

"TOM DUTTON'S TRIUMPH!"

A Magnificent Long Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. By Frank Richards.



BUNTER'S BAD START IN THE GREAT RACE!

(A Screamingly Amusing Incident in the Magnificent Long Complete School Tale Contained in this Issue.)

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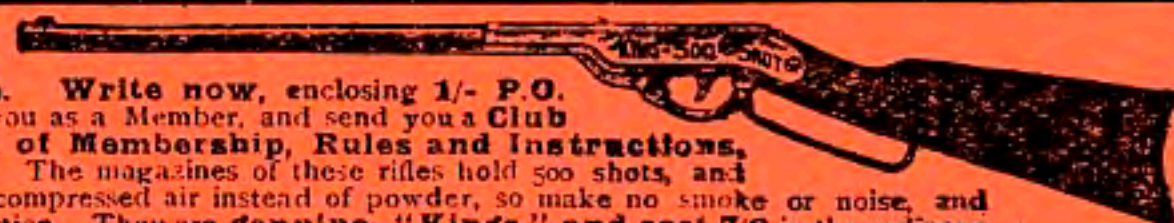
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TOM DUTTON'S TRIUMPH!

A New, Long, Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
at Greyfriars School.

By FRANK RICHARDS.



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Rinking Extraordinary!

BILLY BUNTER came into No. 7 Study, in the Remove passage at Greyfriars, with a pair of roller-skates dangling from his fat hand.

His three study-mates were hard at work at the study table. Peter Todd was writing lines, his cousin, Alonzo Todd, was deep in a volume on the entrancing subject of entomology, Tom Dutton was doing his preparation, so none of them looked up as Billy Bunter came in.

"I say, you fellows!" said Bunter.

Still they didn't look up. Peter because he was in a hurry to get his lines done, Alonzo because entomology enthralled him, and Tom Dutton because he was deaf, and didn't hear the squeaky voice of the fat junior.

Billy Bunter snorted angrily.

"I say, you fellows!" he roared.

"Don't bother!" rapped out Peter, without looking up.

"Look here, you fellows, you can put that rot away!" said Bunter. "I want you to help me!"

"Rot!" said Peter, still with his eyes on the impot paper and his pen going fast. "I'm doing lines of my own."

"I don't want you to help me to do lines, fathead!"

"All the same if you did!" replied Peter cheerfully. "Shut up!"

"Look here!" roared Bunter. "You fellows know that the ice carnival comes off next week, don't you?"

"Yes. Dry up!"

"And you know I'm going to bag the ten-pound prize for this study?"

"Bow-wow!"

"I should think you might back up a fellow in your own study, Toddy, and not let Wharton and those rotters rope it in!" said Billy Bunter indignantly. "Look here, it's no use my starting in the ice race unless I'm in form! I've got to have some practice."

"Well, you need it," said Peter, with his pen still going; "that's right enough. I don't quite see how you're going to get it, since the thaw. But if you like to go on the river in its present state, you're welcome. I think it's a ripping idea myself."

Alonzo Todd looked up from his entomological volume in surprise.

"My dear Peter," he said, "if Bunter goes on the river in its present state, he will be drowned."

"That's why I think it's a ripping idea!" explained Peter.

"I'm not going on the river, you—you image!" said Bunter. "I'm going to practise on roller-skates. See?"

"You haven't any roller-skates."

"I've got Johnny Bull's. He left 'em in his study," said Bunter. "But—but I'm a bit out of practice. I'm a splendid skater. You've seen me skate."

"Ha, ha! I have!"

"Oh, really, Todd, you know I'm a dab at skating! Still, I'm a bit out of practice, and I'm going to do a bit on rollers to get into form, and I want you fellows to help me. I want you to hold me up first."

"Thanks! I'm not a steam-crane!"

Billy Bunter blinked furiously at the chief of No. 7 Study. It was really hard lines, when Bunter intended to bring glory upon the study by "bagging" the biggest prize in the skating competition, that he should find this plentiful lack of enthusiasm among his study-mates. It was another case of a prophet being unhonoured in his own country.

"Todd, you beast——"

"Look here!" shouted Peter Todd. "You buzz off! You've made me write 'roller-skate' instead of 'Pious Æneas' now! I've got to do these lines for Loder, or he'll double them. Shut up!"

"I say, Dutton, will you help me?" shouted Bunter.

Tom Dutton looked up. Dutton was a good-looking, sturdy fellow, and very good-natured, and he would undoubtedly have helped if he had known what was wanted. But he had the misfortune to be very deaf—though whether the misfortune was his misfortune or his study-mates' misfortune was open to question.

"Eh?" said Dutton inquiringly. "Did you speak, Bunter?"

Peter Todd grinned. Bunter's voice had been audible for the whole length of the Remove passage.

"Yes!" yelled Bunter. "I want you to help me!"

"I'll scalp you fast enough, if you interrupt my prep," said Dutton. "No need to ask me!"

"Help me!" roared Bunter. "I'm going to skate!"

Dutton looked at the study clock.

"Tain't so very late," he said. "Still, I want to get my prep done, and get down to the gym. Be quiet a bit, there's a good chap."

"I tell you I want you to hold me!"

"Who's scolding you? I'll do more than scold you, if you stand there shouting at me!" said Dutton. "I'm not deaf!"

"You—you blithering idiot!"

"Eh?"

"Will you hold me while I try on these skates?" howled Bunter.

"No, I won't! If you want any plates, you can get them yourself! What do you want plates for, anyway? We're not going to have supper yet."

Bunter gasped.

"Leave it till you get your second wind, Bunt," advised Peter Todd.

"The—the deaf villain!" panted Bunter. "Lonzy, old

man, you come and help me. You're a silly duffer, but you're better than nobody!"

It was not a polite way of putting it; but Alonzo Todd was a very obliging youth. He regretfully closed his volume—which was a Christmas present from his Uncle Benjamin—and rose to his feet.

"Certainly, my dear Bunter," he said. "Where are you going to skate?"

"In the passage," growled Bunter. "The linoleum is all right for roller-skates; better than going into the gym. All the rotters are in the gym. Put the skates on for me, will you? I'm rather short of breath when I stoop down."

Bunter plumped himself into the study armchair, and stretched out his fat little legs. Putting on skates was indeed a difficult task for Billy Bunter. It was said in the Remove that it was years and years since he had seen his knees.

Alonzo Todd took the skates and obligingly fastened them upon Bunter's boots. The fat junior blinked down at him through his big spectacles.

"Make 'em safe," he growled. "You know what an ass you are, Alonzo!"

"My dear Bunter——"

"Oh, don't jaw!" said Bunter. "You're like a sheep's head, Alonzo—nearly all jaw! I suppose you're going to help me out of the study, Peter?"

"I'll help you out with my boot if you don't shut up!" shouted Peter Todd. "How can I write rotten lines from a rotten Æneid when a rotten duffer is jawing at me?"

"They are all right now, my dear Bunter," said Alonzo mildly. "I will assist you out of the study. But will Mr. Quelch allow you to skate in the passage?"

"Blow Mr. Quelch! Help me up, fathead!"

Alonzo took a grip of the fat junior and helped him to his feet. One of the skates slid away towards the fender and the other towards the table, and Bunter sat down again with a yell, dragging Alonzo down into the armchair with him.

Alonzo's prominent nose came into violent contact with the top of Bunter's head, and there were two simultaneous howls.

"Ow!"

"Wow!"

"You silly idiot!" shrieked Bunter. "Are you trying to brain me?"

"Ow! My nose!"

"Blow your nose! You've nearly punctured my napper. Get away, you ass; I can manage better by myself!"

"It was really not my fault, my dear Bunter! Ow! You pulled me over—yow!" mumbled Alonzo, clasping his damaged nose with both hands, in great anguish.

"Oh, don't jaw!"

"Leave it till I've done my lines, Bunt," chuckled Peter Todd; "I've done ninety out of a hundred."

"Rats!" snorted Bunter. "You're as big an idiot as your idiotic cousin! I can manage all right. Do you think I can't skate?"

Bunter carefully raised himself with his hands on the arms of the chair. For a fellow who was a dab at skating, William George Bunter was certainly very clumsy on the rollers. His feet betrayed an almost irresistible inclination to run away in different directions. There was a terrific clatter of skates, and Bunter spun round, and plumped down in the chair again, this time face downwards.

"Ow! Yow! You couldn't have fastened those skates properly, Alonzo, you fathead! Oh, my nose! Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Peter. "You look like winning the first prize at the skating—I don't think!"

"You—you—you ass! I'll show you whether I can skate or not!" panted Bunter.

He stumbled to his feet again, holding on to the mantelpiece. Then, tramping on the skates, he started for the door. His right foot made a dive and his left followed it, and he cannoned into Alonzo, sending him flying. Bunter reeled from the shock and spun round, and came back towards the study table at full speed.

"Look out!" yelled Peter, starting to his feet.

"I—I c-c-a-n't— Yow-ow-oh!"

Crash!



Mr. Quelch stood transfixed for a moment. He could scarcely believe his eyes. When he found his voice, he almost stuttered in his wrath. "Cherry! How dare you! Can I believe my eyes? You—you have struck Bunter in my presence—I—I—!" "You ordered me to, sir!" said Bob, with great meekness. (*See Chapter 11.*)

Billy Bunter cannoned into the table with a shock like a battering-ram. Billy Bunter was a heavy-weight, and study tables were not built to stand a charge like that.

The table went flying, and Peter Todd and Tom Dutton went flying with it. Peter Todd landed on his back, and the overturned table rolled on him, and Tom Dutton sat on the floor, gasping. The imposition Peter had been so busy upon was deposited in the grate, and the flowing inkpot along with it.

Crash, crash, crash, went Bunter's skates on the floor, as he strove valiantly to keep his balance amid the general wreck and ruin.

"Oh, my hat! Oh!"

"Great Scott! Help! Yow-ow!"

"I—I—I e-can't keep up somehow. Yaroooooh!"

Bunter's legs fled in different directions, and he sat down with a bump that shook the study.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Shock for Mr. Quelch.

"I I ALLO, hallo, hallo!"

Bob Cherry of the Remove looked into No. 7 Study in great astonishment.

"What on earth?" he exclaimed. "Is it an earthquake, or a German bombardment?"

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"Ow!" groaned Alonzo, who was still holding his nose, as he sat in the corner where Bunter's charge had hurled him. "It is Bunter, my dear Cherry. He is practising to win the first prize at the skating carnival. Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry kindly lifted the table off Peter Todd. Peter staggered to his feet, with fury in his face, which was also adorned by a large splash of ink.

"The—the—the fat villain!" he stuttered. "Look at my impot! Swimming in ink! Loder will double it now. Look at it! Ow! I've got three or four pains and an ache. Ow!"

"Hold that scoundrel till I get at him!" rumbled Tom Dutton. "I'll teach him to play pranks like this in the study!"

"It wasn't a prank!" yelled Bunter. "My foot slipped. Oh, dear! I'm hurt! I'm hurt! Help me up, Bob Cherry. You can keep off, Peter— Oh—oh—oh! Ow—ow—ow!"

Bunter had had the impression, for a moment, that Peter Todd was coming to help him up. But he wasn't. Bunter soon discovered his mistake. Peter was coming for vengeance. He rolled the Owl of the Remove over on the floor, and snatched up a slipper, and started with terrific vim.

NEXT MONDAY—

"THROUGH FIRE AND FLAME!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

Smack, smack, smack, smack!

"Yow-ow-ow-ow! Help! Fire! Murder! Yow!"

Smack, smack, smack!

Crash, crash, crash, went Bunter's roller-skates, as he struggled to get away. But he could not get on his feet. That was quite beyond his powers. Peter Todd swiped him with the slipper till his arm ached, and Bunter's roars rang through the Remove passage.

Juniors came in crowds to see what was the matter. Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent came along from No. 1 Study, and Squiff and Fisher T. Fish from the other end of the passage. They were the first to arrive. Bolsover major and Hurree Singh and Tom Brown and a crowd of others followed, cramming the doorway, and filling the passage outside.

The yells of laughter that arose almost drowned Billy Bunter's wild roars.

"Go it, Peter!"

"Buck up, Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Smack, smack, smack!

"Yow-wow! Rescue!" roared Bunter. "You grinning idiots! Yaroooh! Rescue! Yah! I'm being murdered! Yow-ow! Help!"

Smack, smack, smack!

Harry Wharton rushed in at last, and dragged the infuriated Peter off.

"'Nuff's as good as a feast!" he gasped. "You'll wear out his bags, Peter."

"I—I—I'll squash him! I'll pulverise him! Look at my impot!" hooted Peter Todd.

"Look at my nose!" groaned Alonzo.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cave!" called out Hurree Jamset Ram Singh from the passage. "The esteemed Quelch is coming, with a frownful expression on his august chivvy."

There was a scattering of the juniors in the passage. The din in No. 7 Study had been terrific, and it was no wonder that it had brought the Remove-master on the scene. The rustle of his gown could be heard in the passage as the juniors scattered.

"Help me up!" panted Bunter. "It was all Todd's fault! Oh, dear! Help me up, Wharton, you silly idiot, can't you?"

Harry Wharton grasped the fat junior under the armpits, and yanked him up. Wharton was strong and sturdy, but it required the exertion of all his strength to lift Bunter.

There was a clatter as the Owl of the Remove landed on his feet, and he leaned back heavily on Wharton, unable to keep his balance.

A terrifying figure in cap and gown appeared in the doorway of the study. It was Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, and he had what Hurree Singh called a "frownful" expression—exceedingly so. And he had a cane in his hand.

"What is this?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch angrily. "How dare you make so much noise? How often have I told you that I will not have the Remove passage turned into a bear-garden? This is outrageous—unparalleled! Bless my soul!"

"Ow!" gasped Wharton.

Bunter, in his wild contortions, had driven his elbow into Harry Wharton's waistcoat, and the captain of the Remove staggered back, gasping, with the wind knocked completely out of him. Bunter was left "on his own" again, and he crashed and clattered wildly in a frantic effort to keep his balance. The din of the roller-skates on the floor of the study was simply deafening. Mr. Quelch stared at him in angry astonishment.

"Bunter! Bless my soul! How dare you stand there dancing on skates before me—before my very eyes, Bunter! You utterly stupid boy! If you wish to practise skate-dancing, you must not do it in the study."

Apparently Mr. Quelch supposed that Billy Bunter was executing some new variety of the two-step or the tango. Bunter could not explain; he could not speak. He crashed his skates right and left in frenzied attempts to keep himself from falling. His spectacles slid down his fat little nose, his face streamed with perspiration, and his hair was almost standing on end. Crash, crash! Clatter! Crash!

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"Look out!" yelled Tom Dutton suddenly.

Bunter was skimming forward again, this time towards the door. Mr. Quelch put out a hand to stop him. He might as well have put out his hand to stop a Dreadnought in full career. Bunter cannoned into him, and drove him out of the doorway, throwing his fat arms round the Remove-master, and clutching him wildly to keep himself from falling.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Peter Todd.

"Boy!" shrieked Mr. Quelch, struggling in Bunter's frenzied embrace. "Boy! Release me! Are you mad? Are you insane? Bunter! Bless my soul, you are tearing my gown! Is this boy out of his senses? Good heavens!"

Crash, crash! Clatter! Crash!

Bunter's fat legs travelled off, and Bunter had to follow them, and he dragged the breathless and astounded Remove-master after him down the passage, very nearly dragging him to the floor.

"Help!" cried the Form-master. "The boy is insane! He is pulling me over! Wharton—Todd—Dutton—help me!"

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Peter. "Bunter's done it now!"

The juniors, recovering themselves, rushed to the rescue of the unfortunate Form-master. Peter Todd reeled back with a howl as he caught one of Bunter's skates on his shin. But Wharton grasped the fat junior, and exerted his strength to drag him off Mr. Quelch. Bunter's frenzied grasp came away, with fragments of Mr. Quelch's scholastic gown in his fat fingers and he seemed to float round Wharton on the elusive skates.

"Hold me!" gasped Bunter. "I'm going—Ow—ow—ow!"

He clutched at Wharton, and got a firm grip on his hair with one hand, and on his ear with the other. The captain of the Remove yelled with pain.

"Let go! Oh, my hat! Let go!"

But Bunter was not letting go, not if he knew it. He held on for his life.

"Rescue!" yelled Wharton.

Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent came speeding up. Mr. Quelch was leaning on the wall, gasping. The juniors all grasped Bunter together, and pitched him over on his back on the floor, like a very fat beetle. Wharton clasped his ear and his head, and groaned.

Fellows were peeping out of their studies all along the passage, and grinning. They had never seen Mr. Quelch waltzing before, and his waltz with Bunter struck them as funny. But it did not strike Mr. Quelch as funny. The Remove-master was in a towering rage.

"Oh, dear!" groaned Bunter. "Oh, dear! You silly asses! It was all your fault! Ow! Now my backbone's broken! Ow! I'm bleeding to death! Yow!"

"Take those skates off that idiotic boy!" said Mr. Quelch, his voice trembling with rage. "Take them off him at once."

Nugent and Squiff whipped off Bunter's skates. The fat junior sat up, and groped for his spectacles.

"Bunter!" Mr. Quelch's voice was thunderous. "How dare you play such tricks? How dare you play such tricks on me—on me, sir, your Form-master! Bless my soul! I can scarcely credit the evidence of my senses. On me—me!"

"Please it wasn't a trick!" wailed Bunter. "I—I couldn't help it, sir. I'm a dab at skating, but—but I'm out of practice."

"You utterly stupid boy, I shall punish you severely—most severely!"

"I—I was only trying to please you, sir."

"What?"

"You—you said it would be a good thing for us to enter for the ice carnival competition, sir, and—and you said we ought to practise for it."

Mr. Quelch stared.

"Certainly I did, Bunter. But—"

"Well, sir, I—I was going to practise. I—I hope to bag the first prize for the Remove, sir; that's what I mean."

"You—you hope to win the first prize at skating!" stuttered Mr. Quelch. "And—and that is how you skate! If you dare to put on skates in the house again,

Bunter, I will report you to Dr. Locke for a flogging. Now follow me to my study."

"Wh-a-a-at for, sir?" gasped Bunter, in dismay.

"I am going to cane you!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "Follow me instantly!"

"Oh, dear!"

The unfortunate skater limped away after Mr. Quelch. In a few minutes sounds of wild anguish were heard proceeding from the Remove-master's study. When Billy Bunter came back into No. 7 he was almost crawling.

But he met with no sympathy in No. 7. Tom Dutton glared at him ferociously, and Peter Todd, who was starting his imposition over again, looked up for just one moment to give him a glance that was worthy of a Gorgon, and then went on with his work. Even the gentle Alonzo had no sympathy for him. He was bathing his nose in a basin.

Billy Bunter sank into the armchair and groaned.

