, the two others came for Rod. The lad went down, fighting gamely. He was kicked and jerked about, and a bandage was lashed round his eyes. Then he felt himself being hauled to the side of the lane.

The men did not speak. The friends could hear them breathing heavily. But evidently they did not intend to disclose their identity.

Rodney felt himself smashed against a tree, a sudden pain shooting down his back as his spine came into rough contact with the trunk. A rope was now passed round him and the tree. And Rodney felt another form beside him. Jack, of course! And what did the ruffians intend to do?

Cowardly blows were dealt at the defenceless boys. Then merciful unconsciousness came just as Rodney heard the words, as if uttered from far, far away:

"That'll do, Dirk, I reckon. Ye don't . . . kill 'em! They . . . marked enough." Then, louder: "Hold up, ye fool! If 'tis murder . . . whole countryside agen us!"

Rodney heard no more. He was past hearing anything now.

The people of Poldrewyn found the maltreated boys and the wounded excisemen just after dawn. And the farm labourer who discovered them discovered also a note, pinned to the tree above the boys' heads: "*For spying on smugglers!*"

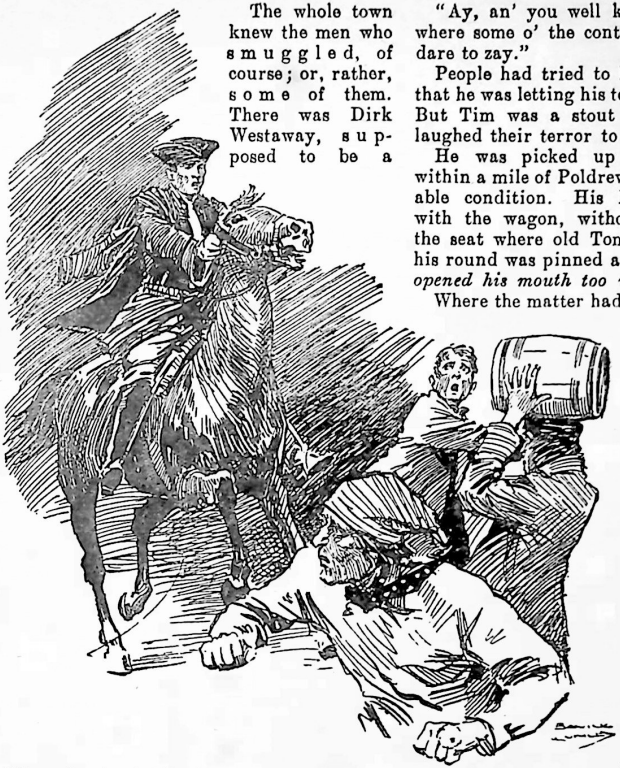
Poldrewyn had been loudly indignant when Mr. Winter, Jack, and Rodney were carried in.

"'Tis the reign o' terror!" said one old woman, clenching her fist and shaking it at various doors in the row of quaint houses that fronted the water at Poldrewyn. "If they think they can frighten we, they be mistaken. Sech brutality! Poor young Rodney Tremayne, and poor young Jack Winter, too, son of the exciseman, with it all!"

"Us'll dassen't look out of window soon, for fear be we might see a smuggler in the street."

"'Tis awful!"

Loud were the threats uttered against the smugglers. But after the first outburst of feeling all lips were sealed, and people held their tongues, for the fear of the smugglers was great.



"Surrender, In the King's name!" ordered the exciseman, dashing straight at the smugglers. (*See Chapter* 1.)

The whole town knew the men who smuggled, of course; or, rather, some of them. There was Dirk Westaway, supposed to be a fisherman. Nick Travers, too, and Dan Holt. But they had not been caught in the act yet.

Old Tim Farrow, the carter, had been loud-voiced about the smugglers' reign of terror. Once, outside the Ship and Plough inn, he had reeled off the names of the men whom he suspected of smuggling. And he turned on the landlord of the Ship and Plough as he banged his tankard on the table.

"Ay, an' you well know, Tom Wheelan, where some o' the contraband be run to, I dare to zay."

People had tried to hint to the old man that he was letting his tongue wag too freely. But Tim was a stout old fellow, and he laughed their terror to scorn.

He was picked up that very evening within a mile of Poldrewyn in a most deplorable condition. His horse had come in with the wagon, without its master. On the seat where old Tom nodded as he did his round was pinned a note, reading: "*He opened his mouth too wide!*"

Where the matter had been serious before, it was now well-nigh desperate. And the stoutest hearts in Poldrewyn quaked at the thought of what might happen to them should they by chance learn something of the smugglers. People were afraid to walk abroad at night, for fear of seeing So-and-so going out of the town. Nobody breathed a word about the mysterious light that was often seen to flare up, then go out, 'way out on the sea to the south-west.

Rodney and Jack, still bearing the marks of their terrible experience in Rush Bottom Lane, were out and about within a week. They met at the office on Monday morning, and Mr. Carryn, the corn merchant, was pretty sour with them.

"Come along! We have a week of the receipts to check up with the books," he said.

Rodney and Jack got busy, and kept busy

till Mr. Carryn went out. Then they pushed the mass of old dusty receipts aside, and propped their elbows on the desk.

"I'm glad your father is getting on all right, Jack," said Rod. "You know, something must be done to clear these smuggling rats out of Poldrewyn."

Jack made a gesture of disgust.

"What can be done?" he said. "The coastguards are in deadly fear of the band, and they shut their eyes when they see smuggling done under their very noses."

"The Government ought to send a naval sloop down if the revenue cutter is always kept so busy on the Dorset coast."

"What the Government ought to do and what it will do are two very different things, Rod," said Jack. "Here we have an exciseman all but murdered, and yet no extra help is forthcoming. What we be coming to I don't know."

"I do know this—I'll not be muzzled by any reign of terror!"

"No, nor I! But we'd best keep inside the town."

Rodney nodded.

"No need for us to go out—except in secret. Look, there's that cur, Dirk Westaways, walking along as if he was landowner, magistrate, and justice of the peace!"

"So he be!" said Jack bitterly. "Our magistrate be as scared of the smugglers as anyone. He lives in deadly fear he'll have to deal with a smuggling case, I do believe."

"Well, he'll have one, if we can see to it. Dirk is passing close by our door. Why, by Heaven, Jack, he's coming in here!"

The boys swung round and stared, half in fear, half in indignation, as the big ruffian came in.

Rod was the first to pull himself together.

"No place here, Dirk!" he said, with acid sharpness. "You couldn't store a half-bottle in these premises."

Dirk Westaways scowled savagely. He clenched his fist.

"Careful how ye go——" he began.

But Rod broke in:

"Or you'll give us another smashing up, like you did in Rush Bottom Lane."

The smuggler looked daggers.

"I dunno what ye be talkin' about," he said. "But I have heard as ye've been tellin' folk as 'twas me consarned in your bit trouble the other week. Well, I say, careful how ye go!"

Jack laughed bitterly.

"My father's still a-bed," he said. "But when he is out again, and this relief officer is gone, I'd say the same to you."

Dirk Westaways looked so threatening that the friends got down off their stools, and looked at him in some alarm.

"Listen you here!" roared Dirk. "I be a peaceful fisherman, an' I'll not have my name coupled wi' smugglin', and so I tell 'e. And as for your father—why, odds, if he dares to bother me, I reckon he'll find he's on a losing tack."

Rodney was standing with the stool between himself and Westaways. The boy was breathing heavily, and a wild anger surged in his breast. He thought of the brutal attack on himself and Jack, of the cold-blooded shooting of Jack's father, of the worse than brutal attack on the old carrier. He threw discretion to the winds, and he pointed at Dirk, his face white with fury.

"I tell you, Dirk Westaways, we know you for a smuggler!" he cried. "There's a nest of rats in Poldrewyn to be worried out, and somewhere there are terriers game enough to do it. The people be not so set against the smuggling as against being bullied and terrified into keeping still tongues. Their patience will break soon, then you and your band may look out for trouble! I——"

"You cub!" snarled Dirk Westaways, lurching towards Rod.

But the boy skipped clear, and hopped round the office-desk, Jack with him.

"That's what I say, too," shrilled Jack. "You don't shoot my father without my having a say in the to-do!"

The smuggler was beside himself with fury, and he snarled like a wolf as he grabbed at the boys. Jack and Rodney skipped clear. They were panting with excitement, and it might have gone hard

with them if Mr. Carryn had not at that second come into the office.

"Hallo, what's this——" he began.

Then he recognised Dirk, and the ruffian pulled up in his stride towards Jack and Rod.

"They be angerin' me, Mr. Carryn," said Dirk. He looked Mr. Carryn straight in the face with his piercing, glittering eyes. "They been tellin' me I be a smuggler. They say as I be the man who let into them the other week. *You* don't believe that, do ye, Mr. Carryn?"

Jack and Rodney, still breathing heavily, watched their employer's face. Mr. Carryn seemed taken aback. The blood had left his usually ruddy countenance.

"I—I——" he began.

But Dirk Westaways repeated his question, and there was something terribly menacing in his tones.

"*You* don't believe I be a smuggler, do 'e?"

Mr. Carryn moistened his dry lips. He ran a finger round the inside of his high white collar, and slapped his tight pantaloons nervously with his cane.

"I—I—— No, of course not," he said.

Westaways favoured him with a twisted grin, then scowled at the boys as he turned to go.

"There be too much talk as to who be the smugglers and who bain't in Poldrewyn to-day," he said.

Then he left the office.

Mr. Carryn was about to speak to the boys, thought better of it, and went into his own office, slamming the door hard behind him.

Rod and Jack looked at each other, and smiled as they climbed on their stools again.

"And he said he would not rest till he had Dirk Westaways by the heels!" whispered Jack across the desk.

"Yes, but that was to you and me when we were in bed, and Dirk Westaways wasn't anywhere near," returned Rodney sarcastically. "I don't know what Poldrewyn is coming to, do you?"

Jack shook his head.

"There's one thing I know, Rod, and that is, unless Poldrewyn becomes a place we can live in in peace and quietness, we'd best get away."



Two more men crept up and joined Dirk Westaways. They were ruffianly-looking fellows, with squat, glazed hats on their heads. (*See Chapter* 2.)

THE THIRD CHAPTER
Prisoners I

In the days of which we write, the conviction of smugglers was a very hard task indeed, unless the smugglers were actually caught in the act. And Rodney and Jack decided that their only course to rid Poldrewyn of its bullying band was to find out when some big running was to be made, and have the right authorities warned in plenty of time, so that they could have representatives there in strength, and call upon the smugglers to surrender.

But this all presented very great difficulties. The chief difficulty of all was to arrange for raids in sufficient strength when runnings were to be made.

The boys well knew how dangerous it was for them to stray very far from the little fishing town. So they embarked on their little excursions with the very greatest care. They shadowed Dirk Westaways, and knew that while shadowing him he could not be shadowing them.

They found out quite a lot. And one dark night they were close on the heels of the band, and very excited because this night it appeared as if they were to discover one of the secret hiding-places for the contraband. Could they but rout out these places one by one, and so arrange to have them raided and the contraband confiscated, smuggling would, perhaps, cease to be profitable at Poldrewyn, and the practice, as a regular thing, would cease.

With the cessation of smuggling on a large scale, the people were of opinion that the bullying and threatening would cease, and honest folk would then be able to live without fear.

As the boys followed the smugglers inland from Kemyell Cliff they were strung up with excitement, for obviously the band did not intend to scatter this night. That meant that they were bound for one of their biggest hiding-places.

Keeping under cover all the time, Rod and Jack followed fairly closely. And Rodney dropped flat in the ditch they were scouting along as he saw the last of the file ahead halt and unsling his kegs of spirit, placing them on the ground. Then he rubbed his shoulders where he had felt the weight of the kegs on the shoulder-ropes.

"Titheridge's Barn!" hissed Jack.

"For sure!" Rodney returned, in a breath. "Ah, they are moving on again!"

The lads listened intently, and distinctly heard the dull thumping as the kegs were stored. Doubtless the contraband was to be left there the next day, to be collected by a cart or another carrying party the next night.

"We will have that lot confiscated, at all events," said Jack softly. "My father is well enough to see to it himself——"

Jack broke off with a half-smothered cry as a heavy hand fell on his shoulder. He was jerked round suddenly, and he started back against the side of the ditch, eyes wide with alarm, and staring straight into the little glittering eyes of Dirk Westaways.

Rodney was by this time struggling in the hands of two other ruffians, and he broke clear just as Jack was collecting his wits. With a cry, he leapt at Dirk.

Back went the ruffian, thudding against the wall of the ditch with stunning force. In a flash, Rodney and Jack jumped on him, Rodney giving the brutal smuggler a heavy blow on the ear.

Westaways roared in fury, and the other two ruffians jumped in to drag off the friends.

"Run!" gasped Jack.

Like a flash, the lads were out of the ditch, but the men were after them, and close on their heels.

Over a ploughed field they tore, the smugglers thudding along behind them. Through a hedge they went, recking nothing of the thorns, and the crash of the smugglers breaking through came to their ears the moment they were free.

Could they outrun the men? They stood a good chance. And would Poldrewyn rise up against the smugglers that very night, and go and confiscate the cargo before the band could have a chance to get it away?

The lads' thoughts were running too far ahead of them, for the thundering of the chase ceased suddenly, and the voice of Dirk Westaways was heard:

"Shoot now, or we'll lose 'em!"

The boys ducked as the blackness of the night behind them was torn with a savage glare of flame. Rodney uttered a piercing cry, and crashed down on his face. He felt a burning pain, as if a red-hot iron had been run through his shoulder.

A second report sounded, and Jack spun round as he was in the very act of leaping to Rodney's aid, then crashed to the ground with stunning force. The ball had entered his fore-arm.

The smugglers ranged up. One of the men was cursing softly.

"If we've killed 'em, Dirk, we'd best clear!"

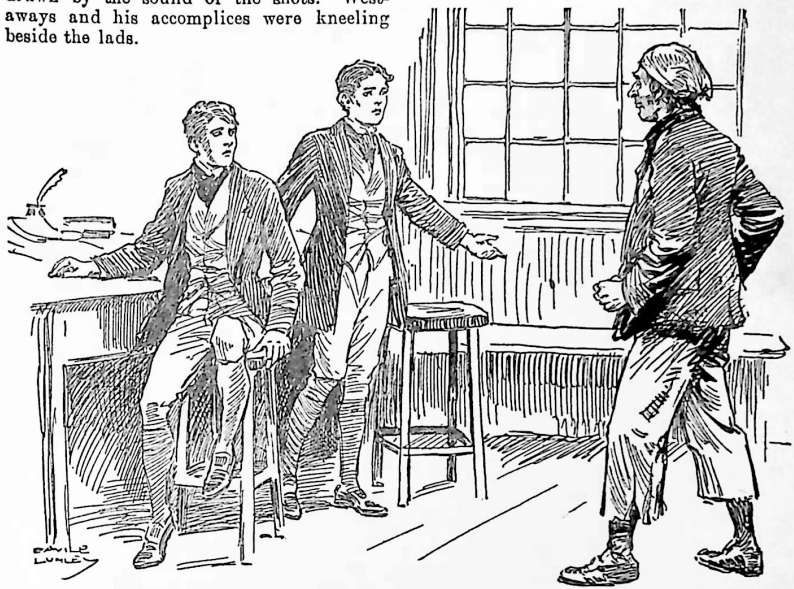
"What's the fear, ye fool? There be no proof!"

As the ruffians drew near to where the boys were lying, a fresh group ranged up, drawn by the sound of the shots. Westaways and his accomplices were kneeling beside the lads.

sea in the lugger and sink 'em good and deep?"

"I'll stand for no murder, Dirk. If they must be kept quiet, I'll run 'em to Holland in the lugger. 'Twill be a few tidy months or ever they could get back here."

"Well, take the ferrety little swabs along of 'e, Evan. Ye could land 'em somewhere



The boys swung round and stared, half in fear, half in indignation, as the big ruffian came in. *(See Chapter 2.)*

"What's to do?" demanded one of the newcomers. "If 'tis murder, I'm finished wi' this part o' the coast."

"'Tis nothin'!" replied Dirk Westaways. "One has a ball in the shoulder. The other be wounded in the forearm."

"'Tis matter enough. This be the second act o' violence wi' firearms!"

"And what of it? If so be ye're afraid o' these cubs talking—and they know too much, that I'll allow—why not take 'em to

desolate on the coast o' Zealand, an' they needn't know which ship carried 'em."

Thus Rodney and Jack, when they came round to their senses, found themselves in a tar-smelling hold, with the heave of the sea under them, and the mournful wash of water sounding close to their throbbing heads where they had brought up against the ribs of the vessel to leeward, after having been bundled into the hold by the crew of the free-trading lugger.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER
Smugglers' Snare !

MASTER REUBEN TREEN, commander of the 100-ton cutter which was tender to the 74-gun ship *Granville*, spread his forearms over the little table in the cabin, and regarded Rodney and Jack critically.

"Ye look sick an' ill," he said, "and that'll be due to the untended pistol-shot wounds ye have had. Well, lads, my captain wouldn't thank me for taking you aboard as new hands for the crew, so I'll be able to put ye ashore on the coast of Cornwall somewhere. We're due down that way at the earliest."

Master Treen was thoughtful as he tapped the surface of the table with a horny forefinger. The boys knew all the details of their rescue from the lugger. War had just been declared with France, and the *Lark*, as the cutter was called, had boarded the lugger in mid-channel, and had searched her to see if she was carrying arms. The friends had been discovered in the hold, well-nigh dead with loss of blood and lack of food. Master Treen, being a man of justice, had rescued them, and, to punish the villainous captain of the lugger, he had impressed all his crew save one for service with the *Granville*. Thus the lugger was allowed to go free, minus its prisoners, and with only two hands to work her to port.

Master Treen suddenly turned to the boys again.

"So they were smugglers, eh? And they shot ye down like rabbits? Bad cess to them! And that lugger was a free trader? Ah, well, we cannot be bothered with the likes of them just now. But we want men.

"Ye know, of course, that we're at war with France? Well, the *Granville* set off with orders to search for ships bearing arms. A frigate would ha' done for that—better than the 74-gun *Granville*. So we in the Navy reads orders crossways. We read it that, having been sent off short-handed and to search for ships bearing arms, that, translated, means: 'Go off recruiting for men of brawn, and shake them down to discipline, and then we'll want ye for the war.'

"That means impressing men, as ye know, the sons of sea-cooks ashore not having a liking for the Navy to-day. That's why I was sent off with the *Lark*—not to search small craft, but to take my fifteen jolly tars ashore and show young fellows what sort o' a life would suit 'em best."

"Press gangs?" asked Rodney breathlessly.

Master Treen nodded, and hitched his sword up across his knees.

"Ay, and that and nothing more! Well, lads, we have combed the Dorset coast, and a poor lot it has brought. The *Granville's* complement is 650 men, for war strength, and we be well 250 short o' that. The *Granville* would look well agen a French liner o' 80 guns, under-manned as we be, wouldn't she? Thus, we have to make up our complement for the defence o' Old England. And yet there be curd-livered folk who prate at the press-gangs!

"Now, my lads, I'm going to land ye near your own home. I have the *Lark* for three weeks, and I must take 200 men back to the *Granville*. For my kind treatment of ye, I'd like just a bit o' information. Be there any lusty lads about Poldrewyn as would make passable sailors?"

Jack gasped as the officer talked, and Rodney, too, looked suddenly eager. Flushed with excitement, they told Master Treen all about Dirk Westaways and his smuggling band, how he led them all in bullying and brutality, to keep the people silent about the smuggling, and so let them carry on with the free trade.

"And how many men be there?" demanded the master.

"In a good running, twenty-five stout fellows could be rounded up," said Rodney. "Nor could they squeal too loud, because of the nature of their work when impressed."

Master Treen slapped his thigh.

"If I land ye handy, could ye find out when there will be a good running, and let me know?"

"We surely could," exclaimed Jack excitedly. "But, sir, they be great fighters—and bullies——"

"And so be we! My fifteen jolly fellows,

me at the head, all wearing the King's uniform and all, could tackle any band of twenty-five clodhopper smugglers. Ay, and 'twill be handy marching them back, rum and all. A goodly haul both ways!"

Master Treen bellowed for his boatswain, and forthwith they settled down to a plan for impressing Dirk Westaways and his gang of ruffians.

"'Tis our dooty to our country," the master said virtuously. "And no one shall ever say as the men of the King's Navy ever failed in their dooty!"

So Jack and Rodney, their wounds properly dressed, and made well and strong again with good food, were landed to the north of Poldrewyn, the *Lark* taking cover in the Helford River till news could come from the lads as to the next big running of contraband at Kemyell Beach.

. . . . .

The friends, according to plan, went back to Poldrewyn. And a great welcome they had! Their disappearance had caused a fresh outburst against the smugglers, and new and more brutal reprisals had been taken by the cowardly Dirk and his ruffians. The people were already cowed into silence. But now Jack and Rodney were back, their indignation at the friends' story was opened afresh.

The boys met Westaways. They had lingered at the most populous part of the town when they saw him coming, for fear of trouble. Dirk accosted them near a sullen and silent group of men by the quay.

"They smugglin' rats should be cleared out o' Poldrewyn," said Dirk, with his usual leer. "I've allus said so. And you yourselves ha' said as there be terriers enough to do it—somewhere!"

Rodney and Jack nodded.

"That's so," said Jack.

The bully switched his glance on the knot of men near by as he spoke, and many eyes were dropped to the ground. With that, the ruffian laughed harshly, and continued his lurching way along the street.

The friends kept a close watch on Dirk. And one night a laughing and joking group of Navy men, headed by Master Treen, skirted Poldrewyn, and, meeting Rodney and Jack, posted themselves along the top of Kemyell Cliff.

The pinpoint of light appeared out at sea. After a wait of an hour, the smuggling band was heard coming along at the double for Rush Bottom Lane.

The tars, chuckling, drew their cutlasses and cocked their pistols.

"Master, better place for an ambush no man ever found," whispered the boatswain.

But Master Treen curtly ordered silence.

The smugglers came on. And just at the right second Master Treen gave the order:

"At 'em, bullies!"

There was a fight that satisfied even those jolly jack tars; but Rodney and Jack, to their great disappointment, on account of their wounds, could not join in. But Master Treen, after he had the twenty-odd smugglers in a subdued group, called on the friends to have a look over them. Dirk Westaways was not amongst them!

One of Dirk's cronies shook his clenched fist in the air.

"He be gone to Poldrewyn!" he cried. "He ha' left us to bear the brunt o' it. He'll be in the back parlour o' the Ship and Plough."

"March off, lads!" ordered the master. "Ten o' ye will march the band to the *Lark*, in Helford River. You others will come along with me to wet our whistles at the Ship and Plough."

Just after dawn, the people of Poldrewyn were roused by laughing and jesting in the street. They looked out of their windows, to see Rodney and Jack with a group of five naval men, one a real officer, moving at the double towards the Ship and Plough.

"The press-gang! The press-gang!"

The word went round like wild-fire, and young men slammed their windows and bolted their doors. But straight to the inn went the naval men.

They found Dirk skulking in the back parlour. They ran him through the yards, and, with cutlasses brandished in the air, shouting and hallooing, they hunted him along the water-front.



The smugglers came on. At the right second Master Treen gave the order: "At 'em, bullies!" Then there was a fight that satisfied even those jolly jack tars! *(See previous page.)*

Rodney and Jack, panting, could not keep up with the chase. Mr. Winter, his arm in a sling, came hurriedly out of his house to see what was to do.

Dirk turned at the quay-head, and, with head lowered, charged the naval men. But a neat blow with the flat of a cutlass felled him to the ground. Then he was caught and hauled roughly to his feet.

The press-gang marched him through the town, and people were out at their gates in all manner of dress, cheering the Navy on.

Never before, in the history of Poldrewyn, had a press-gang been cheered. But this last raid the Navy seemed to know how to manage things properly. And Poldrewyn knew no more of Dirk Westaways, Dan Holt, Nick Travers, and the rest of the ruffianly band.

Rodney and Jack, when again sound of limb, joined the Navy without the aid of the press-gang. And what a send-off they got from Poldrewyn!

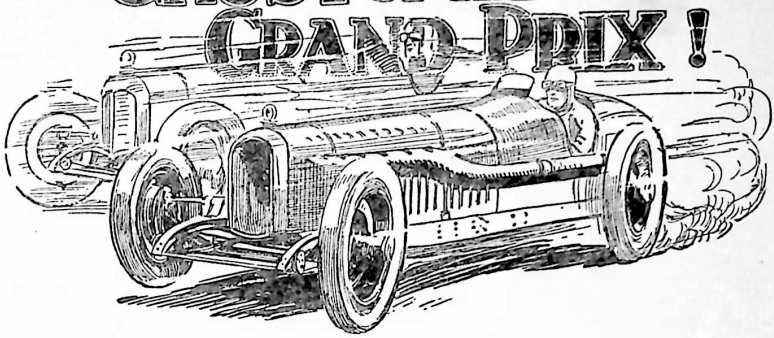
"Go on and become an admiral, Jack!" cried a well-wisher. "And then sail on a ship that carries Dirk Westaways!"

Jack and Rodney laughed as old Tim Farrow, all smiles, cracked his whip, and the carrier wagon rumbled them off towards Helston.

The friends were launched off on a new life, and they would be well content never to meet ruffians like Dirk Westaways again—except in an equality of brawn and muscle!

THE END

THE GHOST OF THE GRAND PRIX!



By ALFRED EDGAR

A Thrilling Mystery-Adventure Yarn of a Plucky Youngster's First Big Race

THE FIRST CHAPTER
The Realm of High Speed!

FOR what seemed the twentieth time Bob Burton settled his goggles more comfortably over his eyes, and then, with hands that quivered more than a little, once again gripped the big, cord-bound steering-wheel before him.

The booming bellow of his racing-car's exhaust seemed to thud into his brain. All around him long, low-built speed machines were thundering and roaring as their drivers waited impatiently for the start of the race.

In front of Bob was the knife-like tail of a blazing red Fiat, standing alongside a low, squat blue Delage, each car throbbing to the eager impulse of its mighty engine. Alongside him were the other two Fleet machines, his own car being the third of the Fleet team. Back of him were crackling blue Bugattis, fierce red Alfa-Romeos, a blaring Benz, and a purposeful straight-eight Duesenberg, which had travelled all the way from the U.S.A. for this great race.

Behind the spring-spoked steering-wheels sat lean-faced, iron-jawed men, with the clear, wind-washed eyes which come only to those who adventure the realm of high speed. They were a grim, steely-nerved, sinewy-muscled crowd—experienced dare-devils! And against them was Bob, just a boy, and riding alone in a big race for the very first time.

"Gosh, I wish to goodness they'd buck up and start!" he grunted to himself. "I'll be all right once I get going."

He pulled the visor of his crash helmet a little farther over his eyes, trod on the accelerator pedal, and watched the needle of the revolution counter surge on the dial. For weeks he had trained and worked for this moment, and now he was nervous.

He had ridden in big races before, but only as a mechanic to the great Peter Hamel. This was the first time that he had sat actually behind the wheel. He knew why he was nervous. He felt that he would not be able to hold his own against the famous speedmen ranged against him—that he'd make a mess of things. But it was his

chance to make good, and he meant to go through with it.

So he sat in the narrow, hot cockpit, with swift thoughts flitting through his brain, and the tumult of preparation all about him, while over at the replenishment pits—where cars would pull in for repairs and fuel during the race—two men watched him through field-glasses.

They stood behind the plank that ran across the front of the Fleet pit. One of them was burly Jim Sullivan, the racing-team manager, and the other was a director of the Fleet firm. Sullivan was an old racing man, and his lean lips twitched to a thin smile as he heard his companion growl:

"Young Burton's as white as a sheet! Sullivan, I've got a feeling that he'll let us down. He keeps on twitching his goggles and his helmet, and wriggling in his seat. He's as nervous as a kitten! We ought not to have let him drive!"

"The boy's all right," grunted Sullivan. "Waitin' for the start of a race like this is enough to rattle anybody. Young Bob's the best we've got since Bowen crashed in practice—and don't forget that Peter Hamel trained the boy to the game. Hamel told me once that Bob will beat the best of 'em before he's finished. He won't let us down."

"He was Hamel's mechanic for long enough, I know," said the director quietly. "A fine chap, Hamel! And, you know, Sullivan, I believe he loved that boy. I used to see him looking at Bob sometimes, when there was nobody else about, and there was something in Hamel's eyes——" He broke off.

Peter Hamel was the racing driver to whom Bob had acted as a mechanic. Hamel had crashed on that same course just a year before—a year to that very day!

He'd crashed and he'd been killed on what the speedmen called Red Corner; and at the beginning of the red-brick wall on the outside of the turn there was a marble-white monument erected to Peter Hamel.

A strange man he had been; the most dour, the most daring driver that ever held a hurtling car to the road. Somehow Bob had always been afraid of him, with his blazing eyes and his dark skin. And yet Bob had liked him. Hamel was the kind of man who doesn't talk much, and it was but seldom that he ever praised Bob's work. But he would never let another mechanic share the heat-tortured cockpit of his car during a big race.

Bob had been in the machine with him when the car had crashed, a year before. Now, as he sat in his own racer—the car that Hamel would have driven had he lived—his thoughts went back to his old chief and their smash.

Bob had been flung out, clean over the wall to the bushes beyond, and had escaped almost unhurt. His hands had been the first to lift Hamel from the shattered wreckage of the car, his face the last that the great speedman ever saw.

"That's what's making me feel so shaky," Bob told himself. "I've got to drive over the same circuit—and do it alone. Pity they don't let mechanics ride in racing cars now; it'd be company. I wish old Hamel was here, just to sort of drop me a word. What was that he said to me once? '*Any time you need my help when you're driving, just let me know.*' I reckon he must have meant that for the time when he was out of the game, and I was older. Gosh, but I'm lucky to get this chance so early, an' I've got to make good. I've got—— Hallo, something happening now!"

Officials were scurrying out in front. He saw them clearing from the track. From the side of the white, sun-scorched road a heavy touring-car moved to take its place in front of the rows of racing machines. It was the pace-making car, and would lead them off for a rolling start. When it had led them to the front of the grandstands, and they were all doing sixty miles an hour, the pace-maker would pull to the side of the road, and leave the racing cars to get on with it.

Bob slipped into gear and revved up his engine. He watched the big semaphore at the side of the road, with the timekeeper standing at the foot.