"Ow! Yow! Lots of thanks a fellow gets for trying to get some credit for his study!" he groaned. "I've a jolly good mind to chuck up the whole bizney. Ow, ow, ow!"

"Do you want some more of the slipper?" asked Peter Todd sulphurously.

"Oh, really, Todd— Yow! No!"

"Then don't let me hear another 'yow' from you!" said Peter.

And Billy Bunter had to bear his sufferings in silence after that.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Dutton Goes!

"BEASTLY, isn't it?" Bob Cherry remarked.

Harry Wharton & Co. agreed that it was beastly.

The select circle, known as the Famous Five of the Greyfriars Remove, were one short. That select circle had consisted of Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove; Frank Nugent, his study-mate; Bob Cherry, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Indian nabob, and Johnny Bull. Now Johnny Bull was gone; Johnny was "off" to Australia with his uncle, and when he would come back, or whether he would come back, his chums couldn't tell. Johnny Bull certainly was going to have a "topping" time, so there was no need to feel sympathetic about it. But the four chums missed him, and they missed him more than ever now that the date of the St. Wode's football match had come round. Johnny Bull had been a steady and reliable back, and it was a question of filling his place in the team.

Squiff, the Australian junior, had filled his place in the select circle. Johnny Bull had recommended, before he left, that Sampson Quincy Ifley Field, known for short as Squiff, should supply his place in the "Co.," so that the Famous Five would still be the Famous Five. But Squiff couldn't take his place in the Remove eleven, because Squiff was already inside-left in the front line.

"It is beastly!" said Harry Wharton. "There isn't a back in the whole Form like Johnny Bull excepting Linley, and he's left back already. Still, Johnny isn't here, and it's a question who goes in. St. Wode's are a tough team, and we've got to make up the best eleven we can. It's between Bolsover major and Tom Dutton. Dutton is jolly good, both as half and back, but he's so jolly deaf."

"Bow-wow!" said a voice in the doorway of No. 1 Study. And Peter Todd looked in. "Of course it must be Tommy, my infants. He doesn't play footer with his ears, does he?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"He never hears a blessed word that's said to him," he remarked, "and he can't play footer with an ear-trumpet in his fist, and I can't use a megaphone on the field of play. Still, he's jolly keen, and he makes up for his ears with his eyes. And I don't think we can play Bolsover this time. He really isn't quite up to the mark for St. Wode's. Tell Dutton we shall want him this afternoon, Toddy."

"Right-ho!" said Peter Todd joyfully. And he rushed away in search of his deaf chum.

Peter Todd had once declared that his study—No. 7—being top study in the Remove, ought to be played whole, as it were. To which the Famous Five had rejoined that No. 7 wasn't top study by any manner of means, and that they would see No. 7 Study hanged.

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EVERY
MONDAY,

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ONE
PENNY.

drawn, and quartered first. The idea of playing Bunter and Alonzo made them smile. Peter had loyally done his best to make players of Billy Bunter and his Cousin Alonzo, but, though he seldom admitted failure, he had to admit it in that instance. But he never ceased to urge the claims of Tom Dutton, who was really a first-class player, though his auricular affliction was a little bit of a bother. But, as Peter very truly declared, Tom Dutton didn't play footer with his ears.

Peter looked into No. 7 for his chum. Billy Bunter was there, with a scowl on his fat face.

"Seen Dutton?" asked Peter.

"Blow Dutton!" said Bunter. "I say, Peter, those beasts have taken those roller-skates away, and I can't practise. They actually had the nerve to say that Johnny Bull said they were to be sold for the benefit of the Belgian Refugee Fund. And the utter beasts have sold them to Skinner for five bob, and Skinner won't lend them to me!"

"Jolly good thing, too!" said Peter. "Ain't you fed-up with skating by this time, you fathead?"

"How am I going to win the first prize at the skating carnival if I don't practise?" howled Bunter.

Todd did not reply to that question. It was too difficult for him, and he gave it up. And he had no time to bother about Bunter. He sped downstairs to look for Dutton, leaving the Owl of the Remove grumbling.

"Hallo, here you are!" exclaimed Todd, as he caught sight of Dutton in the hall.

Tom did not reply; he did not hear. He was standing there with a letter in his hand, reading it, with a worried look on his face.

Todd smote him on the shoulder as the easiest way of attracting his attention, and Dutton gave a yell and a jump.

"Ow! Fathead!"

"You're wanted this afternoon," said Peter. "You're going to play against St. Wode's. It's your giddy chance, Tommy. Play up like thunder, and you'll be a regular man in the team. Savvy? Couldn't be better."

"Yes; I've had a letter," said Tom Dutton. "It's from my cousin."

"Oh, blow!" said Peter. "You're wanted this afternoon."

"Eh?"

"Wharton wants you to play back."

"Yes; it's from Jack," said Dutton. "How did you know my cousin's name was Jack, Peter? I don't remember mentioning him to you."

"Oh, don't be funny, you ass!"

Tom Dutton gave him a startled look.

"Blessed if you ain't a regular wizard, Peter. How on earth did you guess that Jack was short of money?"

"What! Oh, fathead! Blow your Cousin Jack!" howled Peter.

"The silly ass has got himself into a scrape," said Tom, with a troubled look. "He lent me some money last vac., you know, and I sent it back out of my allowance. He says one good turn deserves another. I suppose that's all right. Only where am I to get ten quids from—eh?"

"Blessed if I know," said Peter, with a stare. "Your Cousin Jack wants ten quids, does he? Tell him to go and eat coke!"

"Oh, no; it's not a joke! It's serious enough. He's got himself into a scrape, and he seems to depend on me to pull him out," said Tom. "But I couldn't raise more than fifteen bob at the most. He's a decent chap, though, old Jack, and he says he must have it next week, and if I can't help him he don't know what he will do. Beastly bother, ain't it?"

"You're wanted in the team to-day!" howled Peter.

"Yes; at about three o'clock," said Dutton.

"What?"

"Didn't you ask me if he was coming to-day?"

"Oh, crumbs! No, I didn't. I said you're wanted in the team to-day!" Peter shrieked into his ear.

"Oh," said Dutton, "that's unfortunate! I can't play, you see, as Jack's coming. Jack's an old pal, you know."

"But it's your great chance for bagging a regular place in the team!" Peter roared.

Tom Dutton nodded.

"It's hard cheese," he said, "but I can't fail old Jack. He would always stand me anything when he had any money. You see, it's a half-holiday at his school, same as ours, and he's coming over on his bike. It's a good thirty miles, and I couldn't let him come over and not see me. He says he's going to tell me all about it."

Peter Todd snorted. He wasn't in the slightest degree interested in Jack Dutton, of whom he had never even heard; but he was greatly interested in getting his chum and study-mate into the Remove eleven.

"Tell Wharton I'm sorry I can't play," said Tom. "I'm really sorry. I'd like it more than anything. But old Jack——"

"Blow old Jack!"

"Yes, he'd go back, and he'd be ratty at not seeing me, you see. I don't want him to go back without seeing me."

Peter Todd put his mouth close to Dutton's ear, holding him by the collar so that he could not escape, and shouted:

"You're coming to St. Wode's this afternoon, fathead! I'll yank you into the brake by your hair if you don't come quietly! You're not going to miss this chance. You can leave a note for your cousin. If he's cycled thirty miles, he can cycle another ten to St. Wode's, or he can wait here till you get back, or he can go and chop chips! See?"

Tom Dutton shook his head.

"Can't be did, Peter. I'm sorry."

"Well, then, I'll leave a note for him!" howled Peter. "I'll explain. And, mind, you're coming in the brake, if I have to lug you!"

"Sorry, but——"

"Rats!"

Peter Todd strode away in great dudgeon. It was the chance of a lifetime for No. 7 Study, and Peter was not going to allow it to be missed because some unknown person of the name of Jack Dutton was coming over on a bicycle. Tom Dutton shook his head, and proceeded to read the letter again, his worried look deepening. Todd returned to No. 7 Study.

"It's all right," he said. "What time will the brake be here?"

"Sharp two," said Harry Wharton. "In a few minutes now. Better get your bag ready. Is Dutton ready?"

"I'm going to put his things in my bag," said Peter. "We'll be ready."

Peter Todd hurried away. He had a lot to do in those few minutes. First of all, he wrote a hurried note and addressed it to Jack Dutton, and handed it to Alonzo, with strict injunctions to wait for Jack Dutton to arrive, and to deliver the note into his hands as soon as he came. In case of any mistake happening, Peter threatened to burn the valuable volume on entomology in the study fire.

Then he packed Dutton's footer things with his own, and brought down the bag. Then he might have been observed in deep consultation with Vernon-Smith and Bulstrode and Tom Brown the New Zealander—all members of the team. Those three youths chuckled as Peter talked to them, and nodded assent.

When the brake arrived at the gates of Greyfriars, a crowd of fellows gathered to see the Remove team off. Two or three fellows were coming with them in the brake, and Billy Bunter, of course, squeezed in.

Bunter anticipated a high tea at St. Wode's after the match, and he was "on." Tom Dutton came to wish his chum good luck as he started.

"What's that porpoise doing in the brake?" demanded Bob Cherry, as he jumped in, and there was a yelp from Bunter as he came down on a fat foot.

"Yow! Oh, really, Bob——"

"Oh, clear off, Tubby!" said Squiff.

"Oh, really, Field! As Dutton isn't coming, a reserve will be wanted, and Wharton can't do better than play me in the back line."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you grampus!" said Harry Wharton. "Do you think I could put a performing porpoise at back?"

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"Well, as a matter of fact, Wharton, you could play back yourself, and put me as centre-forward. I'm a dab at footer, as you know, and I like centre-forward best."

"What's that about Dutton not coming?" said Nugent. "He's coming, isn't he?"

"Of course, he is!" said Peter Todd.

"Jump in, you fellows!" exclaimed Wharton. "It's time we were off!"

"Well, good luck, Peter!" said Tom Dutton. "Sorry I can't come; but, you see, my Cousin Jack——"

Peter Todd and Smithy and Brown and Bulstrode closed round Dutton, grinning. They suddenly laid violent hands on him, all together, and he was pitched bodily into the brake. The footballers scrambled in after him, and the driver cracked his whip, and the big vehicle started. The Greyfriars fellows sent a cheer after them as they rolled away down the road.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Sat Upon!

TOM DUTTON sat up, amid a sea of feet, and gasped.

"Yow-ow-ow! Oooooof!"

"What the dickens——" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the little game?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Lemme gerrup!" roared Dutton. "You've got your silly feet on me, Peter, you fathead!"

"That's all right, you're staying there for a bit," said Todd, cheerfully. "Keep hold of the silly duffer, you chaps! He'll be jumping out or something!"

"But what is the gamefulness?" asked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Does not the esteemed deaf Dutton wish-fully desire to come?"

"Oh, yes, said Peter; "he wants to come all right! He thinks he doesn't, but he does! So I'm bringing him."

"But what——"

"He's got a fatheaded cousin or something coming to see him this afternoon," explained Peter. "He thought it was up to him to stay at home. I thought it wasn't."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you going to lemme gerrup?" roared Dutton sulphurously.

"You're coming to St. Wode's!" roared Peter.

"Oh, all right! I don't mind coming down the road," said Dutton. "Only you'll have to put me down at Friardale, so that I can walk back in time."

Peter chuckled, and the dusty Dutton was allowed to rise and take his seat beside Peter. Peter linked his arm in his chum's, and Tom Brown kept a watch on him on the other side. The deaf junior's impression was that he was going "down the road" for a bit. Peter's impression was that he was going to St. Wode's.

The brake rolled away through Friardale village, all the fellows grinning, excepting Dutton, who didn't see what there was to grin at. The brake turned into the high-road for St. Wode's, which was at a good distance from Greyfriars.

"I shall have to get down here," said Dutton. "It's a couple of miles to Greyfriars now. Leggo, Peter!"

"Sit tight!" said Peter.

"Leggo my arm! I tell you I've got to get down!"

"You're coming with us!"

"Rats! I've got to see my Cousin Jack."

"I've left a note for Cousin Jack," screamed Peter. "Alonzo is going to give it to him. I've got your footer clobber in my bag."

"My hat!"

"It's all right, Dutton!" yelled Wharton. "We want you to play back, you know."

"That's just what I want to do—go back!" said Tom. "And I'm jolly well going to, too!"

"My hat!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. Are you going to leggo my arm, Peter, or shall I punch your silly head?"

"You'd better punch my silly head," said Peter cheerfully. "I'm certainly not going to leggo!"

"I say, you fellows, you don't want that deaf duffer, anyway," said Billy Bunter. "Why not play me? I'm as good at footer as I am at skating."



Crash, crash, crash, went Bunter's skates on the floor, as he strove valiantly to keep his balance amid the general wreck and ruin. "Oh my hat! Oh! Great Scott! Help! Yow-ow!" gasped Billy Bunter, "I—I c-can't keep up somehow. Yaroooh!" (See Chapter I.)

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Dutton made an effort to wrench his arm free; but Peter's grip was like iron. On his other side the New Zealand junior had taken his other arm, and his grip, too, strongly resembled that of a vice.

"Will you let go?" yelled Dutton.

"No fear!"

"You silly chumps——"

"Bow-wow!"

"I tell you I've got to get back!"

"Rats!"

"You—you burbling ass——"

"Hear, hear!"

"You chortling jabberwock——"

"Hurrah!"

Tom Dutton panted. There was evidently no escape for him. The juniors yelled with laughter as the brake rushed on. Tom Dutton's face was, as Bob Cherry remarked, worth a guinea a box.

The miles sped under the rapidly-rolling wheels, and Peter Todd and Tom Brown still retained their grasp upon Dutton's arms. Tom was a sturdy fellow, but he could not get his arms loose. He had to resign himself to his fate.

"It's all right," Peter bawled into his ears. "Jack will get my note, and he'll understand. I've told him THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 369.

to come over to St. Wode's on his bike. He'll be in time for tea."

"You silly fathead!" growled Dutton.

The juniors settled down for the long drive, and Tom Dutton remained quiet for some time. But, all of a sudden, he made a wild jump, taking his guardians by surprise, and leaped to his feet. With a bound, he made for the back of the brake.

"Collar him!" shouted Peter.

The grinning footballers collared Tom on all sides before he could jump out. He was borne to the floor of the brake, with five or six fellows piling on him.

"Obstinate ass!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Here, make Bunter sit on him! That's the way to keep him safe!"

"Ha, ha! Come on, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, you fellows——"

"Lemme gerrup, you thumping asses!" came a suffocated voice from Dutton. "You—you're sq-sq-squashing me! Gerrrooh!"

"Sit on him, Bunter!"

"Look here, I'm jolly well not going to squat down there!" exclaimed Billy Bunter indignantly. "I'm jolly well—— Yow! Leggo my ear, Todd, you fearful beast! I—I'll sit on him if you like! Yow!"

Tom Dutton gave a gasp like air escaping from a bad puncture, as Billy Bunter's heavy weight plumped down

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THROUGH FIRE AND FLAME!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry
Wharton & Co. BY FRANK RICHARDS.

on him. He was flattened out on his back, and, with Billy Bunter sitting on his chest, he simply had no chance. He lay and gasped feebly.

"I—I say, get that awful porpoise off!" moaned Dutton. "Ow! I'm being squashed! Yow! I can feel my ribs going— Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Toddy, old man— Yarooch! Oh, crumbs! Draggimoff!"

Tom Dutton's face was growing anguished. Billy Bunter had settled down comfortably now, and he was smiling. He owed Tom many little accounts for little troubles in No. 7 Study, and it occurred to him that his chance had come of paying them in full, with a little interest over.

"Grooooooh!" came faintly from the unfortunate Dutton. "Yankimoff! I—I'll come quietly!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, that's all right!" said Bunter. "I'm quite comfy now. Don't wriggle like that, Dutton, or I may jab my elbow into your eye."

"Yarooch!"

"Well, I warned you! Do keep still!"

"Dragimoff!"

"Don't understand Russian," said Peter Todd.

"Oh! Rescue! I'm being flattened!" gasped Dutton.

"I'll come q-q-quietly! Oh, lor! Oh, crikey! Rescue!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you promise to come and play back, honour bright?" roared Peter Todd.

"Ow! Yes! Honour bright! Honest Injun! Yarooop!"

"Good! It's a go, then! No more of your larks," said Todd severely. "You can roll off, Bunter."

"Oh, really, Toddy, I'm quite comfortable here! I don't mind sitting on Dutton all the way to St. Wode's."

"Dead men tell no tales, and play no footer!" grinned Peter. "Get off! No good carrying a flattened corpse to St. Wode's. Gerroff!"

Two or three hands seized Billy Bunter and rolled him off. Tom Dutton sat up, gasping painfully for breath.

"You—you—you blithering idiots!" he gasped. "Oh, crumbs! Ow! You silly chumps! Yow! Oh, my word! Groooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peter Todd kindly lifted him into his seat, where he sat in a state of collapse for ten minutes at least. When he recovered his breath, he told Peter Todd what he thought of him, at full length, and with great emphasis. Peter listened without turning a hair, and Dutton had not quite finished when the brake rolled up to the gates of St. Wode's.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Held by the Enemy!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. came out into the field, on the St. Wode's ground, looking very fresh and fit. Tom Dutton was still breathing a little hard; he had not quite recovered from Bunter. But he had made up his mind to the match now, though he could not help feeling a little worried about his cousin at Greyfriars. Cousin Jack must have arrived at Greyfriars by that time. But it was no use thinking about Cousin Jack and his little difficulties now. The St. Wode's junior team were in great form, and the Remove backs had plenty to do.

In spite of the "press-gang" device by which Tom Dutton had been brought into the team, he gave his whole heart to the game, and played up well. The other back, Mark Linley, was also in great form. They had plenty to do. The Remove forwards were kept pretty well bottled up, and the attacks were incessant, and Linley and Dutton had a heap of the game.

Harry Wharton had rather an anxious eye upon Dutton at first. Good as he was, he was not quite up to the form of the missing Johnny Bull. But he was doing remarkably well, though he never by any chance heard any shout that was directed to him. But he was sharp-eyed and keen-witted, and those qualities compensated for other deficiencies. Again and again Dutton cleared when the attack was hot, and gave the halves and the forwards

a chance. But the first goal came to St. Wode's within a quarter of an hour of the interval.

Wharton clapped Peter Todd on the shoulder as they walked back to the centre of the field.

"Jolly glad you brought him," he said. "Bolsover couldn't have stood up to them like that. It would have been two or three by this time."

"Oh, you can always rely on No. 7 Study!" said Peter airily. "The top study in the Remove will always pull you out of the fire, you know."

"Fathead!" said Harry cheerfully.

The Remove made a hot attack after the restart, but St. Wode's brought the ball down again, and pressed for goal. Bulstrode fisted it out, and Tom Dutton cleared with a kick that took the leather far past the half-way line. That gave the Remove forwards a good chance at last, and they swooped down on the ball, and swept it goalward.

"Goal!" shouted the half dozen Greyfriars fellows who were in the St. Wode's crowd, watching.

It was goal at last, and the teams had equalised.

"Sure, that deaf gossoon is a broth av a boy, after all," remarked Micky Desmond, who was one of the Remove onlookers.

"Rot!" said Billy Bunter. "You should have seen what would have happened if I'd been in the team, Desmond."

"Sure, I can guess what would have happened, intirely," grinned Micky.

Billy Bunter grunted. He was watching the game through his big glasses, not because there was anything specially interesting in it for him, but because there was nothing else to do. He had come over in the belief that there was a feed to follow the match. And he was hungry already. Ninety minutes seemed a ridiculously long time to play, to Bunter—when he was hungry.

A new-comer had wheeled a bicycle into the gateway, and left it there, and come down to the footer ground. He tapped Bunter on the shoulder.

"Greyfriars chap?" he asked, looking at his cap.

"Yes," said Bunter, blinking at him. "Oh, you're Dutton's cousin, I suppose?" He recognised a resemblance to Tom Dutton in the schoolboy's face.

Jack Dutton nodded.

"Yes, I've come over from Greyfriars," he said. "He's here, I suppose. I got a note signed by somebody—Jodd, or Dodd, or something."

"Todd," said Bunter. "Yes, Dutton's here; he's in the team."

Billy Bunter blinked eagerly at the new-comer. He was a good-looking lad of about fifteen, with a somewhat weak and good-natured face, and curly, flaxen hair. He looked, to Bunter's mind, "soft." He was dressed in Norfolks, and Bunter noticed that his clothes were excellently cut, that his tie was beautifully tied and adorned with a ruby pin, and that he had a general air of being "nutty." His whole appearance was decidedly prosperous, and Bunter's eyes gleamed behind his spectacles as he noticed it. Billy Bunter was always on the look-out for good-natured, "soft," and wealthy persons.

"Tom's my study-mate at Greyfriars," he said confidentially. "He's my best pal, you know. Jolly glad to see you, Jack—I'll call you Jack. I'm Billy Bunter."

He held out a fat hand. Jack Dutton shook it in a perfunctory manner. Apparently he was not greatly impressed with his cousin's pal and study-mate. But Billy Bunter was determined not to notice that.

"Oh, you're Bunter!" he said.

"Yes, I dare say Tommy has mentioned me to you."

Jack Dutton chuckled.

"Yes, he's mentioned you. He told me there was a fellow in his study at Greyfriars who was fatter than Fat Jack of the Bonehouse."

"Ahem! That—that was only Tommy's little joke, you know. We're awfully pally, Tommy and I. I really came over here to-day because Tommy pressed me to come. By the way, Jack, I suppose you're hungry after your ride. There's a tuckshop a step from here, almost outside the gates."

"I've got to see my cousin," said Jack Dutton. "It'll be the interval soon, I suppose."

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"Oh, no! They—they've really only just started," said Bunter mendaciously. "I'll tell you what, Jack, you come and have a snack with me. I'll stand treat, as you're my old pal's cousin. We can get back in ten minutes."

"Well, I'm pretty peckish," admitted Tom's cousin. "I've done thirty-five miles on my jigger, and I've got to get back to Lantham for calling-over. I don't mind if I do."

"Come on, then," said Bunter eagerly. "I'll show you the way."

Bunter promptly showed him the way. They walked out of the school grounds, and Billy Bunter led the way into the tuckshop a hundred yards or so down the lane. The fact that he had only the sum of three halfpence in his pockets made no difference at all to Billy Bunter. The stranger looked like a nut, and if he could afford to spend so much on his clothes, it stood to reason that he had some cash about him. That was how Billy Bunter reasoned it out.

"What will you have?" asked Bunter hospitably. "I'll start with sausage-rolls, myself. And ginger-pop!"

"Same here," said Jack Dutton.

The bald old gentleman in the shop served them, and their orders were liberal. Billy Bunter perched himself on a high stool at the counter, and piled in with great energy. Jack Dutton had a keen appetite, too. They did full justice to the provisions. But after ten minutes or so Jack Dutton looked at his watch.

"Better get back," he suggested. "I want to see Tom in the interval."

"Oh, the interval's over before now!" said Bunter. "Try some of these tarts."

"But you told me——"

"These tarts are simply ripping," said Bunter, with his mouth full. "It's my treat, you know, old chap."

Jack Dutton looked uneasy.

"I've got to get back to Lantham before calling-over, and it's a jolly long way!" he exclaimed. "You told me they'd only started——"

"Oh, I—I meant they'd only just restarted—after a goal, you know," explained Bunter. "It's all right. You'll see Tommy after the match."

"You silly ass——"

"Try the cream puffs."

Jack Dutton restrained his opinion of Bunter, remembering that Tommy's fat pal was standing treat, and in the most handsome manner. As he could not see his cousin during the game, and the interval was passed, he decided that he might as well take Bunter's advice. So he piled into the jam tarts and the cream puffs.

The bald little man who was serving them was making up an account upon a sheet of wrapping-paper, with a stump of pencil. He was not suspicious, but as the two juniors did not belong to St. Wode's, and he did not know where they came from, he gave a broad hint that the bill was running up.

"That's five shillings now, young gentlemen," he remarked.

"All right," said Bunter. "Some more tarts, please. And ginger-beer. I'll have that cake, too. Make it an even ten bob altogether."

"Yes, sir."

"I say, you must have lots of tin, Bunter," said Jack Dutton.

"Oh, that's all right!" said Bunter, with his mouth crammed, and his voice sounding a little muffled in consequence. "My father's awfully rich, you know; and then I get a lot of remittances from my titled relations. There's a big postal-order waiting for me when I get back to Greyfriars, from my uncle the baronet. I'll tell you what, Jack, I came away before the post came in, as it happened, and I'd just lent my last half-quid to your Cousin Tom——"

"Eh?"

"I'll tell you what. You settle this little bill, and I'll send you the postal-order on, immediately I get back. You don't mind?"

"I—I don't mind!" gasped Jack Dutton. "But I can't!"

"Eh! Why can't you?"

"I'm stony!"

Bunter blinked at him.

"S-s-stony! My hat! Why, I—I thought—you look as if you've got heaps of money!" he gasped.

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ONE
PENNY.

"You fat boulder!" exclaimed the Lantham junior. "Do you mean to say you asked me in here because you thought I'd got heaps of money, and you haven't any about you to pay for the feed?"

"I hope you are not going to be personal," said Billy Bunter, with great dignity. "It was quite by chance that I came away from Greyfriars before the post came in. I've got a handsome remittance there from my uncle, who's a lord——"

"You said a baronet just now!" snapped Jack Dutton.

"Ahem! That's another uncle. I—I've got a lot of uncles," explained Bunter hastily. "You—you see—I—I've got six or seven."

"All lords and baronets, I suppose?" snapped the Lantham junior.

"Nearly all," said Bunter loftily. "The family of Bunter de Bunter is——"

"Oh, don't give me any silly piffle!" broke in the Lantham junior angrily. "You asked me here to this feed, and you've got to pay for it. I tell you I'm stony. I haven't a single brown about me!"

"Why, you—you spoofer!" exclaimed Bunter. "What do you mean by swanking about in expensive clothes and ruby tie-pins if you've got no money? I look on you as an impostor, and I decline to have anything further to do with you!"

And Billy Bunter rolled off the high stool and started for the door.

The little bald man behind the counter had listened to that curious and interesting dialogue between the two "stony" schoolboys, with a really terrific expression growing on his crusty face. When it dawned upon Mr. Jukes that he had handed out ten shillings' worth of his stock, and that there was not the slightest chance that he was going to be paid for it, he became quite purple in the face. As Bunter made for the door, Mr. Jukes whipped round from behind the counter and out off his retreat.

"No, you don't!" he roared.

Billy Bunter blinked at him with all the dignity he could muster. He was getting a little alarmed now. Jack Dutton stood rooted to the floor, with a half-devoured tart in his hand. He was overwhelmed with dismay. The Lantham junior had accepted Billy Bunter's generous invitation to a feed in all good faith. Tom Dutton had certainly mentioned the Owl of the Remove to him, but, apparently, he had not given details.

"My good man!" said Bunter loftily.

"Ten shillings, please!" said Mr. Jukes.

Bunter laughed, rather nervously.

"You needn't have the slightest doubt about your money," he said loftily. "I've got tons at Greyfriars. I will fetch the ten shillings at once."

"No, you won't!" said Mr. Jukes grimly. "You're going to stay here, both of you, till I get my money. Ten bob, if you please!"

"I—I—I haven't any about me," said Bunter desperately. "Look here, I'm well known at St. Wode's, and—and I've got a lot of pals there. I—I often come over to see the—the fellows, you know."

"I know I've never seen you before!" said Mr. Jukes.

"Well, you've landed yourself, you spoofing pig!" said Jack Dutton ruefully. "You can get out of it now if you can! Why didn't you tell me you wanted me to foot the bill, and I'd have told you I was stony?"

"Where's my ten bob?" inquired Jukes, in a voice like the rumble of thunder. "You precious pair of young swindlers!"

"You—you had better not be insolent, or I shall decline to pay you at all!" stuttered Bunter. "My—my friends are at the school near here playing footer. I will go and borrow this small sum."

"You won't leave this shop till you've paid me!" said Mr. Jukes.

"Well, I've got to go!" said Jack Dutton. "I've got to see my cousin. The match will be pretty nearly over by this time, and I can't miss Tom. Here, you let me pass!"

"You ain't passing," said Mr. Jukes—"not till you've paid!"

"But—but it was Bunter's treat!" gasped the dismayed Lantham junior. "You—you heard him say—"

"I don't care wot I 'eard him say! I know you've 'ad ten bobs'-worth of stuff atween you, and I know you ain't going till you've paid!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Bunter blinked at Jack Dutton.

"Nice mess you've got us into!" he snapped.

"I have?" shouted the Lantham junior.

"Yes, you! I depended on you!"

"You fat spoofer!"

"You—you swanking impostor!"

"Look here, what's going to be done?" exclaimed Jack Dutton, in utter dismay. "I shall miss Tom at this rate!"

"Blow Tom! I—I can't get back to Greyfriars if the brake goes without me!" howled Bunter. "I haven't any money to pay my fare. I can't walk it."

"Serve you jolly well right!"

"I—I say, my good man, I—I assure you——"

"'Nuff said!" said Mr. Jukes stolidly. "I dessay you've got the money about you somewhere, you young swindlers, and you're going to 'and it out! Leastways, you ain't going out of this 'ere shop, not till you've paid up! I know that!"

Mr. Jukes planted himself firmly in the doorway, and Billy Bunter and Jack Dutton looked at one another in utter dismay. There was no doubt that the crusty old shopkeeper meant every word he said. Billy Bunter thought of the "high tea" at St. Wode's, and groaned dismally. Jack Dutton thought of his meeting with Tom. But there was no help for it. With Cerberus, in the shape of Mr. Jukes, on guard at the door, there was no escape.

Billy Bunter brightened up as a customer stepped in, and prepared for a rush. But Mr. Jukes did not move. He called a boy out of the back-parlour to serve the customer, and remained on guard.

"It's no good, you young thieves!" said Mr. Jukes grimly, when the customer had gone and Billy Bunter's brief hope had died away. "You'd better pay up!"

"I tell you I've got no money about me!" howled Bunter.

"Which you hordered goods you couldn't pay for—hey?"

"I—I thought——"

"Oh, I know your little game!" said Mr. Jukes. "You'll stay 'ere till you pay! And if you ain't paid up by closing-time, I'll 'and you over to the perlice as a pair of young swindlers!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

Billy Bunter dropped into a chair, gasping. For once in his life the Owl of the Remove was sincerely repenting his rascality. He was discovering that the way of the transgressor is hard.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Left in the Lurch!

"GREYFRIARS wins! Hurray!"

It was a close finish to an exciting match. All through the second half Greyfriars and St. Wode's had struggled hard for the odd goal, and it was almost upon the stroke of time when Harry Wharton, receiving a masterly centre from Squiff, drove the leather in, with a shot that beat the home goalie "baldheaded," as Bob Cherry put it.

Then the whistle went, and the teams came off, breathing hard after a gruelling match. Peter Todd slapped his deaf chum on the shoulder as they walked off the ground.

"Glad you came—what?" he demanded.

"What's a shame?" asked Tom.

"Glad you came?" shrieked Peter. "You've helped to win the match."

"Oh, yes! Don't shout. I'm not deaf. I wonder if my cousin's come here?" said Tom, looking round at the crowd on the ground.

"Well, I told him to in my note," said Peter. "If he hasn't, he's waited for you at Greyfriars; and if he hasn't done that it doesn't matter twopence! See?"

"Wait till I change my things," said Dutton.

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Our Companion Papers: "THE GEM" LIBRARY, Every Wednesday, "THE DREADNOUGHT," Every Thursday, "THE PENNY POPULAR," Every Friday, "CHUCKLES," 1d. Every Saturday, 2d.

"Eh—what for?"

"Didn't you say you wanted me to lend you twopence?"

Todd did not undertake to explain. The footer match had not left him enough breath for that. He rushed Tom Dutton into the dressing-room, and they changed and came out in great spirits. It had been a tough game, and it was a feather in the cap for the Remove to have won it. Harry Wharton was quite satisfied with his new recruit, and he uttered some words of congratulation to Tom Dutton; but, as Tom didn't hear any of them, he remained in ignorance of his skipper's good opinion of his prowess as back.

The St. Wode's fellows were entertaining the visiting team to tea after the match. Tom Dutton looked round anxiously for his cousin, whom he had expected to follow the team from Greyfriars. But nothing was to be seen of Cousin Jack. Strangely enough, nothing was to be seen of William George Bunter either. Bob Cherry remembered his existence when they sat at the festive board.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where's Bunter?" he inquired. "Bunter can't possibly be missing the feed."

"Impossible!" said Nugent. "The age of miracles is past!"

"Anybody know where Bunter is?" asked Wharton. "If the duffer isn't here when the brake goes he'll have a jolly long walk!"

"Sure, I saw him strolling out with a chap just before the interval!" said Micky Desmond.

"A St. Wode's chap?" asked Harry.

"No, a stranger; a kid in Norfolk's who'd come in on a bike," said Micky. "I heard him tell Bunter his name was Jack Dutton."

"My hat!" said Peter Todd. "Then Tommy's cousin has come! Where the dickens is he hiding himself?"

"I dare say they'll turn up before tea's over," said Squiff.

But Squiff was mistaken; they didn't. After tea the Greyfriars juniors put on their coats and prepared to start. The brake was waiting for them at the gates. Billy Bunter was not to be seen. The dusk was falling, and the big lamps of the brake glimmered on the road as the juniors came down in a body to the gates with a crowd of St. Wode's fellows to see them off.

Harry Wharton looked round rather anxiously for Bunter. The Owl of the Remove had "wedged" himself into the party, but Wharton did not want him to be left behind, and have to walk nine or ten miles home. It was only too probable that Bunter hadn't the necessary cash to go by train.

"It's jolly queer!" said Wharton, puzzled.

"What's wrong?" asked Thompson, the St. Wode's junior skipper. "Lost something?"

"Yes; a fat boulder in specs, who came over with us," said Harry. "He's got to come back in the brake."

"Anybody seen him?" asked Bob.

Thompson shook his head. None of the other St. Wode's fellows remembered having noticed him. He was evidently nowhere about the school.

"Faith, he went out with that chap Dutton," said Micky Desmond. "But I didn't see him come back."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Whose bike?" said Bob Cherry, nodding towards a very dusty machine leaning on the wall inside the gates. "That jigger looks as if it's been on a long journey. Is that Jack Dutton's?"

Thompson called to the porter, who furnished the information that the bicycle had been left there by a young gentleman in Norfolk's, who had afterwards gone out with a fat young gentleman in glasses. Evidently Jack Dutton had gone out with Bunter, and had not come back.

"Well, we can't keep the brake waiting any longer," said Harry Wharton. "I suppose they know their own business best. They must have their reasons for keeping away. Come on."

The juniors climbed into the brake. Tom Dutton was looking perplexed. He had not heard a word of what had been said about his cousin, and he concluded that Jack Dutton had not come to St. Wode's after all.

"He'll be late back at Lantham," he remarked to Peter Todd, as the brake rolled away with the Greyfriars party.



Splash! Splash! Jimmy Silver forced his way on through the water with Lovell's helpless form on his back. It was not easy going with thick mud all over his boots, and the icy-cold water swishing round his ankles, but he stood it out manfully, and struggled on step by step. See the magnificent long complete tale of the Rookwood Chains, entitled "Heating the Breach!" in this week's issue of our companion paper, "The Boys' Friend."

"Who will?" demanded Peter.

"My Cousin Jack. He must have waited at Greyfriars for me, you know. If he had come over here, he could have got a short cut back to Lantham, and saved half the distance. I was sure he would come."

"He has come!" roared Peter, into his chum's ear.

"His bike's there. He's gone out with Bunter."

"My hat! I'm not going off without seeing him, then!" exclaimed Tom.

"Got to get back for calling-over."

"Who saw him falling over?"

"Calling-over!" bellowed Peter.

"Look here——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Bunter's sweet voice—— What the——"

The brake was passing a little shop about a hundred yards from the school gates of St. Wode's. From the interior of the shop came a yell, as the crowded brake rolled by.

"I say, you fellows! Rescue!"

"Stop!" Wharton called out to the driver.

The brake halted.

"Bunter's there!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "I didn't know there was a tuckshop here. We might have guessed where the fat bounder would be."

"Come on, Bunter, if you want a lift!" shouted Wharton.

"I can't come; this beast won't let me!"

"What!"

"You young swindler!" came a very crusty voice.

"You ain't going without paying!"

Harry Wharton and several more of the juniors jumped

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down. They entered the tuckshop. Billy Bunter and Jack Dutton were there, looking very restive. Old Mr. Jukes was still in the doorway. He had placed a stool there, and was seated upon it, smoking a pipe. He was evidently prepared to keep up his watch for any length of time.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What on earth's the matter?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in astonishment.

Bunter blinked at them with an injured expression.

"This—this person is keeping me here against my will!" he snorted.

"My hat!"

"Which that young swindler ain't going till he's paid my ten shillings," said Mr. Jukes stolidly.

"Oh, so that's the giddy mystery!" chuckled Peter Todd. "You've run up a bill, and can't pay it, Bunter."

"I—I left my purse at Greyfriars," stammered Bunter. "That man has been keeping me here for hours and hours and hours, for a ridiculous sum of ten shillings. I have promised solemnly to send him a postal-order——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And he's keeping me!" exclaimed Tom Dutton's cousin furiously. "That fat beast asked me in here for a feed. When we'd had the feed, he said he hadn't any money, and wanted me to pay—and I'm stony."