Not long to wait now! Bob went over the instructions that Sullivan had given him.

He was to try to lie in about eighth position in the race at first. No. 5 Fleet was going to make the pace with the leaders, and No. 6 was to keep so that he could close up into the leading position if anything happened to No. 5. Bob, on No. 7, was to be ready in case either of his mates in the team cracked up; if they did, he had got to go after the leaders himself.

Very abruptly the red-and-white semaphore arm dropped. The pace-making car surged forward, with the eager lines of racing machines at its tail, keeping formation.

Cars picked up speed, roaring towards the grandstand and the actual starting-line. Bob held the Fleet steadily in position, watching the man who leaned over the back of the pace-making car, a white flag raised in his hand.

Suddenly the flag slashed down, and the car swept to the side of the road.

With a bellowing, shattering roar the racing machines leaped into the fight.

THE SECOND CHAPTER
"Ride to Win, or——"

BLAZING exhausts thundered defiant challenge. Billows of dust gouted from the thudding tyres as they stamped the road, and the roaring cars abruptly changed to coloured streaks of speed—red and blue, green and white and yellow.

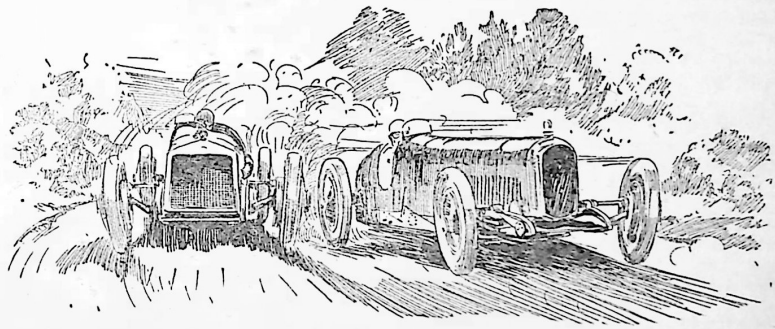
In the heart of the pack Bob Burton rode, deafened by the mad welter of sound, and holding his car between the Benz and a flaring Alfa-Romeo, fighting for position, jockeying his machine as the speedometer needle slewed upwards on the dial.

He had one glimpse of his team-mates rocking away from him, with No. 1 sliding into the lead as his black-mouthed exhaust crashed full-throated defiance at a Fiat and a Delage, storming for the lead.

Bob saw other machines surging forward out of the pack, and he opened up. The speedometer needle clocked on—eighty—ninety. Ninety miles an hour, and still he couldn't leave behind the cars that leaped and swayed on either side of him! If he could snatch the lead from those two he'd be in his right position according to the team's plans.

In front, the racing cracks were streaking ahead in dust and smoke, out to smash one another by sheer speed, hurtling at the first turn on the circuit, and with the slower machines tailing out in rear of them.

Bob rammed his foot hard down now. From the corner of his eye he could see the other two machines dropping back to his tail. He was leaving them behind—holding his position. He'd got the speed of them, and——



Out of the murk ahead Bob glimpsed the white bulk of the Duesenberg. Bob went after him, got him just before the bends, and raced him into the first curve! (*See Chapter* 2.)



To face page 201.

GOING "ALL OUT" TO WIN!

Out of the whirling azure smoke-cloud ahead there suddenly leaped the colourful banners and bunting, the tiers of seats, and the banks of excited spectators that marked the first turn. It seemed to slam at Bob, and he stamped on the brake pedal. Shoes screamed in the finned drums, and he slowed like magic, and, like twin projectiles, the two cars behind suddenly shot past and in front of him.

He saw them wheeling round the corner. He could hear the tearing whistle of their tyres as they strove to grip the road, and then the two were out of the turn and tearing ahead, leaving him yards behind.

"I was too slow!" he gasped to himself. "I've got to corner quicker than that! What's the matter with me? I did better than this in practice. Come on! Put your foot down!"

He'd changed down on the corner instead of before he reached it, and now his engine screamed in gear as he accelerated fiercely. Then he was rocking into the straight beyond the turn, roaring after the twin shapes in the hazy dust-cloud ahead of him.

All the time the other two machines seemed to be drawing away from him. When he came to the bends at the end of the straight, the white Duesenberg snarled past him and beat him to the first curve. Bob chased him through the turns, held the other's tail until they came to the hairpin bend beyond, and then the American car seemed to leave him standing in the dangerous curve, and pulled away by yards as Bob came out of it.

In the days of practice before the race, Bob had twice covered the seven-miles circuit within two seconds of the record time for the distance, and spectators wondered what was the matter with him now. If they had understood, they would have realised that it was just over-anxiousness that made Bob slow. He knew that he was losing ground, and twice, in his anxiety on corners, he missed his gear change, bungling the turns badly.

At the Fleet pit, Jim Sullivan was watching for him and timing him, and the team manager's heart was heavy when he saw the bad show that the boy was making. But the old racing driver believed in Bob, and he knew the boy could drive. Bob had more than proved it in practice.

"He's shaky—that's all that's wrong. The waiting and thinking about how big the race is has rattled him. Give him time—two or three laps—and then he'll settle down, and pick up some of those that have passed him."

The team manager was right. At the end of his second lap, Jim saw a Delage in front of him just as he passed the grandstands. His speedometer needle was steady at a shade above the hundred mark, and now he put his foot down and brought the needle higher, and brought the rounded, fat tail of the blue machine nearer!

He edged up to it, pulling his leaping car out to pass. He saw the bunting and the open stands of the first corner slashing at him again; but he was on the tail of the French machine now. He could see the jerking, helmeted head of the driver, could glimpse the dancing dials on his instrument board—could see his hands on the shifting steering-wheel.

Then he was level with him. He'd got the speed of him; he could beat him to the turn!

He did it. He passed the Delage, changed down crisply, then used brakes and gear to take him steadily round the corner at a speed that was as fast as ever he had covered the turn in those dashing practice spins.

Beating that Delage lent him heart. He could hear the machine coming after him, and he jammed the accelerator pedal hard down, to leave him behind. Then, out of the murk ahead, he glimpsed the white bulk of the Duesenberg. Bob went after him, got him just before the bends, and raced him into the first curve.

For two laps he went on like that, picking up and passing car after car, and bringing a broad grin to Jim Sullivan's face.

"The leaders will lap him," the team manager said. "But he'll pick 'em up again a bit later. He's getting into his stride now—and there's a long way to go yet!"

There *was* a long way to go. The distance was fifty laps of the seven-mile circuit—three hundred and fifty miles. The leading machines were setting a cracking pace, and in the opening laps Bob had lost a tremendous amount of ground. For all that, he had worked his car up to just eighth place by the twenty-fifth lap, and signals from the Fleet pit told him to steady.

It was then that, from behind him, the three machines in the lead came roaring to his tail—a Delage, a Fiat, and No. 5 Fleet. Inside a mile they had passed him, and he realised that they had lapped him, and were now just seven miles ahead.

That didn't worry Bob. Jim Sullivan was managing the race, and he knew what he was doing. There was the chance that either or all of those leading machines would crack under the terrific speed, and Jim had got to hold his car ready for an effort to snatch the lead, if it were necessary.

For all that, he could not resist the temptation to match his machine against the leaders, just to see if he really had their speed. So he sat on their tails down the mile straight from the first corner after the stands, and, as he neared the series of bends at the end, he saw No. 5 Fleet surge forward and challenge the car in front for the first bend.

"Go on—pass him!" Bob grunted. "You can do it. Gosh, he's fast! He could go up in front any time he——"

His thoughts snapped off as he saw the Fleet machine lurch on the road. From somewhere at the front of it there jerked up what looked like a black streak; it whipped for the veriest fraction of time at the blue sky above, and then was gone.

With sight of the streak, the tail of the car slewed round, full across the road and dead in Bob's path. Instinctively he trod on the brake pedal. The other machine's off-side front tyre had gone, stripped of its tread!

He had a hazy glimpse of the driver straining at the wheel, face distorted beneath his dust-rimmed goggles. Then the Fleet slung round, heaved to the side of the road, and clearly Bob heard the crash as the tail of the machine mounted the low, grassy bank and slammed into a tree.

He had a glimpse of the car rearing up and turning over—a vision of mangled wheels and shattered body-work. Smoke gouted in a black pall, and then he was past it.

"He's done!" he gasped. "Crashed—wrecked! Heavens!"

He was now driving mechanically into the bends—and an Alfa-Romeo rocked past him unheeded.

Bob had a memory picture of the smiling, cheerful driver of No. 5 as he had been that morning, with his:

"Best o' luck, young 'un! Make a good show!"

And now he'd seen him wrecked! He'd be lying there in the smoking remnants of his car, battered and broken like—like Peter Hamel!

Bob felt weak and empty somewhere inside. Cars came up from the back and passed him—passed him continually. But he couldn't challenge them—he couldn't rid his mind of the smash he had seen. It might—it might have been himself! Piled up there, with riven metal all around, and smoke and dust and new-torn earth.

He was at the grandstands again before he realised it, and his gaze went instinctively to his pit.

No. 6 Fleet was standing there, and at the end of the pit signals were flying, flagging him in. He pulled in and rolled his car to a stop, while the single mechanic who was his attendant leaped forward.

"Boss wants to speak to you!" he heard the man shout.

Bob clambered out of the hot cockpit, and stumbled across to the pit-plank. Jim Sullivan was leaning over it, staring into his face. He marked how white was the boy as he said:

"Bob, No. 6 is out of the race—big end gone! And No. 5——"

"I—I saw him crash!" Bob gasped. "It was—awful!"

Jim Sullivan's eyes narrowed. Now he understood why Bob's last lap had been so slow, and why the boy was so white.

"Listen! He's hurt, but not too badly. He managed to lift himself in the cockpit, and got slung out when the car hit the tree. He's not badly hurt. And, look, you're the last we've got in the race! It's up to you, Bob! You've got to drive all out—absolutely all out—all the time! Ride to win, or bust your machine!"

Bob stared at him, swallowed hard, then gasped:

"I'll do it," and leaped back to assist his mechanic. Swiftly, with trained precision that was the outcome of long practice, and with movements almost mechanical, they filled with water and petrol and oil.

"Tyres!" yelled the mechanic as he flung back the fuel feed-pipe.

"They're sound!" Bob shouted to him as he raced around the car, feeling the treads. He had been cornering carefully, and he knew that the tyres would last out the race. To have changed them as a precaution would have meant losing time.

He scrambled into the cockpit. The mechanic pushed the car forward, the engine fired, and he roared away from the pit—just as the two leading machines came by again, now two laps in the lead!

THE THIRD CHAPTER
"The Ghost Driver!"

FOURTEEN miles behind, and twenty-four laps to go! Bob gritted his teeth and sent his roaring machine after the leaders. He had got to pass them three times before he could get the lead, and there was less than half the race in which to do it.

Away went his car, rocketing down the broad straightaway for the corner. His hands were steady on the steering-wheel now, and he was holding his machine magnificently. He saved split seconds on the turn as he went round without the sign of a skid. On the straight at the other side he picked up the two machines, and was sitting behind them when he got to the bends.

At the side of the track was a crowd. He knew that the folk there were grouped about what was left of the wrecked Fleet car, but he did not look in that direction. He hurled his car through the bends and on to the hairpin, round that, and it was then that he pulled out to pass the first of the two machines that were still fighting one another for the lead.

By inches Bob crept up to him and went by, the two cars hurtling in a tearing storm of sound. Two hundred yards in front was the leading machine, and Bob passed him just before they reached the glowing wall of Red Corner.

"Got 'em! I'm faster than they are! All I've got to do is to keep my foot down and I can catch 'em again. I'm just under the two laps behind now!" he told himself, and the way he went past the grandstands brought the men at the Fleet pit to their feet in sudden applause.

Stop watches clocked him on every lap—and on each lap he drew closer and closer to the leaders. When forty laps had slid under the thudding wheels he passed them again, but not so speedily nor so easily.

Passing them left him just one lap behind them, and there were ten laps to go to the finish. But now the strain of the race was taking its toll.

From the grid beneath the dash fumes were slinging into his face. Heat swept back from the engine, searing the soles of his feet and parching his throat. Every muscle in his body ached from the pounding of the hurtling machine. The steering-column had drummed bruises on his knees, and the palm of his hand was a burning agony from the snatching use of brake and gear levers.

He was gasping with thirst, worn and racked, and he knew that he was slowing!

From the Fleet pit they were flying the "all out" signal still, and when the physical agony of driving made Bob slow, Jim Sullivan grabbed the signal and waved it wildly at him as he rocked past.

"Go faster! I can't go faster! But I've got to! I've——"

From behind Bob came the leading Delage, poking its blunt nose up to him.

"They're coming up! By heck, I can't let 'em pass!" And Bob's foot went down once more.

Another lap passed in hot agony, and still the emphatic " all out " signals flew.

" That's the signal they gave old Hamel when he crashed!" The thought whipped through Bob's mind. " I heard him cursing 'em for it. I can't go any faster—I'm cornering fast as I can. Wish old Hamel was here to show me how to cut 'em finer! My feet are like fire now. Gosh, but it's hot. I can't stick it. I've *got* to stick it!"

The S-bends and hairpin slid behind him, and then he stormed down at Red Corner. The sun, sinking towards the west, threw the corner into shadow, but a vagrant ray limned the marble-white monument that they had erected to Peter Hamel at the beginning of the wall.

It seemed to stand out, and to Bob's eyes as he peered through his dust-edged goggles, it seemed that the head cut in the white stone turned to watch him.

" I bet he'd have won if he was driving this—and never mind how far they were ahead of him!" Bob thought. " Old Hamel was—— What's that?"

Suddenly, back of him, seeming to come from the wall itself, he glimpsed the white shape of a car—right on his tail! The car was on him, pulling out—driving him to the outside of the turn, forcing him to take it in a long, fast curve without daring to slow, and then the car seemed to fall away.

" Who was that? Funny, he' gone now! Gave me a scare for a minute. I remember now that's just the way old Hamel used to take Red Corner—wide. Right out to the wall, and pulling his car round all the time. Said it was the fastest way of taking it by a good half-second.

" Gosh, I thought it was Hamel himself for a minute!" his thoughts ran on. " Bet he wouldn't think much of me if he were at our pit now, and watching. I can't let him down. Darn it, what's it matter if my feet hurt a bit, and——"

Whoo-oo-oom! He was at the first corner after the stands when he heard the white car behind him, pursuing him. He went into the bend, and the other car seemed to cut on the outside of him, making him take it short on the inside.

And as he went round Bob seemed to get a clear sight of the white machine. At the wheel, lacking helmet and goggles, was a man with dark and blazing eyes. He seemed to be looking at Bob as he forced him in.

" Hamel!"

The recognition came like a douche of cold water. Hamel—after him! Hamel—ashamed of the race he was riding, trying to run him down.

Gone was all the rack and the pain of wearied muscles. The bruises and the burns were wiped away. He never felt the jarring crash of road bumps or the slam of the iron-hard squab at his back.

Hamel was behind him, glaring at him. Bob could hear the snarling blare of his exhaust, and the car was white because it wasn't a real car. It was a ghost car!

Bob gave himself no time to think it out, or to reason that Hamel *could not* be there. He only knew that he had been riding a bad race, and that Hamel was ashamed of him. He was trying to drive him off the road! But he wouldn't catch him. He'd keep in front! He'd *got* to keep in front!

And with the weariness wiped from his brain and his eyes, it seemed to Bob that the road ahead was crisp and clear. On the bends he got glimpses of the grey-white shape behind leaping at him, roaring after him.

At the bends, the glowering ghost-driver was a fierce and monstrous shape, that seemed to dart at him, making him take the turns at the uttermost edge of safe speed.

Panic grew on him. Bob went driving mad. His foot went hard down on the throttle pedal all the time, never easing until the last possible fraction of a second. Fiercely he used his brakes, the drums screaming on the juddering axles—and ever the ghost machine was behind him.

It was with him on every corner; it chased him down the straightaways. It was at his tail when he overtook and passed slower cars. It roared and thundered maddeningly as he made up the lap he lay behind and closed down on the leaders.

He never saw the staring, shouting, excited crowds in the stands. He saw nothing

of Jim Sullivan, leaning over the pit-bank, waving both hands and yelling wildly as he passed. He didn't know about the startled, wide-eyed, gasping Fleet mechanics as they watched his flying machine crash past them.

On he went—on—on! Anything to get away from the pursuing Hamel! He took corners like a speedman inspired, and where he skidded he did it to inches.

Amazed timekeepers clocked his speed, checking figures that smashed the fastest lap records.

His teeth were tight clenched, and his eyes were wide behind his goggles. He lost all count of laps, gave no thought to pit signals. He drove only in a sobbing agony of desperate endeavour, the tearing crash of the ghost car's exhaust coming with a demon roar each time he rocked round Red Corner and past the gleaming monument there.

And then, when it seemed that his brain must crack under the awful strain, when the ghost car was sitting on his tail and snubbing out continually to pounce on him—it was then that there appeared on the broad road before the stands a figure which waved a chequered flag.

"The finish! I've done the distance!" Bob thought. "But I can't stop! He'll get me if I do!"

Without check, his car shot past the finishing flag and thundered on. Then, from beneath the engine cover there came a spluttering, spitting sound. Back of it, surging all around him, was a demoniac roar—a fierce, exultant roar of triumph as the ghost car surged down on him once again.

"Carburettor spitting back." Bob identified the sound from the engine. "Running out of juice! He's got me!"

His machine was slowing—slowing! The white car was on him! Slower and still more slowly, and then, with a bellowing roar, the ghost car seemed to leap full at him.

Desperately, Bob swung the wheel over. Saw the white shape loom beside him, found himself heading for the side of the road, and saw people running desperately. He tried to straighten—too late!

There was a sudden, jarring crash. Something struck him crushingly.

"He's got me!" he thought.

After that there was only blackness.

. . . . .

Bob came round to find himself sitting on a pile of blankets at the side of the road. There was a crowd around him, but beyond them he could see his car. One of the front wheels was buckled, and steam was gouting from the broken radiator, but that was all.

"Marvellous driving, Bob!" Jim Sullivan's face was before him, and the team manager was shaking his hand. "You passed the leaders at the beginning of the last lap. That was the winner's flag they gave you, boy. You've won!"

"Stone through his tank, an' all!" a mechanic exclaimed. "He'd lost a lot o' juice! Ran right out of petrol just after the finish!"

"Never seen anything like——"

Bob cut in on the voice.

"Where's Hamel?" he asked.

He saw Sullivan staring at him wonderingly.

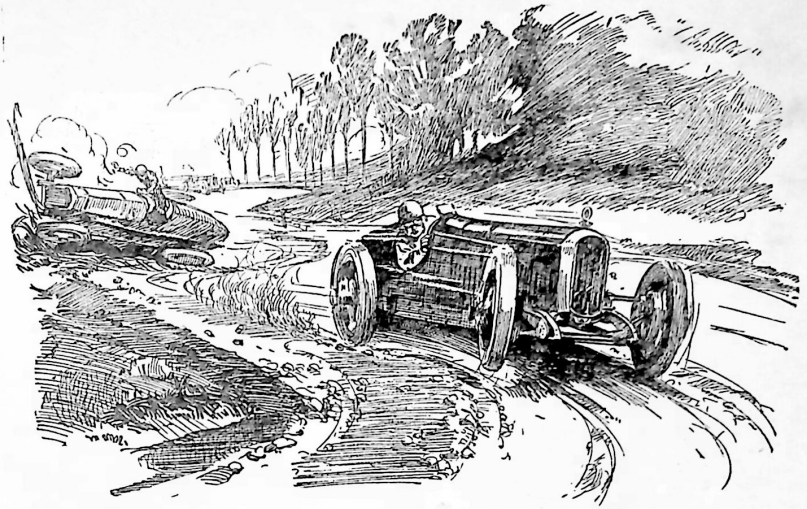
"He was after me," Bob explained. "I saw him glaring! I couldn't get away from him!"

They said nothing for a space.

"Bit too much strain for him," he heard Jim Sullivan murmur presently. "Take it easy, Bob. You'll be all right in a minute or two. You skidded the old 'bus into a post when you stopped, and bumped your head. I've never seen anybody take corners the way you did, boy! Took 'em along the same line every time, fast as anyone could go. It was just like somebody was guiding you round! Wonderful driving!"

Guiding him! Jim stared, wide-eyed, at the manager of the racing team. Guiding him! That's what the ghost car had been doing! Forcing him out on the bends, putting him on the line to take them the fastest way.

He'd wished Hamel had been there to show him how to cut them finer—and he'd come! *"Any time you need my help when you're driving, just let me know!"*



Bob had a hazy glimpse of the driver straining at the wheel. Then the Fleet swung round, mounted the low, grassy bank, and slammed into a tree! (*See Chapter* 2.)

"It was Hamel!" he murmured. "Showing me. He was after me all the time! He——"

"Bob," Jim Sullivan's strong hand dropped gently on his shoulder. "You mustn't think things like that. The only thing after you was the white Duesenberg. That American was trying to pass, but you wouldn't let him do it. He was mighty fast, but he couldn't get by, and he sat on your tail about the last six laps."

Bob looked up and smiled.

They thought it was the white Duesenberg, did they? He knew differently. He got to his feet, with mechanics helping him to stand. He could see his car, with bouquets of flowers on it, and the winner's laurel wreath hanging from the radiator cap.

But he knew he hadn't won the race. It was Hamel who'd done that, only it was no good telling them, because they wouldn't understand.

So Bob let them lead him away. The mighty crowds cheered him, and after that there was a reception and a dinner. But all the time he wanted to get away to Red Corner.

He did it at last.

Late that night, when the moon was shining full and clear, and when the speed monsters had long since been silenced, a slim figure stood with bared head before the white monument on the red wall.

"They say it was the white Duesenberg after me all the while," Bob murmured as he looked at the face chiselled out of stone. "But it wasn't. It was you helping me—helping me to remember all the things you'd taught me, and helping me to win. Never mind what they say. You were there—I know it! Thank you, and——"

On the plinth of the marble-white monument he laid the victor's laurel wreath that he had brought from the radiator cap of his wrecked car.

THE END

In the Land of the "Aussies"



Despatches for the King!

By MORTON PIKE



Mystery and thrills—Cavaliers and Roundheads, and a ghost—provided an all-too-stirring Christmas for the folk at Old Hillingdon Hall

THE FIRST CHAPTER
Captain Newbury's Mission.

THROUGH the gathering gloom of the December afternoon a man came galloping into the village of Goose Green. His horse was enveloped in a cloud of steam as he reined up before the door of the Fox and Grapes, whose red curtains were already drawn to shut out the winter twilight and the bitter cold.

The sentinel, who had been stamping his feet, and casting envious glances at his more fortunate comrades within the hostelry, had thrown forward his carbine, and called upon the horseman to halt, and the sentinel now stood looking at the hard-ridden beast, which he had tethered to a ring in the wall.

"Odds life, my beauty," he muttered, "thy rider has not spared thee. The news for my lord must be of grave importance."

He glanced at the casement of the window overhead, where the bright light of several candles and a roaring fire threw a cheerful glow upon the snow on the window-sill; but, it being no business of his, he fell to striding backwards and forwards once more, muffling himself in his cloak, and longing for the moment when he would be relieved from his post, and could get him to the stone-flagged kitchen and a tankard of mulled ale.

In the room overhead sat two men, examining a bundle of papers on the table before them, and it was easy to see, from the richness of their clothes, that they were officers of distinction.

"My lord," said one of them, a broad-shouldered, hard-visaged man, with the scar of an old sword-cut traversing his face from cheek-bone to chin, "the King must have this news without delay."

"I am entirely of your opinion, colonel," replied the other, who was no less a personage than my Lord Byron, commander of Charles' forces in the county of Cheshire. "Who have you among your officers who can ride hard, and hold his tongue if he should have the ill-luck to fall into the hands of the crop-ears?"

"Captain Walter Newbury is our man," said the colonel. "He has faced fire and smoke a hundred times, and ninety miles in the dark will not daunt him."

My lord rang a little bell at his elbow, the door opened, and an orderly appeared and saluted.

"Bid Captain Newbury come hither with all speed," said my lord.

And ere a man might count twenty, the jingle of spurred heels sounded on the landing without, and a young officer entered the room.

He was a strikingly handsome man, with a mass of black, silky lovelocks framing his oval face. His high yellow boots reached almost to the skirts of his buff coat, which was laced with silver, and a broad sash girded his middle, bright scarlet in colour, like the feather in his hat.

His sword hung in a baldrick that crossed his cuirass, and he carried in his hand a pair of doeskin gauntlets, as though he were ready for instant service.

"Be good enough to close the door, Captain Newbury," said Lord Byron, "and come hither. What I have to say to thee must not be heard by an idle ear."

As my lord spoke he poured out a brimming goblet of French wine, which he handed to the young man.

"Drink this," said he. "You will need it, Captain Walter Newbury."

"To the King," said the young Cavalier, his eyes flashing and a bright smile lighting up his face.

"It is to the King you are going to-night," said my lord. "And now, listen! News of that arch-rebel, Fairfax, has just reached us from the Marquis of Newcastle—news which must be in the King's hands as fast as horse can carry it."

And my lord looked straight into the eyes of his messenger, who returned the glance with a proud toss of the head, drawing on his gloves the while.

My lord took a sheet of parchment from the table, placed the papers within it, folded it into an oblong packet, and sealed it with his gold signet.

"You will defend this with your life, captain," he said. "This must not fall into the Roundhead hands."

"And if it does, my lord," said Walter Newbury, "it will be because my heart has ceased to beat. I am to go now?"

"As soon as you can set foot in stirrup, and God go with you, Walter Newbury, for you are a brave man!"

The young Cavalier kissed the packet entrusted to his charge, and thrust it deep down in his yellow leather boot; and then, bowing to the general, the door closed behind him, and he was gone.

"I fear we have spoiled his Christmas for him," said my lord, with a smile; "but if he gets through 'twill mean a colonel's commission for him."

And as he spoke he pulled aside the curtain and looked out on the village green.

Already there was a clatter of hoofs in the stable-yard, and as my lord gazed across the darkening expanse of snow he saw the sentinel step briskly aside as a figure trotted out of the archway.

A little throng of men clustered under the archway to see him go, and one and all raised their flagons, and crying "God and the King!" drank to their departing comrade. Then they went back to their comfortable quarters and the firelight and the good cheer that was to be found at the Fox and Grapes, and silence once more fell upon the green without, broken only by the muffled tread of the sentinel and the whistle of the frost wind that creaked the overhanging sign.

"Now, Carlos, old fellow," said the young Cavalier, patting the neck of his Spanish charger, "we have far to go, and we must make our road warily."

He slackened his pace into a brisk trot, the level fields stretching white and silent on either side, and the road wound ever and anon through frozen woods and feathery coppices. Now and again the gables of a timbered house, with warm light glowing from the windows, caught his eye, and made him think of Christmas cheer; but one after another they passed behind, and he drew his cloak closer about his shoulders, for a bitter wind was blowing.

Sometimes he passed an ice-bound mere, where happy boys were skating, and once, as he clattered through a village street, a



"Gadzooks, Roger," cried the captain, "thou didst not think to see Walter Newbury here to-night, I warrant me!" (*See Chapter* 1.)

woman, watching no doubt for her man's return, threw open her cottage door and cried "God speed you, sir!" as the Cavalier went on into the night.

Then the moon rose—a great full moon that flung the shadows of the snow-covered trees across the roadway, guiding his course, it is true, but adding much to the dangers, for he had to pass through a country filled with enemies.

In those old days it was the custom for armies to sheath their swords on the approach of cold weather and go into winter quarters, suspending hostilities until the spring-time came again. Still, there was great danger for anyone trying to pass through the Roundhead lines.

Chance foraging parties might be encountered, patrols and pickets, and the like. And when some sixteen leagues had been left behind him, Captain Walter Newbury pulled up on the top of a hill, where the wood on either side was thick, and listened intently.

It seemed to him that the wood had tossed back an echo of tramping hoofs that was not of his own making. For some time he sat motionless in his saddle, with no sound but the heavy breathing of his horse, and the creak of the stirrup leather as the good beast's flanks rose and fell.

The winter stillness was all around him. Sometimes a frozen twig cracked without any apparent cause; sometimes the snow would slip from heavily-laden branches, and a twig released from its weight would sway backwards and forwards. A fox barked on the other side of the copse, but that was all, and, after watching his horse's ears, the captain shook his bridle and broke into a trot again.

The moonlight showed a smile upon his face and an unwonted glitter in his eye, for he was coming into a country he knew well—the country of his boyhood—and his

own home was but a few miles from the high road.

"Steady, boy—steady!" he said sharply as his horse floundered on the slippery hill slope and nearly lost its footing. "Methinks 'twere well to stop at Hillingdon, and let Roger, the smith, roughen thy shoes, for the King's dispatches must not be hazarded by a chance fall."

The square church tower now loomed ahead, and, slackening his pace to a walk, Walter Newbury turned aside to the mouth of a lane, from whence came the musical ring of the hammer and anvil.

A large door like that of a barn stood open as he bent his head and rode in, and at the clatter of his hoofs the blacksmith, who held his hammer in one hand and a half-made shoe by a pair of pincers in the other, turned and looked at the newcomer, his sturdy, bare-armed figure telling strong against the red glow of the fire.

"Gadzooks, Roger," cried the captain, "thou didst not think to see Walter Newbury here to-night, I warrant me!"

The moment the words had passed his lips, he felt that he had been indiscreet, for the smith made a warning gesture towards the corner, where a man, heavily cloaked, paused at the bellows. And the Cavalier saw a grey horse tied to the wall.

"I will attend to thy bidding in a few minutes," said the smith, "for this shoe is well-nigh done."

And as he brought his hammer down upon it again he made a strange gesture, which the messenger understood.

The shower of sparks ceased, and the fire died down to a ruby glow as the stranger paused at the bellows, and the captain saw that he was a stout, hard-featured man, wearing a high-crowned hat that proclaimed him a Puritan.

"I am in no haste, Roger," said the captain, leaning his back upon the wall and eyeing the stranger from beneath the shadow of his hat-brim.

"Would I could say the same!" said the man at the bellows. "I have far to ride. Thy pardon, sir, but do you take the London road, for I would willingly have thy company."

"Nay, sir, I follow it for but a mile or so; so I fear me our ways do not lie together."

The stranger inclined his head curtly, and as his services were no longer required, stood there eying the newcomer.