The Greyfriars juniors chuckled. They understood now the reason of the mysterious disappearance of Billy Bunter and Tom Dutton's cousin.

"You're Jack Dutton?" asked Peter.

"Yes. Where's my cousin?"

"Here he is. Tom, here's your cousin!"

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THROUGH FIRE AND FLAME!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry
Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

Tom Dutton came into the shop.
 "Hallo! Here you are, Jack!" he exclaimed, shaking hands with his cousin. "Blessed if I knew what had become of you! What did you go off with that fat bounder for?"

"He asked me to a feed."
 "I can't see that it was a case of need. Anyway, here you are now," said Tom. "Come on."

"I can't go!" shouted Jack. "Bunter owes that man ten bob, and he won't let us go."

"Oh, really, Dutton! You——"
 "Oh!" said Tom, with a snort. "I catch on! Fat beast! Look here, you can pay half, then."

"All serene. Give me five bob, old chap."

Tom Dutton handed out five shillings, and Jack bestowed them on Mr. Jukes, who kindly allowed him to pass out. Billy Bunter made a movement to follow, but the bald-headed old gentleman grimly planted himself in the way.

"No, you don't!" he said. "You owe me five shillings."

"Look here, I'm not going to stay here for a paltry five shillings!" howled Bunter. "I say, Toddy, lend me five bob."

"Rats!" said Toddy.

"Lend me five bob, Wharton. I'll hand you my postal-order immediately we get to Greyfriars."

"More rats!"

"I say, Bob, old chap——"

"Bow-wow!"

"Squiff, will you——"

"Time we were getting on," said Squiff, with a grin.

"It's a long, long way to Greyfriars."

"I say, you fellows!" shrieked Bunter, as the juniors made a movement to follow the two Duttons out. "You—you beasts, you can't leave me here! Look here, Johnny Bull owes me five bob, that I lent him just before he left. One of his pals ought to settle with me——"

"What-ho!" said Bob Cherry. "I'm his pal, and I'll settle with you for saying that Johnny owes you five bob!"

"Yaroooh! Yah! Oh, leave off! Chuck it! I—I was only j-j-joking!" yelled Bunter. "I—I mean that I owe Johnny Bull five bob. Yow-wow!"

The Owl of the Remove jerked out that amendment as he dodged Bob Cherry's heavy boot.

"You fat rotter!" gasped Bob, pausing breathless.

"You can stay here all night, for all I care. Come on, you chaps!"

"I—I say, Smithy, you've got lots of money!" wailed Bunter.

"And sense enough to keep it in my pocket," grinned the Bounder.

"I—I shall get into a fearful row if I miss calling-over. I—I left all my money in the study at Greyfriars——"

"Good!" said Vernon-Smith. "I'll look in your study when we get back, and if I find any money there, I'll come over with it specially and bail you out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I—I mean, I—I—I say, you fellows, be pally, you know," groaned Bunter. "That old brute won't let me come out, you know. Some of you hold him while I get by."

Mr. Jukes snorted, and picked up a thick stick. But the juniors had no intention of rescuing Bunter by those means.

"He—he's going to give me in charge," wailed Bunter. "Think what a disgrace that will be for Greyfriars. I shall be sacked!"

"Hurrah!"

"You—you beasts! You rotters! I say, do be pally——"

"You don't want beasts and rotters to be pally, surely," said Tom Brown.

"Oh, really, Brown——"

"Come on!" said Bob.

The juniors left the shop, and Bunter made a desperate rush to follow them. Mr. Jukes flourished his stick, and the Owl of the Remove dodged back.

Outside the shop, the Co. held a whispered consultation, with many chuckles. They did not intend to leave Bunter stranded, but they intended to punish him for his cheek.

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in running up bills for them to pay. Inside the shop, Billy Bunter had sat down in a state of desperation. To be left there, a prisoner, with a ten-mile walk before him even if he escaped. He would not be back at Greyfriars by bedtime. And he thought of the wrath of Mr. Quelch and the Head. Never had the Owl of the Remove suffered so much for his sins.

"I say, you fellows!" he howled, as he caught the sound of whispering voices outside. "I know you're not going to leave me here, you know. I know you're only j-j-joking."

The whispering voices died away. Wharton's voice rapped out sharply:

"Drive on!"

There was a rattle and jingle of harness, a scraping of wheels. Bunter heard the brake move off. Then silence. And from the very depths of Bunter's fat bosom came a dismal groan.

"The—the beasts!" he mumbled. "They've gone and left me! Oh, the rotters! Oh, the beasts! After all I've done for them! Ow!"

Harry Wharton & Co., chuckling softly, walked after the brake. Wharton had called out loudly to the driver to drive on, and added in a whisper that he was to stop a score of yards down the road. The party had to wait while Tom Dutton was talking to his cousin, and during that wait they intended to let Billy Bunter meditate upon his sins—under the watchful eye of Mr. Jukes.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Woes of a Knut!

"N OW, what's the row, Jack?" asked Tom Dutton.

"I'm in a fix," said Jack Dutton, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"Tricks? You've been playing tricks?"

Jack suppressed a groan. They had withdrawn to some distance from the party, as it was a private conversation. But, owing to Tom's little affliction, the conversation was not likely to be kept private from anybody within a hundred yards or so. The footballers in the brake simply could not help hearing.

"Fix!" said Jack, raising his voice. "I know it's a shame to bother you, old chap, but, if you can't stand me a tanner, I'm regularly up the spout!"

Tom Dutton wrinkled his brows.

"Where the dickens am I to get a tanner from, Jack? What on earth have you been doing with your allowance?"

"Spending it," said Jack.

"You shouldn't lend money," said Tom, with a frown. "Bunter's always asking me to lend him money, but I don't do it. Won't the chaps pay up?"

"Spending—not lending!" roared Jack.

"Oh, I see! You don't speak plainly. You needn't rave, you know. I'm not deaf; not what you would call really deaf—only a little hard of hearing."

"Blessed if I know what you'd call deaf, then!" mumbled Jack.

"Eh?"

"I'm in debt, Tom. Ten quids!" said Jack miserably.

"Oh, I say! You haven't been playing the giddy ox, Jack," exclaimed Tom, in dismay—"not pub-haunting, and that kind of thing?"

"Of course not," said his cousin testily. "What do you take me for?"

"Then what do you owe ten quids for?"

"It's my tailor."

"Blessed if I understand why you should owe ten quids to a sailor!" exclaimed Tom, in astonishment.

"Tailor!" shrieked Jack.

"Oh, a chap named Taylor, do you mean?"

"No; my tailor!"

"Well, I'm blowed!" said Tom. "I always knew you were a nut, Jack; but fancy spending ten quids on your clothes! You must be an ass!"

"Well, the other chaps keep up awfully stunning clobber," said Jack. "Most of the fellows in my Form have bigger allowances than I do, and they spend a lot of money. Fitzmaurice—that's my chum—introduced me to his tailor—and—and I'm one of the crowd who

dress well, you know—and—and I'm blessed if I knew how the bill was running up. But Snooks—that's the tailor—grew restive at last, and he began to dun me. I put him off and off, and now he says that, if I don't pay, he'll send the bill in to the Head."

"Oh!" said Tom.

"The other fellows run up bigger bills than that," mumbled Jack. "I suppose I was an ass. But a fellow likes to dress well among a lot of rich fellows, you know. If the bill goes to the Head, he'll slang me and send it on to the pater. You know that the pater will cut up fearfully rusty."

"I should say he would."

"He'll stop my allowance till it's paid," grunted Jack, "and—and he'll jaw to the Head about me, and—and I shall get into no end of a row. I suppose I shall have to stand it. But you're always so careful with your money. I thought you might have some saved or something. You've always helped me when I've been in a fix, Tom, old chap, so—so I thought of you."

Tom Dutton looked moody and thoughtful. His cousin's eyes were fixed beseechingly on his face. The weak, foolish fellow evidently depended on his stronger cousin to help him out of his "fix." They had been "pals" from early boyhood, and it had always fallen to Tom to look after the weaker nature that was always falling into scrapes and requiring to be got out of them.

"Well, I'm glad it's no worse than that," said Tom at last. "I was afraid when I got your letter that you'd been playing the giddy ox. You've only been playing the dashed fool."

"I suppose you can call me names!" growled Jack.

"No; I don't approve of such games," said Tom. "It's silly rot. What do you want to be a silly nut for, you duffer? You always were such a blessed swanker!"

"Look here, I'm not going to be slanged for nothing! If you won't help me out of this scrape, I'll get off, and you can go and eat coke!"

"Oh, don't talk to me about a joke! It's jolly serious if you owe a tradesman ten pounds and can't pay him. Your pater will be as rusty as old nails, and your headmaster will lick you, most likely."

"I—I know he will!" mumbled Jack, the momentary anger dying out of his weak face. "I—I depended on you to help me if you could, Tom."

"I'd help you if I could," said Tom, "but I'm blessed if I see how. I only have five bob a week from home. I've got a half-quid in my pocket now, that's all, and it takes some time to save that, I can tell you."

"Then you can't help me?"

"Oh, I don't mean to scalp you! I'm simply telling you how matters stand. Where the dickens is a fellow in the Lower Fourth to pick up ten quids?" said Tom. "I'd do it like a shot if I could to get you out of a scrape; you know that, Jack. We've always been pals, and you were always decent about my being deaf when some fellows used to make fun of me. But—but I don't see—Suppose I write home, I couldn't ask for more than a quid. And my aunt might stand me ten bob; and I've got two pounds in the Post Office Savings Bank. With what I've got in my pocket, I dare say I could make up four quid altogether, Jack. Do you think the man would take that, and give you time on the rest?"

"I know he wouldn't," said Jack gloomily. "I—I owe it from last term, you see, and—and he's fairly got his back up at last. He's given me till to-day week to pay it in full, and he refused even to see me when I called on him yesterday. And—and Fitz can't lend me anything; he's in low water, too. I—I looked on you as a last resource, Tom. I thought you might be able to manage it somehow."

"You see I can't, old chap, don't you?"

Jack Dutton did not reply. But Tom's look grew quite alarmed as he saw his cousin's weak, handsome face working.

"I—I say, Jack, don't blub!" he gasped. "I—I can't stand that. Look here, I'll manage it somehow. I'm blessed if I know how, but I'll do it. I'll raise that ten quid by next Saturday if I bust a boiler!"

Jack's face brightened up.

"Honest Injun, Tom?"

"Honest Injun!" said Tom desperately. "There must be some way. I—I've got an idea in the back of my mind for roping in ten quid in a lump, if I have luck. I simply must do it, that's all. I—I think you can rely

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on it, Jack. Anyway, you leave it to me, and I'll raise the money, even if I have to go round borrowing it."

"I—I say, you are a good fellow, Tom!" said Jack, gratefully and remorsefully. "I'm a beast to plant my troubles on you in this way!"

"Oh, yes; I mean what I say!" said Tom. "You leave it to me, and don't worry about it any more. I'll see you through. Leave it to me. Now, you'd better buzz off and get your bike, or they'll be shutting up the gates yonder."

"Right-ho!" said Jack, quite briskly. "Thanks, Tom. And I'll let you have the tin back, on my word I will, as—as soon as I can! Good-bye!"

"Good-bye! And keep your pecker up."

Tom Dutton shook hands with his cousin, and Jack hurried away towards the gates of St. Wode's for his bicycle. Tom stood watching him, with a moody brow, till he wheeled out his machine and mounted and rode away. Then he came towards the brake.

"Sorry to keep you fellows waiting," he said, as he came up. "I had to have a little talk with my cousin, you know."

The footballers grinned.

They had heard a good deal of that talk, though not intentionally; and, though some of them felt sorry for Tom, some of them looked at it from a humorous point of view. The idea of a "nut" being in such desperate trouble because he could not pay for his "nobby clobber" struck them as funny.

"Sure, and you're going to pay for the beautiful trousers intirely?" asked Micky Desmond.

"Eh?"

"Shut up, Micky," said Mark Linley.

"But sure it's awfully good of Tommy to look after the tailor," said Micky. "How much does he give for his bags, Tommy?"

"What rot!" said Tom. "My cousin's the best-dressed fellow at Lantham. What do you mean by saying he's in rags, you silly ass?"

"What price his ruby pin?" chuckled Bulstrode.

"Yes, I'm getting in," said Tom. "All you fellows ready. What about Bunter? You're not going to leave him there, are you?"

"No," said Wharton, laughing. "If you're ready, we're ready. I'll look after Bunter."

"I'll stand a bob towards his gorge, if you like, as the beast's in my study," said Tom. "Toddy can stand the rest. I'd shell out the lot, only I want all my tin now for a special reason."

"Faith, and we all know the special reason, Tommy darling!" howled Micky Desmond. And the footballers chuckled. Tom evidently did not know that the conversation—his cousin's half of it, at any rate—had reached as far as the brake. "Faith, if I were you, Tommy, I'd lave him to fight it out with his tailor."

Tom Dutton looked round.

"The light isn't out," he replied.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All in?" said Wharton. "Right-ho! I'll be back in a tick."

And Harry Wharton scudded through the dusk towards the shop where Billy Bunter was still a prisoner.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Runs For It!

BILLY BUNTER had abandoned himself to despair. It was a quarter of an hour since he had heard the brake roll away, and his faint hope that the juniors might come back for him had faded away. He sat in the shop in a state of collapse. Terrific visions of a policeman and a stern magistrate floated before his mind, and then the thunderous brow of the Head of Greyfriars, and a flogging, if not the "sack." If it had been possible, Billy Bunter would have disgorged his plunder willingly. That, however, was scarcely feasible. Mr. Jukes was seated in the doorway on his stool, placidly pulling at his pipe. He was content to wait. But he certainly didn't intend to let the fat junior go without paying. Bunter's feelings towards Jack Dutton were almost homicidal. The elegant "clobber" of the

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"THROUGH FIRE AND FLAME!"

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nut of Lantham had led him to believe that Jack Dutton had plenty of money, or he would not have risked landing himself in this awful scrape. Bunter felt that he had been taken in—in fact, swindled by an impostor. So far as he could see, he was not to blame at all personally, and it was rank injustice that he should have to suffer for another's sins in this way. But he had to, there was no doubt whatever about that.

Mr. Jukes glanced up as Wharton came quietly back towards the shop. Harry Wharton held up a five-shilling piece, and beckoned to Mr. Jukes. The old gentleman came out of the doorway.

"Wot—" he began.

"Mum's the word!" whispered Wharton. "Here's your five bob, and you can let that fat spoofer go. But don't tell him I've paid you. He ought to be punished for playing these tricks, don't you think so? You can give him a lick with that stick, and let him run. See?"

Mr. Jukes grinned; he was quite of opinion that Billy Bunter ought to be punished. He slipped the five-shilling piece into his pocket, and nodded.

Harry Wharton ran down the road to the brake, and jumped in. The vehicle was set in motion at a walking pace.

Mr. Jukes stepped back into the shop doorway. Billy Bunter had risen to his feet, with a wild idea of making a rush for it, but at sight of Mr. Jukes he plumped back again, and tried to look as if he hadn't moved.

Mr. Jukes appeared to take no notice of him. He brought in his stool, and busied himself at the counter. Billy Bunter breathed hard. The way to the door was open now, if he could venture to make a rush for it. The old man's back was turned, but— Billy Bunter's heart went pit-a-pat.

A couple of minutes passed. Mr. Jukes was busy wiping glasses. He seemed to have forgotten Bunter, and he had laid down his stick.

Bunter resolved to chance it.

He raised himself stealthily on his toes, blinking at the old man's back. He was too short-sighted to see that Mr. Jukes was watching his reflection in a little glass behind the counter.

On tiptoe, with palpitating heart, Bunter stole towards the door. He was half-way to safety when Mr. Jukes spun round with a sudden yell.

"Ah! Would you?"

He grasped his stick and leaped after Bunter.

But Billy Bunter was between him and the door now, and he made a desperate bound for it. He emitted a fiendish yell as the stick whacked behind him, and bolted out of the doorway. Mr. Jukes rushed after him, brandishing his stick, and Bunter went down the road to Greyfriars as if a pack of wolves were on his track. Billy Bunter was not an athlete, but the speed he put on at that moment was remarkable. Mr. Jukes chuckled, and went back into his shop, and Billy Bunter simply galloped away down the dusky road.

"Ow! Ow! Ow!" panted Bunter, looking back over his shoulder at last. "Ow! Ow! Beast! I've done him! I jolly well won't send him the postal-order now! Ow! Ow! Ow! Oh, crumbs, I shall have to walk all the way to Greyfriars! Ow!"

He slackened down as he found that he was not pursued. On the road ahead of him he could hear a rumbling of wheels, and two lights that glimmered on the hedges caught his eyes. He gasped with relief.

"The—the beasts! The spoofing rotters! It's the brake! They ain't gone after all. Oh, the rotters!"

He ran desperately after the brake.

It was rumbling on at a moderate pace, and the fat junior overtook it at last. A crowd of grinning faces looked down at him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's an escaped porpoise!"

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I—I say, you fellows, hold on!" gasped Bunter. "Take me in! Ow! I—I—I'm nearly out of breath!"

He caught hold behind the brake. But it was quite impossible for him to get in while it was going, and he had to run behind, pumping in breath.

"Stop!" shrieked Bunter. "You know I can't walk back to Greyfriars, you beasts! Stop that rotten brake, you rotters!"

"Have you paid your bill?" demanded Bob.

"Yes! Yes! Yes! It's all right! How—how could I be here if I hadn't paid?" gasped Bunter. "The—the old villain apologised, and let me go. Take me in!"

"My only hat!"

"You've paid!" shouted Wharton.

"Yes! Yes, of course! Take me in. I can't keep up much longer!" wailed Bunter, whose little fat legs were going like clockwork as he clung on behind the brake.

"I—I say, you fellows!"

"We've got to be satisfied first that you've paid," grinned Wharton. "Where did you get the money from? We can't be parties to your swindling an honest shopkeeper!"

"I—I happened to have five bob in my—my pocket that I'd forgotten!" hooted Bunter. "It's all right. I tell you he apologised for doubting a gentleman's word. I say, you fellows, I'm out of breath!"

"Well, my word," said Bob Cherry, "if that fat beast doesn't beat Ananias hollow! We're sorry, Bunter, but we can't take you into the brake; we're all truthful persons here, and you're barred. Your proper place is in Berlin, in the Wolfi Bureau, or else with the Kaiser's General Staff. A liar like you is wasted in England!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—Ow! Ow! Ow!"

Billy Bunter's fat face was streaming with perspiration now. The brake was going just fast enough to keep him on the run. He held on, but he could not possibly get aboard. Flop, flop, flop! went his fat feet on the hard, unsympathetic road. His spectacles slid down his perspiring nose, and he blinked over them in anguish at the grinning juniors in the brake.

"I—I say, you fellows, don't be beasts!" he mumbled.

"After pressing me to come with you this afternoon—Ow! Tell that scoundrel of a driver to stop, Wharton! Oh, you rotters! I say, old chap—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I—I shall fall down soon! Oh, dear!"

"My esteemed and lying Bunter, I will hold you helpfully," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. And he leaned out of the back of the brake, jerked off Bunter's cap, and took hold on his hair with a firm grip. "Now it is all rightful. If you should fallfully stumble I shall hold you upfully by the hair of your esteemed head."

"Yarcooh!"

"It's all serene, my fatful tulip. I have you quite safe by your honourable mop!"

"You—you black villain, leggo!" shrieked Bunter. "You're pulling my hair out, you—you Thug! You—you black cannibal, leggo!"

"I will not desert my Bunterful chum in the hour of distress!" said Inky firmly. "If it causes you some slight painfulness you must bear it grinfully. A Bunter in hand is worth two in the bush!"

"You—you black scoundrel, you're pulling my hair out! Draggimoff!" shrieked Bunter. "I—I—I know what you're doing this for, you beasts! I haven't paid that old villain. I—I bolted!"

"Oh, we're getting nearer the truth!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "But if you didn't pay him, what did he apologise for?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He—he—he didn't apologise!"

For Next Week:

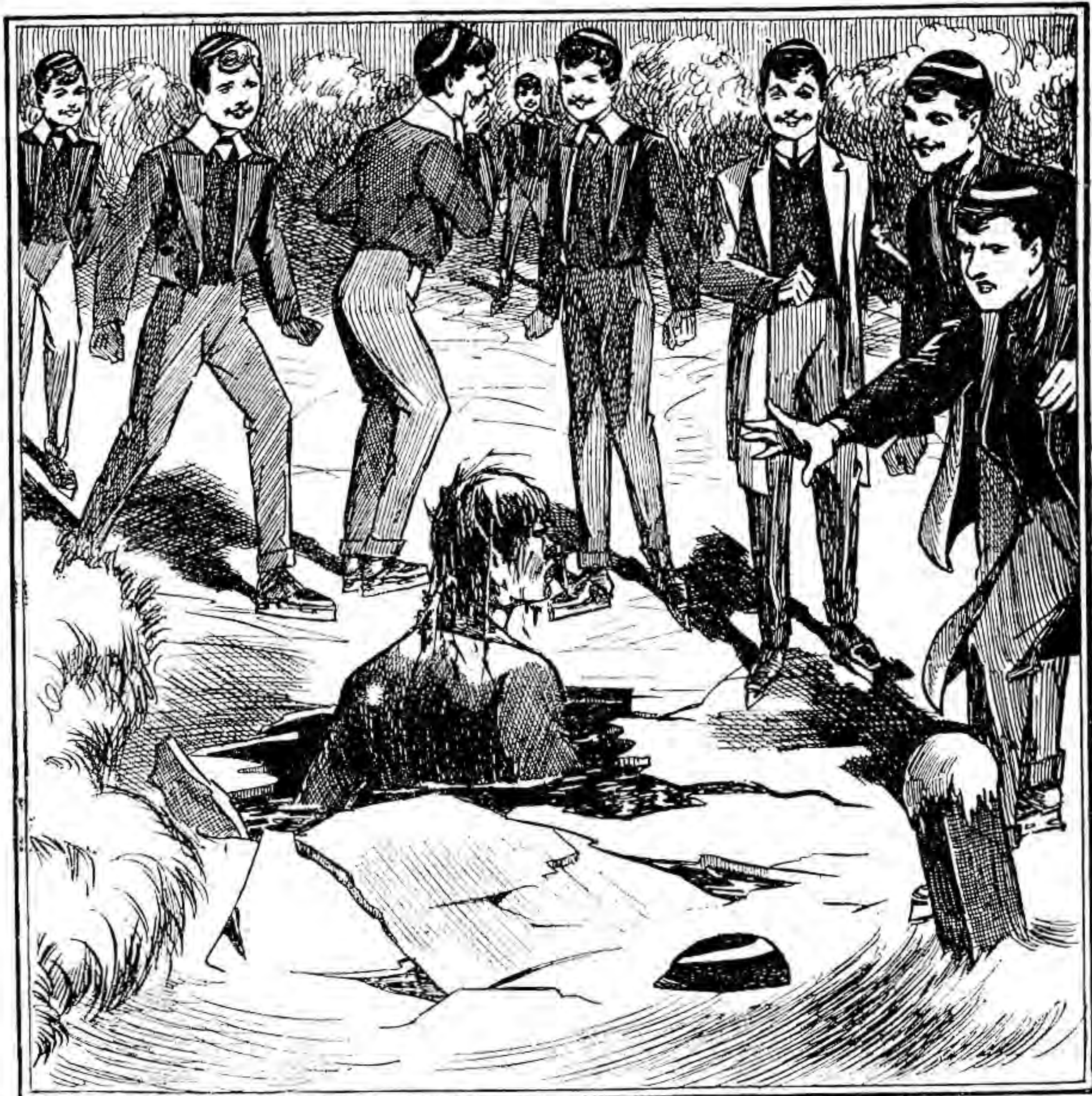
THROUGH FIRE AND FLAME!

Another Splendid
Long, Complete Story
of the Chums of
Greyfriars.

—By—
FRANK RICHARDS.

Order in Advance.

PRICE ONE PENNY.



With his hair plastered down on his head, and water streaming down his face, Coker looked funny. But he did not feel funny. The water was icy cold, and Coker made frantic efforts to scramble out, but the thin ice smashed under his hands as he tried to grasp it. "Scramble ashore, fathead!" shouted Squiff. (See Chapter 10.)

wailed Bunter. "I—I meant to say that—that—that I'd apologise if you liked!"

"Are you sorry you have swindled a shopkeeper, and disgraced us by sponging on a Lantham chap?" demanded Wharton.

"Ow! Yes! Awfully sorry! I'll slaughter that black rotter if he doesn't leave off pulling my hair! Ow! I'm sorry— Yow-wow!"

"Will you settle up the five bob I paid for you?"

"Why, you—you—you rotter, did you pay him? Yes, I'll settle up out of my very next postal-order!" shrieked Bunter.

"How long will that be?" chuckled Wharton. "Will it come in time to eke out my old-age pension?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I—I say, you fellows, lemme in!" groaned Bunter.

"I—I'm done!"

"Halt!" said Wharton.

The brake stopped at last. Billy Bunter had been brought to a properly repentant state of mind—for the present at least.

"You can come in!" grinned Bob. "Help him in, lanky."

"I am helping him, my esteemed Bob. He will come in liftfully unless his august mop comes out of his respectable head!"

"Yow-yow-yowp! Oh, my hair! Oh, my head! Oh, my hat!"

Billy Bunter landed among the legs of the juniors, gasping, and the brake rolled on. The Owl of the Remove lay pumping in breath for several minutes. He sat up at last, blinking furiously through his spectacles.

"You rotters! This is the last time I'll come out with you, I can tell you that! Beasts! Next time you want

me to come with you, you can want, and be blown! I was going to stand a big feed all round with the first prize in the skating competition, and now I can tell you that I jolly well won't! What are you cackling at, you blinking idiots? You—you dummies!"

And Billy Bunter sat pumping in breath during the remainder of the drive home to Greyfriars.

THE NINTH CHAPTER. Genuine American!

"WILL it freeze?"

That was the great question during the next few days at Greyfriars.

It was a great question outside Greyfriars, too—at Cliff House School, where Marjorie and Clara and their comrades were anxious to know if it would freeze; and at Courtfield County Council School, where Trumper & Co. were very anxious on the same subject.

The ice carnival on the Sark had already been put off once, owing to an untimely thaw. If it "froze," the skating competition was to come off on Wednesday afternoon. And it was quite a big affair.

There were all sorts of events, and all sorts of prizes, but the big event of the occasion was the long-distance race, which was only to be won by a skater of unusual staying powers.

A good many Greyfriars fellows had entered for the various events, and it would be a great occasion at the old school when it came off.

But the entrants for the big race were few, most of the fellows realising that it was beyond their powers, and reserving themselves for the things they could do.

Billy Bunter had put his name down, of course. There was a ten-pound prize for the winner of the big race, and Billy Bunter had declared his intention several times, emphatically, of bagging those ten quids.

Whereat the other fellows grinned and chuckled. Bunter had about as much chance of bagging those ten quids as Admiral von Tirpitz had of bagging the British Navy.

Harry Wharton, who was a first-class skater, was down, too, and so was Bob Cherry. Temple of the Fourth and Coker of the Fifth were down, and Hobson of the Shell. The general opinion in the Remove was that the race was safe for Wharton, whose prowess on the ice was well known, his most dangerous rival being Trumper of Courtfield School. After the competition the prizes were to be awarded by Sir Hilton Popper, a great local magnate. Coker of the Fifth had already composed a modest little speech to make in reply to Sir Hilton Popper's congratulations. It was probable that Coker's modest little speech would never be uttered.

The thaw was still continuing, and the Sark was flowing through its banks, clothed with frosty rushes, laden with chips of ice, only in the backwaters a thin coating of ice still covering the waters.

"Will it freeze?"

That was the great question.

Billy Bunter was very anxious on that point. As he confided to the juniors in No. 7 Study, he was anxious that the competition shouldn't be put off much longer. He wanted that ten quid.

"As the first prize is practically a dead cert. Toddy," Bunter remarked, a day or two after the St. Wode's match, "I think you might be pally for once and advance me, say, a quid off it. I'll let you have it back out of the tenner the minute old Popper hands it to me—honour bright!"

"Fathead!" said Peter.

"My dear Bunter," remarked Alonzo Todd, "surely you have not done sufficient practice. From the way you acted on the roller-skates, I should hardly imagine that you had a very great chance of——"

"Oh, rats!" said Bunter. "That's all you know about

it. Ice-skating is different from roller-skating—quite different. Rollers are all rot, anyway. Of course, I'm going to practise on rollers so long as this beastly thaw lasts. But ice-skating is different—quite different. There isn't the smallest doubt that No. 7 Study is going to bag that prize."

"Bow-wow!" said Peter.

"I happen to be hard-up," went on Bunter. "As the tenner is a dead cert——"

"Oh, cheese it!"

"I say, Dutton!" roared Bunter.

Tom Dutton looked up from a brown study. He had been very thoughtful ever since his interview with his "nutty" cousin at St. Wode's.

"Eh? Did you speak, Bunter?"

"Yes," roared Bunter. "I suppose you know that this study is going to bag the first prize in the skating?"

Tom looked surprised.

"I hope so," he agreed.

"Oh!" said Bunter. "Well, many thanks for your kind wishes, anyway. Those two silly duffers think that I haven't an earthly. You think the tenner will come to this study—what?"

"I don't see why they should be a muddy lot," said Dutton. "The skating's going to take place on the river, if it freezes, and there won't be any mud."

"Ow! You think the tenner will come to this study?" shrieked Bunter.

"Oh, I hope so! I'm looking forward to it."

"Good! Now, as the tenner is coming here, you wouldn't mind lending me a quid off it, in advance, would you?"

Tom Dutton shook his head.

"Can't be done, Bunter. You see, I shall want it all."

Bunter stared at him through his big spectacles.

"You'll want it all?" he gasped.

"Yes—every quid of it."

"M-m-my hat! Do you think I'm going to hand you the tenner when I win it?"

"Oh, yes, I shall be in it!" said Tom. "I've put my name down, you know. It's very kind of you, Bunter, to say you think it's coming to this study. Of course, you know, you haven't a chance yourself."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Peter Todd, and Alonzo smiled. There was evidently a misunderstanding. Billy Bunter snorted.

"You—you—you fathead!" he howled. "Do you mean to say that you've entered?"

"Eh? Oh, yes!"

"You haven't an earthly against me."

"I hope I sha'n't run against you, Bunter, but if I do I'll shift you out of the way fast enough, I can tell you!"

"You—you—you deaf post!"

"Yes, I hope I shall get to the post," said Tom. "I want that ten quid, you see. As you had no chance anyway, it doesn't matter about my entering against you. It will be a good thing for this study to bag the prize."

"Fathead! Look here, if you should get it—not that you've got an earthly against me; but accidents happen sometimes to the best skaters—if you should get it, I suppose you're going to do the right thing with it?"

"Eh?"

"I mean, you'll stand a whacking feed to all the study."

Tom Dutton looked round the room carefully.

"I don't understand you," he said.

"Eh, what?"

"I don't see anything we need in the study. What are you driving at?"

"Oh, my hat! If you get the first prize—— Yaroooh! What—what are you lamming at me for, you silly idiot?" roared Bunter, as Tom Dutton smote him with a cushion.

"Don't you say I tell the worst lies!" said Tom. "I never tell lies. I leave that to you, you fat Ananias! Get out of the study! I'm fed up with you!" And the exasperated Dutton drove the equally exasperated Bunter headlong out of the study with terrific swipes of the cushion.

ANSWERS

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Peter Todd looked as if he were going into hysterics. "Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" growled Tom. "Nothing funny in that fat idiot saying I tell lies."

"Ha, ha, ha! You take the cake, Tom!" gasped Peter.

"I don't care whether he's got an ache or not. Serve him right for what he said!"

"But he didn't say anything of the sort," howled Peter.

"Eh? Yes, you bet I'll cut him short when he says things like that. Do stop cackling. I've got to do my prep."

Billy Bunter rolled down the passage in a state of breathless indignation. He would have changed studies and refused to put up with his deaf study-mate a day longer if he could have found new quarters. But nobody was anxious to have Bunter for a study-mate. Indeed, Peter Todd often took great credit to himself for "standing" Bunter in No. 7.

Bunter blinked into Vernon-Smith's study a little later. The Bouncer was there, with Skinner, his study-mate. Skinner was the purchaser of Johnny Bull's rollers, having secured them at a bargain—he had a keen eye for a bargain. He held up his finger as Bunter looked in.

"You've come to borrow my skates?" he demanded.

"Yes," growled Bunter. "Look here, Skinny, I must have some practice, you know. I'm going to practise in the gym. I'll tell you what—you lend me your skates as long as I want them, and I'll stand you ten bob out of the tenner."

"Thank you for nothing!" said Skinner. "You're not going to have the skates. I've paid good money for them, and I'm not going to have 'em damaged by a clumsy porpoise! Go and borrow Fishy's."

"Well, his rollers are beastly Yankee things, and might crack up——"

"Very likely, if you get on them!" grinned Skinner. "Shut the door after you!"

"Beast!" said Bunter; and he retired, and shut the door after him with a slam that made the study-table jump. Then he rolled on to No. 14, which belonged to Fisher T. Fish and Squiff. Bunter blinked into the study cautiously. He knew that the American junior would not lend him his skates if he could help it. Fortunately—from Bunter's point of view—the study was empty; and he soon unearthed Fish's roller-skates and scudded away with them.

After his painful experiences with Mr. Quelch, he did not venture to skate any more in the Remove passage. He rolled out of the School House to the gym. The wide, smooth floor of the gym was admirably adapted to roller-skating—though what the other fellows there would say when Bunter started remained to be seen. However, William George Bunter was not worrying about that. It was certain that he needed practice if he was to bag the first prize on Wednesday; and practice he was going to have, however heavy the list of casualties might be.

There was a crowd in the gymnasium. Squiff was doing wonderful things on the bars, and an admiring circle of juniors watched his performances. Wingate of the Sixth had the gloves on with Courtney, and they also had an admiring circle. Billy Bunter was not noticed at first, and he sat down in a quiet corner to put on the roller skates. He puffed and panted as he did so—it was not easy for the Falstaff of Greyfriars to reach his feet. The owner of the skates was among the crowd looking on at Sampson Quincy Idley Field's acrobatic performances. Fisher T. Fish was indulging in criticism—he was a great critic—with his hands in his pockets. He explained airily that, for real gymnastics, the fellows should see what they could do "over there"—"over there" being Fishy's way of alluding to the Yew-nited States, as he called his native land.

"I guess we are some gymnasts," said Fisher T. Fish, in the expressive American language. "We knock spots off anything you can do in this hyer old island—just a few! Yes, sir, I guess——"

Crash! Clatter!

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Bunter again!"

"Kick that fat duffer out!"

"Look out, he's coming! Ha, ha, ha!"

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Billy Bunter had secured the skates at last, and he was starting. He started with a rush, and then the skates went on of their own accord, and Billy Bunter made a bee-line for the group of juniors, utterly unable either to guide or to stop himself. The Removites scattered at once. It would have been no joke to stand that charge.

"I—I say, you fellows——"

"Stop, you fathead!" shouted Wharton. "You'll bang into the wall!"

"I—I—I c-c-can't!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter shot past them, straight for the wall, and the juniors almost held their breath as they waited for the "cosh."

Squiff came down off the bars with a light jump as Bunter sped by, and caught him by the shoulder. Bunter was spun completely round, just in time to save him from a collision with the wall, that would certainly have hurt him. He clattered frantically on the skates, his legs shot out at weird angles, and he sat down. His feet shot into the air, and Squiff jumped out of reach just in time.

The sight of Billy Bunter rolling on his back, with his skates waving wildly in the air, elicited a yell of laughter from the juniors.

"Ow!" roared Bunter. "What the—— Ow!"

Crash! His skates descended on the floor with a terrific concussion. Little wheels rolled away in all directions. The skates had made their first and last appearance in the gym. What was left of them would never be skated on again.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Fisher T. Fish, doubled up with merriment. "Ha, ha, ha! Look at his skates! Well, this beats Banagher! Just a few! He, he, he!"

"Ow, ow, ow! I'm hurt!" yelled Bunter. "Squiff, you silly idiot, it's your fault! It's all through you catching hold of me."

"Well, my hat!" exclaimed the Australian junior indignantly. "You fat maniac, you'd have biffed into the blessed wall and flattened your silly nose into your empty mumskull if I hadn't stopped you!"

"Oh, really Squiff, you'll have to pay for those skates!" growled Bunter, dragging at the remains of the rollers and unfastening them. "Look at them! They're smashed!"

"Ha, ha! They look rather damaged."

"I guess you might have expected it," chuckled Fisher T. Fish. "When you want real good roller-skates, you want to send to the Yew-nited States for them. You can't make things in this old island—nope!"

"Oh, rot!" said Squiff. "They'd have to be armour-clad skates to stand Bunter. Still, they did smash up pretty easily. You'll have to get some new skates, Bunt; lucky you didn't want a new face."

"Ow!" Bunter rose painfully to his feet. "Ow! It was all your fault, Field. Ow! You can pay for those skates."

"Catch me!" said Squiff.

"He, he, he!" cackled Fisher T. Fish. "You should get your skates from the Yew-nited States, Bunter."