"Good luck!" he was thinking to himself. "This must be the son of that arch malignant, John Newbury, of Fallowash. 'Twould be an acceptable thing an he fell into the hands of the Lord's anointed; and worthy Captain Cephas Cripplegate is the man to put his hand to the plough."

In the meantime the smith had finished the shoe, lost no time in putting it on, and when he had paid him the stranger mounted and rode out of the smithy with a curt "Good-night to ye!"

"How now, Master Newbury? What folly is this?" said the smith, in a low voice. "Know ye not that Ireton's men are at Fallowash and in the villages hereabouts, and you thrust yourself in their very midst?"

"Nay, good Roger," said the Cavalier; "Fallowash will not see me this night. I ride upon the King's business—urgent business—Roger, and to that end rough ye these shoes, and that right speedily."

The smith looked grave as he went about his business.

"I trust yonder stranger heard not your name," he said. "From the length of his sword and his visage, I set him down a crop-ear."

"An he falls foul of me," laughed the young captain, "he shall be a crop-ear indeed! Truth to say, methought he regarded me somewhat sourly. What, finished already? Here's for thy pains, Roger." And he placed a piece of money in the smith's hands. "Now, tell me—how fares it with Sir John, my father?"

"Well," said the smith, "save for an injury to his leg, which keeps the poor gentleman prisoner."

"And where do the enemy lie? Is the road clear between this and Massy?"

"For aught I know, yes," replied the

smith; "but pass not through Brunton, nor yet Lisie, for Ireton hath his quarters at the first town and there is a regiment of Hazelrigs at the other."

Walter Newbury swung himself into the saddle, and, with a wave of his gauntlet, rode out of the smithy, leaving the smith standing there until the sound of the hoofs had died away in the distance.

There were lights in Hillingdon village as the Cavalier rode through it, and when he reached the park wall, which stretched along the road for half a mile, there were lights in Hillingdon Hall, and an unconscious sigh broke from the messenger's lips.

"I would give something to turn aside," he muttered to himself, "and break in unexpectedly upon stout Sir Jeffrey, my uncle, this Christmastide. Little Phyllis, too, my old playmate, she must be a sweet maid by now, for 'tis long since I was at the Hall."

He looked over his shoulder many times before he came out of the shelter of the park wall into the keen north wind again, and though he kept his eyes and ears keenly alert, his thoughts were full of memories of his kith and kin.

A mile went by, and he reached the hill that overlooked the little village of Massy, and, slackening his pace, for the descent into the village was steep, he rode down, a conspicuous figure in the brilliant moonlight.

A large tythe barn stood at one side of the road, and scarcely had he passed it and come in sight of the inn than he realised that all was not well. A man, who had just dismounted from a grey horse, stood at the inn door, talking to one whose dress betrayed him to be an officer of musketeers, and both turned towards him with a shout.

"Hold, sir, in the name of the Parliament!" cried the officer, drawing his long tuck. "Who are ye that rides so late on the highway?"

"One who brooks no questioning from a Roundhead dog!" cried the Cavalier.

And, shortening his reins and drawing a holster pistol, he touched his horse with the spur and broke into a gallop.

Another moment and he would have been safe, but a shrill whistle from the officer brought a party of musketeers hurrying from the inn, and, levelling their matchlocks, they fired at the flying figure.

Walter Newbury reeled in his saddle as his left arm dropped powerless by his side, and as he seized the reins with his right hand a groan burst from his lips, for he knew that his gallant horse was also wounded.

One glance showed him a Roundhead picket running out into the centre of the street at the other end of the village. There was nothing for it but to retrace his steps, and, with a prayer to Heaven, he pulled his charger round and spurred as he had never spurred before.

The enemy at the inn were fifty yards from him, and all their matchlocks were empty. He had one chance, if his horse could only stay the distance, and, bending low over his holsters, he faced the steep rise that led to the top of the hill. He heard the Roundheads yell as he passed out of sight for a moment behind the barn. The horse leaped and bounded up the slippery slope, but those behind him had reloaded with haste, and as he gained the crest of the hill he felt a bullet strike his ankle, and with a quiver and a deep groan his steed plunged forward and rolled in the road, flinging him a yard off into the snow.

As he picked himself up a shout of triumph came up the hill, and, limping along, leaving a tell-tale stain at every step, the King's messenger knew that he was being pursued.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

The Coming of the Enemy.

"CAST another log upon the hearth, good Simon, and set the wicker-flask here at mine elbow," cried Sir Jeffrey Hillingdon, settling himself in the wide inglenook of the great fireplace. "And give me my pipe, little daughter, filled with Indian weeds that my soul loveth. There is not a Roundhead knave within ten miles of us; and, if we be not as merry as of yore at this gay season, thanks to this cruel war, we may at

least spend our evening together by our own fireside."

It was Christmas Eve at Hillingdon Hall, and red-berried holly decorated the walls. Outside, everything seemed hushed and muffled under the heavy mantle of fallen snow. For two days and nights the keen north wind had filled the air with whirling flakes, and when they had suddenly ceased to whirl about nine o' the clock the whole landscape was white as far as the eye could scan. It covered the gables, it outlined the mullions of the great hall windows that looked upon the park; there were drifts full five feet deep in the avenue of stately elms that wound away to the high road, and as the moon rose slowly above the feathery fringe of woodland the scene became one of dazzling beauty.

A real, old-fashioned Christmas Eve, with the frost ferns gleaming on the window-panes, and every tree glittering as though it had been set with diamonds. It wanted only the mummers and the joy-bells and the lord of misrule to make it perfect; but, alas! folk had little heart for frivolity while King and Commons were up in arms, and Cavaliers and Roundheads only waited for the coming of spring to fly at each other's throats.

It was a cosy room, with its huge fireplace and the great iron dogs, on which the logs lay burning, and it was panelled from floor to ceiling with dark-brown oak that reflected the warm glow. One hardly wanted the candles that stood upon the long table, with that flood of warm light falling from the hearth; and sweet Phyllis, who sat beside her father upon a low stool at his feet, breathed a little sigh of contentment, and clasped her hands idly in her lap.

On the other side of the fireplace sat Basil and Ralph—the one dark-eyed and dreamy, seeing pictures in the blaze; the other regretting that his fifteen years had kept him at home, away from the fighting that had fallen to his absent brother's share.

"I fear we must give up all hope of Raymond's joining us," said Sir Jeffrey. "This snowstorm will have made the roads impassable."

"Ay, and there is more to come!" said Basil. "'Twas as much as I could do to get back from the village this afternoon. My mare was girth deep more than once, and well-nigh as white as your jennet, Blanche Flower, Phyllis."

"Now, I warrant me," said Sir Jeffrey, smiling, "had any of the womenfolk met thee in the gloaming, they would have thought it the Grey Lady of Hillingdon. You know, she rides to-night."

The handsome old Cavalier drew a long cloud of smoke, and looked down with a twinkle in his eye at Phyllis, whose hand had crept into his own as she sat peering into the glowing heart of the fire.

"Poor Mistress Amaryllis!" she said, breaking the pause which followed Sir Jeffrey's words. "Didst ever see her, father?"

"See her, child! Why, the tragedy happened a century ago, more than fifty years before I was born!"

"I meant not that," said Phyllis, with a little awe creeping into her voice. "Did you ever see her ghost?"

Sir Jeffrey laughed, and played with the soft brown curls that clustered so prettily about the girl's face.

"No, child, I never saw it, nor do I believe that ever anyone else did. At best I deem these things but old wives' tales. though, indeed, 'twould be hard to convince the serving-maids—or the men, for the matter of that—that she doth not walk on Christmas Eve; and as for one of them setting foot across the threshold of the Red Room this night, I verily think they would sooner die."

"Tell us the legend again, father," said Basil, from the other side of the fireplace. "'Tis the one night of all others for a ghost story."

Sir Jeffrey smiled, and looked at the leaping flame, which made the pine-logs hiss and sputter.

"Why, in truth, you know it as well as I," he said; "and even what little there be to tell, I doubt not it has gained as the years roll on."

He poured some wine into a goblet of

Venetian glass on the table beside him, and, smoking for awhile in silence, began the family legend, which was always fresh to them, although they had heard it a dozen times.

"As you all know," said Sir Jeffrey, "our family was knighted by King Henry VII., after Bosworth Field, and the second of our house to carry the title was Sir Jasper Hillingdon, who flourished under bluff King Hal, and had the reputation of being a great miser.

"'Twas he who built this house, as you doubtless know, making the secret passage upstairs that leads from the Red Room to the stables, without a thought of the terrible tragedy to which it also led.



Ralph Hillington, tearing the curtain aside, uttered a cry. Pressed against the pane was the face of a man—a man pale and bareheaded! (*See Chapter* 2.)

"Sir Jasper had two children—your grandfather, Philip, who was my own sire, and a daughter, Amaryllis, the celebrated Grey Lady of Hillingdon.

"Money was at the bottom of it all, for Sir Jasper was very rich, while our cousins, the Newburys of Denham, had no fortunes but their swords.

"I have often thought, sweetheart, how like you are in face to the portrait of Mistress Amaryllis on the wall yonder; but, thank Heaven, my little daughter has not the unfortunate self-will of the Grey Lady."

They all turned and gazed across the room at a painting by Zucchero, which represented a very pretty young woman in the stiff ruff of the Tudor period, set in the oak panelling.

"Mistress Amaryllis was eighteen, only two years older than you, when she fell in love with her cousin, young Walter Newbury, a gallant lad enough, like all the lads of his family; but from the very outset Sir Jasper would have none of it, and promptly forbade him the house. Folk said he grudged his daughter's dowry, but if that be true I know not.

"Hark how the wind is rising!" And, raising their heads, they all listened to the rumbling of the blast that suddenly swept against the windows of the hall. "Odds life, I had rather be indoors than out to-night!"

Even the great boarhound that crouched by his master's side raised his head also, and moved uneasily.

"Now, Mistress Amaryllis, being remarkably self-willed, set her father at defiance, and the story goes that, by means of the secret passage which opened from Sir Jasper's bedchamber, she was wont to steal forth after nightfall, saddle her white palfrey with her own hands, and ride away to meet her lover, returning before daybreak and gaining her own room, unknown to any of the household.

"But in time Master Walter Newbury received command of a company of pikes in garrison at Calais, which, as you know, was then held by the English, and when the time came for him to cross the water, these unfortunate young people determined to marry, in order that the soldier of fortune might take his bride with him.

"All was arranged. A divine was found willing to tie the knot, and Mistress Amaryllis, attiring herself in a grey gown that still remains in the oak chest upstairs, stole from her room on that fatal Christmas Eve, and crept on tiptoe across the corridor.

"In vain had Sir Jasper locked and barred his chamber door, for there was a sliding panel that gave access to his room, which, somehow, this self-willed young lady had discovered, and, with beating heart no doubt, she passed through it, and paused a moment to gaze for the last time at the sleeping father she was betraying.

"The snow was on the ground, as it might be to-night, and the moon was at its full. Whether or not she had grown careless with repeated success, as she reached the opposite panel, which leads to the staircase concealed in the thickness of the west wall, she must have made some sound that roused Sir Jasper.

"The iron-clamped coffer in which he kept his wealth still stands where it did that night, and as he drew the curtains of his bed aside he saw a figure bending over it. No doubt she waited, trembling, when she heard him move; but Sir Jasper was a man of action, and, thinking that some robber had got into the room, he seized the loaded gun which he kept ready to his hand, and fired, with fatal effect.

"Poor Mistress Amaryllis! In another moment she would have been safe within the panel and have joined the anxious soldier who waited with the horses below; but the aim was true, and, shot through the heart, she fell lifeless at Sir Jasper's feet."

Phyllis and her brothers had all turned their gaze towards the picture, and were looking at it with keen interest, but no one spoke, for on a sudden the wind rose again in its fury, clashing the branches in the avenue together, and driving the snowflakes that had begun to fall again against the window-panes. With a half-amused smile, Sir Jeffrey, his head slightly on one side, was looking at the faces of his two

boys, marking the difference in their expressions, and possibly thinking what future lay before them, when the great boarhound suddenly rose, and, lifting up his shaggy muzzle, gave a prolonged low howl, and then lay down again, whimpering a little, as if ashamed of himself.

"What ails the dog?" said Sir Jeffrey, bending over him.

"Does he hear the Grey Lady?" said Basil, in a hushed voice, his eyes glowing in the firelight. "'Tis said she glides across the Red Room on Christmas Eve, down the dark stairs and so to the stables, and then rides forth upon her white horse, traversing the avenue until she reaches the gate on the high road, where she waits, and waits, and then turns and rides slowly back again."

"Hold thy silly prate, Basil!" said his brother sharply. "Grey Lady or none, I heard something mighty like a cry for help in the lull of the wind just now."

He walked to the window as he spoke, but ere his hand could grasp the curtain, Cæsar, the boarhound, sprang up once more, and, leaping to the centre of the room, stood glaring at the window, with every hair bristling, his lip curled back to show the strong, white fangs.

Ralph Hillington looked over his shoulder at the dog, and, tearing the curtain aside, sprang back a pace and uttered a cry, for pressed against the pane was the face of a man—a man pale and bare-headed, who leaned heavily against the sill and beat upon the window with a doeskin glove, richly embroidered with silver.

"Stay where thou art, Phyllis!" cried Sir Jeffrey, snatching up his rapier, which hung over the back of a chair. "Summon the men, Basil, and come thou with me, Ralph, to unbar the hall door. 'Tis Walter Newbury, thy cousin, of Byron's regiment, and he is in sore need!"

"Thank Heaven!" gasped the wounded Cavalier as Sir Jeffrey and Ralph between them hauled him up the steps into the dining-room. "Alas! my name seems fated to bring misfortune upon this house. The Roundheads are upon my track, and in a few moments they will be here. For the love of the good cause conceal me somewhere! I carry dispatches for the King!"

He sank insensible upon the floor as he uttered these words, and Sir Jeffrey, checking his first impulse, which was to kneel beside him and examine his hurts, raised his hand and listened.

"Quick!" he commanded in a low, stern voice. "Carry him to the secret room in the south wing. I hear the rogues on the terrace already."

And even as he spoke his words were drowned by the thunder of matchlock butts on the hall door, and a loud voice, crying:

"Open, in the name of the Parliament!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER

How the Grey Lady of Hillingdon Walked for the Last Time.

"Now, malignant, for the last time, wilt thou come to reason, and tell us where this man is hidden? That he is in the house we know."

Captain Cephas Cripplegate, of Ireton's Musketeers, stood in front of the great fireplace, in his huge boots of untanned calfskin, and before him, bound hand and foot in his own elbow-chair, was Sir Jeffrey Hillingdon, his rapier lying broken on the floor, and his black velvet doublet showing signs of recent rough usage.

"I deny not that the lad is here," said Sir Jeffrey sternly; "but he is my own nephew, and our secret hiding-places have baffled more clever men than you, crop-ear, in times gone by."

"Tut, tut! Bandy no words with me," said the Roundhead, who was a short, smug-visaged man, very much impressed with the idea of his own importance, and formerly a linen-draper in Cheapside before the war began. "I warn you, malignant, I am a very lamb an thou use me properly, but I am a lion when I am aroused!" And Captain Cephas Cripplegate roared in a high falsetto.

A huge Roundhead sergeant, followed by half a dozen musketeers, entered the room noisily, and in their midst came Ralph and Basil, white and shamefaced, with their

heads hung down as they caught the searching eye of their father.

"Whom have ye here, Abimelech-Bind-the-Foe-in-Chains?" said the Roundhead captain.

"Two young whelps whom we found attempting to escape across the terrace, sons of the old wolf here, no doubt in the hope of bringing succour."

"Ah! Tie them, even as you tied the old dog," said Master Cripplegate. "Still no trace of the fugitive?"

"None, captain, though we have ransacked the house from top to bottom. We have discovered nothing beyond a great store of wine in the cellar." And the sergeant grinned a meaning grin at his officer.

"'Twill make our stay the pleasanter," said Captain Cephas. "And you, malignant, listen well to my words and ponder well on them. To-night I shall take up my quarters here, where my men can make merry at thy expense. To-morrow, if this fugitive nephew of thine is not forthcoming, I will order them to burn the house about your ears, as a warning to all traitors!"

The little man struck a fierce attitude, which made him look all the more like a gigantic cock robin.

"Friend Abimelech," he continued, "see that the sentinels are at their duty, and bid that bottled-nosed rogue, Simon, the butler, place a posset of hot sack by the bed in the Red Room above, and warm the sheets against my retiring."

"And the other prisoners, captain, the serving-men and the maids?" said Sergeant Abimelech.

"Let them sit at one end of the kitchen, taking care that none escape," replied Cripplegate. "They will thus profit by the edifying discourse, and forget the sinful revels in which they would have indulged but for our coming."

"Hypocrite and hound, you shall pay dearly for this night's work!" exclaimed Sir Jeffrey, in a low voice of great bitterness.

"Not so dearly as thou for thy burned mansion, malignant!" And the little officer, setting his legs wide apart, twinkled his eyes maliciously.

Simon, the butler, came out of the kitchen, carrying a long brass warming-pan in his trembling hands, and his gait was the gait of a man who goes to the funeral of his dearest friend. His rosy face was pale and sickly, and with every step he heaved a profound sigh as he mounted the broad staircase to the floor above, leaving the smoky odour of burning coals behind him.

"Alack, that I have lived to see this night!" he muttered to himself as he heard the wind howling and sobbing about the doomed mansion.

The stairs were in full sight of the open door of the dining-room, and the disconsolate retainer could feel the eye of the Roundhead captain upon him, but as he gained the landing an idea struck him. There were two doors to the Red Room, one that could be seen by anyone sitting in the dining-hall below, the other opening into a long corridor that divided the north from the south wing.

"Dear heart alive," muttered the old man to himself, "she must be mad for news of what is gone forward. All the enemy are below, and this is my opportunity."

He proceeded a few yards down the corridor, and, looking cautiously backwards and forwards, tapped three times on the oak-lined wall, and instantly a square of misty moonlight fell on the floor at his feet as Phyllis Hillington slid the panel back.

The moonlight, which poured through a tall window, illumined every corner of the little hiding-place, a mere cupboard, artfully contrived between two bedchambers. If you had looked at the south wing, you would have seen seven windows in a row. The two bedchambers had three apiece; the seventh was the window through which the moon now poured, revealing Captain Walter Newbury stretched at full length upon the floor, and Mistress Phyllis bending forward, with her fingers to her lips.

"Heaven forgive me, but I bring bad news!" whispered the butler. "Your brothers were both taken, and are now tied to their chairs in the dining-hall, with Sir Jeffrey. The boarhound flew at the Roundhead's throat, and to save the dog Sir

Jeffrey drew his rapier, and now there's no hope. The house will be burned in the morning unless the captain gives himself up."

"And that will he do," said Walter Newbury, turning his face towards the speaker.

"Hush, cousin—implored Phyllis. "Much may happen 'twixt this and sunrise. But whither go thou, Simon?"

"To warm the scoundrel's bed!" replied the old retainer, gripping the warming-pan fiercely. "Would I might heap these coals of fire upon his head — the knave!"

"The Red Room," said Phyllis, in a scarcely audible whisper. "It will add to the danger; but, after all, what is danger to a Hillingdon when the King's cause is at stake?"



They could not move or utter a sound, though the cold sweat beaded on their brows . . . In an instant the apparition had vanished as mysteriously as it had appeared! (*See Chapter* 3.)

Simon looked at her blankly, not understanding the meaning of her words. Then, fearful lest some sneaking Roundhead might discover them, he was turning away, when Phyllis laid her little hand upon his sleeve.

"Simon," she whispered, "mark well what I say to you! To-night is Christmas Eve. Tell them below the legend of our house—the legend of Mistress Amaryllis and the Walter Newbury of old. The rogues must not come prowling through the upper rooms, for the Grey Lady of Hillingdon will walk to-night!"

And, without giving him an opportunity to speak, Phyllis slid the panel to again, and, blotting out the moonlight, left worthy old Simon, the butler, in mental and physical darkness most profound.

"Cousin Walter," said Phyllis, kneeling down beside the wounded man, a curious look in her eyes, and her sweet face more than ever like that of her ill-fated ancestress in the picture downstairs, "your life is your own, but the papers you carry belong to the King. Wilt thou give the dispatch to me,

and trust me to place it in a safe spot, where the Roundheads can never find it?"

"Odds life, 'tis a brave little cousin!" said the young Cavalier, a smile coming into his pale face. "Pass thy hand down into my boot, and thou wilt find it there."

She did as he bade her, and drew forth my lord's packet, reddened with Walter Newbury's blood, and, kissing it, she thrust it into her bosom and rose lightly to her feet.

"Now must I leave you for a little space; but do not fear, I will return anon."

And opening yet another panel, which gave entrance into one of the bedchambers the Roundheads had already searched, Phyllis glided through the opening and disappeared.

. . . . .

It was midnight, and silence reigned in Hillingdon Hall. Captain Cripplegate had betaken himself to the Red Room, and Sergeant Abimelech-Bind-the-Foe-in-Chains kept watch in the dining-hall, whither he had invited Simon, the butler, to quaff a bumper of wine with him.

The snow had ceased falling, but the wind still moaned lugubriously in the chimney, and the sentinels on the terrace sought what shelter they could from the icy blast, and thought regretfully of the quarters they had left at Massy.

True to his trust, the butler had told the story of Mistress Amaryllis and her ghost, and he had told it so well, too, that Captain Cripplegate regretted his choice of the Red Room not a little, and would have changed it at the eleventh hour had not he feared to incur the scorn of Sergeant Abimelech, who declared loudly "that he believed in no such things as ghosts."

Nevertheless, when the captain had retired, Abimelech sat with his eyes riveted on the portrait, and more than once he shivered a little nervously as the wind moaned more dismally than usual.

Poor Basil and his brother had fallen asleep in their bonds, but Sir Jeffrey's eyes gleamed redly in the firelight as he nursed his wrath, and thought of what the morrow would bring forth.

"'Twas a grim story of thine, Simon," said the sergeant, suddenly breaking the silence; "all the grimmer that 'tis a Walter Newbury we seek to-night. Spake you ever with any who hath seen the Grey Lady?"

"That have I," replied the butler. "My father saw her many times. Boy and man, my folk have served this family for nigh upon two hundred years."

"Ay, and served it faithfully, too!" said a deep voice that made Sergeant Abimelech start in his chair, to meet the eyes of Sir James Hillingdon fixed upon him with curious intentness.

"What ails thee, Roundhead?" said the knight. "Thou art over pale, man, for one who hath made such inroad into my wine."

The sergeant frowned, but made no answer. Strong man that he was, there lurked deep down in his nature that taint of superstition which we all possess, however much we may delude ourselves to the contrary, and the moaning of the wind, the melancholy howling of a bloodhound chained to his kennel behind the stables, the butler's story, and the curious situation in which he found himself, were all having their effect.

"Pass me that flask," he said savagely. "I will go and visit my sentinels, after I have taken a dram of strong waters. A tented field is more to my liking than such a haunted house as this."

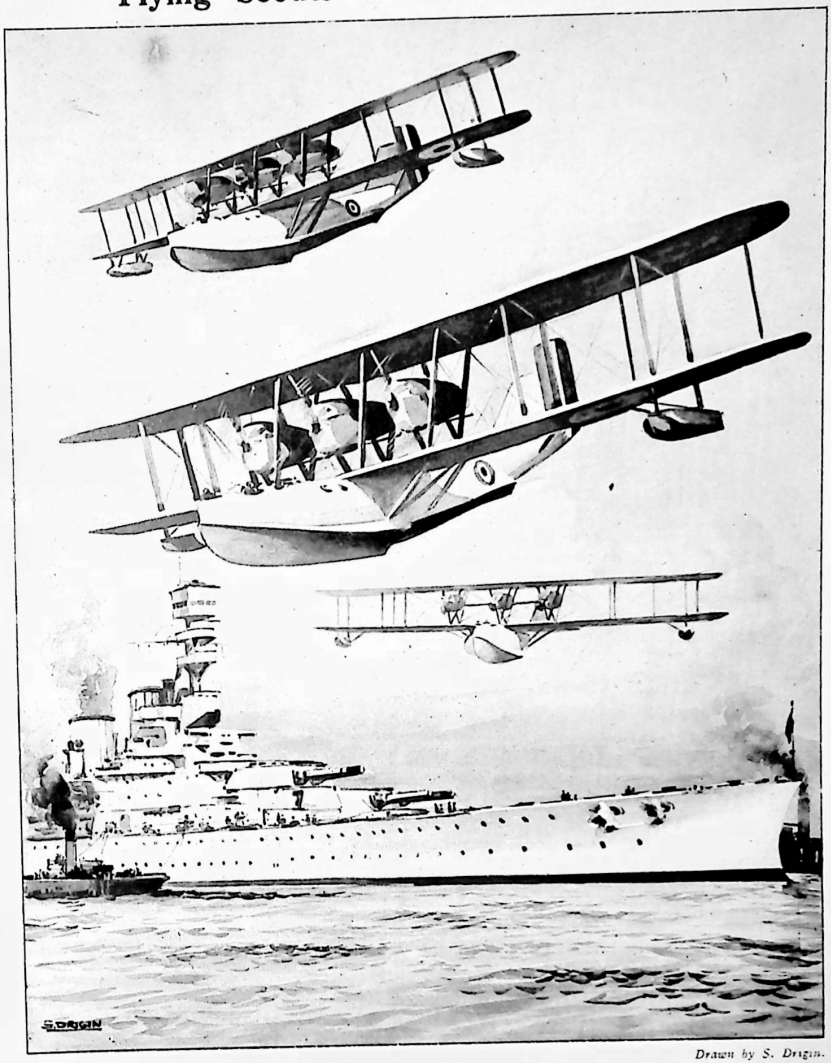
For all that, as he set his glass down on the table, his eyes returned to the picture on the wall, as if some curious fascination drew them thither and held them there.

Simon, the butler, had risen from his chair, on which he had sat all the time in great discomfort, by reason of the presence of that master whom he was powerless to help; and, going across to the hearth, he placed another log on the smouldering fire.

"The house was well enough before you came," muttered Simon, looking around.

"'Twill be better for all honest men when we leave it," said the sergeant, "since we shall leave it a heap of ruins. I warrant

Flying Scouts of the British Navy!



Drawn by S. Drigin.

To face page 220.

British Flying-boats Passing H.M.S. Renown after a Reconnaissance Flight.

me there will be no ghosts and grey ladies at noon to-morrow!"

The words died away on his lips, for as he glanced at Simon he saw a curious sight. The old retainer, his back still bent in the attitude of placing the log upon the fire, was staring wildly out of the open door into the hall, quivering in every limb, as one stricken with the palsy.

"Odds death!" exclaimed the sergeant. "What is it you see, man?"

But as his eyes followed the direction of the butler's gaze, Abimelech-Bind-the-Foe-in-Chains also grew pale as ashes; for there, passing noiselessly along the gallery at the top of the staircase, glided the Grey Lady of Hillingdon!

The sergeant's long sword lay on the table in front of him, but he seized the arms of his chair and crouched like a frightened lion. The candles guttered in their sconces in the outer hall, but they threw a strong light on the carved balusters, flinging a pattern of black shadows against the oaken panelling and the closed door of the Red Room.

Clad in the dim grey gown of ancient shape, her neck encircled by the stiff ruff of Tudor times, the ghost passed on, and Mistress Amaryllis turned her face and looked down the stairs towards them. The face was the face of the picture! They could not move nor utter sound, though the cold sweat beaded on their brows; and, laying her hand on the panel beside the Red Room door, it seemed to open at the touch, and in an instant the apparition had vanished as mysteriously as it had appeared!

. . . . .

Captain Cephas Cripplegate lay tossing uneasily in the great bed in the haunted chamber. He had drained the sack posset to the dregs, but it failed to bring slumber to his eyes, and at every blast of wind that shook the high casement the Roundhead started and peered nervously round, with his nose protruding over the bedclothes. The moonlight flooded the room, and the fire burned low, and, like the sentinels outside, the captain was already regretting that he had come upon that errand, and heartily wished himself back in his quarters at the village inn.

How the wind moaned! It seemed to him like the despairing sorrow of old Sir Jasper after he had fired the fatal shot, and several times he was in the mind to get up and dress himself.

Then on a sudden a low click fell upon his ear from the opposite side of the room, and, turning his eyes in that direction, Cephas Cripplegate gave a gasp of terror, his hair rose, and he went gooseflesh all over. For an instant a square of bright light illumined the darkness at the far end of the chamber. The door closed noiselessly, and then the Grey Lady of Hillingdon stood before him, with one hand raised, as though motioning him to silence.

He could not move; his voice died away in his throat. And, as the storm shrieked with unusual violence in the chimney, the Grey Lady of Hillingdon glided slowly past the foot of the bed, keeping those piercing eyes turned full upon him.

The wretched little linen-draper, who had swaggered so boldly in all the bravery of his buff coat and his big boots, wished that the earth might open and swallow him up.

And still the apparition glided on and on, the moonlight glistening on the silver embroidery of her gown and the handle of the riding-whip she carried in her raised right hand.

For an instant she paused motionless over the very spot by the iron-bound coffer, where her father's bullet had slain her two centuries before; and then the panel opened, the eyes glowed with peculiar intensity, and, gliding apparently through the solid wall, the Grey Lady of Hillingdon had gone!

. . . . .

For several moments after the apparition had disappeared into the sleeping-room of his officer, Sergeant Abimelech-Bind-the-Foe-in-Chains remained motionless, with mouth and eyes wide open.

The sight had shaken him to the very centre of his being, but the muffled tread of

a sentinel outside brought him back to his senses again, and, overturning the heavy carved chair with a tremendous crash, Sergeant Abimelech-Bind-the-Foe-in-Chains seized his long sword with one hand and snatched up a silver candlestick with the other.

"Stay, man—stay!" cried Simon, starting forward to hold him. "'Tis death to interfere with the ghost of the Grey Lady!"

"Silence, fool! This is some trick!" exclaimed the sergeant.

And with one bound he dashed from the room, and sprang up the stairs, three steps at a time.

Simon was about to follow him, still pale and trembling, and, as yet, all unsuspecting, when Sir Jeffrey's voice stayed him, and made him turn towards his captive master.

"Cut these bonds, thou fool!" exclaimed the knight, his face livid, and distorted with pain and anger. "To think that thou, of all men, should lend thyself to such madness as this!"