"Eh! These are Yankee skates!" growled Bunter. "It's because they're rotten Yankee skates that they've smashed up like that, you silly fathead!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish's face was a study for a moment.

"Oh, come off!" he exclaimed. "You've been done! Whoever sold you those skates palmed them off as real American, you silly galoot! Where did you get them?"

"In your study."

"Wha-a-t!"

"They're your skates," said Bunter.

"Mum-mum-mum-my skates!" shrieked Fish.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The expression on Fisher T. Fish's face made the juniors shriek.

"What price skates from the Yew-nited States now, Fishy?" chortled Bob Cherry.

"Mum-mum-mum-my skates! You—you fat burglar! I guess—— I—I——"

Fisher T. Fish rushed at Billy Bunter, who fled for his

life. The fat junior vanished out of the gym, with the infuriated Yankee hot on his track, leaving the Removites yelling like hyenas.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

An Ice Experience!

TOM DUTTON jumped out of bed at the first clang of the rising-bell and hurried to the dormitory window, and mounted a chair and looked out. Bob Cherry sat up in bed and shivered and yawned. Dim grey dawn was creeping in at the window.

"Freezing?" asked Bob, as Dutton jumped down with an expression of satisfaction on his face.

"No, I didn't sneeze," said Dutton. "Jolly cold, though, ain't it? There's frost on the window, and I think it's frozen jolly hard outside. We shall be able to get a run on the ice before brekker—what?"

Bob Cherry laughed.

"Right-ho!" he said.

"I say, you fellows," mumbled Bunter, as he sat up, "I'll come with you, if you like. I want to put in some practice. You can lend me your skates, Bob."

"Rats!" said Bob.

"Well, somebody will have to lend me some skates," said Bunter. "I can't pull off that tenner on Wednesday without any skates, can I? Will you lend me your skates, Wharton?"

"Fathead! I shall want them myself."

"You may as well chuck it. You know you haven't any chance against me. It's only your blessed conceit," growled Bunter. "Will you lend me your skates, Nugent?"

"Ask me another!" said Nugent laughing.

"Well, if nobody will lend me any skates, I can't practise, so I may as well have another snooze," grunted Bunter, and he settled down again with his head on the pillow.

It remained there in repose for about a tenth part of a second, and then there was a roar from Bunter, as he was bundled out of bed in a heap.

"Yow—ow! You beast, Cherry!"

"Time to get up," said Bob. "You can always depend on me, Bunter, when you're inclined to oversleep yourself."

"You—you—you—" stuttered Bunter. "You—you—you—"

The fat junior dressed himself sulkily. He always stayed in bed till the latest possible moment, excepting when Bob Cherry or Peter Todd bestowed kindly attentions upon him.

Most of the juniors were keen to get out of doors and try the ice on the Sark before breakfast. Tom Dutton was the first out. He had been one of the latest to enter for the big event of the skating contest, but he seemed to be one of the keenest about it. The deaf junior went down, with his skates swinging over his arm, almost before the rising-bell had ceased to clang out.

"Freezing, by gum!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as the chums of the Remove came out into the frosty Close. "It will be all right for Wednesday. Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's old Coker! What are you going to do with those skates, Cokey?"

Coker of the Fifth frowned majestically at the Removites.

"I hear some of you kids have entered for the race on Wednesday," he remarked, in a condescending way.

"We have—we has!" said Bob. "We're after the tenner, you know."

"You young ass! The tenner's mine!" said Coker. "I really think this is rather too thick. Kids like you ought to be barred. Makes the whole affair ridiculous, by Jove!"

"And you could do all that's required in that line, couldn't you, Coker?" remarked Bob, in a thoughtful way.

Coker sniffed and stalked ahead of the juniors to the river. The chums of the Remove followed him smiling. They did not fear Horace Coker as a competitor.

Tom Dutton was already on the ice, cutting figures. Tom was a first-rate skater, and the juniors paused on the bank to look at him as he glided rapidly to and fro.

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while Coker sat down to put on his skates. Tom paused and called to them.

"Better look out, you chaps; the ice is pretty thin. It's rather risky in places," he said. "Don't let Bunter come on; it would never stand him. Coker, old man, it won't bear your weight."

"Rubbish!" said Coker.

Tom Dutton glided off again, and Horace Coker went on fastening his skates. Coker rather prided himself on his abilities as a skater, and he was not above showing the fags of the Remove what good skating was really like. He finished fastening his skates on and stepped out on the ice. There was an ominous creak under him. The new ice was thin, and the big, burly, Fifth-Former was a good weight.

Tom Dutton came whirling by him on one foot, light as a bird.

"Keep out of my way!" snapped Coker. "I can't be bothered by blessed fags when I'm skating."

"Eh?"

"Keep out of my way!" roared Coker.

"Whom are you calling a jay?" demanded Tom. "Jay yourself, Coker! Here, don't come blundering over here! The ice won't stand the weight of your feet, you know, and you'll spoil it for us."

Coker breathed hard through his nose as the juniors on the bank burst into a chuckle. He skated towards Tom Dutton, with the intention of cuffing him and clearing him off the ice. From Coker's point of view, the River Sark had, apparently, been placed there by Nature for the sole and especial benefit of Horace Coker of the Fifth.

"Look out, Dutton!" shouted Peter Todd.

"Look out for Coker!" yelled Bob.

Tom Dutton glanced round, and grinned as he saw Coker of the Fifth in pursuit. He slackened down and allowed Coker to get within punching distance, and as Coker cuffed at him, he whirled away, and the great Horace's "paw" swept the empty air, and Coker very nearly turned a somersault. Tom Dutton sailed cheerily away, and Coker gasped, and righted himself, and sped after him with a purple countenance. There was a yell of laughter from the bank.

"Go it, Coker!"

"Put it on, Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Horace Coker "put it on." His dignity as the greatest and most important person in the Fifth Form at Greyfriars was at stake now. He was determined to run down that cheeky fag and cuff him off the river, if it kept him going till breakfast time. But Tom Dutton was not so easily run down.

He skated round Coker, making rings round the angry Fifth-Former, and as Coker wheeled clumsily in pursuit, Dutton circled him, and slid behind him, and calmly lifted off his cap, and skated away with it.

"You—you— My hat!" gasped Coker, as the cold winter wind smote upon his bare head. "My—my hat! My cap!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker skated desperately after Dutton. He cornered him near the bank, but the elusive junior slid away again with Coker's clutch only an inch from his shoulder. He whizzed round Coker, and, in passing, placed the cap backwards on the Fifth-Former's head.

Coker spluttered with rage, and the juniors on the bank roared. The baiting of the great Coker struck them as funny.

"I—I—I'll smash you!" bellowed Coker, careering after Dutton again.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

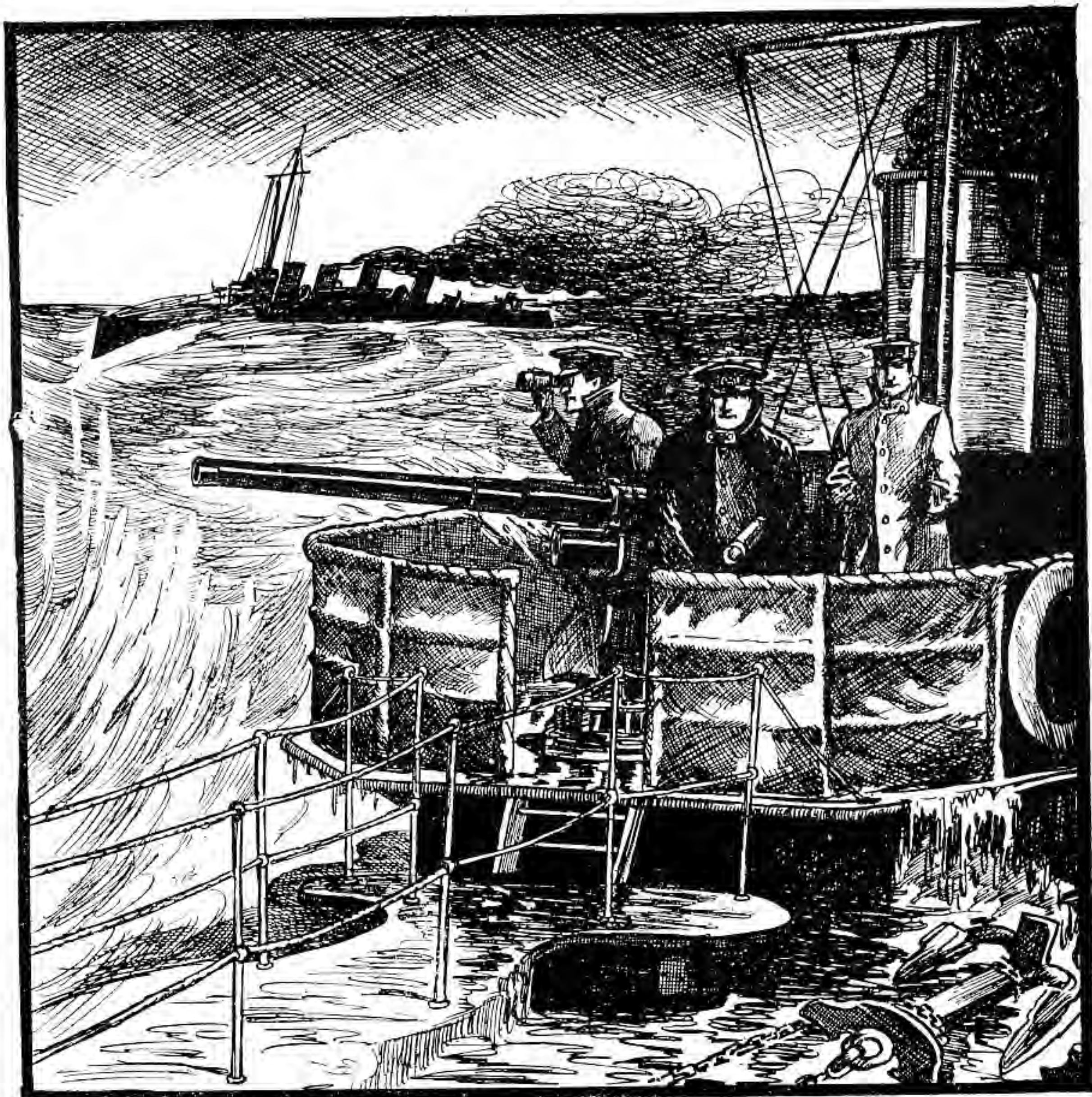
Again the big Fifth-Former came quite close to Dutton, and clutched at him with both hands. The junior slid from under his grasp like lightning, and shot away, and Coker, completely overbalanced, shot forward and plumped down.

"Oh!"

Crash!

The ice was not likely to stand the weight of Coker of the Fifth, plumping down on it like a sack of coke.

Fragments of ice flew in all directions as it smashed under the impact of the burly Fifth-Former. Horace Coker disappeared with a gasp and a yelp.



The above picture gives us a good idea of what is going on in the North Sea at the present time. It is a waiting game for the heroes of our Navy, for German vessels fear an open encounter with the boys of the bull-dog breed almost as greatly as a Prussian regiment fears cold steel; but they are only putting off the inevitable day when the men who are waiting and watching on the torpedo-boat-destroyers will render a noble account of themselves.

"My hat! He's in!"

"Great Scott!"

Fortunately, Coker had plumped through the ice close to the bank, where the water was shallow. He came up dripping, and blowing like a grampus. The water came up to his chest, and his skates were deeply buried in mud.

"Oh! Oh! Ooooooooooch!" gasped Coker.

The juniors had been alarmed for a moment, but as they saw that the great Horace was in no danger, they burst into a roar of laughter. The downfall of Coker had been sudden and complete.

With his hair plastered down to his head, and water streaming down his face, Coker looked funny. But he did not feel funny. The water was icy cold, and Coker made frantic efforts to scramble out on the ice. The thin ice smashed under his hands as he tried to grasp it.

"Scramble ashore, fathead!" shouted Squiff.

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"Groooooh!"

Coker scrambled towards the shore, smashing the ice between him and the frozen rushes. The juniors rushed to help him out.

"Here you are, Coker!" Bob Cherry stretched out his hand from the bank.

"Clear off, you rotten fags!" howled Coker. "Get out of the way!"

"Ungrateful beast!" growled Bob. "Get out by yourself, then."

Coker had supposed that he could get out easily by himself. But as he grasped at the rushes, and tried to drag himself from the water, he found it harder than he had expected. The skates were buried in mud, and held fast. Coker dragged out rushes and reeds by handfuls, but he did not get out of the water. His wild efforts made a small whirlpool round him, and he gasped and

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THROUGH FIRE AND FLAME!"

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Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

snorted, and snorted and gasped, while the Removites looked on and grinned.

"Can't you help a fellow, you sniggering dummies?" yelled Coker, at last, apparently forgetful of the fact that he had refused assistance without thanks.

"Certainly, my esteemed Coker," said Hurree Singh. "But under the esteemed circumstances, you must say please pretty."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Grooogh! My s-s-skates are stuck in the m-m-mud!" howled Coker. "If you don't lend me a hand I'll s-s-smash you!"

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"You're an ungrateful beast, Coker. You're not going to get any help unless you say please pretty."

"You—you—you— Grooogh!"

Coker made another terrific effort to drag himself out. But it was in vain; he was stuck fast in the mud. The chums of the Remove looked on cheerfully, waiting for the great Coker to say please pretty. It was a bitter pill for Horace Coker to swallow, but he had to get it down. He realised that he would never get out of the river by his own unaided efforts. And in spite of the violent exercises he was going through, it was very cold.

"Help me, you young rotters!" he snorted.

"Rotters never help people," said Harry Wharton, shaking his head. "You can't expect rotters to help you, Coker."

"I—I—I— Do help me, there's good chaps!" amended Coker.

"Please pretty?" asked Bob Cherry.

Coker gulped.

"Please pretty!" he stuttered.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites rushed to the rescue at once, as Coker had asked them so nicely. They all took a grip on Coker—wherever they could. Bob Cherry and Wharton had an ear each. Coker's ears were large, and afforded a good hold. Nugent grasped his hair. Hurree Janset Ram Singh fixed a businesslike grasp on his nose. They all pulled together. The yell that came from Horace Coker would have done credit to a buffalo.

"Yaroooh!"

"Pull!" shouted Bob Cherry. "It's all right, Coker; you're coming! Either you're coming, or it's your ear coming off. We'll soon see!"

"Yarooop! Ow! You young villains! Yaroooh!"

"All together!" gasped Nugent. "He's bound to come, unless he goes to pieces. Now, put your beef into it!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

Squiff, chuckling, grasped Coker's collar, and tugged. Todd and Tom Brown had his wrists. Coker was dragged out bodily. But he was feeling hurt in several places. He was landed like a big fish, and lay on the bank gasping and snorting.

"You—you wait till I get my wind!" he gurgled.

"Wait till he gets his wind, you fellows," said Bob.

"Coker wants to thank us for rescuing him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Thanks were not what Coker had in mind. He leaped up and made a jump for the juniors, intending to display anything but gratitude. But he had forgotten his skates, and he rolled over headlong on the bank with a roar.

"Hurrah!" chirruped Bob Cherry. "Let's see you do that again, Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker did not let them see him do it again. He yanked off his skates furiously, and tramped away towards the school to dry himself and get a change of clothes. Harry Wharton & Co. cheerfully went on the ice, and proceeded to skate untroubled by the presence of Coker of the Fifth.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Present From Johnny Bull!

I SAY, you fellows—

"Haven't any!" said Bob.

"Eh! Haven't any what?" demanded Bunter.

"Cash to lend you."

"You—you fathead!" growled Bunter. "I wouldn't borrow any of your measly cash if you offered it to me!"

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"Too bad!" murmured Bob. He fished in his pocket, and drew out a five-shilling piece. "I suppose you don't want a little loan, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter's eyes glistened behind his spectacles. The Remove had just come out after morning lessons, and Bunter very badly wanted a "snack" before dinner. The expression on his fat face changed at once.

"Oh, really, Bob, old chap, that's very decent of you," he said. "Thanks very much!"

"Thanks for what?" asked Bob.

"That five bob—"

"Oh, don't thank me!" said Bob, slipping the coin back into his pocket. "I'm not going to lend it to you. You wouldn't take any of my measly cash if I offered it to you."

"I—I—I was only j-j-joking, you know!"

"So was I," said Bob cheerfully.

Billy Bunter blinked at him with feelings too profound for speech for a moment. The sight of the five-shilling piece had raised his hopes for the moment; a vision of ginger-pop and jam-tarts galore had floated before his eyes.

"Come on," said Bob. "We'll punt the ball about, and get an appetite for dinner."

"I say, you fellows—hold on, you fatheads!—there's a letter in the rack. It's from Johnny Bull!" howled Bunter.

"Oh, good!"

The chums of the Remove made a rush for the letter-rack at once. They were anxious to hear from their chum. They knew that Johnny had not reached his destination yet by a long way, but he had promised to write from every port of call. Right enough, there was a letter, addressed to Harry Wharton in Johnny Bull's familiar handwriting, and bearing the postmark of a French port.

Billy Bunter watched them eagerly as the letter was opened. He was not in the slightest degree interested in news from Johnny Bull. But he had a faint hope that Bull might have remembered him in his letter. Johnny was going away with a tremendously rich uncle, and there was no doubt that he would have heaps of tips, and it was quite possible that he might stand a feed by post, as it were, to his old chums at Greyfriars. While Johnny was at the school Bunter had never found favour in his eyes, but ever since he had left Bunter had persisted in alluding to him as "my old pal Johnny." And if, by any chance, there was a remittance in that letter from his old pal Johnny, William George Bunter meant to have his whack in it. He intended to assert a claim as Johnny's best pal.

"I say, you fellows, what's in it?" he exclaimed eagerly.

"I say, Wharton, lemme look! I say, surely he's sent a whack in the tips his uncle gives him; it would be only decent to stand his old pals something, you know. I say—"

But the Famous Five were not listening to Bunter. Harry Wharton had taken out the letter, and the juniors were reading it together, looking over one another's shoulders. It was a short note.

"Dear old pals.—Just a line to tell you I'm all serene so far. I'm posting this at Cherbourg. A French Johnny has just told me that the Germans are licked again. Uncle and aunt all right, and yours truly topping. Give Bunter a thick ear from me. JOHNNY."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, is there anything in it? I suppose he would have the decency to stand something now he's rolling in money!" spluttered Bunter. "He might have remembered me. Show me that letter, you beasts!"

"My dear Tubby—"

"Look here, there's something for me in that!" howled Bunter, his suspicions awakened at once as Bob Cherry, who had taken the letter, thrust it into his pocket with an appearance of haste. "You're not going to spoof me, Bob Cherry. Give it to me!"

"You see—"

"I believe there's something for me in it. Johnny

was my pal while he was here." Billy Bunter almost believed by this time that Johnny Bull had been his bosom pal. "I know he's sent me something, and you are trying to keep it back. Look here, is there something for me—yes or no?"