"Madness, master?" cried the honest old butler, who had been as greatly terrified as the sergeant.

"Ha! And worse than madness!" cried Sir Jeffrey, struggling with the thongs about him. "To let my sweet Phyllis masquerade in the midst of such dangers! My loyalty to King Charles carries me not to such a length as that!"

On a sudden it all dawned upon Simon, the butler, and he knew now what Mistress Phyllis had meant when she said the Grey Lady of Hillingdon would walk to-night!

But as he raised his hands in mute horror, two pistol-shots rang out in quick succession from the floor above, and, reeling backwards with a cry of agony, Sergeant Abimelech-Bind-the-Foe-in-Chains staggered from the open door of the Red Room, and fell heavily upon the landing!

In an instant there was a mighty uproar from the stone kitchen, where the Roundheads were sleeping, and those on guard on the terrace without came rushing into the mansion, blowing upon their matches.

"By heavens!" exclaimed Cephas Cripplegate, appearing half-dressed in the doorway, a smoking pistol in each hand. "What have I done?"

But there was no answer to his words. In his sudden terror, he had fired too surely, and Sergeant Abimelech lay dead upon his back, his head hanging over the topmost stair, with the shaven chin pointing upwards to the ceiling.

No one saw the Grey Lady, who rode forth on her white horse from the now unguarded stables, and flitted silently away among the oaks and beeches, across the snowy park.

Walter Newbury, alone, aroused by the pistol-shots, started up on to his unwounded elbow, and heard the soft trampling of hoofs under the casement. But he knew what it meant, and wondered whether pretty Cousin Phyllis would come back to him, as she had promised.

And meanwhile, when the trees of the avenue had hid her from all sight of the mansion, the shade of Mistress Amaryllis became very flesh and blood indeed, and, shortening her reins, set that white palfrey at the park paling, as surely never ghost rode yet!

"Now Heaven help me, and I shall save them!" cried the Grey Lady. "'Tis but ten miles to Coventry, and gallant Rupert lies there with his Cavaliers!"

. . . . . .

Daylight came streaming in through the windows of Hillingdon Hall, for it was morning, and outside the red sun was doing his best to warm the frozen world. The wind had dropped, and wintry stillness chained the landscape; but within the Hall preparations were in progress for a terrible tragedy.

The Roundhead musketeers leaned grimly on their muskets, drawn up in a row before the three chairs in which sat Sir Jeffrey and his boys, all three of them very pale, but bravely defiant.

Clad once more in his soiled buff coat and huge calfskin boots, with his large ears standing out on either side from his round, bullet head, Captain Cephas Cripplegate strode backwards and forwards between the

file of musketeers and the three prisoners, his eyes resting thoughtfully upon the ground, and his hand playing nervously with his unshaven chin.

The words of Sergeant Abimelech were dinning in his brain: "Ireton will have no bloodshed!" But blood had been shed, and by Cripplegate's own hand, too; and his craven soul thirsted to avenge his own folly on the three helpless captives before him.

At the other end of the room, under the guard of half a dozen men, stood the terrified manservants and the scowling grooms, and among them old Simon, the butler, his lip trembling, and his face as white as the snow without.

The Roundhead captain stopped suddenly before Sir Jeffrey.

"For the last time, malignant," he said sternly, "wilt thou surrender the prisoner we seek, or must I pass judgment upon thee?"

"Neither will I give him up, nor do I recognise your right to pass what you please to call judgment."

"Silence!" cried Cephas Cripplegate. "And listen to me." And as he spoke he drew from his belt a well-thumbed Bible. "Lest men should say that I judged thee out of my own mouth, this Book shall speak. How say ye?" And he turned to the musketeers. "The Book shall open where it listeth, and by the first text upon which my finger falls shall ye three live or die!"

"Agreed!" cried the musketeers, in hoarse chorus. And dead silence fell upon the room.

Laying the vellum-bound volume on his outstretched palm, the Book slowly opened, and he placed his forefinger in the centre of the page.

With a smile of triumph, he read as follows, through his nose:

"In the 1st Book of Kings, the eighteenth chapter, and the fortieth verse, it is written: 'And Elijah said unto them, "Take the prophets of Baal, let not one of them escape."' Musketeers, look to your priming." And, closing the Book with a snap, he took out a large silver watch. "To your



Captain Cripplegate strode backwards and forwards between the musketeers and the three prisoners, his eyes on the ground, and his hand playing nervously with his unshaven chin.
(*See previous page.*)

prayers, old man; to your prayers all three of you, for in five minutes by this timepiece you will have done with this world and its vanity!"

One of the maids screamed, and fell fainting on the floor, and Sir Jeffrey, roused by the sound, turned his fine old head firmly towards the other end of the room, and spoke with a mingled ring of scorn and sadness in his voice:

"Silence, good folk! There never lived a Hillingdon yet who betrayed his friend, nor one who was afraid to give his life for the King's cause!"

"Nor yet a Newbury!" cried a ringing voice.

And, turning in surprise, they saw the King's messenger, pale and haggard from loss of blood, leaning against the open door.

"Unbind Jeffrey Hillingdon!" he said. "I am the man you seek!"

"Zounds, men, upon him!" cried Captain Cephas Cripplegate, taking out his sword. "He shall pay for the life of Sergeant Abimelech!"

But ere any of them could move a hand, a flourish of trumpets sounded on the terrace, the hall door was flung open, with loud shouts of "Down with the crop-ears!" And a troop of Cavaliers, who had swung out of their saddles, poured into the house.

"Throw down your arms! The first shot that is fired is the signal for the death of every man-jack of you!" cried a commanding voice, with a strong foreign accent, and, flushed with his hard gallop, Prince Rupert himself strode into the dining-room, and stood still in blank amazement.

"By my sword," cried the gallant young prince, "'tis the first time we have met, Sir Jeffrey Hillingdon, and it seems to me we were within an ace of not meeting at all in this world! Disarm this crop-head scum!"

And in the twinkling of an eye the ruffianly musketeers stood there, a group of crestfallen prisoners.

"How can I thank your Highness?" said the old knight as he rose, stiff from his bonds.

"Tut, man! You owe us no thanks. All the praise is due to this sweet little lady of thine. Where is the maid?"

And, taking her by the hand, he led the blushing girl forward, and placed her in her father's arms.

High revel did they hold in the Hall that Christmas Day, for Rupert and his Cavaliers stayed to garrison it, lest General Ireton should come in search of the missing company. He would have found them securely locked in one of the great cellars, where they spent a doleful Christmas enough, until Mistress Phyllis made entreaty with Sir Jeffrey that some meat and drink should be carried to them.

The chirurgeon, who had accompanied the Cavaliers from the prince's quarters at Coventry, dressed Walter Newbury's hurts, and pronounced them to be less serious than they had feared. The intense cold had stopped the bleeding, and in a few weeks he would be in the saddle again, for the Roundhead bullet had passed through the arm without breaking any bones, and the other was found in the long yellow boot that had held the King's dispatch.

He sat at the long table, propped up with cushions, thankful to Heaven to be there at all, and though his eye roved from the scarlet holly-berries to the huge chine of beef, and his pale visage nodded in response to the clamour of the company who drank to his speedy recovery, that eye always returned to pretty Phyllis, beside him.

She had laid aside the old-world garb of her ancestress, and very sweet she looked in her white silk gown, with its knots of cherry-coloured ribbon, which were scarcely redder than her cheeks, when Prince Rupert rose, and called for the health of the Grey Lady of Hillingdon.

Out flashed the bright swords, and the rafters rang with the roar of cheering as those gallant Cavaliers sprang to their feet, and clashed their blades together.

If you go to Hillingdon Hall to-day, you will see two portraits on the panelled wall, close to that of Mistress Amaryllis.

They were painted after the restoration by Sir Peter Lely, the famous Court painter, and one represents a handsome officer in the



Prince Rupert rose, and called for the health of the Grey Lady of Hillington. As those gallant cavaliers sprang to their feet, out flashed their bright swords and the blades clashed together. (*See previous page.*)

scarlet uniform of the Royal Guards—Colonel Walter Newbury by name; the other is Dame Phyllis, his wife. She stands beside a white horse, and in the distance is a representation of the Hall, looking very much as you may see it now.

No one knows what became of Captain Cripplegate; but the long, steel-mounted pistols that once figured in his belt now hang harmless enough beneath the portraits on the wall. Their explosion on that famous Christmas Eve would seem to have broken the spell for ever, for when Mistress Phyllis reined in her panting charger at the terrace steps, and Prince Rupert sprang from his saddle into the snow, the Grey Lady of Hillingdon had taken her last ride!

THE END



A Rift at Rookwood!

By OWEN CONQUEST

A specially-written story, featuring Jimmy Silver & Co., the lively chums of the Classical Fourth at Rookwood School

THE FIRST CHAPTER
A Rift in the Lute!

"'Hem!"

Jimmy Silver, of the Classical Fourth at Rookwood, made that remark.

He made it twice.

"'Hem!"

Uncle James of Rookwood as a rule was a straightforward fellow, and said what he had to say without hesitation. It was quite unlike Uncle James to beat about the bush.

But he was hesitating now.

His remark was not of the most intelligible order. But his three comrades in the end study seemed to understand it.

Raby smiled faintly.

Newcome winked at the ceiling.

Arthur Edward Lovell knitted his brows.

Lovell was sitting in the armchair, with his right leg crossed over his left. He was gently caressing his right knee. That tender caress indicated that Lovell's knee was not in its most high and palmy state. As a matter of fact, that knee had recently had a severe knock in games practice. Such things will happen in football. Lovell was not the fellow to grouse. He was the fellow to make light of such an injury. And he was the fellow to make light of it all the more, because if his knee was likely to fail him, it was evident that he could not play in the match with Greyfriars School that was coming along on Saturday. And a Rookwood junior team, in an important fixture, without Arthur Edward Lovell in the half-back line was unimaginable—by Arthur Edward, at least.

"'Hem!"

For the third time Jimmy Silver made that cryptic remark.

A football captain's job was not roses, roses all the way, at Rookwood—or anywhere else. Especially did it present difficulties when the captain in question was Jimmy Silver, kind and good-natured to a fault, and loyally attached to the chum whom it was necessary to drop out of the eleven, and who was obviously determined not to see the necessity.

Raby gave Newcome a glance.

"Let's give Morny a look-in," he said.

"Let's!" agreed Newcome.

They strolled out of the study. They felt that it might be easier for Jimmy Silver to

get it out, alone with Lovell. It was thoughtful of them, and Jimmy was grateful. Lovell only smiled in a grim, sarcastic way. He knew what was coming, and he was prepared to contest the point with vigour. Lovell rather prided himself upon the fact that his character possessed, among its other qualities, the firmness of a rock. It had never even occurred to him that this characteristic of his bore some resemblance to the obstinacy of a mule.

"'Hem!"

It was difficult to begin, with a fellow like Lovell to deal with, and for a fourth time Jimmy Silver coughed.

"Go it, if you've finished your atmospherics!" said Lovell.

"How's your knee, old chap?"

"Quite all right, thanks," answered Lovell.

"Quite?"

"Quite!"

"Well, I don't see how it can be quite all right after that knock it had, old fellow."

"It's my knee," remarked Lovell, with the accent on the possessive pronoun.

"No pain left?" asked Jimmy.

"I'm not the man to grouse about a little pain."

"Oh, no! But——"

"But what?" said Lovell coldly.

Lovell was a good fellow. He was a loyal chum. He would have stood up for Jimmy Silver against all the wild world. Yet now he was making a difficult and unpleasant task as thoroughly difficult and unpleasant as he could for his best friend.

"Do you think you're really fit for the match to-morrow?" asked Jimmy bluntly.

"Yes."

"Sure?"

"Quite."

"But with that gammy knee——"

"My knee's not gammy."

"Well, bruised."

"I'm not made of putty. What's a bruise?"

"It let you down in games practice to-day," Jimmy Silver pointed out.

Lovell's manner was having some slight effect on Jimmy's placable temper.

"It did not."

"Oh!"

"If you mean my falling down——"

"I didn't mean your jumping up," said Jimmy.

"If you mean my falling down," repeated Lovell icily, "I fell over that clumsy ass Raby. He butted into the way."

"Oh!"

"I'm as fit as a fiddle," said Lovell. "If you want to turn a pal out of the team and put in another man, say so. Don't make out that I'm not fit to play Greyfriars to-morrow. That's humbug."

Jimmy coloured.

"Look here, Lovell, old man," he said, "you got that knock last Wednesday. You've been limping ever since."

"Not what I should call limping."

"Well, what anybody else would call limping, old chap," said Jimmy. "Let it go at that. In games practice to-day you practically crumpled up."

"Rubbish!"

"All the fellows saw it."

"Rot!"

"We have to go all out to give Greyfriars a beating," said Jimmy. "We can't afford to take chances."

"That's why I'm keen on playing."

"Oh!"

"My knee's all right," said Lovell—"practically all right. And to-day isn't to-morrow. Games practice to-day isn't the Greyfriars match on Saturday. Thought of that?"

"Let's look at your knee, old bean."

"No need to look at it. It's all right."

"The fact is, Lovell, you had an awful cosh. You've been limping ever since, and you'll be limping for days to come. We play Greyfriars on Saturday and St. Jim's on Wednesday. You may pull round in time for the St. Jim's match, though, to be plain, I doubt it. I'm afraid you'll have to stand out to-morrow."

It was out at last.

"Now you've come to the point," said Lovell grimly. "No good my telling you

that I'm ready to play the game of my life to-morrow?"

"I know you think so, old chap——"

"It's not a matter of thinking. I know."

"'Hem!"

"More atmospherics!" said Lovell satirically.

"I'm sorry, old chap," said Jimmy. "If you were fit, you're the man for the job. But you're not fit. I'd almost rather leave myself out of the team than leave you out, if it could be helped. But it can't be helped, and that's that. Keep smiling, old chap."

"You're chucking me?"

"No."

"You're playing me, then?"

"No."

"It's one or the other."

"It isn't! You're standing out to-morrow because you're not fit. That isn't chucking."

"I've told you I'm fit as a fiddle."

"And I've told you you're not!" answered Jimmy Silver, a little tartly.

"You know more about my knee than I do?"

"More than you choose to know, apparently."

Lovell drew a deep breath.

"It's settled, then. I don't play?"

"Sorry, old fellow—no."

"You can keep your sorrow," said Lovell. "Keep it till the Greyfriars men wipe you off the football field to-morrow! You'll need it then. You needn't have beaten about the bush, Jimmy Silver. I knew you were going to chuck me. I knew a lot of the fellows had been on to you about it, and you can't say 'No.' You're weak."



"As you're not the fellow I thought you were, naturally I don't care to pal with you any longer. You'll oblige me by not speaking when you see me again." With that Arthur Edward Lovell tramped out of the end study. (*See Chapter* 1.)

Jimmy made no reply to that. Really, it was rather unreasonable, since Lovell's wrath was founded upon the fact that Jimmy Silver had said "No." But if it relieved Lovell to blow off steam, Uncle James was not the fellow to say him nay.

Arthur Edward Lovell rose to his feet. He winced as he did so—a sharp wince, due possibly to the fact that his hapless knee, thought not "gammy," was not so absolutely sound as a bell as he hoped and believed. He fixed his eyes on Jimmy Silver.

"I'm sorry for this," he said grimly.

"So am I, old fellow," said Jimmy amicably.

"I'm sorry, because it shows that you're

not the fellow I've taken you for," said Lovell. "The fellow I thought you were wouldn't chuck a pal out of the football team because other fellows got at him. The fellow I thought you were wouldn't chuck a friend out—for nothing."

"Your knee——"

"Any excuse is better than none, I know," said Lovell. "You needn't recite all that again. As you're not the fellow I thought you were, naturally I don't care to pal with you any longer. You'll oblige me by not speaking when you see me again."

"Lovell, old chap——"

"That's enough!"

Arthur Edward Lovell tramped out of the end study. But his heavy tramp suddenly stopped as his knee gave him an awful twinge, and he was limping before he was outside the doorway.

Slam!

The door of the end study closed behind him with a terrific slam that rang and echoed in every corner of the quarters of the Classical Fourth.

Lovell was gone.

Jimmy Silver sat and stared at the door. Lovell was gone, deeply incensed, simmering with a sense of wrong, burning with resentment. Football was football, and a football captain's duty was plain; but Jimmy Silver's chum was Jimmy Silver's chum, and the captain of the Fourth sat, with a dismayed face, staring at the door that had slammed.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

Quite a Jest!

"HE, HE, HE!"

Thus Tubby Muffin.

Reginald Muffin, of the Classical Fourth, was obviously entertained, and he gave audible expression to his entertainment. Other fellows smiled.

Jimmy Silver frowned. From the general point of view, the incident was amusing. From Jimmy Silver's point of view, it was not amusing at all.

Jimmy, coming out of the School House, met Arthur Edward Lovell face to face.

He had not seen Lovell since Arthur Edward had flung angrily out of the end study an hour before.

Now he met him again, and it was clear that Lovell's resentment had not cooled. Rather it had improved, like wine, with keeping.

Jimmy smiled cheerily at his chum, hoping that the storm had blown over, and that all was calm and bright.

His friendly smile was a sheer waste.

Not only did Lovell not return it, but he did not seem to recognise Jimmy Silver at all.

He stared straight before him unseeingly, looking through Jimmy, as it were, as if Jimmy was not there!

It was the cut direct!

Utterly ignoring Jimmy Silver, Lovell walked on, with fixed gaze, unseeing. He went into the House.

Jimmy Silver drew a deep, deep breath.

His cheeks were burning.

It was not pleasant to be cut dead by any fellow, under a dozen pairs of eyes, even when the fellow in question was an unreasonable ass.

"He, he, he!"

The incident seemed so comic to Tubby Muffin that he contributed a second unmusical cachinnation.

There were smiles on several faces. Peele winked at Gower, and Gower nudged another fellow. Mornington laughed. Erroll looked rather grave. Conroy gave a sniff. Raby and Newcome uncomfortably affected to have noticed nothing.

It was unfortunate that the incident had occurred just in front of the House, when fellows were coming in to tea. There had been quite a good audience. There were even two or three men from Manders House on the spot, and the grins on the faces of the Modern fellows were most disagreeable of all to Jimmy Silver. It was bad enough for Lovell to make a fool of himself before the Classicals; it was really too bad for him to excite the ridicule of the Moderns, too.

"Dear me!" Cyril Peele was speaking. "Trouble in the happy family circle! Oh, dear, me!"

"He, he, he!"

"Lovell's got 'em!" remarked Putty, of the Fourth.

Jimmy Silver walked on, with flushed cheeks. Raby and Newcome walked with him, angry and uncomfortable.

"The silly owl!" said Raby when they were out of hearing of the crowd.

"The footling chump!" said Newcome.

"The ass!" said Jimmy.

"It means a row in the study, then," said Raby. "The frabjous fathead's got his back up."

"Let him keep it up," said Newcome warmly. "I'm fed up with it. Are we going to have a row whenever Lovell can't play in a football match? Suppose the other fellows took the same line? It's altogether too ridiculous!"

"The whole House will be laughing at him!" said Raby.

"They're laughing at him already. How a fellow can be such a howling ass beats me."

"You see," murmured Jimmy Silver, "Lovell's awfully keen on the Greyfriars match. Naturally a footballer is keen on a big fixture—can't blame the chap for that. And it makes him a bit unreasonable."

Jimmy's chums stared at him.

That Uncle James of Rookwood was a remarkably good-tempered fellow, blessed with an unusual gift of patience and toleration, they knew. But this really seemed the limit.

"You're not going to punch his silly nose, then?" asked Raby.

"'Hem! No."

"He's cut you before all the House."

"That doesn't hurt me," said Jimmy. "It hurts him. He hasn't made me look a fool; he's made himself look a fool."

"Well, that's so, of course," admitted Raby.

"Why should I punch the old fellow's nose for making himself look a fool?" asked Jimmy tolerantly. "I wish he'd have a bit more sense. I wish he wouldn't fly into



"Yarooh! Rescue, Moderns!" yelled Tommy Todd, struggling frantically. From a distance, Tommy Doyle and Tommy Cook, of the Modern Fourth, came speeding up to the rescue. (*See Chapter* 2.)

these tantrums. But he's always been more or less like it, and we like him all the same."

"Oh, you're the limit!" grunted Newcome.

"But I wish he'd chuck it," said Jimmy, with a sigh. "The poor old chap thinks he's been treated badly, and thinks he's got a bad grievance. Of course he hasn't, but he thinks so. All the House knows that he's not fit to play to-morrow—all but himself—and he doesn't——"

"He won't, you mean," growled Raby.

"Well, he won't! In some matters our old pal is not very bright," said Jimmy

Silver. "All the House knows that he's cutting up rusty because he's dropped for the match to-morrow—about the most ridiculous thing any man could do. He will be a figure of fun all through Rookwood if he keeps it up. A fellow standing on his dignity is always rather funny, but old Lovell is funniest of all. I wish he'd chuck it. We don't want the end study laughed at."

"Hallo, you men!" Tommy Dodd, of the Modern Fourth, hailed the Classical chums under the old Rookwood beeches. "Trouble, I hear."

Tommy Dodd was grinning.

"Rats!" snapped Jimmy.

"What's this about Lovell?" chortled Tommy Dodd. "Is it true that he punched your nose for leaving him out of the footer?"

"No, it isn't, you footling fathead!"

"Well, I heard so. And I heard another story. One chap says he sat down and cried."

"You cheeky Modern worm!" roared Jimmy Silver.

"Isn't that true, either?" queried Tommy Dodd cheerily. "Isn't it true that he blubbed, and one of you men lent him a hanky to wipe away the tears?"

The Classical chums did not answer that. Cheek like this from a Modern called for action, not for words.

As if moved by the same spring, Jimmy and Raby and Newcome hurled themselves upon Thomas Dodd, collared him, and swept him off his feet. To an accompaniment of wild yells from Dodd, they rapped his head on the trunk of the nearest beech.

Rap! rap! rap!

"Whooop! Yoooop! Yaroooogh!"

"Keep it up till he blubs, and then we'll lend him a hanky!" said Jimmy Silver ferociously.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Rap! rap! rap! rap!

"Yaroooh! Rescue, Moderns!" yelled Tommy Dodd, struggling frantically.

From a distance, Tommy Doyle and Tommy Cook, of the Modern Fourth, came speeding up to the rescue. The three Tommies of Rookwood were never very far away from one another.

The Classicals dropped Dodd, who collapsed on the earth, gasping. They met the other two Moderns at a rush, and Cook and Doyle went spinning under the charge of the trio.

Jimmy Silver & Co. walked back to the House, feeling a little better. Ragging the Moderns had taken the keen edge off their annoyance.

But as they came into their House, on the Classical side of Rookwood, Smythe, of the Shell, met them. There was a derisive grin on the face of Adolphus Smythe.

"Here, hold on, Silver!" he exclaimed.

"Well?" grunted Jimmy.

"Are you playin' me in the Greyfriars match to-morrow?"

Jimmy stared at him.

He would have been as likely to play Snooks, of the Second Form, as the superb Adolphus. Adolphus knew all about neckties and silk socks, but what he did not know about football would have filled whole libraries. It did not occur to Jimmy for the moment that Adolphus was pulling his leg, though he might have been apprised of that fact by the grinning faces of several other fellows standing round.

"Playing you?" repeated Jimmy.

"Yaas, little me."

"No, you ass."

"Not playing me?" demanded Adolphus.

"No, fathead."

"Then I shall cut you dead next time we meet," said Smythe, of the Shell. "I shall give you the marble eye in the quad, and the frozen mitt in the common-room. Consider yourself cut dead."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared a dozen fellows.

Even Raby and Newcome grinned.

"My turn," said Howard, of the Shell. "Are you playin' me in the match to-morrow, Silver?"

"Don't be a silly ass!"

"Then I shall cut you dead!" chortled Howard. "We're all goin' to take a tip from Lovell!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"



"I say, Jimmy! If you don't play me to-morrow I won't speak to you! He, he, he!" Jimmy Silver kicked Reginald Muffin with considerable vigour and still more satisfaction, and went on his way. (See Chapter 2.)

"Are you playin' me, Silver?" demanded Tracy, of the Shell.

Evidently this was a little "rag" concocted among the Shell fellows.

Jimmy Silver suppressed his feelings and went up the staircase. He left a chuckling crowd behind him. The peculiar proceedings of Arthur Edward Lovell were undoubtedly adding to the gaiety of existence at Rookwood.

In the Classical Fourth passage Jimmy encountered Valentine Mornington, the dandy of the Fourth. Morny smiled at the sight of his clouded face, but looked grave again at once.

"Jimmy, old man," he said.

Jimmy looked at him.

"It seems that you're for it," said Mornington. "Look here, I've got an idea that I'll pass on to you for what it's worth."

"Well?"

"You know that donkeys' ages ago they used to play Rugger matches with fifty or sixty a side."

"I've heard of it. What on earth about it?"

"What about introducin' somethin' of the sort in Soccer at Rookwood?"

Jimmy stared at Mornington.

"Wandering in your mind?" he asked.

"Not at all. It's the only way."

"The only way for what?"

"To save yourself from bein' cut by all Rookwood, if every fellow who wants to play in matches and can't is goin' to cut you."

"You silly ass!" roared Jimmy.

"My dear man——" grinned Mornington.

"Oh, sit down!"

Mornington sat down rather suddenly, and Jimmy Silver passed him and strode into the end study. He was getting a little cross by this time. Even Uncle James' temper was not absolutely perfect.

Lovell was in the study.

He was bending over a crossword puzzle, Lovell being given to crosswords. Certainly he saw Jimmy come in, but he did not heed him. Jimmy stood and looked at him for some moments, with growing exasperation.

"Lovell!" he said at last.

No answer.

"Lovell!"

Grim silence.

"You footling ass!" shouted Jimmy.

Arthur Edward looked up at that.

"I think I've asked you not to speak to me, Silver," he said icily.

"Look here——"

"You've treated me badly. I think you've acted rottenly. I'm done with you. Shut up, and leave a fellow alone!"

"Lovell," said Jimmy quietly, "can't you see that you're making yourself look a footling ass to the whole school? The fellows have made a standing joke of it already. This study will be laughed to death. What would happen if every fellow who can't play to-morrow took the same line? Can't you see that it's ridiculous to cut up rusty when you're left out of a match?"

"I've not cut up rusty for that, and you know it."

"Then what——"

"I've cut up rusty, as you call it, because I've been treated rottenly. You've let fellows talk you into treating me rottenly."

"Raby didn't say that when I had to leave him out of the Bagshot match," said Jimmy patiently.

"Raby was left out because he was crocked."

"Well, you're crocked."

"I'm not crocked."

"Look here, Lovell——"

"Would you mind shutting up?" asked Lovell politely. "I'm rather busy with these crosswords."

Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath; refrained, with wonderful self-control, from jamming Lovell's head into the coal-locker, and left the study. In the passage there was a howl from Tubby Muffin.

"I say, Jimmy! If you don't play me to-morrow I won't speak to you! He, he, he!"

Jimmy Silver kicked Reginald Muffin with considerable vigour and still more satisfaction, and went on his way.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

Just Like Jimmy!

THE following morning there were many smiling faces in the Lower School at Rookwood.

The jest was still going strong.

There were, in fact, only two unsmiling faces—Jimmy Silver's and Arthur Edward Lovell's.

Jimmy was worried.

Lovell was not worried. Lovell was wrapped in dignity as in a garment, lofty with an Olympian loftiness.

He was angry. He felt that his anger was justified. Had he been asked, like the prophet of old: "Doest thou well to be angry?" he would have answered unhesitatingly: "I do well to be angry."

It was not uncommon for a fellow who fancied himself at football to display irritation if he was left out of a big fixture. Fellows could not always see eye to eye with their skipper on such matters. Even reasonable and sensible fellows, on such occasions, doubted the judgment of their captain. Even a hard-headed fellow like Conroy could not help feeling that Uncle James was rather losing his grip if he was replaced in goal by another man. Even Raby, though he admitted that he had been rather crocked on the date of the Bagshot match, had hardly considered that he was sufficiently crocked to be left out. Even Mornington, at a time when he was so obviously off colour that he was not fit to play in the Third, had been extremely and bitterly sarcastic when he was passed over for a fixture. Such feelings were natural to fellows keen on the game.

So far from being roses, roses all the way, a football skipper's path was often set with thorns.

But every fellow, excepting Lovell, bowed as a matter of course to the decree of fate. Fellows did not elect a captain for the purpose of quarrelling with him every time they disagreed with his judgments. It was to be noted, too, that every fellow except the fellow concerned always agreed with Jimmy's judgments, which seemed rather to indicate that Jimmy was right every time.

A man who was keen on a big match did not like being passed over; that was human nature, and nobody found fault with it.

Only, a fellow was expected to take it like a sportsman, even if it appeared to

him personally that his captain was suffering from obvious and palpable mental defects.

Lovell was the only fellow who failed to do so.

But Lovell was a law unto himself.

He would have derided, as much as anyone, a fellow who could not take his exclusion from a match in a sportsmanlike spirit. Lovell prided himself on his sportsmanship. Had he realised that he was no good for the Greyfriars match, not only would he have endorsed Jimmy's judgment, but he would have offered to stand out of his own accord. The trouble was that he did not realise it.



Lovell was about to rush at Tommy Dodd and smite him hip and thigh. Jimmy's detaining hand on his arm stopped him. "Hold on, old chap! No scrapping just before a match!" he said. (*See Chapter* 3.)

Even so, it was his duty to submit gracefully. It was open to him to believe, if he liked, that his captain was suffering from some form of juvenile senility in leaving him out. But he was bound to take the sentence smiling. And so he would have done but for a certain obtuseness which characterised Arthur Edward, of which his chums were well aware, but which was unsuspected by Arthur Edward himself.

Having decided, on his own judgment, that he was not only fit for the game, but particularly and conspicuously fit for it, Arthur Edward could only attribute his exclusion to questionable motives on the part of his skipper. Jimmy Silver had been talked over by other fellows. That was the meaning of it—to Lovell. It was not, therefore, as a footballer who had been passed over that he resented Jimmy's action. It was as a friend who had been let down, as a player who was needed by the side, and whose exclusion might mean disaster to the side.

This was a fine distinction which wholly satisfied Lovell.

But on the rest of the House that fine distinction was quite lost. To all the other fellows, Lovell was a man who was cutting up rusty because he was left out of a fixture for good and obvious reasons.

Such an attitude was supremely ridiculous. It was not the first time that Lovell's hasty temper and mulish obstinacy had caused a rift in the end study and entertainment in the Classical Fourth. But this time it was, as Morny said, the limit. Lovell, wrapped in Olympian dignity, feeling that he did well to be angry, was impervious to criticism. Meanwhile, the whole Lower School were laughing at him. His attitude had become a standing joke, and the juniors laughed loud and long.

Hence the worry in Jimmy Silver's brow that Saturday morning.

In class that morning, Jimmy was worried and thoughtful, but his unusual thoughtfulness was not due to any unusual attention to his lessons.

Jimmy was worried about Lovell.

Lovell was his chum, and Lovell's wrong-headedness made no difference to that.

Lovell, while making himself look an ass to all Rookwood, was evidently unconscious that he looked an ass. Jimmy Silver was only too painfully conscious of it.

Every jest, every gibe, which passed over Lovell like water over a duck, stung Jimmy Silver on his friend's account.

It was intolerable to Uncle James that a fellow who was his friend, who was really a good fellow, who shared his study, should be making himself the butt of the House.

There were few things that Jimmy would not have done to extricate Lovell from the ridiculous position in which he had placed himself. It was painful to Jimmy, and it was a reflection on the end study.

And there were disagreeable fellows in the Classical Fourth—fellows like Peele and Lattrey and Gower—who were always up against the end study on principle, and who openly rejoiced at this split in the study. They rejoiced to see a man of that study let himself down, and let down his friends, by taking up an attitude that was, in the general opinion, infantile.

As for the Modern fellows, they greeted the affair as a screaming joke. Manders' House echoed with jests on the subject. All sorts of stories were current, but the most popular one was that Lovell had sat down and cried like a baby when he was dropped from the team. The story was further developed to the effect that Lovell's friends had offered to buy him a toy engine to play with while the football was on. Some Modern fellows said that it wasn't a toy engine, but a doll that squeaked. There was no doubt that the Modern juniors were enjoying the jest. And it made Jimmy Silver writhe with discomfort and blush for his friend.

So Jimmy was worried.

In morning break, Lovell stalked in the quad, ignoring his friends, much to the entertainment of the other fellows.

In solitary state he stalked, inflexible.

He was angry, and he did well to be angry! He was dignified, and he hugged his dignity. Even yet it had not dawned upon him that his lofty and resentful attiture was enough, as Putty of the Fourth expressed it, to make a cat laugh. Whether it would have stirred the risible faculties of a cat or not, certainly it made Rookwood laugh.

His crocked knee twinged as he stalked, but he did not regard that. He had made up his mind that his knee was not crocked, therefore it wasn't crocked; and those twinges were nothing—less than nothing.

Tommy Dodd, of the Modern Fourth, burst into song when Lovell passed him. The song he chanted was: "Oh, dry those tears!"

There was a roar of laughter.

Lovell glared round.

He saw a circle of grinning faces, and for the first time, perhaps, he had an inkling how matters stood.

His faced flushed crimson.

"Poor little kid!" said Tommy Dodd. "Wazzums dropped out of the footer, and diddums blub?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Then Jimmy Silver was guilty of a weakness, more in keeping with his character of kind-hearted Uncle James than with that of a football captain who was out to win matches. He stepped to Lovell's side. Ridicule of his pal by the Classicals was bad enough; but from the Moderns, the rival House at Rookwood, it was more than Jimmy could stand.

Lovell was about to rush at Tommy Dodd and smite him hip and thigh. Jimmy's detaining hand on his arm stopped him.

"Hold on, old chap! No scrapping just before a match," he said.

"I'm not playing."

"You are."

"What?"

"You're playing right-half."

"Oh!"

Jimmy Silver slipped his arm through Lovell's, and walked him away. The die was cast!

The Modern fellows were left staring. So were the Classicals. They could scarcely believe their ears.

As Lovell's pal, Jimmy had reason to be satisfied. All was calm and bright once more. But as junior football captain of Rookwood, he suffered from deep remorse.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER
The Voice of Authority!

"ROT!"

"Rubbish!"

"Bosh!"

"He can't!"

"He shan't!"

"It's the limit!"

"The outside edge!"

Those remarks, and many more, were called forth by the sight of the name of A. E. Lovell in the list of players for the Rookwood match, duly posted up before dinner that day.

Jimmy Silver was one of the most popular fellows at Rookwood School. He was liked all through the Classical side, and even his rivals on the Modern side could not help liking him. He was almost as popular in Manders' House as in the School House. It was unanimously—or almost unanimously—agreed that he was the best junior football captain that Rookwood had ever turned out. Even old Bulkeley, the captain of the school, was not more popular than Uncle James.

But there was a change now.

Jimmy's popularity was at its lowest ebb.

Even Raby and Newcome looked glum, though they loyally supported their leader.

With one voice the Modern side condemned him. With few dissentient voices, the Classical side followed suit.

It was not playing the game! For the first time on record, Uncle James, of Rookwood, was accused of not playing the game, and his friends did not know what to say.

That the Greyfriars match would be a tough match, that Rookwood could not hope to beat Harry Wharton & Co. without putting their best men into the field, all the school knew. Even with Rookwood going all out, victory was still on the knees of the gods.

And in that match, almost the most important of the season, Jimmy was playing a dud.

It was unthinkable.

Lovell had sulked his way back into the team. That was how the fellows looked at it—not Lovell, of course. Lovell was satisfied that Jimmy had, after due reflection, decided to do the right thing. Jimmy Silver knew that, for various reasons, he had decided to do the wrong thing. He did not expect the other fellows to be pleased. Had he expected it he would have been woefully disappointed.

"He can't mean it," breathed Tommy Dodd. "Why, there are twenty Modern men better than Lovell!"

"That's rot!" said Mornington. "You Moderns can play footer. But there are fifty Classical men better."

"You Classical ass!"

"You Modern chump!"

"Oh, don't rag!" exclaimed Conroy. "We've got to put this plain to Jimmy, all of us, Moderns and Classicals alike. We're all Rookwooders, and we want Rookwood to put up a good game."

"Hear, hear!"

There was a rush to seek Jimmy Silver after dinner. He was easily to be found. But he had no comfort for the exasperated footballers.

"It's rot!"

"Rubbish!"

"Lovell's crocked!"

"He will crack up at the first rush!"

"He will let down the side. You know it!"

"For goodness' sake, Jimmy——"

"Don't all speak at once," said Uncle James. "I quite understand. If you want me to resign, I'm your man. Mornington's a good man to skipper the side, and I'll stand out. Leave it to Morny."

"Nothin' of the sort," said Mornington. "You're an ass, Jimmy Silver, but you needn't be a silly ass!"

"You're not going to resign, fathead,"

said Putty, of the Fourth. "We'll lynch you if you do!"

"Cut that out!" snapped Tommy Dodd. "I won't allow you to resign, even if you offer the job to a Modern."

"That's bosh, Jimmy, and you know it," said Erroll. "You've got to play, and you've got to play as skipper. But for goodness' sake don't play a man who you know will crumple up in the first ten minutes!"

"Lovell says he's fit."

"Do you believe he is?"

No reply.

"Did you believe it yesterday when you dropped him?"

Silence.

"Jimmy, old chap——"

"Have a little sense, old fellow——"

"This is a matter for the football committee," said Gower. "I think the committee ought to call on Silver to resign the captaincy."

"Shut up, Gower!"

"Kick him, somebody!"

"Yarooooh!" Cuthbert Gower departed with a loud yell, and his voice was heard no more in the excited discussion.

Jimmy Silver smiled faintly.

"Let it drop," he said. "If you're not satisfied with me, give me the chuck! Otherwise, let it drop."

"Fathead!"

"Ass!"

"Chump!"

"Frabjous ass!"

It was some consolation to the footballers to blow off steam. But it was all the consolation they had.



"Get off the field, Lovell!" Lovell did not stir. "You hear me?" exclaimed Bulkeley, staring at him. "I'm down to play," said Lovell doggedly. "Junior captain is always allowed to pick his own men." (*See Chapter* 4.)

When the Rookwood junior team—seven Classicals and four Moderns—went into the changing-room, Arthur Edward Lovell was one of the Classical seven. Jimmy Silver's manner was very quiet and subdued. He had made a mistake, and he knew it. He would have been glad if the fellows had given him the "chuck," as he had asked them to do. That would have relieved him at once of his responsibility as football captain, and his promise to play Lovell. But that was not to be. Jimmy could not be spared from the eleven; his captaincy could not be spared. It was better to play a passenger in the team than to lose Jimmy. All the fellows knew that, and they knew that if Jimmy played, Lovell played. They had to swallow it. But they did not get it down easily. Their looks and remarks in the changing-room might have made Lovell's flesh creep had not Lovell been absolutely certain that, when the game came to be played, the fellows would alter their opinion, and would realise how very fortunate they were to have Arthur Edward at right-half!



Through the open window the shout of "Goal!" came ringing. It was first blood to the Greyfriars men, in the first ten minutes of the game. Lovell's lips curled. He had been left out of the match! (*See Chapter 5.*)

Meanwhile, his knee twinged unregarded.

Jimmy Silver led his men down to the field. Three or four voices called attention to the fact that Lovell was limping. Jimmy Silver turned a deaf ear. The die was cast now. He was playing Lovell on Lovell's own firm assurance that he was fit, and he had to let it go at that.

When Harry Wharton & Co. arrived, they could not help noticing there was some suppressed excitement in the Rookwood ranks. They could not help hearing a good many remarks that were passed among the fellows, Modern and Classical, thronging round Little Side. Bob Cherry, of the Greyfriars Remove, put his foot into it all innocently.

"Had a knock?" he asked Lovell.

He was rather surprised to see a fellow who obviously limped among the doughty champions of Rookwood.

Lovell glared, much to Bob's surprise.

"I had a knock some days ago," he snapped.

"Oh! Nothing much?"

"Nothing at all."

"Oh!"

"The limpfulness of the esteemed Lovell seems rather terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, of Greyfriars.

"Rot!"

"Eh?"

"Bosh!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh did not make any more remarks to Lovell.

Mornington tapped Jimmy Silver on the shoulder as Bulkeley, of the Sixth, who was to referee the match, came down to the ground.

"It's not too late yet, Jimmy," breathed Morny. "Send that dud off. You were goin' to play Putty in his place. Putty's here, waitin' and ready. Send that dud off while there's time."

"Give us a rest," answered the wretched Jimmy.

"You howlin' ass——"

"That's enough! Get into the field."

"Look here, Jimmy——" muttered Conroy.

"Cheese it!"

"You Classical ass——" breathed Tommy Dodd.

"Are you getting into the field or not?" snapped Jimmy Silver.

The sorely-tried temper of Uncle James of Rookwood seemed to be failing him.

Bulkeley, of the Sixth, good-humoured and cheery, came up. He glanced over the footballers, and his eyes rested on Lovell. Arthur Edward at that moment was suppressing a wince, caused by an agonising twinge.

"Lovell's playing, Silver?" asked the Rookwood captain.

"Yes."

"His knee looks bad."

"D-d-does it?"

"Come here, Lovell."

Lovell had no intention of admitting, even to himself, that his knee was bad. But he was instinctively trying to keep it away from the view of Bulkeley, of the Sixth. But the captain of Rookwood, with all his cheery good-humour, had an eye that nothing escaped, especially on the football field. He had noticed Lovell's involuntary limp, and he had noticed his discoloured knee, and he was surprised, and he wanted to know. Junior matches and junior players were matters that the juniors settled for themselves; but the captain of the school was Head of the Games, and he exercised his supervision when it was needed. It seemed to Bulkeley that it was needed now.

Lovell had to come at his call. He came unwillingly. He made desperate efforts not to limp as he came. Nevertheless he limped.

"What's the matter with your knee, Lovell?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing?" repeated Bulkeley.

"Nothing!" said Lovell doggedly.

"You're limping."

"I'm not."

"What?"

"Not exactly limping," amended Lovell. Even Arthur Edward realised that he could not speak to the captain of the school as he spoke to the junior captain, though he was strongly disposed to do so.

"Not exactly?" repeated Bulkeley. "Here, let's have a look at your knee! You young ass, you're thinking of playing football with a bruise like that?"

"Yes."

"I don't blame a man for being keen on the game, and want to keep on. But to begin a match in a crocked state is simply silly. I dare say your keenness accounts for it, and I won't blame you. The blame rests on your skipper for putting you in the team. That leg of yours will double up and let you down as soon as you get going."

"It won't!"

"You may think it won't, but it will," said Bulkeley, "and more than that, you may turn a little injury into a big one by playing the goat. Silver, you've only got to look at Lovell to see that he ought not to play. What the thump do you mean by it?"

Jimmy's cheeks crimsoned.

There were smiles among the footballers. They smiled all the more because it was pretty clear now that the Rookwooders were not going, after all, to carry that passenger through the game.

"You don't generally play the fool like this, Silver," said Bulkeley, staring at the wretched junior captain. "Have you lost your common sense? You know as well as I do that Lovell ought to be resting his leg; he ought not even to take a long walk at present, let alone play football. If this is the way you pick out your men, I fancy

that the Lower School had better look for another captain. This won't do!"

"I—I——" stammered Jimmy.

He deserved it, and he knew it. He had no defence to make. He could only stammer and blush crimson, and wish that the football field would open and swallow him up.

"Send that man off," said Bulkeley abruptly.

"Look here——" began Lovell hotly.

"That will do, Lovell. You're not fit to play, and it's my duty as Head of the Games to see that you don't. Silver has made a mistake—a silly mistake—unless he picked out his men with his eyes shut. I'm surprised at this, Silver, and you'd better not let it happen again!"

"Nunno!" gasped poor Jimmy.

"Pick out another man! You're keeping your visitors waiting. Get off the field, Lovell!"

Lovell did not stir.

"You hear me?" exclaimed Bulkeley, staring at him.

"I'm down to play," said Lovell doggedly. "Junior captain is always allowed to pick his own men."

Bulkeley gave him a long, hard look.

"Go back to the House, Lovell, and go to your study, and write out two hundred lines of Virgil," he said quietly. "Say one word more before you go, and I'll make you bend over and give you six, here and now, with the Greyfriars men looking on. Cut!"

Lovell opened his lips, but shut them again. Black bitterness was in his face as he limped off the field.

Jimmy Silver signed to Putty, of the Fourth.

That eager youth was ready very quickly. He joined the ranks of the footballers before the limping Lovell had disappeared from sight. The whistle went, and the game began—minus Lovell.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER
The Greyfriars' Match

"GOAL!"

The shout reached the ears of Arthur Edward Lovell in the end study.

That celebrated study was blessed with two windows, one of which looked on the quadrangle, the other on the playing fields. At the latter Lovell had stationed himself.

He had gone to his study as ordered. Even Lovell, seething with angry resentment as he was, did not want to be given "six" on the football field, under the eyes of the visitors from Greyfriars. He had gone to his study, but he was not thinking of writing out the lines Bulkeley had given him. The lines could wait. He stationed himself at the window that gave a view of the distant football field and watched. Through the open window the shout of "Goal!" came ringing.

It was not a Rookwood shout.

A good many Greyfriars men had come over with their team, and they were watching the game with the Rookwood crowd. And every Greyfriars voice joined in the shout as Harry Wharton drove the leather in.

"Goal!"

"Bravo!"

"Goal! Goal!"

It was first blood to the Greyfriars men, in the first ten minutes of the game.

Lovell's lips curled.

He had been left out of the match. It was by Bulkeley's order, but he had not failed to see how that order had brightened the faces of all the eleven; even Jimmy Silver had been scarcely able to conceal his relief. Even Jimmy, who had consented at long last to play him, was glad that he was ordered off the field by the Head of the Games. He was out of it, but his absence did not seem to be making the side prosper. The first goal had fallen to the visitors. They could hardly have started better had Lovell been in the home side, game leg and all.

His eyes never left the field. The running figures were small in the distance, but Lovell's eyes were good, and he picked out every man with ease. He saw the Greyfriars attack come on again; he saw the ball shoot in from the foot of the dusky junior, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. Conroy, in the Rookwood citadel, barely saved. There was

a struggle before the home goal, and though the defence was made good, the Rookwooders had to go all out, and it was a close thing. The game swung away to midfield, and for a long time it stayed there or thereabouts, Rookwood never somehow getting fairly away.

Lovell's sneer became more pronounced.

He had been turned out, to the general satisfaction of the team, but his turning out had not turned it into a winning side. At half-time only one goal had been scored, and that was scored by the visitors. And the home goal had had a series of hair's-breadth escapes.

Lovell was a patriotic Rookwooder, and he wanted his school to win, even without him. Nevertheless, there was a bitter satisfaction in seeing them outclassed by Greyfriars in the circumstances.

If they were going to be beaten, their satisfaction at Lovell's exclusion was a little premature, at least. With Lovell in the team, game leg or no game leg, they could only have been beaten.

In the interval the players were breathing hard. It had been a gruelling half, and both sides were feeling the effects of it.

The whistle went again.

Lovell continued to watch, with a very unpleasant expression on his face. Sneers certainly did not improve his good looks.

The change of ends gave the Rookwooders the advantage of the wind, which was fresh and keen. But their luck did not seem to improve. Harry Wharton & Co. came on hard and fast, passing the ball like clockwork; one of those rushes with quick, short passing for which the Greyfriars men were well known. The defence was good, but the attack was better, and Conroy, in goal, was beaten to the wide. The ball went in from the foot of Herbert Vernon-Smith, of Greyfriars.

There was a yell from the Greyfriars supporters.

"Goal!"

"Good old Bounder!"

"Goal!"

Two up for Greyfriars, and a beautiful blank for Rookwood. Lovell shrugged his shoulders sarcastically.

To judge by the fellows' looks when Bulkeley sent him off the field, sending him off made the match into a walk-over for them. It did not look like it now.

But Jimmy Silver & Co. were not beaten yet.

Jimmy, at centre-half, was a tower of strength to his side, but he was conscious of a little weakness at his right hand. The two teams were, as a matter of fact, much of a muchness; both of them so good and so resolute that a feather's weight might almost have sufficed to turn the scale. Putty, of the Fourth, was a good man; but it was useless to try to think that he was anywhere as good as Lovell at his best. Lovell at his best, at right-half, would have given Rookwood the extra ounce they wanted. Jimmy Silver knew that, and he would have given much to have had Lovell—at his best—as his right-hand neighbour. But Lovell at his worst would have been of no use—a fact overlooked by the sarcastic youth watching from the distant study window. Putty was nowhere near Lovell's form at his best, but he was leagues ahead of Lovell's form with a game leg.

Still, Rookwood were not beaten. There came a change in the fortunes of the game, one of those sudden changes that make the game so enthralling to both players and spectators. Rookwood, hitherto hopelessly bottled, broke out in grand style, and the Greyfriars men, who had seemed to be carrying all before them, seemed now to be nowhere. There was a roar from Rookwood when the ball went in from Raby's foot.

Some of the excited fellows were still yelling when another roar started, to greet a goal landed by Mornington.

"Goal! Hurray! Goal!"

Lovell stared.

He was glad—of course he was glad. Any Rookwooder who was not glad to see his side take goals was worthy only of kicking, and Lovell would willingly have been the first fellow to kick. But along with his dutiful gladness there was a pang. He wanted the side to win that fixture; he was sure of that.

But he did not want his exclusion from the eleven to be justified by results. Very much indeed he did not want that. His wishes being so very mixed, it was rather fortunate that Arthur Edward Lovell had no control over the fortunes of the game

He watched grimly.

Ten minutes to go and a level score. Putty was on his back, and very slow to get up. When it came to putting on pace and feeding the forwards, Putty was all there; but in stopping rushes he was nothing like Lovell. He was quick and keen, but infinitely better in attack than in defence. Lovell was a first-class man at both—with a sound leg. Putty's sound legs did not seem much use to his side, Lovell reflected satirically.

Shots seemed to be raining on the Rookwood goal. As fast as the Greyfriars attack was driven off, it rallied and pressed again. Minutes were short now, and Greyfriars did not want a draw. There was no doubt that they were a fine team, and that they kept up the mustard right to the finish. Many eyes were turning on the clock tower over the beeches. It was almost on the point of time when Hurree Jamset Ram Singh drove the ball in. There was a roar.

"Goal!"

"Good man, Inky!"

"Hurray!"

The Rookwood crowd cheered, too. They could cheer good men when the good men beat them. The whistle went.

"Hard cheese, old scout," Harry Wharton remarked to Jimmy as the men came off. "It was touch and go."

"The touchfulness was great, and the gofulness was terrific," observed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Jimmy Silver grinned.

"It's a jolly old uncertain game," he said. "I rather think we should have done it if I hadn't lost one of my best men."



Fellows grinned and whispered, and made sly remarks intended to reach Lovell's ears. He did not heed, if he heard. His deep indignation was growing deeper and deeper. (*See Chapter 7.*)

"Not in your lifetime!" said Bob Cherry emphatically; and then, remembering that he was a visitor, he added hastily: "I mean, very likely. Hard luck on you to lose him, whoever he was."

Jimmy laughed.

"All serene. We'll take it out of St. Jim's next week," he said cheerily.

Lovell turned from the study window.

Rookwood had been beaten. Leaving Lovell out had not won the game for them. Lovell tried to feel sorry that Rookwood had captured a defeat. But he did not succeed very well. There was more of an angry, resentful satisfaction in his breast than of regret, though he did not acknowledge it to himself. They had left him out, and they had been licked. It was rough on Rookwood, but serve them jolly well right!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER
Lovell's Last Word!

"NEXT Wednesday——"

The Fistical Four of Rookwood were at tea in the end study on Monday when Lovell began.

Relations were still rather strained in the end study.

Lovell was not the fellow to bear a grudge except in certain circumstances when he felt that his personal dignity and self-respect demanded that he should be unforgiving. That, at least, was how it appeared to him.

A fellow with a proper sense of dignity and a well-developed self-respect could scarcely forgive fellows who had been glad to see him pushed out of a football match upon which he had set his heart.

On the other hand, Raby and Newcome felt rather sore at Lovell playing the goat, and letting down the end study thereby.

Jimmy Silver had a worry on his mind, caused, of course, by Arthur Edward Lovell.

The St. Jim's match was due on Wednesday, and Lovell was taking it as a matter of course that he was going to play for Rookwood.

His knee was on the mend, slowly but surely; and if Lovell considered that it was mended sufficiently to play on Saturday, still more did he consider that it would be right as rain on the following Wednesday.

Jimmy Silver did not think so.

After losing the Greyfriars match, Jimmy was more keen than ever on beating St. Jim's when they came over; and after the scene with Bulkeley on Little Side he was less keen than ever on making the serious mistake of playing a man who was not up to the mark.

It was not pleasant for the junior captain to be called over the coals before a crowd of fellows by the Head of the Games. And Jimmy could not take refuge in anger and indignation, because he knew perfectly well that old Bulkeley's reprimand was deserved. He had acted weakly and good-naturedly, and he had been called to order. Not for Lovell, or a whole tribe of Lovells, would Jimmy have repeated that mistake. Friendship was one thing and football was another. He had forgotten that once, but he was not likely to forget it again.

If Lovell was fit to play on Wednesday, well and good. But he knew that he would not be fit—not for a match like that with Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's. A week at least was required for Lovell's game knee to get back to its pristine state. So Jimmy knew that there was an argument coming, and more trouble with the headstrong Arthur Edward, and he was growing irritated and fed up at the prospect.

"Next Wednesday——" repeated Lovell, looking round the tea-table.

"Well?" murmured Jimmy.

"The first eleven will be away at Bagshot," said Lovell. "Bulkeley's playing the Bagshot First on their ground."

"That's so," said Jimmy more cheerfully. He had been afraid that Lovell was about to begin on the topic of the St. Jim's match on Wednesday.

"So Bulkeley will be away that afternoon," said Lovell.

"Yes."

"He won't referee for us, and he won't be on the ground at all."

"No."

"So he won't be able to meddle again."

"Eh?"

"So it will be all serene," went on Lovell. "Who's going to ref.?"

"Neville, of the Sixth."

"Well, Neville's not captain of the school or Head of the Games, or an interfering, meddling ass," said Lovell.

"Are you calling Bulkeley an interfering, meddling ass?" inquired Raby.

"Yes."

"Then you're a silly chump!"

"And a howling duffer!" added Newcome.

"Order!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

Lovell looked unpleasant.

"I call him an interfering, meddling ass," he said. "I'll call him what I like. Anyhow, Neville won't meddle. It will be all serene."

"How's that?" asked Jimmy.

"I mean that as Bulkeley won't be here, he won't be on the spot to butt in and send a man off the field," said Lovell. "You'll be able to play me against St. Jim's without being interfered with."

Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath.

It had come!

But Jimmy Silver was ready now. The time of weak good-nature was past. Jimmy had had his lesson; rather a severe one. If Lovell chose to go off at the deep end again, he could go, and it couldn't be helped. Jimmy had no intention whatever to take risks with the St. Jim's match in order to save Arthur Edward's arrogant self-esteem.

"We'd better have this plain, Lovell," he said. "You won't be fit for the game on Wednesday, and I can't play you."

"Rot!"

"Rot or not, there it is," said Jimmy tartly.

"You did so jolly well without me in the Greyfriars match," jeered Lovell. "You won all along the line, what?"

"No; but that has nothing to do with it."

"You think matters would have been worse if Bulkeley hadn't hoofed me off the ground?"

"Yes. We were beaten by one goal. We should have been beaten by four or five if we'd carried a passenger in the game."

"Oh!" This was a new view to Lovell.

"So that's what you think, is it?"

"It's what I know."

"And what every man in the House knows," snapped Raby—"and in the other House, too."

"Everybody excepting you, old bean," said Newcome.

Lovell compressed his lips.

"Of course, I don't admit anything of the sort for a single moment," he said.

"Can you alter facts by not admitting them?" inquired Raby.

"Oh, cheese it! Look here, Jimmy Silver ——"

"What's the good of jaw?" asked Jimmy restively. "You must really leave such things to my judgment, Lovell."

"That's not the question. You're a weak ass, and you let yourself be talked over by any fellow who takes the trouble to pull your leg," said Lovell scornfully.

"Oh, rot!"

"My knee is better now; it will be better still the day after to-morrow. You thought I was fit to play on Saturday."

"I did not."

"You were playing me, only Bulkeley butted in."

"Because I was rather an ass."

"Then you were playing a man you considered unfit for the game? What sort of a football captain do you call yourself in that case?"

Jimmy Silver looked at him. He was accustomed to a good allowance of unreasonableness from Lovell. But really this from Lovell was the limit!

"Put it plain," said Lovell scornfully. "You made up your mind to do the right thing on Saturday, only that meddling ass Bulkeley butted in. Now the fellows have got at you again."

"Oh, give us a rest!" exclaimed Jimmy impatiently. "You're not fit, and you don't play. Think what you jolly well like, but there it stands."

"I'm left out?"

"Yes."

"You mean that?"

"Do you want me to say it a dozen times

over, or get it set to music and sing it?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

Raby and Newcome grinned. It was plain English from Uncle James at last, and exactly what Lovell needed in their opinion.

Arthur Edward Lovell rose from the table. His face was almost pale with anger.

"That does it," he said. "I've been giving you a chance to play up decently. But I suspected all the time that you had this trick up your sleeve."

"Trick?" repeated Jimmy.

"This dirty trick!" emphasised Lovell.

"Oh, don't be an ass! Are you the first man that's ever been left out of a Soccer side?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, exasperated. "Why, I'm leaving out Putty, after trying him on Greyfriars. I'm going to try a Manders man in the place. But Putty isn't howling indignation up and down the passage."

"That's different."

"I don't see the difference."

"Putty's no good. I knew you would lose to Greyfriars when you bunged him in in my place. I don't blame you for that. It was Bulkeley's doing. But I knew it."

"Oh, dear!"

"Putty knows he's no good, if he's got any sense," said Lovell. "That's where the matter's different."

"You mean you've not got any sense?"

"No," roared Lovell, "I don't. I mean that Putty was the wrong man, and I am the right man."

"Bow-wow!"

"Very well," said Lovell, between his teeth. "I'm turned down! A set of the fellows have been trying to bring it about, and they've got round you. My own pals have turned me down. I more than half expected it after the way you acted last week. I'm done with the lot of you!"

Lovell tramped to the door.

No doubt he fully expected to be called back. No doubt he would have disregarded the call. But he was not called back. The almost inexhaustible patience of Uncle James of Rookwood had been exhausted at last. Not a word was spoken as Lovell went, and the door slammed behind him unheeded.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER
In Coventry!

"More trouble!" sighed Mornington.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Jevver see such a howling ass?" inquired Conroy.

"Never!"

"Well, hardly ever!" chuckled Putty, of the Fourth.

In the junior common-room that evening, Arthur Edward Lovell sat in solitary state.

His comrades came in, and he did not heed them.

Jimmy Silver gave him a friendly glance, and Lovell deliberately turned his head away.

Jimmy shrugged his shoulders.

He was fed up, which, in the circumstances, was not surprising. If Lovell chose to play the goat again and make himself a figure of fun in the House, he had to be given his head. Jimmy Silver could do nothing but let him rip, and trust to time and reflection to bring him to his senses.

There were many smiles in the room.

Lovell had a "Hobby Annual" for company, and he seemed to be reading sedulously. A "Hobby Annual" was very good company, and perhaps Lovell was enjoying it.

Still, as he was not turning the pages, he could not have been making very great progress with the perusal.

Fellows grinned and whispered, and made sly remarks intended to reach Lovell's ears. He did not heed, if he heard. Only, his deep indignation was growing deeper and deeper.

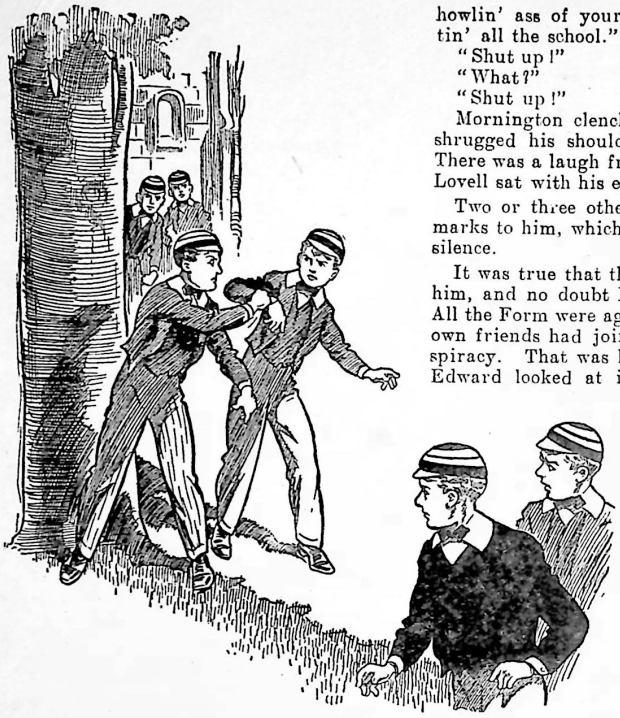
Morny strolled up to him at last. It was Morny's mischievous desire to draw the indignant and sulky youth.