"Well, yes," said Bob, with a chuckle.

"I knew there was!" said Bunter triumphantly. "I jolly well knew it, and you weren't going to give it to me!"

"I was just thinking——"

"Nothing to think about! Just hand me what Johnny's sent for me!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "My hat, what an awful cheek! It's no better than stealing!" Billy Bunter was almost breathless with fury. "You—you rotter, give it to me at once!"

"Sure you want it?" asked Bob, appearing to hesitate. The rest of the Co. burst into a howl of laughter. Bunter was pressing furiously for what Johnny Bull had sent him, little dreaming what it was.

"Of course I want it!" howled Bunter. "Wharton, that letter was addressed to you, and I hold you responsible!"

"I'm leaving it in Bob's hands," said Wharton, laughing.

"You've no right to. I'm going to have what belongs to me. Give it to me, Cherry, you beast, you—you swindler!" howled Bunter. "You're jolly well not going to keep it back! There's nothing to cackle at. You can cackle as much as you like, you rotters, but I'm going to have it all the same. I'll complain to Mr. Quelch. I'll——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What on earth's the row?" exclaimed Tom Dutton, coming along the passage. "What's the matter with Bunter?"

"Johnny Bull's sent something for me in that letter, and Bob Cherry won't give it to me!" howled Bunter. "Make him!"

"Take what?"

"Ow! Make him give me my remittance in that letter!"

"Oh, rubbish! Bob's not your debtor, I know that," said Dutton. "Is that a letter from Johnny Bull, you chaps?"

"Ha, ha! Yes!"

"Give it to me!" shrieked Bunter, almost beside himself with apprehension of losing what Johnny had sent him. "I'm not going to be swindled! I'll call Mr. Quelch!"

"Bunter!"

Mr. Quelch came down the passage, frowning. The laughter died away at once. When Mr. Quelch frowned there was no room for merriment. But Bunter turned at once towards the Form-master, chockful of his wrongs.

"I appeal to you, sir!" he spluttered. "You'll see justice done, sir. You won't let them keep what belongs to me, sir?"

"Certainly not!" said Mr. Quelch. "What is the matter?"

"Shut up, you fat idiot!" murmured Squiff.

"I won't shut up! Don't you whisper to me, Field! You're all hand in glove to swindle me!" roared Bunter. "I won't stand it. You needn't make faces at me, Nugent! I'm going to tell Mr. Quelch!"

"You will certainly tell me now," said Mr. Quelch. "Calm yourself, Bunter. If you have been deprived of anything belonging to you I shall assuredly see that it is given to you at once. But I can scarcely believe——"

"It—it's a silly mistake of Bunter's, sir," muttered Wharton. "He——"

"It isn't a mistake!" bawled Bunter. "Bob Cherry said plainly Johnny had sent me something in that letter, and I'm going to have it! I——"

"Moderate your tone at once, Bunter. How dare you shout in my presence! Cherry, you have received a letter from Bull?"

"Yes, sir," murmured Bob.

"Bunter declares that Bull has sent him something in that letter. He says that you admitted it. Is that the case?"

"Ye-es, sir."

"You have not given it to him?"

"Nunno, sir!" stammered Bob.

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NEXT MONDAY—

"THROUGH FIRE AND FLAME!"

"Do you mean to say, Cherry, that you have kept back what Bull sent to Bunter, although Bunter has demanded it from you?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch sternly.

"Ye-es, sir! I—I——"

There was a crowd in the passage now, and all eyes were fixed upon Bob Cherry's face. Mr. Quelch was frowning portentously. Bunter blinked triumphantly at the Famous Five. He was going to get what Johnny Bull had sent him now that the Form-master had taken the matter in hand. He had no doubt about that. Bob was looking very red, and his eyes were gleaming a little.

"Why have you not given it to Bunter, Cherry?" rapped out the Remove master.

"I—I was thinking about it, sir."

"You should have handed it to Bunter at once," said Mr. Quelch severely. "I am sure that there is nothing in Bunter's reckless statement that you wished to keep what belonged to him."

"He did wait to!" howled Bunter.

"Silence, Bunter! But by retaining it in your own possession, Cherry, you have given rise to this unworthy suspicion in Bunter's mind."

"You—you don't understand, sir!"

"Certainly I do not understand," said Mr. Quelch. "I order you, Cherry, to hand immediately to Bunter, in my presence, what Bull has sent for him, whatever it is!"

"You—you order me, sir?"

"Undoubtedly. Obey me at once!"

"I—I suppose I must if you tell me, sir," said Bob.

"Certainly you must!"

"Very well, sir, I will do as you tell me!" said Bob meekly.

He stepped towards Bunter, who awaited him with a grin of triumphant anticipation.

The next moment Bunter uttered an unearthly yell as Bob smote him upon one of his fat ears with a mighty smite. The Owl of the Remove went staggering. He put a fat hand up to his ear and roared.

"Ow! Ow! Ow! Ow!"

"My hat!" gasped Tom Dutton. "Are you dotty, Bob?"

Mr. Quelch stood transfixed for a moment. He could scarcely believe his eyes. When he found his voice he almost stuttered in his wrath.

"Cherry, how dare you! Can I believe my eyes? You—you have struck Bunter—in my presence. I—I——"

"You ordered me to, sir!" said Bob, with great meekness.

"What!"

"You ordered me to give Bunter what Johnny Bull had sent him, sir!" said Bob, with great simplicity.

"Wha-a-at! What did Bull send him?"

"A thick ear, sir!"

Mr. Quelch jumped, and a yell of laughter rang through the passage. The Remove master looked at Bob Cherry as if he would bite him.

"A—a—a what? A thick ear? What do you mean? Explain yourself!"

Bob Cherry held out the letter for the Form-master's inspection. Mr. Quelch read it. Then he fixed his eyes upon Bob's innocent face. Bob Cherry met his gaze quite calmly, without moving a muscle.

"Oh!" said Mr. Quelch, in a gasping voice. "Ahem! It—it certainly appears that Bull has—has made use of that—that ridiculous expression. But—but—but you must know, Cherry, that—that I should not have allowed you——"

"Well, sir, I was thinking whether I should give Bunter what Johnny had sent him, sir," murmured Bob. "When you ordered me to, sir, of course, I had to!"

"Cherry, I—I—I do not believe you are so foolish as you would make out."

"Foolish, sir!" said Bob, in astonishment. "I don't think it foolish to obey my Form-master's orders, sir. My father has told me always to obey my Form-master, sir, whatever I think myself!"

"I—I—I——" Mr. Quelch was at a loss for words.

"Yow—ow—ow—ow!" came from Bunter.

"Cherry, you—you will take fifty lines!" gasped Mr.

Quelch, and he hurried into his study. And when the door was safely closed he burst into a laugh, which he had restrained with difficulty till he was out of the sight of the juniors.

Bob Cherry looked round with an injured expression.

"That's pretty thick, ain't it?" he exclaimed. "Fifty lines for obeying my Form-master's orders! Blessed if that wouldn't make me disobedient in future, if I wasn't such a really obedient chap by nature. Look here, Bunter, you ought to do those lines for me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow, ow, ow!" groaned Bunter. "Oh, you beast! Why didn't you tell me what it was that beast had sent? Ow, ow, ow! I hope the Germans will blow him up before he gets to Australia! Ow, ow, ow, ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

In the Form-room that afternoon all the Remove could see Johnny Bull's present to Bunter. It was quite prominent, and Bunter rubbed it occasionally, and blinked furiously at Bob Cherry. It was a really first-class specimen of a thick ear, but the recipient of Johnny Bull's present didn't seem in the least pleased with it. But, as Bob Cherry remarked, there was no pleasing some people.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Wharton Has a Think!

THE ice on the Sark was frozen hard, and freezing harder and harder. There was no doubt that the ice-carnival would come off that week, after all; and the Greyfriars fellows rejoiced. Every fellow who had entered for the contests put in as much practice as he could on the river. Billy Bunter found certain difficulties in the way of practice, as he possessed no skates, and was reduced to borrowing them—generally without the permission of the owner. This sometimes led to trouble, nobody being satisfied with Bunter's promise of compensation for possible damage out of the famous "tenner" he was to bag for the big race. And as every fellow would certainly want his skates on the great day, it was not easy to see how Bunter was to compete at all. The Owl of the Remove was giving that matter a great deal of thought. His idea was that somebody should stand out and lend him his skates; but the only fellow at Greyfriars who was self-sacrificing enough to do that was Alonzo Todd—and Alonzo hadn't any skates. Tom Dutton, as Bunter's study-mate, ought to have made the sacrifice, in Bunter's opinion, but it was in vain that Bunter explained that to him.

Tom turned a deaf ear to all his persuasions—or, to be more accurate, two deaf ears. Peter Todd was equally deaf on that subject. Billy Bunter went up and down like a lion seeking whom he might devour, so to speak, in search of skates; but self-denial among the Remove fellows seemed to be "off." There were no skates for Bunter, and when he borrowed them for practice, it frequently led to thumping. So Bunter, as he indignantly declared, was faced with the prospect of seeing a certain absolutely assured tenner slip through his fingers, because a lot of silly asses, who thought they could skate, persisted in making duffers of themselves instead of lending him their skates as they manifestly ought to have done.

Tom Dutton was keenest of all on practice. He wanted that ten-pound note very badly. His Cousin Jack was depending on him to settle the tailor's bill at Lantham, and had in fact written to him telling him how grateful he was—in anticipation. And how the ten pounds required were to be raised, unless he won the prize, Tom did not know. The whole of his worldly resources, pooled, amounted to four pounds; but he had promised to get the "knut" out of his scrape, and he was going to do it. To go round to Lord Mauleverer and other fellows in the Remove who had plenty of money and borrow what he required was a last desperate resource; but since he had shouldered his cousin's troubles, he would have no other resource if the ice failed him. So it was not to be wondered at that Tom Dutton was sparing no effort to make himself thoroughly fit for the race; neither was it surprising

that he declined to stand out for the purpose of lending his skates to Billy Bunter.

Tom was in splendid form, and he was certainly a brilliant skater. His keenest rival was Harry Wharton, who had well beaten Bob Cherry in the trial spins they had taken together. Tom Dutton looked rather glum when he saw Wharton on the ice, spinning along like lightning. At any other time he would have rejoiced in the prospect of a hard tussle for victory, but just now the victory meant too much to him. The Nut of Lantham was depending on that tenner.

On Tuesday a crowd of Greyfriars fellows sallied out for trial trips on the ice immediately after dinner. Marjorie and Clara were there from Cliff House School. Billy Bunter gave them a warm greeting, not noticing at all that their greeting in return was the reverse of warm.

"I suppose you're coming to see me to-morrow—what?" asked Bunter. "I'm in the big race, you know—the long-distance. I rather think I shall pull it off."

"Bow-wow!" said Miss Clara disrespectfully.

"Oh, really, Miss Clara—"

"We are coming," said Marjorie, laughing, "but we are coming to skate, not to watch. We are doing the combined figures with Nugent and Field."

"Pair of duffers!" said Bunter loftily. "I say, it's not too late for you to enter for the two-step with me as your partner."

"My hat!" said Miss Clara.

"I should be very pleased," said Bunter, with dignity. But apparently Bunter's pleasure did not extend to Marjorie, for she declined with thanks.

"I say, don't buzz off," exclaimed Bunter. "I've got no skates. We'll have a chat on the bank, you know. I say—"

But the Cliff House girls had glided away. "Race you to the island, old chap," said Wharton, clapping Dutton on the shoulder.

Tom put his hand to his head.

"It's all right," he said.

"What? What's all right?"

"My cap."

"Ha, ha! Race you to the island!" roared Wharton. "We'll see how we're going to get on to-morrow, eh?"

"Oh, all right! Don't shout. I'm not deaf!"

Wharton chuckled, and they started off. The other skaters watched them as they glided rapidly down the wide, frozen river. They were soon away from the rest of the crowd, however. Faster and faster they glided on, with lightning strokes of the skates, Wharton drawing ahead. Tom Dutton set his teeth, and put all his "beef" into it; but he could not make up that lead gained by the captain of the Remove, hard as he strove. Wharton drew further and further away.

He glanced back. Tom was five or six yards behind at the end of the mile, and Harry started as he saw the desperately determined expression on his face. He slackened his pace a little, and Dutton came up level.

"You let me do that!" panted Dutton.

"I want to speak to you," said Harry, keeping level with Tom. "It will be a pretty close thing between us to-morrow. Between ourselves, I don't think the other chaps have an earthly."

Tom Dutton grunted.

"I know they haven't; but you'll beat me."

"Well, it will be a tussle," said Harry good-naturedly. His private opinion was that he would win, and he wondered why Tom was taking it so seriously. But Dutton did not speak again, and they turned and glided back towards the school.

Harry Wharton looked very thoughtful as he went into the Form-room that afternoon, and he was very thoughtful during lessons. When the Remove came out Bob Cherry clapped him on the shoulder.

"Wherefore that wrinkled brow, O king?" he inquired.

"I've been thinking," said Harry.

"Hurt?"

"Oh, don't be funny. What's up with Dutton?"

"Slightly deaf, I think," said Bob humorously. "Not what you'd call deaf, you know, but a trifle hard of

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hearing. At least, he says so himself, and he ought to know."

"Be serious, you ass! He seems to be dead set on bagging that race," said Harry. "He isn't the sort of chap to care much about a money prize, either. He looked quite downhearted when I got ahead of him to-day. What's the row with him?"

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Don't you remember the k-nut?" he asked.

Wharton gave a start.

"Oh! That fellow who came to see him at St. Wode's."

"Don't you remember the little talk—a private conversation that could be heard from here to Holland?" grinned Bob. "Poor old Dutton has taken the ineffable Jack's troubles on his shoulders, I fancy. If he bags that prize he's going to hand it over to the nut. In his place, I'd jolly well crack the nut; but poor old Tommy is going to be looted, if he bags the prize. Not that he's likely to bag it. You can give him fifty up and beat him."

"Oh!" said Wharton; and he looked more thoughtful than ever. Bob Cherry eyed him curiously.

"Rats!" he said suddenly.

Wharton started, and coloured.

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, I'm a giddy thought-reader. It won't do, old scout. This isn't self-denial week, and you know we've planned a tremendous celebration if you bag the tenner. Half of it to the 'Parcels for Tommy Fund,' and the other half for a big blow-out. That's the programme, my son."

"I—I know," said Harry hesitatingly. "But—but I've bagged a lot of pots and things, and—and it looks rather greedy to be bagging things all the time, and—and—"

"Bless your little heart!" said Bob. "I don't mind chucking the feed, if you don't. But it wouldn't be quite sporting to let another fellow win, you know; and Tommy would have his back up if he knew. So—"

"I'm going to think," said Harry.

He did think, and when he had finished thinking, he grinned. The matter was not discussed again; Wharton had made up his mind. In the dormitory that night Billy Bunter blinked at the Famous Five with deep reproach.

"What am I going to do for skates to-morrow?" he asked.

"Is that a conundrum?" asked Bob Cherry affably.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Wait a minute. I'll try to guess it," said Bob.

"I'm a dab at conundrums. Because one rode a horse and the other rhododendron!"

"You silly ass!" howled Bunter.

"Isn't that the answer?" asked Bob. "It's a good answer, anyway. I'll try again, if you like. Because he saw the bulrush!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—you fathead! You know I'm not asking you conundrums!" yelled Bunter. "I say—"

"Now then, turn in," said Wingate, looking into the dormitory. And the question relating to Billy Bunter's skates remained unanswered.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Winner!

THE next day—the great day—was bright and frosty. It was a grand day for the ice carnival, and all the school, and the vicinity generally, prepared to enjoy it.

Early in the afternoon an army of Greyfriars fellows arrived on the banks of the frozen Pool, the widest part of the Sark, where the contests were to take place. There was a band already installed on the bank, and the scene was already animated. Hazeldene had fetched over his sister Marjorie, with Miss Clara, from Cliff House, and there was a regular bevy of other charming young ladies from Miss Primrose's school. All, as Bob Cherry declared, was calm and bright. Only Tom Dutton was looking a little grim, and Billy Bunter exceedingly discontented. Tom was thinking of the hard contest before him, which he was determined to win or "last" something. Billy Bunter was thinking of that absolutely assured tenner which was to slip through his fat fingers

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"THROUGH FIRE AND FLAME!"

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

because of the beastly selfishness of fellows who wouldn't stand out of the contests and lend him their skates.

The proceedings opened joyously to the strains of the band. There were many contests, with various prizes. But the big event was the long-distance race, which was coming later. Harry Wharton bagged a "pot" early in the proceedings. Tom Dutton had entered for nothing but the long-distance event, and he was reserving himself for that.

Billy Bunter rolled up to him as he was looking on somewhat moodily. The Owl of the Remove made a last effort to bring his study-mate to what he considered a proper sense of duty.

Tom made an irritable gesture, and pushed him over, and Bunter sat down on the bank, gasping wrathfully. By the time he recovered his breath, Tom Dutton was out of reach. Bunter tried Peter Todd next, and Peter told him to go and eat coke. He tried Squiff, and Squiff knocked his cap off. He even tried Coker of the Fifth, but did not finish, the expression on Coker's face becoming simply terrifying. Then he tackled Dick Trumper of Courtfield School, who persisted in regarding his request as a joke, in spite of Bunter's almost frantic efforts to explain that he was serious. The more Bunter explained that he really wanted Trumper's skates, the more Trumper persisted in laughing at it as a good joke, and the Owl of the Remove gave it up at last.

It was getting near time for the race, and Bunter had almost given up hope. He rolled up to the spot where Harry Wharton was chatting with Marjorie and Clara, who were well placed to see the start of the great race.

"I'm out of it, Marjorie," said Bunter gloomily. "It's a sickening shame! The tenner was as good as mine. I—I happen not to have any skates, you know, and even the fellows in my own study won't stand out and lend me theirs. What do you think of them?"

"I think it's very natural," said Marjorie, in surprise. "And I think you're a duffer, Bunter," said Miss Clara. "Besides, what does it matter? You can't skate for toffee."

Bunter glared. But he did not waste any more words on the Cliff House girls. He turned to Wharton, and concentrated his fire, so to speak, upon the captain of the Remove.

"Look here, Wharton," he said impressively. "I'm not going to ask you any favours. You know I'm not the kind of chap to ask favours of anybody. But you've bagged a pot already. It would have been mine if I had entered, but you've got it. Well, I don't say I'm not willing to let you keep it—"

"Thanks!" said Harry.

"But I'll tell you what. I don't believe in fellows bagging all the things. I think it's greedy. I'm not going to ask you any favours about your measly skates, but I'll make you a good offer. You lend me your skates, and I'll go halves with the tenner."