"Turnin' up on Wednesday?" asked Mornington.

No reply.

"You'll come along and give us a cheer, what?"

Lovell fixed his eyes on Mornington. He was conscious that all eyes in the room were



Lovell, his face flushing with anger, struck the hand savagely from his shoulder. "Oh!" gasped Jimmy. (*See Chapter* 8.)

fixed on him. He spoke clearly and distinctly:

"Sheer off!"

"What?"

"I don't want you to speak to me. I'm fed up with you."

"Oh!"

"Is that plain enough?" sneered Lovell.

Mornington's eyes gleamed

"Quite!" he assented. "You mean you want to be a sulky fool, and get laughed at by all Rookwood. Some fellows have a queer idea of enjoyin' themselves. Are you cuttin' everyone who thinks you're making a howlin' ass of yourself? That means cuttin' all the school."

"Shut up!"

"What?"

"Shut up!"

Mornington clenched his hands. But he shrugged his shoulders and turned away. There was a laugh from some of the juniors. Lovell sat with his eyes fixed on his book.

Two or three other fellows addressed remarks to him, which were received in stony silence.

It was true that their object was to draw him, and no doubt Lovell was aware of it. All the Form were against him now, and his own friends had joined in the general conspiracy. That was how the hapless Arthur Edward looked at it; to that length had sulky resentment, recklessly indulged, led him. Well, he didn't care. He was sure that he didn't care; he told himself many times that he didn't care a straw. If he was let down by his friends, mocked by the rest of the Form, he didn't care a straw. Solitary dignity was enough for him. They should see that he didn't care.

Soon enough the fellows let him alone.

If Lovell chose to sulk, he could sulk. If he chose to send himself to Coventry, he could abide in that lonely and chilly place as long as he liked. It was his own business.

Lovell did not go to the end study, as usual, for prep. He was cutting his old friends, and he would not share the study with them. His indignation was growing to a white-hot pitch.

He did his prep. in the Form-room, which was solitary and silent and rather chilly, but quite in keeping with Arthur Edward's present mood.

After prep. he was in the junior common-room again, in solitary state, hugging his lonely resentment.

His friends did not approach him.

It was the most serious breach that had ever occurred in the happy circle of the Fistical Four, but there was nothing they could do to heal it. Lovell's requirements were fixed too high for reconciliation. First of all, he had to be put down for the St. Jim's match. That was impossible. So there was nothing to be done.

In the Classical Fourth dormitory it was the same. Lovell went to bed without a word.

After lights out, Jimmy Silver called out cheerily from his bed:

"Good-night, Lovell."

There was no answer.

Jimmy laid his head on his pillow and went to sleep. But it was long before Lovell slept. Indignation and sulky resentment did not conduce to balmy slumber.

When the rising-bell clanged out in the morning, and the Classical Fourth turned out, Jimmy Silver made one more attempt.

"Coming for a trot round before brekker, Lovell?"

Lovell stared him in the face and did not answer.

That was the finish. Jimmy made no further attempts. He was growing indignant himself by this time.

In class that morning Lovell was something of an Ishmael. In morning break he stalked off by himself, still limping a little. His game knee was much better, but it was not mended yet by any means. Some of the fellows were punting about an old footer. Lovell did not join them. He stalked away, lofty and unapproachable.

Nobody heeded.

Lovell had sent himself to Coventry; that was what it amounted to. He could stay there as long as he liked so far as the rest of Rookwood was concerned. If he chose to step out of the common life of the Form, it was inevitable that the life of the Form should go on its way, unregarding him. Lovell, perhaps, had not expected that. To stand aloft on a pedestal of unapproachable dignity was one thing; to be left unregarded on his pedestal was another. Probably he did not find it pleasant. But not for worlds would he have shown that he did not like it, or have made the slightest advances to any man in the Fourth Form. He was more disposed to snub any advances that might be made to him. But he did not have the opportunity; none was made.

Such a situation, once unthinkingly brought about, was not easily remedied. As the day wore on, Lovell found lonely dignity less and less of a comfort to him; but the only effect of that was to increase his resentment and his bitterness. He heard, without joining, the football talk, especially about the St. Jim's match. His bitterness grew. Jimmy Silver, once his best chum, was thinking only about that match with St. Jim's, forgetful of his lost chum. A bitter desire grew in Lovell's heart to see the Rookwood junior eleven soundly beaten, even more soundly than by Greyfriars. He was now in a mood in which he would willingly have brought about their defeat, had that been possible to him. Self-imposed solitude was not improving the character of Arthur Edward Lovell.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER
Left On His Own!

"JIMMY!"

"Hallo!"

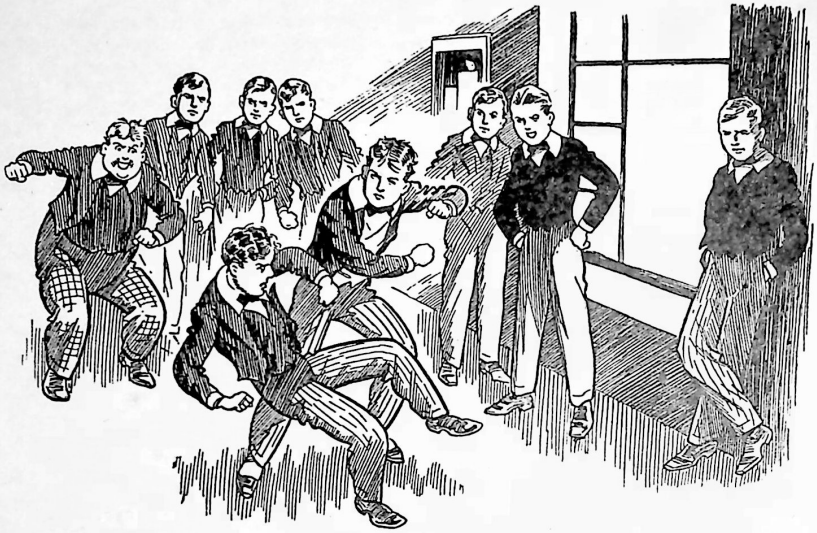
"You're wanted."

Jimmy Silver & Co. were punting a ball about after class that day when Tubby Muffin rolled out of the House with that message.

Lovell was stalking unheeded under the beeches at a distance. Scarcely a glance fell upon him. Even as a jest, Lovell's attitude had palled on the Rookwood juniors. Even the Moderns had tired of cracking jokes about him. He had simply dropped out, and was left where he dropped. Which, of course, was one more deep grievance for the unhappy fellow who had allowed sulky resentment to master him and cloud his understanding.

"You're wanted on Dicky Dalton's 'phone, Jimmy," called out Tubby Muffin.

"Oh, my hat!"



Mornington knew that he had an opening, and he did not lose the chance. He piled in with his right and left, and Lovell went sprawling and crashing along the passage. (*See Chapter* 9.)

"Mr. Dalton told me to call you. It's a trunk call from St. Jim's," added the fat Classical.

"Oh!"

"Something about the match to-morrow," said Raby. "Nothing up, I hope. Better cut in, Jimmy."

Jimmy Silver ran into the House.

It was uncommon enough for a Fourth Form man to be asked for on the telephone, and certainly he had not expected a call from St. Jim's. If it meant that anything was to interfere with the match on the morrow, it would be a blow for Jimmy. He was anxious to know.

The receiver was off the telephone when Jimmy Silver reached his Form-master's study. Richard Dalton gave him a kind nod.

"Tom Merry has rung up from St. Jim's, Silver. You may take the call. It is about the football match to-morrow."

"Thank you, sir."

Jimmy Silver picked up the receiver.

"Hallo! That you, Merry?"

"Yes. Is that Jimmy Silver?" came Tom Merry's voice over the wires.

"Speaking."

"About the match to-morrow, old chap. We're writing, but I thought I'd ring you up and give you a bit longer notice, so that you needn't waste the date. I'm awfully sorry that we're prevented from coming over."

"Anything happened?"

"You bet, or we shouldn't be calling off a footer match," answered Tom Merry. "We couldn't let you know sooner, as it only turned up to-day."

"Nothing serious, I hope."

"We don't know yet. Two fellows are down with influenza, rather suddenly. They're in sanny now, of course. Whether it's gone any further, or going any further, the doctor can't tell yet; but he has advised the Head to cut off all out matches this

week. Rot, you know, but doctors are doctors, and the Head is the Head, and we can't help ourselves."

Jimmy smiled.

"I dare say the doctor's right, old bean," he answered.

"Well, of course, we shouldn't like to bring the 'flu over to Rookwood, and you wouldn't quite like that, if we did," said Tom, with a laugh. "I don't believe there's any danger myself. All my men are sound as a bell. But we have to give the medical johnny his head, so there you are. I'm letting you know at the earliest possible moment. You won't get a letter till the morning."

"Thanks."

"What about Wednesday week?" asked the St. Jim's junior captain. "Have you got that date open?"

"Luckily, yes. We had a House match here for that date, but we can postpone it if you can come over."

"Call it Wednesday week, then. If we've really got a 'flu outbreak here, we shall know for certain long before that, and I can let you know. But I'm sure it will be all right."

"That's settled, then."

"Good-bye, old chap."

"Good-bye, kid."

Jimmy Silver put up the receiver.

His face was thoughtful as he walked out of the House. It was rather a blow for the match to be postponed; but on reflection Jimmy Silver realised that it was not such a blow after all, in the peculiar circumstances. Lovell's game knee, which was too "game" for play on the morrow, would certainly be all right on the following Wednesday. Lovell would be able to play in the St. Jim's match, after all. Irritating as Lovell's attitude was, Jimmy was glad of a chance of reconciliation, of extricating Arthur Edward from the ridiculous position he had taken up. And he was equally glad of the chance of getting Lovell back into the team, for Lovell, in his old form, was the best man available at Rookwood. What had seemed rather a blow at first was, as Jimmy realised, a blessing in disguise.

So Uncle James' face was bright when he rejoined his comrades in the quad.

"Well?" said a dozen voices.

Jimmy explained.

"Oh, rotten!" grunted Mornington.

"Beastly!" said Tommy Dodd.

"Well, nobody likes a fixture put off," remarked Jimmy, "but this will make it all right for Lovell to play."

"What?"

"Look here——"

"Lovell will be right as rain long before next Wednesday," said Jimmy Silver. "It's all serene."

"You're goin' to play him, after all his thunderin' cheek, and his playin' the goat——"

"I'm going to play the best man for the job. Lovell's the best man for the job when he's fit. That settles it."

Mornington made a grimace.

"Well, you may be right," he said. "But if I were footer captain I'd leave him out for the rest of the season after the way he's acted."

"Same here," said Tommy Dodd.

"Yes, rather!" said Putty, of the Fourth, emphatically.

"And lose matches?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Br-r-r-r! If we beat St. Jim's with Lovell in the team, it will fix it in his silly head for good and all that we can't win without him."

"Never mind what it fixes in his silly head so long as we beat St. Jim's," said Jimmy cheerily. "Anybody know where he is?"

"Stalking like a spectre under the beeches, scowlin' at any man who comes within ten yards of him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver smiled, and walked away to the beeches there and then. He soon discerned Lovell, leaning against an old tree, with his moody gaze fixed before him on vacancy. With the corner of his eye, however, Lovell spotted Jimmy Silver coming up. He detached himself from the tree, turned his back on the captain of the Fourth, and walked away.

Jimmy Silver breathed rather hard.

"Lovell!" he called out.

Arthur Edward did not turn his head.

Jimmy broke into a run and overtook him.

"Lovell! Stop a minute!"

"Leave me alone, can't you?" snapped Lovell.

"But I want to tell you——"

"Shut up!"

"I want——"

"Will you leave me alone?" almost snarled Lovell. "We're not friends now, and I'm done with you! Keep your distance!"

"I tell you——"

"Shut up!"

Lovell swung away again. Jimmy Silver caught him by the shoulder to detain him, and Lovell, his face flushing with anger, struck the hand savagely from his shoulder.

"Oh!" gasped Jimmy.

It was a sharp rap on his wrist.

Jimmy Silver's eyes flashed, and he clenched his hands hard, and made a stride at Lovell. For the moment it looked as if he would hurl himself at his one-time chum, hitting out right and left. Lovell put up his hands in a twinkling, his eyes gleaming over them, a sneer on his face. Evidently he was not averse to a scrap.

"Come on!" he said between his teeth.

Very nearly Jimmy Silver took him at his word. It required all his self-control to keep his hands down. But he dropped them and unclenched them. Lovell gave a taunting laugh.

With burning cheeks and beating heart, Jimmy Silver turned away. The taunting laugh followed him. Jimmy did not look back. He was determined that he would not be drawn into actual conflict if he could help it. He strode away, unheeding, though his eyes were gleaming with anger.

The next time Arthur Edward Lovell came across the captain of the Fourth, Jimmy Silver's face was as grim as his own. The olive-branch, offered so often and rejected, was not offered again, and Lovell was left to go on his own wilful way, unregarded and unfriended.

THE NINTH CHAPTER
A Licking for Lovell!

"I'D have licked him!"

"Well, he could lick him if he liked."

"Not worth it."

Arthur Edward Lovell, coming along the Classical Fourth passage, heard those remarks from a group of the Classical Fourth.

He knew what they were discussing.

A good many eyes had witnessed that little scene under the beech-trees. Jimmy Silver's self-control, admirable in itself, did not find many admirers in the Form.

The general opinion in the Classical Fourth was that Arthur Edward Lovell was asking for a licking; begging and praying for one, as Valentine Mornington expressed it. That the captain of the Fourth was fully able to give him what he was asking for was common knowledge. And the Classical juniors saw little to commend in Jimmy's self-restraint. A sulky fellow, who quarrelled with all his friends and put on airs and graces all round, would have been all the better for a thrashing in the opinion of the Rookwooders.

Lovell's eyes flashed as he heard.

One day in Coventry—self-imposed as it was—had intensified his bitterness to an alarming extent. Solitude led to brooding, and brooding over grievances, real or fancied, could only make matters worse. He was left alone now, disregarded, looked on, if he was looked on at all, as a fellow who did not matter, a fellow whose persistent wrongheadedness made it advisable to leave him severely alone.

Lovell was possessed by a fierce desire to show the fellows that he did matter. He was ready for a quarrel with anybody.

So he stopped on his way up the passage, and turned a grim and savage look on the group of Classicals.

Tubby Muffin detached himself from the group and sidled away. Peele, of the Fourth, became interested in the view from the nearest window. But there were five or six other fellows who were not in the least alarmed by Lovell's black looks.

Conroy and Putty and Oswald eyed him coolly. Mornington laughed in his face.

"You're speaking of me, I think?" said Lovell, between his clenched teeth.

"Hallo! Found your voice?" grinned Mornington. "Now you've found it, would you mind keepin' it for the fellows who want to hear it—if any?"

"Were you speaking of me?"

"Tremble, you chaps!" said Mornington. "Lovell's ratty! This is where our knees knock together."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you're afraid to own up——"

Mornington laughed.

"I was speakin' of you, and wonderin' why Jimmy Silver didn't whop you as you asked him to," he replied. "I'd have done it in his place, without half so much askin'!"

"Same here," said Conroy.

"And here," said Oswald.

"Well, you've got a chance now," exclaimed Lovell. "Put your hands up, Mornington, you cad!"

And Lovell rushed at the dandy of the Fourth.

Morny's hands were up in a twinkling.

The next second a fight was going on in the Classical Fourth passage. Fellows came hurrying out of the studies.

"A fight!" yelled Tubby Muffin into the end study. "Lovell and Morny! He, he, he!"

"The silly ass!" breathed Jimmy Silver.

And he came out into the passage.

The fight was going strong. The slim and graceful Mornington was giving ground before the more burly Lovell, but he was fighting hard, with a set, grim face. And suddenly, as Lovell pressed him fiercely, there was a pause, and Lovell stumbled.

It was his game knee again. He had forgotten it, but it had failed him in the critical moment.

Morny did not know why his attack tailed off; he was fighting hard, and he was excited. He only knew that he had an opening, and he did not lose the chance. He piled in with right and left, and Lovell went sprawling and crashing along the passage.

"Man down!" yelled Tubby Muffin. "He, he, he!"

"Shut up, you fat idiot!" growled Jimmy Silver.

He ran up to Lovell. The sight of his hapless friend, sprawling under the blows of a fellow who in ordinary circumstances was no match for him, went to Jimmy's heart. Lovell's wrongheadedness had led him into this—into open conflict with his Form-fellows, and he was not equal to what he had so wilfully and recklessly taken on.

Jimmy dropped on a knee beside him.

Lovell was gasping dazedly. He made an effort to rise, and sank back again. But as Jimmy gave him a helping hand, Lovell brushed it roughly aside. He was not a fellow to be pitied.

He staggered up.

"Lovell——"

"Mind your own business, hang you!"

Jimmy Silver stepped back.

"Come on, Mornington, you rotter!" snarled Lovell.

But by that time Valentine Mornington had realised the cause of Lovell's collapse, and he had dropped his hands.

"Chuck it," he said. "Wait till your jolly old leg's mended, old bean. You've got only one leg to stand on."

"That's a lie!"

"Every fellow here can see it. What's the good of playin' the fool, Lovell? You're no more fit for fightin' than you are for footer."

That did it! Lovell rushed at him fiercely, and Morny, willy-nilly, had to resume the combat.

"Give him what he wants," grinned Peele. "He won't be happy till he gets it!"

Lovell's attack was hot and fierce, and again Morny had to give ground. But again that unfortunate leg played false. It was odd that Lovell would not admit even to himself that he had a game leg when that game leg was obviously letting him down. But to admit it even to himself was to admit that he had been utterly

wrongheaded all the time, hopelessly in the wrong all along the line. Not for any consideration would Lovell have admitted that. So he declined to see the obvious; and there are, of course, none so blind as those who are determined not to see.

Nevertheless, whether Lovell chose to admit it or not, the knee was undoubtedly "gammy," and it crocked. Lovell almost fell, as he felt a frightful twinge; the next moment he quite fell as Morny's fist was dashed in his face.

Crash!

That was the end of the fight.

When Lovell rose, slowly and painfully he limped away, with a black and bitter face. He was licked, and he knew it. Bitterest of all was that it had happened under the eyes of all the Classical Fourth, under the eyes of Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome. They were glad, of course; certainly they had not looked glad, but Lovell did not doubt that they were glad.



"My hat!" ejaculated Jimmy. He wrenched at the door-handle. But the door was fast. Evidently it was locked on the outside. "Here, open that door!" he shouted. There was a low laugh on the landing outside.
(*See Chapter* 10.)

"Licked to the wide!" said Peele. "And that's the fellow who thinks he can play St. Jim's, when he can hardly stand on his gammy leg!"

That was the last remark Lovell heard as he went.

He did not show up in the junior Common-room that evening. His defeat at fisticuffs had been the finishing blow to his pride, and he would not let mocking eyes behold the signs of damage on his face. He kept away from the other fellows, and was not seen till dormitory. Then he went to bed without a word or a look at the rest.

Probably he expected some chipping. But the Classical fellows said nothing on the subject. They let him alone, and, in fact, ignored his existence.

But that ignoring of his existence was the unkindest cut of all.

Lovell lay awake long after the rest of the Form were asleep. His swollen nose and other damages helped to keep him wakeful.

And the thoughts that were passing through the mind of the poor wrongheaded fellow now would have startled his Form-fellows had they guessed.

THE TENTH CHAPTER
Desperate Measures !

JIMMY SILVER stared round the end study. It was Wednesday afternoon; the afternoon which should have been devoted to the St. Jim's match, but for the unexpected postponement of that fixture.

A scratch match had been arranged for that afternoon to fill up the blank, and incidentally to keep the Rookwood junior footballers up to the mark.

Jimmy had come up for his football boots. He kept them in the study. Raby and Newcome, like most of the fellows, kept their football things in the changing-room. On such matters there was a good deal of communism among the Rookwooders, and a fellow who could not find his shirt or his boots did not hesitate to help himself to anybody else's if they would fit more or less. This was not as it should have been, and sometimes a master or a prefect would descend on the fellows and institute a new order of things—which lasted until that master or prefect forgot about the matter, and no longer. Jimmy was rather particular about his boots, as every footballer should be. He kept them in the study, where they were not liable to get mixed with any other fellow's.

But on the present occasion it looked as if some borrower, short of boots, had dropped into the end study to look for some.

For they were gone.

Jimmy looked round the study and stared round it. He glanced into the cupboard, and he peeped under the table and peered over the top of the bookcase. No boots met his eye.

He looked cross.

Really, it was too bad, when a fellow took so much trouble with his football boots, if a reckless borrower had tracked him to his lair, so to speak, and borrowed the boots there.

"Bother !" said Jimmy.

It was annoying—all the more because the other fellows had gone down to Little Side, and were expecting Jimmy to join them there. He did not want to waste time rooting over the House for somebody else's boots to replace his own.

There was a step outside the end study.

"Hallo, you ! Seen my boots ?" called out Jimmy Silver.

"Yes."

Jimmy started.

It was Lovell's voice.

Jimmy swung round to the door. Arthur Edward Lovell was looking in, with his hands in his pockets and a sarcastic grin on his face.

Jimmy stared at him. He did not quite understand Lovell's expression, and he was surprised by Lovell speaking to him at all in the present circumstances.

"You've seen them ?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Well, where are they ?"

"In the top attic."

"Eh ?"

"Top attic."

"How on earth could my football boots get into the top attic ?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, in amazement. "They couldn't walk up there, I suppose ?"

"They could be taken there."

"Do you mean that some silly ass has been larking with my boots, just when I want them to put on," exclaimed Jimmy. "Who was it ?"

"I," answered Lovell coolly.

"Well, you thundering ass," said Jimmy, "if you've taken my boots up to the attic, you can jolly well go and fetch them down again ! See ?"

"Fetch them yourself !"

"Look here, Lovell——"

"Go and eat coke !"

Lovell lounged away.

"You silly ass !" roared Jimmy Silver, in great exasperation. "What the thump do you mean by playing a kid's trick like this ?"

Lovell made no answer.

He had lounged away to the passage

window, and stood staring moodily out into the quad, heedless of Jimmy Silver.

Jimmy drew a deep breath.

He was annoyed and irritated by such a childish trick, but he was more surprised than either. It was not like Lovell to play such a trick, and an infantile prank of this sort was certainly not in keeping with the attitude of lofty dignity Lovell had adopted. Really, it was difficult to understand.

Lovell had told him where the boots were; apparently it was his object to give Jimmy a tramp up two or three flights of stairs to the old attic to fetch his boots. Such a trick was absolutely puerile; it almost made Jimmy wonder whether Lovell was quite in his right mind. Still, he knew where the boots were now, and he started to fetch them.

The old attics at the top of the building had been disused for many years, except by the spiders. They were hardly ever entered, except occasionally by some fellows like Peele and Gower, to smoke cigarettes in great secrecy and with a feeling of devilment. The top attic was a very secluded room, with a tiny, cobwebby window looking out over sloping slates and chimney-tops, and nothing else but the sky. The stairs were narrow and steep, and Jimmy did not feel good-tempered as he laboriously mounted them.

He reached the top attic at last and went in.

The room was empty save for dust and cobwebs. In the far corner his boots were to be seen, in the dim light from the tiny window.

Jimmy Silver hurried across the room.

He picked up the boots and turned.

Bang!

The door of the little attic closed suddenly and sharply. The sudden bang made him jump.

Jimmy stared at the door.

It opened outwards, and it had been flung to. There was no draught on the little landing or the narrow stair to cause it to bang shut.

Jimmy ran across to the door and pushed it.

It did not move.

He had not noticed, when he entered, that the key was on the outside of the lock. But he noticed now that it was not on the inside.

"My hat!" ejaculated Jimmy.

He wrenched at the door-handle.

But the door was fast. Evidently it was locked on the outside. Jimmy banged on it with his fist.

"Here, open this door!" he shouted.

There was a low laugh on the landing outside.

"Lovell!" exclaimed Jimmy, in wonder.

"You've got it."

"You utter ass! Unlock that door!" shouted Jimmy. "The fellows are waiting for me on Little Side."

"I know that. Let them wait!"

"Lovell——"

"You're bagged," came Lovell's cool, steady voice through the keyhole. "You're landed, you rotter! You've asked for this, and now you've got it. You've left me out of the St. Jim's match, and now I've left you out. See? I'm going out for the afternoon, and taking the key with me. Ta-ta!"

Steps were heard descending the narrow stair.

"Lovell!" roared Jimmy Silver.

There was no reply. The footsteps were gone. Only the echo of Jimmy Silver's voice answered him.

Bang! bang! bang!

Jimmy thumped savagely on the door.

"Lovell! Come back, you thumping ass! My hat! I'll jolly well lick you for this! Come back, you howling chump!"

But there was no answer, and he realised that Lovell was gone, taking the key with him.

Jimmy Silver was a prisoner in the attic.

It was scarcely credible, though it had happened. Jimmy ceased to shout and thump on the door at last. Lovell was gone, and he knew that no one else could hear. The top attic was too far from the inhabited portions of the building for that. Unless Lovell chose to come back and release him, he was a prisoner for the afternoon.

"The ass!" breathed Jimmy. "The utter idiot!"

Evidently the conveying of the football boots to the top attic had not been the childish trick Jimmy had supposed. It had been designed to get him there, so that he could be locked in. Lovell evidently had followed him quietly up the stairs, and slammed the door on him and locked it, trapping him with perfect ease Not for an instant had Jimmy suspected or expected anything of the sort until it happened. Even now he could hardly believe it. It was difficult to comprehend that sulky resentment and hugging a grievance could so far change the nature of a fellow who had always been open and honourable and frank, with all his headstrong ways. There was something smacking very unpleasantly of treachery in what Lovell had done—astonishing enough in a fellow like Lovell.

And why had he done it?

To keep Jimmy out of a practice match? It was not that. Jimmy realised that Lovell, so completely estranged from the rest by his own wrongheaded conduct, did not even know that the St. Jim's match had been postponed.

He believed that Tom Merry & Co. were arriving at Rookwood that afternoon for the game—that they might arrive any minute now. And, believing that Jimmy Silver was wanted on the football ground for one of the biggest fixtures of the football season, he had tricked him into that lonely attic and locked him in.

As he realised that, Jimmy felt a flush of anger and his eyes sparkled.

He knew that there was no hope of release.

He could have shouted till his throat was husky and hoarse, and no one would have heard him. No one had the least suspicion where he was. If the fellows looked for him, certainly they were not likely to look in the attics. He was there till Lovell chose to release him, and Lovell had said that he was going out for the afternoon. Had the St. Jim's match been taking place that day, Jimmy Silver would have been out of it.

"The rotter!" breathed Jimmy.

Then he laughed.

He could not help it.

It was uncomfortable enough to pass a half-holiday locked up in a lonely attic. It was disagreeable to miss a game on Little Side—even a practice game. But that was all there was to it. No real harm was done. The big fixture, which Lovell believed he was missing, was not to take place till a week later.

Jimmy laughed aloud.

Lovell had taken to scheming and plotting in his sulky resentment, but scheming and plotting really were not in his line at all. He was about the worst schemer and plotter at Rookwood. This was exactly like Lovell; he was given to blundering and making endless mistakes; but he had never blundered so conspicuously and ridiculously as when he took on the rôle of schemer and plotter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jim's laugh rang through the attic.

There was something so supremely ridiculous in Lovell's having locked him up away from a practice match, in the firm belief that he was keeping him away from a big fixture, that Jimmy roared over it.

Lovell had acted badly—very badly; but a fellow who did his bad actions in this way, whose scheming was run on these absurd lines, was evidently not cut out by Nature for a rascal. Jimmy was no longer feeling angry. The situation was too absurd for that. He laughed loud and long, and settled down to wait as cheerfully as he could.

On Little Side, the fellows wondered why Jimmy did not come. One or two fellows came up to the House to call him, and did not find him. Certainly they never dreamed that he was locked up in the attics. They supposed that he must have been called away, and went back to the football. It was a matter of no great consequence, a man more or less in a practice game. Had the St. Jim's match been on that afternoon, assuredly the matter would have been very different. Jimmy would have been hunted for high and low: his absence would have spread dismay all through the Lower School. But the St. Jim's match was still a week distant, and nobody thought of it in

connection with Jimmy's absence from Little Side. The practice went on serenely, while Jimmy was enduring his incarceration in the top attic as calmly as he could.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER
Perplexing !

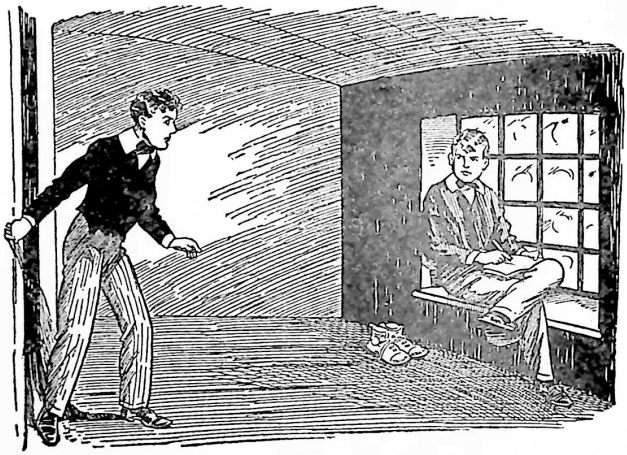
ARTHUR EDWARD LOVELL came in at the gates of Rookwood, rather tired and dusty.

He had spent a long afternoon by himself, tramping in country lanes and leafless woods. Such a tramp as he had often enjoyed in company with his chums, but which he had not found very enjoyable all on his lonely own.

He was tired now, he was dusty, he was dispirited.

He had walked out of Rookwood, with the attic key in his pocket, angry triumph in his breast, giving one sarcastic, sneering glance in the direction of the football ground as he went.

But during his long and solitary walk, his feeling of triumph had evaporated, and his success in his wretched scheme left a bitter taste in his mouth.



Lovell looked in. "So you've come?" said Jimmy Silver's quiet voice. Jimmy was seated in the little window-seat, with a pencil in his hand and a pocket-book on his knee. (*See Chapter* 11.)

The consequences, too, had to be thought of when he came back to the school. Headstrong and reckless as he was, Lovell had to think a little when he turned his footsteps homeward towards Rookwood.

The dusk was falling. Football, of course, was long over. How had the match gone?

Defeat, of course. With Lovell out and Jimmy Silver out, two reserves would have had to be played at centre and right-half, and that was more than enough to settle Rookwood's chances. At their best they were no more than a match for Tom Merry & Co Without their captain, Rookwood had no chance of pulling off a victory, and that was a certainty. The St. Jim's match was not one of those games in which hurried changes could be made in the team at the last moment, and second-rate men given a chance. It was a match in which Rookwood had to go all out. An ounce of quality more or less might make all the difference. Lovell believed that his own exclusion would bring about defeat, as he believed that it had brought about defeat in the tussle with Greyfriars. With Jimmy Silver missing also, there was not the shadow of a doubt. The only question was, by how many goals had Rookwood been licked?

Had Lovell had the sense of his sins, as it were, an overwhelming defeat of the Rookwood side would have pleased him. Somehow the idea of it did not please him, however. He had deliberately brought it about, as he fancied, by locking the junior captain in the attic. Yet he did not want

the side defeated, as he dimly realised. He did not want the visiting team to pile up a ridiculous margin of goals. He did not want Tom Merry & Co. to return to St. Jim's thinking that Rookwood had forgotten how to play Soccer.

What he did want was rather vague.

As usual, he had acted without reflection, carried away by headstrong impulse. Not as usual, he had acted badly—indeed, wickedly—and though he would not think so, or believe so, the lurking consciousness of it was horribly discomforting.

He had been justified, he said to himself a score of times. A fellow keen to play, entitled to play, fit to play, he had been turned out by a sort of conspiracy among the others, to whom his captain, his own chum, had weakly given ear. That was the extraordinary view Lovell took of the matter.

From that point of view, he felt justified in hitting back in the only way he could. As for the match, it was lost anyhow when the football captain followed such methods. Had not the Greyfriars match been lost?

But that point of view, which had satisfied Lovell right up to the end, right up to the time when it was too late to repent, somehow ceased to satisfy him when it was too late. What he had done had, in fact, given him a shock, and that shock had opened his eyes a little.

One thought made him still obstinate, defiant, unyielding. That was the thought of the consequences.

He had to face them; he knew that. The Rookwooders would be ready to lynch the man who had kept their captain out of a big fixture. Any sign of repentance on Lovell's part would be attributed only to a cowardly desire to escape his punishment. At that thought, Lovell set his teeth. He would be ragged unmercifully; he would be turned out of the football club. If the matter came to the ears of the masters, he might be flogged and even expelled from the school. Well, the fellows should see at least that he could face the music without flinching.

Like Pharaoh of old, Lovell hardened his heart. He was ready to oppose sullen defiance to the condemnation of all Rookwood.

He tramped up to the House.

It was near time for call-over, and many fellows were going in. Nobody, as was usual now, spoke to Lovell or took any heed of him.

But Lovell was puzzled.

The fellows did not look as if any disaster had occurred that afternoon. There were no angry looks, no sign of excitement.

Surely they had not pulled off the match after all, in spite of the loss of two instead of one of Rookwood's best men?

It was impossible.

The fellows were not even discussing the game or Jimmy Silver's absence. Lovell caught a good deal of talk among the fellows as he went in, but no one referred to St. Jim's. No one spoke of the game; no one seemed concerned about Jimmy being away.

It was mystifying.

Never had Lovell's exclusion weighed so heavily upon him. It needed all his stiff-necked pride to keep him from speaking to some of the fellows and asking them questions.

He remembered that Neville, of the Sixth, was to referee the match. He could speak to a Sixth Form man. He sighted Neville, and went up to him.

"Did you referee for the junior team today, Neville?" he asked.

Neville glanced at him.

"No," he answered.

And he walked on.

So Neville hadn't been referee. Somebody must have been, if the game had been played at all; but, without knowing who, Lovell could not ask him what had happened.

Conroy called to Lovell as he went upstairs. Perhaps he forgot that Lovell had sent himself to Coventry, or perhaps he did not care.

"See anything of Jimmy Silver out of gates, Lovell?"

Lovell started and looked round.

"No."

Evidently the fellows did not yet guess Lovell's agency in the junior captain's disappearance. They were really not likely to guess, and they would not know till Jimmy told them.

"Wasn't he with you on Little Side?" Lovell asked, his intense curiosity to know what had happened overmastering his sulky reserve.

"No."

"You played without him?"

"Yes."

"You don't seem to have missed him much," said Lovell, more and more mystified by Conroy's evident indifference.

"No. What did it matter, anyhow?" said the Australian junior. "I was only wondering where he'd got to."

"Oh!"

Utterly perplexed, Lovell went on up the stairs as Conroy walked away whistling.

The loss of Jimmy Silver that afternoon could not have been the crushing blow that Lovell had supposed it would be. But he could not understand. He had expected to find the juniors seething with excitement and wrath, and he found that nobody cared a straw. Really, it was mystifying.

He tramped up the narrow stairs to the attics.

On the landing outside the top attic he stopped, and drew the key from his pocket. Roll-call was due in ten minutes now, and Jimmy Silver had to be released, unless he was to be inquired after by the masters. Lovell inserted the key in the lock and turned it.

He pulled the door open.

"So you've come?" said Jimmy Silver's quiet voice.

Lovell looked in.

Jimmy was seated in the little window-seat, with a pencil in his hand and a pocket-book on his knee. He had been passing the time with some exercises in Latin verbs; not a very enticing way of passing a half-holiday, but better than idleness. He put the pencil and book into his pocket, and came across to the door.

Lovell eyed him.

He was prepared for assault and battery; indeed, he fully expected a fight with Jimmy Silver to be the beginning of what he had to go through. He was not fit for a scrap. He was tired, and his long tramp had caused his knee to twinge painfully; he had overtaxed the limb that was not yet recovered. But he faced the captain of the Fourth grimly. Fit or unfit, he was ready.

Jimmy Silver looked him full in the face.

What Jimmy read there did not make him angry. It rather made him sorry. He did not raise his hand, and Lovell, flushing, abandoned his defensive attitude.

"You've missed the match!" he jeered.

A faint smile played over Jimmy's face for a moment. Even yet Lovell did not know that his wonderful scheme had missed fire, and had no suspicion of his egregious blunder.

Jimmy could not help wondering what his feelings would be like when he made the discovery.

"You don't seem to care," said the mystified Lovell.

"Not very much."

"I suppose Rookwood were licked?"

"Do you?"

"They'd have been licked anyhow, so it doesn't matter."

"It doesn't matter, certainly," agreed Jimmy.

"If you're looking for a scrap, I'm ready."

"Thank you," said Jimmy Silver politely. "I'm not looking for a scrap."

He passed Lovell and went down the stairs.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER
Funny!

"JIMMY!"

"Jimmy Silver!"

"Here he is!"

"Where on earth have you been, you ass?"

A dozen voices greeted Jimmy as he joined the fellows going into Big Hall for call-over.

"Why didn't you come down to the footer?" demanded Raby.

"You were going to follow us down," said Newcome.

"What have you been doing?"

Jimmy Silver did not reply for a moment or two. He had already made up his mind that he would say nothing of what Lovell had done. Perhaps he erred on the side of kindness and forgiveness—if, indeed, it is possible to err in that direction. Lovell had acted badly, rottenly, unscrupulously. Jimmy knew all that. But he knew also that he did not want to see the finger of scorn pointed at his old chum, that he did not want to see Lovell ragged by the Form, ragged first and cut afterwards by all the Classical Fourth.

Jimmy Silver did not want that. And if it was not to come to pass, he had to keep silent.

Had Lovell kept him out of the St. Jim's fixture, he could scarcely have been silent. The excitement would have been too great. He would have had to explain why he had failed his side. But Lovell's preposterous blundering saved him from that painful necessity. There was no need to explain why he had failed to attend a practice match.

"What on earth have you been doing all the afternoon?" demanded Raby.

"Verbs," answered Jimmy.

"What?"

"Latin verbs."

His chums stopped and stared at him.

"You've put in a half-holiday doing Latin verbs?" yelled Raby.

"Yes."

"Oh, my hat! You're fonder of them than I am."

"Well, you must be a howling ass," said Putty, of the Fourth. "We thought you were coming down to the practice, too. You might have sent us word that you weren't coming."

"So I might," agreed Jimmy. "Sorry."

"Blessed if I catch on at all," said Newcome. "You arranged the practice, and we expected you to turn up. Morny captained the side as you weren't there. You never said a word about swotting this afternoon."

"I hadn't thought of it then," said Jimmy.

"Well, you're an ass," said Newcome.

"Thanks."

"A howling ass!" said Raby.

"More thanks."

"Fathead!" said his two chums together, and then they went into Hall, and the subject dropped.

Arthur Edward Lovell came last into Hall, only in time to answer to his name.

The Classical Fourth took no notice of him. He realised that Jimmy Silver had not spoken yet. After roll-call the fellows were dismissed, and Lovell, as was his habit now, loafed away by himself, with a clouded face.

He did his prep. in the Form-room, as was his new custom. He expected to be interrupted by an indignant mob of juniors, arriving to rag the fellow who had kept their captain out of a match.

But he was not interrupted.

Prep. over, Lovell left the Form-room. He had nothing to do with himself, except to hug his grievance on the top of the lonely, lofty pedestal of dignity he had set up for himself. He lounged about aimlessly, only affecting a brisk air when he saw a Classical fellow glancing at him. Not on any account were the fellows to know that he felt lonely and miserable—not on any account whatever; though, as a matter of fact, they knew it perfectly well, such of them as gave him any thought at all.

When was the ragging going to begin?

Lovell was ready to face it when it came, and he knew it must come. The thing itself would be bad enough, but not so bad as this harassing state of expectation, this wretched suspense.

Was Jimmy Silver deliberately keeping him in suspense, letting the consequences of his action hang over his head, like a sword of Damocles, by way of punishment?

That must be it, of course.

Lovell gritted his teeth at the thought. It revived all his old anger, all his old bitterness and resentment. He had done what all the fellows would call a dirty action—a treacherous, disloyal trick; and he was

ready to face his punishment. Punishment was his due, but not being played with in the manner of cat and mouse.

He tramped up to the Classical Fourth passage.

As he was seen heading for the end study, some of the Classical fellows exchanged glances and smiles. They anticipated a row. Not one of them had the faintest idea of what was working in poor Lovell's moody, miserable mind.

Lovell threw open the door of the end study.

Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome had finished prep. They looked round together at Arthur Edward Lovell's dark and lowering face in the doorway.

"Hallo! Bill Bailey's come home again," remarked Raby.

Jimmy Silver and Newcome grinned.

Lovell scowled.

He came into the study and shut the door after him. He fixed his eyes on the captain of the Fourth.

"You haven't told the fellows yet, Silver?"

"No."

"When are you going to tell them?"

"Never."

"Wha-a-at?"

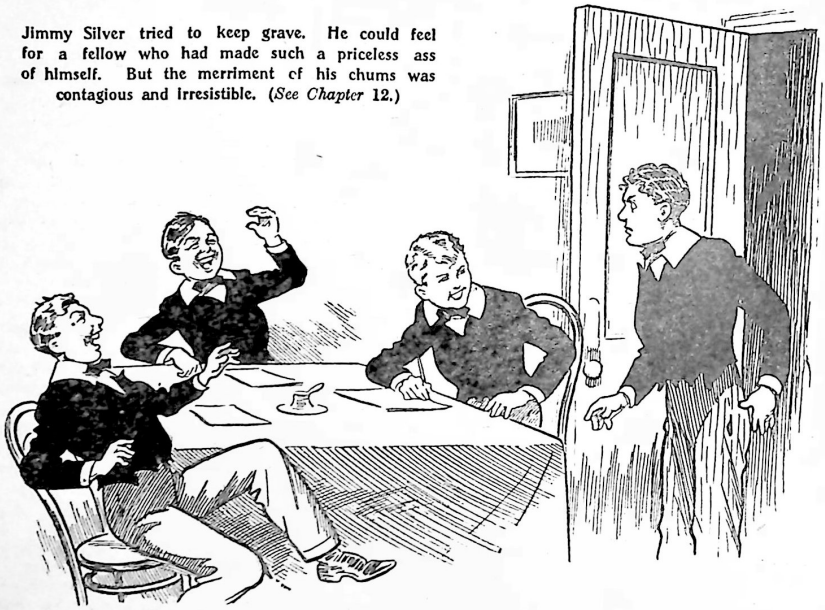
"Never."

Lovell stared.

Raby and Newcome looked at one, then at the other. What Lovell was driving at was a mystery to them.

"You're not going to tell them?" breathed Lovell at last.

In spite of himself, in spite of angry pride and sulky resentment, his face lighted. The ordeal he had expected as a matter of course was "off." Not merely the ragging—Lovell



Jimmy Silver tried to keep grave. He could feel for a fellow who had made such a priceless ass of himself. But the merriment of his chums was contagious and irresistible. (*See Chapter* 12.)

Rapiers At Rookwood!



To face page 201.

Drawn by E. E. Briscoe.

An Affair of Honour Between Two Rookwood Masters!

Rapiers at Rookwood!

IN the "good old days" of the eighteenth century, when George the Third was King, it was a fairly common custom, among the aristocracy, to settle disputes by means of duels.

Naturally, you would not expect to find highly respectable schoolmasters indulging in sword-play to settle their differences; yet in the summer of 1794 a thrilling duel was fought in the vicinity of Rookwood School. The gentlemen concerned in this "affair of honour" were Mr. Roger Lynd, the master of the Fourth, and Monsieur L'Esperon, the excitable little French master. For some time the two masters had been bitterly estranged, and the climax was reached when Monsieur L'Esperon sent a private challenge to his colleague. The challenge was accepted, secret preparations were made for the duel, and only two other masters (who agreed to act as seconds) were taken into the duellists' confidence.

Despite these precautions, the whisper passed through the Fourth that Mr. Lynd and the French master had arranged to cross swords. When the two masters met, in a clearing of the wood, a number of juniors ambushed themselves near the spot. They were fearful for the fate of Mr. Lynd, their quiet, studious Form-master; but they need not have feared, for Mr. Lynd proved himself a master of swordcraft. Monsieur L'Esperon fought fiercely. In his excitement, he launched a series of wild attacks, and often recklessly exposed himself to the rapier of his opponent.

Mr. Lynd could have settled the issue on several occasions had he chosen, but he refrained from taking advantage of the openings with which his opponent presented him. The boys looked on breathlessly, and presently they had the great joy of seeing their Form-master disarm the Frenchman, sending his rapier circling through the air, and causing Monsieur L'Esperon to topple helplessly at his feet.

This ended the matter, and the two masters became fast friends.

could have stood that. But the scorn and contempt that he knew would be his portion, —the averted, contemptuous faces of the Rookwooders—he had escaped that! He drew a deep, deep breath. At that moment, somehow, everything seemed to become clearer in his troubled mind. He had dreaded the condemnation of the fellows because, in his heart of hearts, he knew that he deserved it. He had not admitted the knowledge, but it was there.

"It's all serene," said Jimmy. "No harm done, and nothing to make a song about."

"Oh!"

"What on earth are you two fellows burbling about?" demanded Raby. "What has Lovell done?"

"Oh, nothing to speak of."

"Look here, you ass, what does all this mean?" exclaimed Newcome. "What are you making a mystery about?"

"Nothing much."

"I locked Jimmy Silver up in the top attic this afternoon," said Lovell deliberately. "I'm not afraid to own up! You can shout it out to all Rookwood if you like!"

"You—you—you locked Jimmy up in an attic?" stuttered Raby.

"Yes."

"So it was there you did your giddy Latin verbs, Jimmy?"

"A fellow had to do something," said Jimmy, with a smile. "It was rather a bore. No need to say anything outside this study."

"But what did the silly ass play such a kid's trick for?" exclaimed Raby. "Are you going off your rocker, Lovell, with your sulks?"

"I did it to keep Jimmy Silver out of the St. Jim's match."

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Because he left me out. And I'm not sorry!" added Lovell defiantly. "You can do what you like about it."

Raby and Newcome stared at him blankly. They stared at him as if fascinated.

"You—you—you——" babbled Raby. "You locked Jimmy up this afternoon to—to—to keep him out of the St. Jim's match?"

"Yes."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Newcome.

The absurdity of it seemed to have struck him all of a sudden. He roared.

Raby joined in.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy Silver tried to keep grave. He could feel for a fellow who had made such a priceless ass of himself. But the merriment of his chums was contagious and irresistible. Jimmy, in spite of himself, joined in the roar of laughter that rang through the end study.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lovell stared at the three. He simply could not understand. Anger, scorn, rage, resentment, he could have understood; but not this outburst of uncontrollable merriment.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the three, almost weeping with mirth.

Lovell set his lips.

"So you think it's a laughing matter?" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, rather," gasped Raby. "Oh, my hat! You locked Jimmy up to-day to keep him out of a match that comes off in a week's time! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Newcome. "You should have kept him locked up for a week! Ha, ha, ha!"

Lovell's face was a study.

"Hasn't the match been played?" he stuttered.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Raby and Newcome.

"It's postponed till next Wednesday!" gasped Jimmy Silver, wiping his eyes. "That's why it doesn't matter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pip-pip-postponed!" stuttered Lovell.

"Yes."

"Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the three, going off into another paroxysm at the look on Arthur Edward Lovell's speaking countenance.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lovell, with a crimson face, tramped out of the study and banged the door after him. A yell of merriment followed him as he went. Lovell's first—and last—essay as a plotting schemer had had the effect of sending the end study into hysterics. That was all; and later on, when Lovell's ears had ceased to burn, and he thought the matter over quietly, he was glad, deeply and intensely glad, that it had had no other effect.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER
Lovell Sees Light!

"IT was rotten!"

Lovell said that to himself.

Had he said it to Jimmy Silver, as certainly he ought to have done, all would have been calm and bright.

But Lovell, though he had reached the stage of repentance, had not by any means reached the stage of owning up to it.

Towards the end study he was feeling far from reconciled. No fellow likes being laughed at; no fellow likes the knowledge that he has made a priceless ass of himself. Especially was this the case with a fellow whose sense of dignity was so highly developed.

When he thought of the absurd blunder he had made and the merriment in the end study, Lovell's ears still burned.

Still, he had reached the point of taking a detached view of his own conduct, and to himself he admitted that it was "rotten." He was deeply thankful that, after all, Jimmy Silver had not been kept out of the St. Jim's match by his trickery. Luck had favoured him, inasmuch as no harm had been done. He was glad of that. But he had intended to play what he now realised, rather late, was a very dirty trick—a very scurvy trick indeed. He was ashamed of it to the very bottom of his heart.

Only he would not say so.

If he said so, the fellows would think he wanted to make it up, might even think that he was angling for a place in the team

next week; might think all sorts of things derogatory to his lofty pride.

So he said nothing.

After what had happened he did not, of course, expect Jimmy Silver to give him a place in the eleven again. Even Lovell was able to realise that he had forfeited all claims to be considered now.

A fellow who deliberately acted against the success of his own school was not the fellow to be selected to play for the school. That became clear to Lovell's mind.

Jimmy had kept the secret; the incident was to be allowed to die away and be forgotten. That was more than the hapless Arthur Edward had any right to expect, and he knew it. Friendship, after what had occurred, was out of the question. Trust was out of the question. Lovell felt a pang of remorse and shame as it came into his mind that when the actual date of the match came round the junior captain would be taking precautions against him. Naturally Jimmy would be on his guard next time. There was not going to be any "next time" so far as Lovell was concerned. But he had parted with any right to be trusted.

It was a bitter reflection.

That reflection led to further reflections. Lovell's own conduct, and his tardy realisation of its rottenness, had given him a painful shock, and the shock had opened his eyes to many things. He had a sort of glimpse of his own headstrong wilfulness; he even began to understand that he had been hopelessly in the wrong from the beginning. All through Thursday he had a painful ache in his game knee, due to his long tramp on Wednesday afternoon. It was painful, it was irritating, and it drove into Lovell's obstinate mind at last the knowledge that he really had been crocked, and that he had wilfully shut his eyes to the fact. The leg that would not stand a long tramp was evidently not a leg to be depended upon in a hard and fast game of football. When a thing was absolutely obvious, Lovell could see it. He saw it now.

Only a deep sense of injury had afforded him some sort of justification for his action. It was driven into his mind that the injury was a fancied one.

That completed his sense of shame and humiliation.

During the following days, Lovell was the most thoroughly miserable fellow at Rookwood or anywhere else.

In his own eyes he stood condemned, and that made him understand how the others must look upon him—how all Rookwood would have looked upon him had not Jimmy kept his secret. For a fancied wrong he had played a scurvy trick on his best chum, and his chum had only retaliated by saving him from the general condemnation that was his due. It was no wonder that poor Lovell felt wretched about it.

But he was not going to say so.

Repentant and ashamed as he was, he was still Arthur Edward Lovell, and too lofty to own up or make the first advances towards a reconciliation. And his ears still tingled over his absurd blunder and the laughter it had caused. He had failed lamentably in his bungling attempt to act like a rascal, but he had succeeded admirably in making a fool of himself. So his lofty back was still up, on that account at least. The fellows who had laughed at him should not see him coming round making it up.

So Arthur Edward Lovell still went on his lofty way, on the most distant terms with his former friends, though he was dropping into the old friendly terms with other fellows in the Classical Fourth.

Meanwhile, Jimmy Silver had heard from St. Jim's. The influenza scare had turned out only a scare after all, and the next Wednesday was definitely fixed as the date of the postponed match.

On Monday, Jimmy stopped to speak to Lovell when the Classical Fourth came out of their Form-room.

"How's your knee?" he asked.

Lovell hesitated before replying, but he replied:

"Quite all right now, thanks."

He paused, flushed, and added:

"It was pretty bad. But it's all right

now. Thanks for asking." Then he walked hurriedly away.

Jimmy Silver looked after him with a curious expression on his face. This was a great concession from the lofty Lovell. He had actually owned up that his knee had been a "game" knee.

On Tuesday, when Jimmy was busy with pencil and paper in the end study, making up the football list that was to be posted that evening, Raby, who had been looking very thoughtful, made a remark.

"About to-morrow, Jimmy——"

"Yes?" said Jimmy, looking up.

"Better keep an eye open. If that footling ass plays any more tricks, it will be serious this time."

"Oh, he won't!" said Jimmy cheerfully.

"He's ass enough for anything, you know," remarked Newcome.

Jimmy shook his head.

"It's all right," he answered.

Jimmy Silver was assured that there would be no more trouble with Arthur Edward. And Uncle James, as usual, was right.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER

The St. Jim's Match!

"QUITE a good lot!"

Valentine Mornington made that remark, among a crowd of fellows who were reading down the list for the St. Jim's match, in the junior common-room that evening. Morny, apparently, was satisfied with the list; no doubt all the more because his own name was there.

"Right as rain!" remarked Conroy.

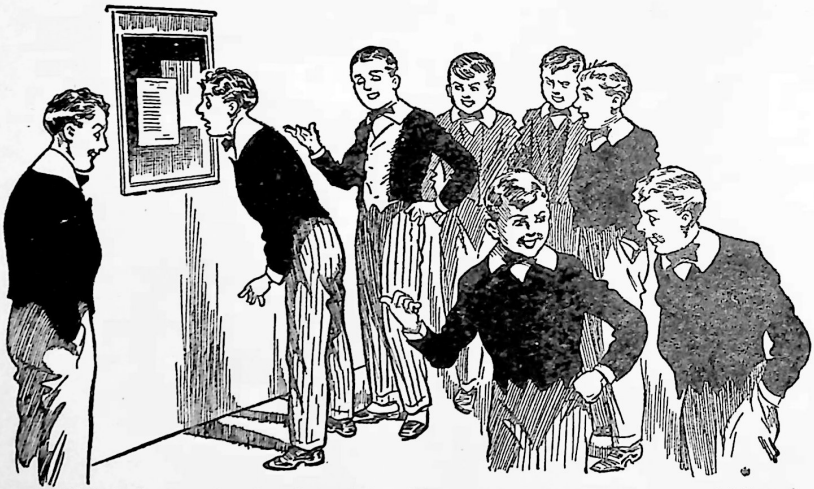
Conroy was down to keep goal.

"Might have been better," Putty of the Fourth observed, with a shake of the head, and there was a laugh. Every fellow whose name was not in the list felt that he could have suggested improvements.

Arthur Edward Lovell appeared in the doorway, and glanced at the group of juniors.

He coloured uncomfortably.

But for his own wrongheadedness, as poor



Lovell blinked. It was rather difficult for Arthur Edward Lovell to believe his eyes. "J-J-Jimmy's playing me after all!" he ejaculated blankly. (*See Chapter* 14.)

Lovell was at last conscious, his own name would have been there. That game knee, the cause of so many troubles, was mended at last! It was as well as ever.

Mornington glanced round, and smiled as he saw him.

"Seen the list, Lovell?" he asked.

"No."

"Take a squint at it."

Lovell joined the group, and looked over the list. He looked, and then he stared. It was rather difficult for Arthur Edward Lovell to believe his eyes as he read:

"Conroy; T. Rawson, T. Doyle; T. Cook, J. Silver, A. E. Lovell; T. Dodd, V. Mornington, C. Erroll, G. Raby, Towle.

Lovell blinked.

The name that jumped out to meet his eyes, as it were, was "A. E. Lovell."

He stared at it.

"Knee all right, old bean?" grinned Mornington.

"Oh!" gasped Lovell. "Quite! But——"

He stuttered.

"If you don't feel quite up to the mark, old bean, you can leave it to me," remarked Putty, of the Fourth.

"Or me," suggested Oswald.

"Or me," said half a dozen voices.

"J-J-Jimmy's playing me, after all!" ejaculated Lovell blankly.

"Why not?" asked Mornington. "If you're fit, there's no reason why not, is there?"

"N-n-no. But—but——"

"You don't think he'd give you the go-by because you've been givin' him the marble eye, do you? What's that got to do with football?"

Lovell made no answer.

He left the crowd of juniors, with his brain almost in a whirl. He made his way to the end study.

"Jimmy!"

Jimmy Silver was there. He gave Lovell a nod and a friendly grin, just as if nothing had ever happened. Raby and Newcome regarded his crimson face curiously.

"Hallo, old bean," said Uncle James.

"I—I—I've seen the list," stammered Lovell.

"Satisfied with it?" asked Jimmy.

"You've put my name down."

"Naturally."

"Oh," said Lovell.

"You're fit, aren't you?"

"Oh, yes."

"Well, when you're fit, you're the best half-back we've got—excepting little me, of course," smiled Jimmy. "I shouldn't be likely to lose you if I could help it. We want to beat St. Jim's."

Lovell stood silent for some moments.

"I'm fit," he said at last.

"Good."

"I'll play—if you can trust me."

"That's all right."

"I'm fit," repeated Lovell. "But—but—but the other day, when you played Greyfriars, I wasn't fit. I thought I was. I—I mean, I was a silly, obstinate chump, and I thought—I thought I was—if you get me."

"Quite."

"Bulkeley was quite right to send me off the field. I ought never to have been there."

"That's so," assented Jimmy. "My mistake."

"It wasn't your mistake. At least, it was I who made you make such a mistake. Playing the fool as I did," said Lovell. "I know now that I should have let the side down. I'm jolly glad Bulkeley sent me off. I—I I've been a fool, Jimmy."

"Quite!"

"A silly, fat-headed, unreasonable sort of ass," said Lovell. Now that he had made up his mind to it, Arthur Edward was going the whole hog.

"You have," agreed Jimmy Silver.

"Hear, hear!" said Raby and Newcome cordially.

"I—I'm sorry," Lovell gulped.

"Don't mench, old bean," said Jimmy Silver. "Let's forget all about it. Bygones are bygones."

"I—I've been a fool," repeated Lovell. "I didn't see it—but I saw it afterwards, and wouldn't own up. I own up now."

"Better late than never," remarked Raby.

"I—I own up! I got my back up over

nothing, and then one thing led to another, and I did a rotten mean thing. Look here, Jimmy, you can scratch my name out of the list, and I shan't say a word."

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"I won't do that," he said.

"I wouldn't grumble."

"The other fellows would. We want to beat St. Jim's, you ass. Greyfriars beat us because you were standing out. We don't want history to repeat itself to-morrow."

Lovell was silent. His heart was full of an emotion that he could never have expressed in words.

"You're a good sort, Jimmy, old chap," he gasped at last. "I—I'd do anything I could to make up."

"Help us beat St. Jim's to-morrow, and we'll call the account square."

"And don't play the goat again!" suggested Raby.

Lovell nodded.

"You can rub it in," he said. "I know I deserve it. Rub it in as hard as you like."

"No fear," said Raby, repentant at once. "It's all serene, old chap. Look here, it's time for prep. Go and get your books out of the Form-room, and bring them to the study."

"I'll come and help you carry them," said Newcome.

Lovell gulped. Sulky resentment, lofty pride, had vanished now, and Arthur Edward was feeling all the better for it.

"I—I say, I'm jolly glad to be friends again," he gasped.

"And so say all of us!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Hear, hear!"

And all was calm and bright.

The rift at Rookwood had closed again.

Once more the Fistical Four were happily reunited. The end study was itself again, and cheery good-fellowship reigned in that celebrated apartment, not to be disturbed again in a hurry, for Lovell was not likely to forget the lesson of his late experiences.

In many little ways Lovell showed his changed mood. Obviously, he wanted to make up for his shortcomings. He even seemed to have come to doubt whether his own opinion was really the last word that could be said on any subject. More than that could hardly be expected of Arthur Edward.

Best of all, he made up his mind to justify Jim's choice of him to play St. Jim's, and to prove a credit to his side, by playing the game of his life—and he did.

When Tom Merry & Co. came over from St. Jim's they found the Rookwood junior eleven at the top of their form, and uncommonly hot stuff to tackle; and there was one fellow in the home team whom the visitors agreed was regular mustard. That fellow was the right half-back, Arthur Edward Lovell.

It was a gruelling game, and in the first half no goals were scored; in the interval, both sides were breathing hard and deep. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of St. Jim's, shook his head seriously as he sucked a lemon.

"You fellows will have to pull up your socks, you know," he told his comrades. "We've got all our work cut out to beat Wookwood. I vewy neahly bagged a goal, but that fellow—what's his name?—Shovel, or somethin', got in the way. He seems wathah a good man."

"He does," agreed Tom Merry.

"We shall weally have to go all out to win this match," declared Arthur Augustus sagely.

St. Jim's went "all out" in the second half. But it booted not, as a poet would say. Every attack broke up short of success. Right up to the finish the game looked like a draw; but then came an overwhelming attack from the home side, and it was Arthur Edward Lovell who gave Mornington the ball he slammed into the St. Jim's net.

There was a roar from all Rookwood.

"Goal!"

"Rookwood wins!"

Arthur Edward Lovell's face was bright when he walked off the field with his friends. Every cloud had rolled by, and the chums of the end study forgot that there ever had been a rift at Rookwood.

THE END



The Tuckshop Raider!

A PLAY IN VERSE FOR AMATEUR ACTORS

NOTE.—This play may be performed by readers of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL without fee or licence, on condition that the words "By permission of the Editor of the HOLIDAY ANNUAL" appear on each programme.

CHARACTERS:

BILLY BUNTER ... The Fat Boy of Greyfriars.

HARRY WHARTON, BOB CHERRY, FRANK NUGENT, JOHNNY BULL, HURREE SINGH — The Famous Five of the Greyfriars Remove.

DAME MIMBLE ... Proprietress of the Tuckshop.

DOCTOR LOCKE ... Headmaster of Greyfriars.

BILL HIKES ... A Burglar.

FIRST GHOST, SECOND GHOST, THIRD GHOST — Three Fearsome Apparitions.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*The Greyfriars Tuckshop.*

(THE FAMOUS FIVE *are perched on stools at the counter.* DAME MIMBLE, *with a beaming face, is all eagerness to serve them.*)

DAME MIMBLE:

Good-evening, Master Wharton, sir!
Good-evening, Master Cherry!
Now, what would you young gents prefer?
My tarts are tasty, very!



Bunter : " I'm starving, ma'am, without a doubt.
I really feel I'm going out."
Cherry : " There's many a true word said in jest,
And now we'll speed the parting guest ! "

WHARTON :
No need to recommend your tarts,
For they are dear to schoolboy hearts.
HURREE SINGH :
The dearfulness, my worthy chum,
Makes purses light, and faces glum !
WHARTON (*laughing*) :
I didn't mean " expensive," Hurree !
You've put Dame Mimble in a flurry.
DAME MIMBLE (*indignantly*) :
The gent's remark was treasonable,
My terms are always reasonable.
Who dares to say that they are dear ?
I never, never profiteer !
HURREE SINGH (*contritely*) :
I eat my wordfulness, good Dame,
And hang my headfulness for shame.
I crave your pardon begfully.
I pulled your limb, ma'am, legfully !
Pray serve us with the tartfulness
So dear to every heartfulness !

CHERRY (*grinning*) :
And do it with the smartfulness !
(DAME MIMBLE *bustles about and serves the juniors with jam tarts and ginger-beer.* WHARTON *pays.*)
NUGENT :
Your uncle, Harry, was a brick
To send that five-pound note so quick.
BULL :
He must have guessed that funds were low—
He's been a boy himself, you know !
CHERRY :
These tarts are absolutely prime !
WHARTON :
They'll disappear in record time.
NUGENT :
Bunter would beam, if *he* were here !
BULL (*glancing round*) :
Why, talk of angels, they appear !
(*Enter* BILLY BUNTER. *He rolls up to the counter, and blinks eagerly through his spectacles at the tuck.*)
BUNTER :
I say, you chaps ! I'm sinking fast,
And feeling ripe for a repast.
I've not had bite nor sup since tea,
Nothing at all since half-past three.
Except six dough-nuts and some toast.
That's not enough to feed a ghost !
I'm suffering now from slow starvation.
I crawled in here for consolation.
HURREE SINGH :
Crawl out again, my worthy Bunter !
You are a greedy, fat tuck-hunter !
BUNTER (*appealingly*) :
Oh, don't be mean ! Spare just one tart !
WHARTON :
Vamoose !
CHERRY :
Absquatulate !
BULL :
Depart !
BUNTER (*turning to* DAME MIMBLE) :
Don't let them turn me out, good Dame !
I'm starving ! It's a jolly shame !
There's not another meal till brekker,

And not a bean in my exchequer!
But if you'll be a perfect brick,
And serve me with some tuck on tick,
I'll settle up another day—
My postal-order's on the way!

DAME MIMBLE:

I've heard that fairy-tale before.
I cannot serve you. There's the door!

BUNTER:

Oh, really! You've a heart of stone
To talk to me in such a tone.
I'm faint, and groggy at the knees—
Wasting away by slow degrees!
I'm starving, ma'am, without a doubt.
I really feel I'm "going out."

CHERRY:

There's many a true word said in jest,
And now we'll speed the parting guest!

(BOB *picks up a soda-water siphon from the counter, and brings it into action, squirting a jet of liquid into* BUNTER'S *face. Exit* BUNTER, *yelling loudly.* BOB *pursues him to the door, while the others look on, laughing.*)

WHARTON:

Exit the fat and fatuous Owl!

NUGENT:

To dry his features on a towel.

BULL:

Bob Cherry chased him off the premises

HURREE SINGH:

With all the fleetfulness of Nemesis!

CHERRY:

And if he shows up any more,
He'll get a shower-bath, as before!

WHARTON:

Let's hurry up and drink our "pop,"

Dame Mimble wants to close her shop.

(*While the* FAMOUS FIVE *are finishing their feed, and* DAME MIMBLE *has turned her back in order to put some things away,* BILLY BUNTER *creeps cautiously into the tuck-shop. Without being seen by those present, he slips behind the screen, where he is effectually hidden from view.*)

NUGENT:

Now that we've had our celebration
We'll go and tackle preparation.
(*All move towards the exit.*)

DAME MIMBLE:

And I must look alert and nimble.
It's eight o'clock!

ALL:

Good-night, Dame Mimble!

DAME MIMBLE:

Good-night, young gents, and thank you kindly!
Pray mind the step. Don't stumble blindly!
(*Exit* THE FAMOUS FIVE.)

DAME MIMBLE:

I like those lads, for I can trust 'em!
What should I do without their custom?



"Why, goodness gracious! What was that? I heard a noise—perhaps a rat!"

They're always civil, gay, and genial;
They never treat me like a menial.
But as for Master Bunter—why,
He's greedy, artful, mean, and sly!

(*At this, the screen shakes violently, and* BUNTER'S *furious face peers round it for an instant. He shakes his fist at* DAME MIMBLE, *then disappears again.*)

DAME MIMBLE (*in alarm*):

Why, goodness gracious! What was that?
I heard a noise—perhaps a rat!

(*She pauses and listens a moment, but there is no further sound.* DAME MIMBLE *then puts on her hat and coat, lowers the lights in the tuck-shop, and passes slowly out, failing to notice* BILLY BUNTER *behind the screen.*)

DAME MIMBLE (*taking a last look round*):

I've left my shop in perfect order.
I do not fear a night marauder.
I'll lock and bolt the door securely,
And that should be sufficient, surely!

(*Exit* DAME MIMBLE, *followed by sounds as of a door being locked and bolted.* BILLY BUNTER *emerges from behind the screen, and blinks around him in the half-light.*)

BUNTER (*gleefully*):

Locked in the tuck-shop for the night!
The prospect fills me with delight.
Locked in a paradise of tuck!
Oh, what a ripping stroke of luck!

(*He dances to and fro in his excitement.*)

When Quelchy calls the nightly roll,
There will be ructions, 'pon my soul!
The name of "BUNTER, W. G."
Won't be responded to by *me!*
The whisper will go round the ranks:
"Bunter is playing foolish pranks."
And some will think I've run away,
And Quelchy's hair will turn quite grey.
Little will anybody dream
That I've devised a cunning scheme
To get myself locked up all night
Here, to appease my appetite!
And now, I think, I'll wander round
To see what dainties can be found.

(BUNTER *starts to explore the tuck-shop, pausing here and there before the various jars and dishes, and sampling a little of everything, with obvious enjoyment.*)

BUNTER (*turning to audience*):

Just a preliminary snack
To keep my jaws from getting slack.
They've had no exercise since tea.
Time they got busy, you'll agree,
And when I've had this little bite
To whet my healthy appetite,
I'll eat a really big repast.
Jove! this is Paradise at last!
Here will I feast and banish sorrow,
And risk the reckoning on the morrow!

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*The Greyfriars Tuck-shop. Midnight.*

(BILLY BUNTER, *having feasted to his heart's content, is reclining on a heap of cushions on the floor, fast asleep. His hands are clasped in the region of his lower waistcoat button, and he is snoring happily. Empty dishes and glasses strew the counter.*)

(*Suddenly three distinct raps are heard, "off."* BUNTER *does not stir. The rapping is repeated, louder and more insistent.*)

Rap! Rap! Rap!

BUNTER (*sitting up with a start*):

I seem to hear a rap-rap-rapping!
Was it a window-curtain flapping?
It gave me quite an awful scare!
Hark! There it goes again!——

Rap! Rap! Rap!

——Who's there?

(*Enter* THREE GHOSTS, *gliding into the tuck-shop from different entrances, and converging upon* BUNTER, *who quakes visibly. The ghosts are draped in sheets, and their faces are hooded, with slits for the eyes. They halt within a few paces of* BUNTER, *who blinks at the hooded figures in terror.*)

BUNTER (*wildly*):

Help! Murder! Rescue! Yow! Oh, dear!
How did these gug-gug-ghosts appear?
Who are these phantoms, clad in white,
Disturbing me at dead of night?
Is it a jape—a silly antic?

Speak! Speak, or you will drive me frantic!

FIRST GHOST:

I am the Ghost of Greyfriars School!
Tremble!
Cower and cringe, thou fatuous fool!
Tremble!
Stuffer of tarts and buns and scones,
I'll freeze the marrow in thy bones!
Making night hideous with my moans!
Tremble!

BUNTER (*quaking violently*):

Are you a really, truly Ghost?
Or are you having me on toast?
Don't terrify and torture me!
Who might your ghostly comrades be?

SECOND GHOST:

I'm the Ghost of Simon Blenkinsop,
Tremble!
Who used to keep Ye Olde Tuckshoppe!
Tremble!
One night, marauders entered in
And brained me with a rolling-pin.
Behold, I grin a ghastly grin!
Tremble!

BUNTER (*in great alarm*):

You mean to say that you were slain,
And that your ghost comes back again,
And haunts this place when Greyfriars sleeps?
Groo! You are giving me the creeps!

THIRD GHOST:

I am the Ghost of Doctor Grimm!
Tremble!
I used to wield the birch with vim!
Tremble!
Beneath my robes, unhappy wight,
I have a birch-rod, tucked from sight.
I'll wield it now—this very night!
Tremble!

(THIRD GHOST *whips out a birch-rod from beneath his robes, and swishes it through the air.*)

BUNTER (*squirming on the floor*):

Pip-please don't touch me! Keep your distance,
Or I shall bellow for assistance!
Masters and fellows will arise,
And you'll be given exorcise!

FIRST GHOST:

Be silent, fat and fatuous fool!



"Locked in a paradise of tuck!
Oh, what a ripping stroke of luck!"

Thou canst not wake the slumbering school.

SECOND GHOST:

Shouting will not avail thee much—
We have thee in our ghostly clutch!

THIRD GHOST:

Yea, verily! If we're defied,
My birch-rod will caress thy hide!

BUNTER:

What have I done that you should haunt me,
And plague and terrify and taunt me?
I've never given you offence!
I am the soul of innocence!
Why don't you go and haunt old Toddy,
And Wharton, Bull, and everybody?
I'll tell you where the bounders sleep,
Then to their quarters you can creep

And give them such a shock and scare
That bolt upright will stand their hair!

FIRST GHOST:
Thou art our special, chosen victim!

SECOND GHOST:
Now, Doctor Grimm, 'tis time you licked him!

(THIRD GHOST *gives* BUNTER *a playful flick with the birch-rod.* BUNTER *leaps to his feet with a wild yell, and flees round the tuck-shop, with the* THREE GHOSTS *in hot pursuit. Stools are overturned, and pandemonium prevails.*)

BUNTER:
Help! Wingate! Wharton! Doctor Locke!
Save me, before I die of shock!

(*Exit the* THREE GHOSTS, *with surprising swiftness.* BUNTER *does not see them vanish, and he continues to race wildly round, under the impression he is still being pursued. At last he halts, and blinks around the tuck-shop, and realises he is alone.*)

BUNTER:
The Ghosts have vanished! Glory be!
I thought it was the end of me!
I've never had so bad a scare,
Not anytime, nor anywhere!

(*He sinks down on to the heap of cushions.*)

I wonder if those Ghosts were real?
I doubt it. I begin to feel
It was a nightmare, grim and fleeting,
The dire result of over-eating!

(BUNTER *composes himself to slumber. Presently he hears a stealthy, rattling sound, as of the tuck-shop door being unlocked.*)

BUNTER (*sitting up*):
My nerves are steady now, and stronger.
I don't feel funky any longer.
These are no ghostly sounds I hear.
It's someone breaking in, I fear.

(*The rattling sound continues.*)

I'd better lie discreetly still,
In readiness for Burglar Bill.
If only I can make a capture!
The prospect fills my soul with rapture!

(*Enter* BILL HIKES, *the Burglar. He is a rough-looking individual, wearing a mask, and carrying an electric torch. He creeps stealthily into the tuck-shop, and passes* BUNTER'S *recumbent form without noticing it.*)

BILL HIKES:
Seems to have been a struggle here.
A rough-and-tumble, that is clear.

(*He wanders round the tuck-shop, flashing his torch.*)

There must be lots of grub about.
In the big cupboard, I've no doubt.

(*He steps towards the cupboard and opens the door, flashing his torch into the interior.*)

BILL HIKES:
Oh, what a sell! There's nothing here!
No cakes, no tarts, no ginger-beer.
There's not a single crumb in sight.
This must be my unlucky night!

BUNTER (*aside*):
Yes, Burglar Bill! You're out of luck.
Now is the chance to prove my pluck!

(BUNTER *rises to his feet, and tiptoes towards the burglar. Hurling himself upon the man from behind, he bundles him without ceremony into the cupboard. Then he swiftly shuts and locks the door.*)

BUNTER (*gleefully*):
Caught, like a rat inside a trap!
You won't get out of *this*, old chap!
I trapped you neatly, you'll agree.
Now you're my prisoner. He, he, he!

BILL HIKES (*in muffled tones*):
Open this door, and let me out!

BUNTER:
Sorry! It can't be done, old scout!

BILL HIKES:
Say, I shall die of suffocation!

BUNTER:
One burglar less will please the nation!

BILL HIKES (*banging on the door*):
Release me, there's a sporty kid!
And then I'll give you half a quid!

BUNTER:
Really! I never take a bribe
From members of the burglar tribe.

BILL HIKES:
What do you mean to do with me?

BUNTER :

Wait till the morning, then you'll see!

(BILL HIKES *hammers furiously at the door of the cupboard.*)

BUNTER :

No use! You'll merely bark your knuckles!
Just listen to my merry chuckles.
Ha, ha, ha! He, he, he!
Burglar Bill's been bagged by me!

BILL HIKES :

Just wait, you cackling little beast,



"Help! Murder! Rescue! Yow! Oh, dear! How did these gug-gug-ghosts appear?"

Till I've the luck to be released!
I'll punch your jaw and black your eyes,
And make your nose swell twice its size!
In fact, I'll lead you such a dance,
You'll need to call the ambulance!

BUNTER :

Your threats don't worry me a scrap.
You're talking through your hat, old chap.
Revenge is sweet, they always say,
But not a chance will come your way.
They'll take you off, at rising-bell,
To languish in a prison cell!
A tragic end to all your schemes.
Good-night, my beauty! Pleasant dreams!

(*Ignoring the repeated bangings from the cupboard,* BUNTER *returns to his improvised bed.*)

BUNTER :

What a surprise, when morning comes!
What a big bombshell for my chums,
And for my enemies as well,
When my exciting tale I tell!
I've caught a burglar single-handed,
And in the cupboard left him stranded.
The Head will pat me on the shoulder
And say: "No lion could be bolder!"
While all the fellows will acknowledge
I am the hero of the college!
Meantime, a few hours' sleep I'll borrow,
And dream of glory on the morrow!

(BUNTER *settles down to slumber, and is soon snoring happily.*)

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*The Head's Study.*

(DOCTOR LOCKE *is seated at his desk, looking very worried.*)

THE HEAD :

Now, where can that boy Bunter be?
His antics have distracted me!
He disappeared, without a trace,
And I have searched and scoured the place.

But he has vanished absolutely.
If hiding, he has acted cutely.
A further search must now begin.
(*Knocking without.*)
Dear me! I wonder if—— Come in!
(*Enter* THE FAMOUS FIVE. *They salute* DOCTOR LOCKE *respectfully.*)

THE HEAD:
Good-morning, boys! I am afraid
You have not found the renegade.

WHARTON:
No, sir; there's not a sign of Bunter.

CHERRY:
He has eluded every hunter.



"Help! Wingate! Wharton! Dr. Locke! Save me, before I die of shock!"

NUGENT:
We've searched for Bunter far and wide——

BULL:
In fact, we've scoured the countryside.

HURREE SINGH:
Most worthy sahib, we've explored
The highways, byways, and the sward.
Together we pursued the questfulness
With thorough zealfulness and zestfulness.
As Cherry says, the worthy Bunter
Has baffled every eager hunter.
We can't locatefully discover
The whereabouts of our tuck-lover.
Mysteriously, he's taken wing——

THE HEAD:
Don't be ambiguous, Hurree Singh!

WHARTON (*eagerly*):
Let us off lessons for the day, sir.
And we will search another way, sir,

CHERRY:
Yes, rather! It is our intent
To leave no stone unturned in Kent.

NUGENT:
If let off lessons for the *week*,
We'd have a game of hide-and-seek,

BULL:
Exploring every inch of ground
So that our school-mate might be found.

THE HEAD (*frowning*):
No, no! I really can't consent

To let you roam about in Kent,
Neglecting, for a whole long week,
Your Latin, History, and Greek.
(*Knocking without.*)
Dear, dear! Am I to get no peace?
Come in, and let those knockings cease!
(*Enter* DAME MIMBLE, *looking very wrathful, and leading* BILLY BUNTER *by the ear.*)

DAME MIMBLE:
This fat young rascal, Doctor Locke,
Has eaten nearly all my stock!
All night he's feasted in my shop——

CHERRY:
Wonder he doesn't go off pop!

THE HEAD:
Be silent, Cherry! This is serious.
Do you not hear my words imperious?
Proceed, Dame Mimble, with your story——

BUNTER:
Sir, I have won renown and glory!

THE HEAD:
Silence! And hang your head for shame,
You wicked boy! Continue, Dame!

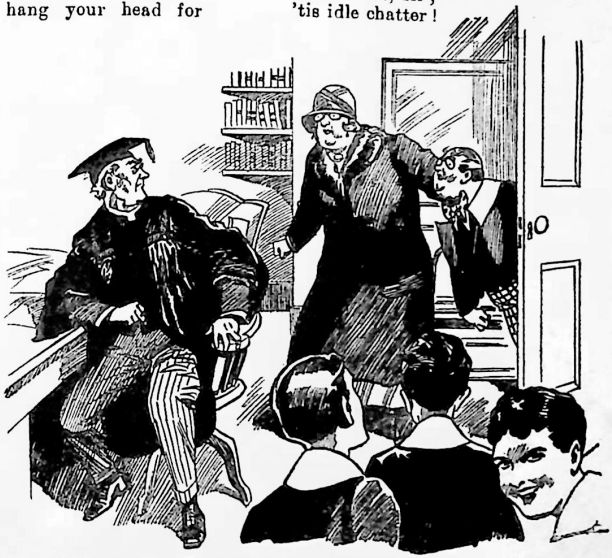
DAME MIMBLE:
This rascal came to me last night,
Declaring he was famished quite.
He begged me for some tarts "on tick."
I answered: "There's the door—go quick!"
I shut my shop at seven-fifteen.
He must have slipped behind the screen,
And on my premises he stayed
From dusk till daybreak, I'm afraid.
He raided every single shelf,
Glutted and gorged and stuffed himself!
And when I met him there this morning
He greeted me with words of warning.
"I've caught a burglar, ma'am," says he.
"A hefty brute of six-foot-three.
I locked him in the cupboard yonder."

THE HEAD:
Is that a fairy-tale, I wonder?

BUNTER:
No, sir. I never tell a lie!
Quite a George Washington am I.
I bagged the burglar, safe and sound,
And in the cupboard he'll be found.

THE HEAD (*to* DAME MIMBLE):
Did you investigate the matter?

DAME MIMBLE:
Of course not, sir;
'tis idle chatter!



"This fat young rascal, Dr. Locke, has eaten nearly all my stock!"

THE HEAD:

Bunter is capable of knavery,
But not, I think, of pluck and bravery.
In fact, he has a craven habit
Of being frightened as a rabbit!

BUNTER (*indignantly*):

Oh, really, sir, I don't deserve
To be accused of lack of nerve.
You should have seen my feat of skill
In overcoming "Burglar Bill"!
It was a fierce, terrific tussle,
Requiring every ounce of muscle,
For he was armed, and I was not.
(I marvel that I wasn't shot!)
At last, to my exceeding rapture,
I brought him down and clinched the capture!
Now in the cupboard he does languish,
Uttering howls of wrath and anguish!

THE HEAD:

I can't believe a word you say!
Heroic feats are not your way.
But, ere I thrash you with the cane,
I will proceed to ascertain
If there is any truth whatever
In your wild tale of bold endeavour!

(DOCTOR LOCKE *turns to* THE FAMOUS FIVE.)

Go to the tuck-shop with despatch,
And see if Bunter made this catch!

(*Exit* THE FAMOUS FIVE.)

DAME MIMBLE:

Of course, the boy has told a whopper!

THE HEAD:

Ma'am! That expression's hardly proper!
You should have said a "fabrication."

BUNTER (*aside*):

Soon they will have a revelation!

THE HEAD:

Unless your story, boy, is true,
I shall severely punish you!
Your foolish and mischievous action
Caused untold worry and distraction.
Parties have searched the whole night through,
Hoping to find some trace of you,
Not dreaming that you schemed to stop
All night in Mrs. Mimble's shop!

DAME MIMBLE:

My stock has vanished! It's a shame!

BUNTER:

Quite so; but Burglar Bill's to blame!

THE HEAD:

Tut, tut! The burglar is a fiction!
Your tale is doomed to contradiction.

(*Footsteps without.*

Your schoolmates, Bunter, are returning;
Now the true version we'll be learning.

(*Enter* THE FAMOUS FIVE, *with* BILL HIKES *strug-*



"Silence! You scoundrel, hold your noise! Don't let the brute escape, my boys!"

gling in their grasp. They march him into the study, and DOCTOR LOCKE *rises to his feet with a cry of amazement, while* DAME MIMBLE *shrinks back in alarm.*)

THE HEAD:
Gracious! This gives me quite a shock!

WHARTON:
We found the burglar, Doctor Locke!

NUGENT:
Bunter has told the truth at last!

BULL:
Who said that miracles were past?

BILL HIKES (*struggling to get free, and shaking his fist at* BUNTER):
That's the fat cove who captured me!
I'll punch and pound and paste him—see?
I'll pulverise him good and proper
Before you 'phone to fetch a "copper."

THE HEAD:
Silence, you scoundrel! Hold your noise!
Don't let the brute escape, my boys!

HURREE SINGH:
We have him in our gripful clutch.
His struggles won't avail him much.
We'll hold him, sahib, tight and cheerfully,
Till the police arrive appearfully!

THE HEAD (*crossing to the telephone and speaking into the transmitter*):
"Give me Friardale, one-three-two! (*Pause.*)



"Yes, sir! Alone I did the trick! I caught the burglar smart and slick!"

P.-c. Tozer! Is that you?
Come to Greyfriars with despatch.
We have made a startling catch!
It's a burglar! Don't delay!
Come and take him right away.
He's a desperate man, that's why!
We await you here. . . . Good-bye!"

(DOCTOR LOCKE *rings off, and turns to* BILLY BUNTER.)

Bunter, the tale you told was true!
My gallant boy, I'm proud of you!

BUNTER (*puffing out his chest with pride*):
Yes, sir! Alone I did the trick!
I caught the cracksman, smart and slick.

THE HEAD:
Bunter, you've won a hero's fame.
Yet you are very much to blame
For staying in the shop all night
To glut your greedy appetite.

DAME MIMBLE:
He's eaten all my cakes and "fancies"——

THE HEAD:
Yes, yes! But in the circumstances
I cannot give the boy a caning,
So it is little use complaining.

BUNTER:
Only a cruel man like Nero
Would ever cane a gallant hero!

BILL HIKES (*struggling fiercely*):
Just wait till I have served my sentence!

THE HEAD (*sternly*):
Silence! And cultivate repentance!

BILL HIKES:
Revenge is sweet, and mine will wait!
(*Footsteps without—the measured tread of a policeman.*)

THE HEAD:
My boys, remove this hulking lout—
The handcuffs wait for him without!
(*Exit* THE FAMOUS FIVE *with* BILL HIKES.)

BUNTER (*turning to the* HEAD):
Am I to be rewarded, sir?

THE HEAD:
H'm! What reward would you prefer?

BUNTER:
I do not crave for £ s. d.
In honour of my bravery.
I'm not by nature avaricious——
But a fine feed would be delicious!

DAME MIMBLE:
Good gracious! After all you've eaten?
For gluttony, this can't be beaten!

THE HEAD:
Let Bunter have his heart's desire.
Of food he never seems to tire.
Dame Mimble, pray escort him hence,
And feed him well—at my expense!
He foiled the burglar, don't forget,
So we are both in Bunter's debt.

BUNTER (*beaming*):
I thank you, sir, with all my heart!
Straight to the tuck-shop we'll depart!
(*Exit* BILLY BUNTER *and* DAME MIMBLE, *the former grinning broadly, the latter shaking her head in strong disapproval.*)

CURTAIN.

MEET THEM ALL AGAIN!

IT will be with regret that you come to this page, knowing it to be the end of the jolly reading matter in this best of all boys' and girls' story Annuals.

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The Editor.

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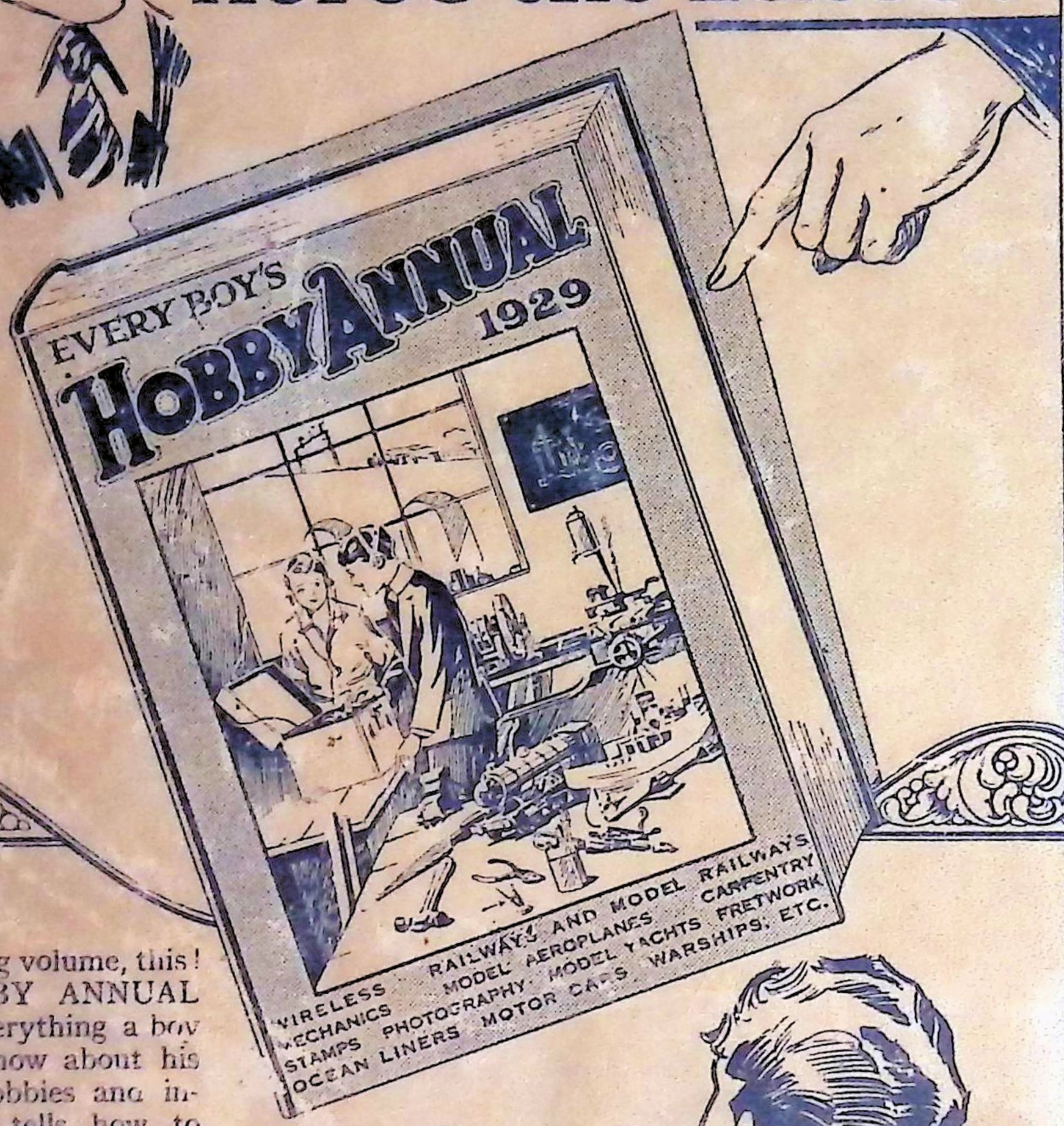



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