Marjorie and Clara burst into a laugh. They knew how much chance William George Bunter had of finger-ing the tenner. Wharton chuckled.

"Halves?" he asked.

"Yes," said Bunter eagerly, as he thought he saw signs of yielding in the face of the captain of the Remove. "Halves—honest Injun! You see, you stand to gain all along the line. If you run against me, you won't have an earthly. And—and I could borrow Toddy's skates if I liked. In fact, he pressed me to accept them, but I'd rather have yours. You see, you wouldn't have a ghostly for the tenner, but by lending me your skates you make absolutely certain of a fiver. See?"

"A bird handfully is better than two bushfully," grinned Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. "I think the esteemed Wharton should accept that offer jumpfully."

"It's a go!" said Harry, apparently making up his mind. "I'll take your advice, Inky. You can have the skates, Bunter. I'll stand out and watch."

"My esteemed chum," gasped Hurree Singh, "I was only speaking jokefully."

"Never mind; Bunter shall have his chance. If you get the tenner, Bunter—"

"When I get it, you mean."

"Ahem—yes! When you get it, half to the War

fund, and half for yourself," said Harry Wharton, with great seriousness. "That's the programme."

"Done!" said Bunter.

"But, you ass, Wharton!" exclaimed Squiff. "What's the little game? You know that fat chump will roll over at the start."

"Oh, give him a chance!" said Harry. "He may be a dark horse, you know. Besides, I've got a pot already, and as Bunter hasn't any skates—why, let him have a go!"

"Well, that may be good-nature," remarked Squiff. "But I call it dashed idiocy!"

"Thanks!"

"I say, you fellows, help me on with these rotten skates," said Bunter plaintively. "They will be starting soon, and you know I can't stoop down——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter was helped on with his skates. When the race started, with nine competitors, Billy Bunter was in the line, performing really wonderful contortions to keep from falling over, and to keep his feet from running away before the signal. The pistol cracked, and the skaters shot off, and there was a terrific roar on the frozen river. Eight vigorous youths were shooting away, and one extremely fat youth was lying on his back on the ice, with his fat legs flying in the air.

"Yow! Help! Yaroooh! Grooh! Yah! Oh! Help! Fire!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a rush of laughing helpers, and Billy Bunter was seized and dragged off the ice. He sat up on the bank, groped for his glasses, and set them straight on his fat little nose, and blinked.

"I—I say, you fellows, that was a false start. I can't get on with these rotten skates of yours, Wharton. Have they come back?"

"Not yet, ass. They're going round the island before they come back," said Bob Cherry. "They won't be back yet."

"I mean, have they come back to start again?" exclaimed Bunter wrathfully. "I don't call that a start. 'Tain't fair! I wasn't ready. I protest!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No good protesting to us," chuckled Wharton. "There's Sir Hilton Popper over there. Go and protest to him."

Billy Bunter decided not to carry his protest to Sir Hilton Popper. He kicked off the skates, and rose to his feet, blinking indignantly.

"You can keep those rotten skates, Wharton. I'm sorry now that I gave in to what you kept on pressing on me; only you made such a point of it, a fellow couldn't very well refuse."

"What!"

"You might have provided decent skates, at least, as I was taking the trouble to do the race for you, and was going halves in the tenner," said Bunter disdainfully. "You won't get anything now, and serve you jolly well right. But it's just like you, Wharton—always on the make."

"My hat!"

"Oh, squash him!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter fled for his life.

All eyes were watching for the racers now. The course was a long one, as far as the island and back to the Pool. The first two who came in sight were Tom Dutton and Dick Trumper, neck and neck, with Temple of the Fourth close behind. Temple was dropped in a minute more, and Dutton and Trumper came on splendidly. But there was a yell from the Greyfriars fellows as Tom was seen drawing ahead.

"Pile it on, Dutton!"

"Greyfriars wins! Hurrah!"

Trumper put on a spurt, and came level for a moment, but Dutton shot away from him again, his skates going like lightning. He seemed hardly to touch the ice.

"Study No. 7 wins!" chuckled Peter Todd. "Hurrah!"

"Give him a yell!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "He won't hear it, but give it him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites gave Dutton a tremendous yell, as he swept up a winner. And even Tom heard that. It could be the MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 369.

Our Companion Papers: "THE GEM" LIBRARY, Every Wednesday, "THE DREADNOUGHT," Every Thursday, "THE PENNY POPULAR," Every Friday, "CHUCKLES," 1 & 2 Every Saturday.

have been heard a mile away. And the Removites clustered round the deaf junior with hearty congratulations as he came off the ice. Tom Dutton had bagged the tenner, and they were all proud of his success. Billy Bunter squeezed his way through the crowd to get at the happy winner. Tom's good-looking face was very bright and cheery, and as red as a beetroot with his exertions.

"I say, you fellows, lemme speak to him. He's my study-mate, ain't he?" howled Bunter. "I know what you want, Bob Cherry. You're not getting any of that tenner. Yaroooh! Leggo my ear! Wow, wow, wow!"

Tom Dutton walked off in the midst of a congratulating crowd. There were loud cheers as he received his prize from the august hands of Sir Hilton Popper. There were some more proceedings, but Tom did not stay for them. He cut away towards Greyfriars at once; and before the tenner had been in his possession an hour, it was posted to Jack Dutton at Lantham School.

Tom was in his study in the Remove passage when the Greyfriars fellows came in. Harry Wharton & Co. had gone to tea at Cliff House, successfully dodging Bunter. But for once Bunter did not mind being dodged. He was thinking of that tenner. He came into No. 7 Study with an anticipatory grin on his fat face, and followed by quite an army of fellows, equally anticipatory. The tenner having been won by Bunter's study-mate, of course, Bunter intended to have a very important hand in the expending of it; and he had planned a tremendous feed—simply tremendous. As a rule, Bunter preferred to keep his feeds to himself, in case supplies should run short. But on this occasion he felt that it would "run" to a little party. With royal munificence he had issued his invitations right and left. And they had all been accepted, and an army of eager juniors, all keenly hungry after the frosty afternoon out, followed in his footsteps when he came to No. 7 Study. Tom Dutton looked up in surprise at the sight of them.

"Here we are, Tommy!" said Bunter affectionately. "Where's the tenner? Haven't you got the feed ready? I thought you came home first to get the feed."

"Eh?"

"Never mind, I'll do the shopping. I don't mind how much trouble I take to oblige a pal," said Bunter. "Give me the note."

"Blessed if I understand you! Who's a goat?"

"Oh, don't mind, you chaps," said Bunter, as the juniors chuckled. "He's as deaf as a doorpost, you know, but he means well."

"I say, Dutton," bawled Bunter, "we're ready for the feed!"

"What feed?"

"The feed you're going to stand out of the tenner, you know."

"Fathead!"

"Eh?" It was Bunter's turn to say "eh?" now.

"Deaf!" said Dutton, with a sniff. "I tell you, there isn't any feed. I've already sent that tenner away, to pay a debt. Go and eat coke!"

Billy Bunter gasped.

"Why, you—you—you rotter!" he howled. "You—you swindler!"

"Eh?"

"You spoofer! You swindler! You—you—you—I say, you fellows, lend me a hand, and we'll rag him bald-headed!"

"No, we won't," said Skinner. "It's you who've brought us here for nothing, you silly, fat chump, and you've got a ginger-pop out of me on the strength of that feed. And now the feed isn't coming off. Collar him!"

"I—I say— Oh—ow!"

Bump, bump, bump!

"Ow! Help! Yaroooh!"

The disappointed guests retired from the study, leaving Bunter sitting on the carpet, puffing and blowing, and Tom Dutton grinning. Billy Bunter sat there for a good five minutes, telling Dutton what he thought of him. But as Tom did not hear a word, there was no harm done.

All the other fellows in the Remove congratulated Dutton on his victory, but for Billy Bunter there was no satisfaction whatever in Tom Dutton's Triumph.

(Next Monday's Story is entitled "THROUGH FIRE AND FLAME!" Order your copy early.)

Our Grand SIDNEY DREW Serial.

THE UNCONQUERABLE



A Magnificent Story of Thrilling Adventure.
By SIDNEY DREW.

INTRODUCTION.

The well-known millionaire, Ferrers Lord, is the inventor of a wonderful vessel called the Unconquerable. On the trial trip this ship reveals her marvellous abilities by travelling alternately beneath the water and in the air. The Unconquerable is to be entered for the Florida Cup, in competition with a flying machine built by Ferrers Lord's deadly enemy, Paul Guthrey, a man who will stop at nothing. The latter hires a band of unscrupulous men, who steal the Unconquerable, and reduce the vessel to a total wreck, so Ferrers Lord is compelled to commence the construction of Unconquerable II.

Prout, Maddock, Barry O'Rooney, and Gan-Waga in the meantime go for a cruise in Ching-Lung's yacht with the Chinese prince. They land on a small island, where they meet Martin Arkland, one of the ruffians who has assisted in stealing the Unconquerable, and who is in the employ of Senor Paravalt, a wealthy Brazilian.

Paravalt takes Ching-Lung and his friends prisoners with the object of preventing them from taking part in the competition for the Florida Cup, but Ferrers Lord arrives in his wonderful vessel just in time to prevent Paravalt from sailing away from the island and leaving Ching-Lung and his comrades stranded. Ferrers Lord compels Paravalt to go on board his submarine, the Lord of the Deep, in order that he may view the race for the Florida Cup, which is being presented, together with twenty million dollars, by an American millionaire named Lister P. Hagenbeck, to the owner of a machine that can fly fifty miles in sixty minutes. As the existence of the Unconquerable was not generally known, it seemed as if the prize would never be won, until it was announced that Paul Guthrey had entered his airship Icarus for the race.

(Now go on with the story.)

A Shock for Paul Guthrey!

Guthrey was the shrewdest man in a nation famous for shrewd men. He was a king of finance. He had the touch that turned everything into gold. This grim, hard-headed money-maker was not a man to jest. Astounding rumours

filled the air and flashed over the wires. People who had rashly pledged themselves to add to the prize-money began to feel uneasy.

They knew the millionaire's reputation. If he succeeded he would move the whole machinery of the law to extract the last dollar from them.

But could any mortal man—even Paul Guthrey—achieve such an unparalleled triumph? A few said "Yes," but they were laughed down. The air was still unconquered for many a long year.

An army of sentries and a whole fleet of motor-launches patrolled the low-lying, palm-fringed island.

During the night the searchlights swept their white beams ceaselessly over the water. Wily newspaper men strove by every possible means to penetrate the watchful lines.

All America watched and waited on the tiptoe of excitement. To Americans that tiny island was the most important place in the world.

"The Icarus is ready, and will sail.—GUTHREY."

The "New York Herald" published the brief telegram. For two days a dense fog had enveloped the Florida coast. Fishermen told of strange, humming sounds—sounds like the whirring of gigantic fans such as are used for ventilating mines.

Some fog-hidden monster had rushed away overhead.

"The Icarus has made a successful trial. I am confident that she will win.—GUTHREY."

And Paul Guthrey never boasted. If he failed, his defeat would be almost as glorious as a victory.

As the great day approached pleasure-steamers and yachts crowded the sea. Hundreds of special trains were run. A city of tents and booths sprang up as if by magic.

Every road was crowded with carts, motor-cars, waggons, and buggies. It was obvious now that the mysterious Icarus would have no opponent. What had become of the scores of inventors who had nominated themselves as competitors?

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THROUGH FIRE AND FLAME!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry
Wharton & Co. by FRANK RICHARDS.

Thousands of field-glasses and telescopes were fixed on the jealously-guarded island, and on the great wooden building in which the monster was hidden.

Ted Holland, president of the Columbia Aero Club, had been appointed judge and referee. The course, marked out by flagstaves on the landward side and anchored steamers out to sea, had already been prepared. And the great day dawned without a puff of air to ripple the water.

"'Rah, 'rah, 'rah! Guthrey—Guthrey!" yelled a thousand voices.

They had seen a motor-boat shoot away from the island. Troops kept a path clear for the aeronaut. Stiff and erect, he walked briskly through the lines, lifting his tall hat in response to the cheering.

The committee gave him another rousing cheer as he entered the clubhouse. Ted Holland struck the table with his hammer to obtain silence, and looked at the clock.

"I've got the rules of the show here, boys," he said, in his breezy Yankee way, "and I reckon Guthrey's going to have a walk-over. There's a yard of names printed here, but that looks about all there's goin' to be. I put it that Paul can get a move on when he likes."

"Hear, hear!" cried several voices. "What's the good of waiting?"

Lister P. Hagenback stood up, mopping his fat face with a handkerchief.

"Don't you boast so mighty slick, Teddy!" he said. "I'm up to the neck in this for a heap o' dollars, but I'm sport enough to hope Guthrey will win 'em and handle 'em. Look at the rules again, sonny. Anybody can enter up to the very start, or arter it if it suits 'em. The boat that wins wins on time. They can try as many times as they like between mid-day and sundown, but no boat starts till noon."

"Why, I believe he fancies a whole fleet of 'em will come along," said Ted Holland, amid a roar of laughter, "and give it Paul in the neck! Well, rules are rules, and to please you we'll not go back on 'em. Anybody here got an airship in his pocket that he'd like to enter. Holler out quick!"

"I've got a racin' pigeon I'd like to back agen Paul for all New York City!" said a freckled man. "Can I stick him down, Teddy?"

"Can't be done, old chap!" answered Ted Holland. "If it could, I'd back your bird myself. Guess I'm only blowing good breath away, but just to make Hagenback smile, I'll

repeat the question. Is there anybody who wants to try for the Florida Cup? Once, twice, three times, and the last!"

"I do, gentlemen!" said a deep, quiet voice.

The members of the committee turned in a body and peered through the cloud of cigar-smoke. The stranger had just entered—a splendidly-proportioned man, with a handsome, bearded face and brilliant blue eyes. Paul Guthrey clenched his hands and retreated a step.

"I cannot promise that the vessel I intend to compete with will be ready to start for at least another hour, Mr. Holland," said the stranger; "but I promise you that she will start before the time expires according to rules. She is now on her way!"

"Guss you hail from that little island with a village called London stuck in the corner of it," said the referee. "You'll forgive the boys for sniggering. I want to do the fair thing, and give you the glad hand, sir, if you mean honest. Amurrica ain't the only place where they breed cranks. You see, sir, it kinder strikes us as a peculiar thing that you should come floating along like this. Where's your ship, or your balloon, or whatever it is? I never saw anything in the airship line big enough to lift a cat that you could hide in your watch-pocket. If it's a big spoof your trying on us, the warning is—git!"

The big man smiled.

"I assure you that my intentions are quite honest and above-board," he answered. "My name is Harold Honour, and I am an English engineer. My vessel, as I have said, is now on her way. All I ask you to do is to enter my name and the name of my airship."

"I'll do that, you bet, sir!" said Ted Holland. "Mr. Harold Honour, England, is it? What's the name of your missing boat?"

"Unconquerable the Second."

Paul Guthrey turned white and staggered. Hal Honour glanced at him and smiled again inscrutably.

"I protest!" cried the millionaire harshly. "I am prepared to start at once. It is preposterous to believe such a story from the lips of a person we have never set eyes on before. I do not believe a word of what he says, and no sensible man could. Where is his airship? Our big telescope would pick it out fifty or sixty miles away. I ask you to search for it. The weather is in my favour now, and I am the only competitor. It is unfair to delay me by such a farcical tale."

Most of them agreed with him. They did not believe in the existence of the stranger's airship. The airship was a myth, and the Englishman a harmless crank. Hagenback was thinking of his money. He did not expect to lose it, but there was always the possibility, and a friendly breeze might spring up to hamper the Icarus, and make his dollars more certain.

"You'll start at twelve o'clock, Guthrey," he said. "Those are the rules, and we're not going to alter them."

"Then I'll make no ascent at all."

"If you don't, I kinder opine you'll be the leadin' figure in a lynching party, Paul," said Ted Holland, with a grin. "If you disappoint that mob outside they'll soon make rags both of you and your airship. The gun'll fire at twelve prompt, if you're ready. Good-luck to you, my boy."

They wrung Guthrey's hand, but few noticed the pallor of his thin face. A torrent of cheers greeted him, and was answered from the boats that crowded the sea. Ted Holland found himself alone with the good-looking stranger. His hand went to his hip-pocket at once.

"You will not need your revolver," said Hal Honour, "for I am not a lunatic. Am I wrong in thinking I have just met some of the wealthiest gentlemen in America?"

"Wal, they've all got dollars," answered Ted Holland. "I can't get on to you at all. Have a cocktail, anyhow, and say what you're driving at."

He rang the bell and ordered one of those pleasant Yankee concoctions that bear such extraordinary names.

"And they are all sportsmen; men who like a wager?" asked the engineer.

"You're right there," said the Yankee wonderingly. "They'll plank down the dough if they think they've a chance to win."

"You know the Columbian Banking Syndicate?"

"I should smile. Why, sir, I bank at that establishment!"

"And I suppose you know the signatures of Messrs. Gannet, Purley, & Saltash."

"Just as well as my own. Say, am I in the witness-box, or what is it?"

"Be patient for a moment, please," said Hal Honour, taking out his pocket-book. "I have an open draft here, signed by the directors of the Columbian Banking Syndicate. Here it is, Mr. Holland. It gives me unlimited credit. Are these signatures genuine?"

"Gee-whizz!" gasped the amazed Yankee. "I'd like to have the fillin' of that in for a few million dollars. Say,



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Our Companion Papers: "THE GEM" LIBRARY, Every Wednesday. "THE DREADNOUGHT," Every Thursday. "THE PENNY POPULAR," Every Friday. "CHUCKLES," 1d. Every Saturday. 2

who the deuce are you, anyhow? How in thunder did you get hold of this? A few scratches, and you're a millionaire. Take it back!"

"No, I want you to keep it. We know you to be one of the straightest sportsmen in America, Mr. Holland. This is what I wish you to do. That draft will cover any sum I can possibly lose. It can only be cancelled or stopped by the directors. Mr. Saltash will be here to watch the Icarus, and you speak to him if you are suspicious. He will guarantee the draft. Now, sir, I am willing to oblige your friends, and if I fail to produce my airship, I'll pay. I will lay two to one to any amount they choose to wager, that Unconquerable the Second will not only beat the Icarus, but that she will complete the course in fifty minutes."

Hal Honour had talked more in ten minutes than he usually talked in ten months. Ted Holland stared at the closed door, and then at the cheque in his hand. Then he clapped his hat on the back of his head and rushed out. He collided with a man.

"Saltash, by all the snakes in Indiana!" he yelled. "Look at this darn paper! Is it right?"

"What's wrong with it? Did you ever see my signature on anything that was wrong?" laughed the banker. "If it's bets you want, I'll take them."

"Just my luck!" groaned Ted Holland. "Here's a raving lunatic of an Englishman jumpin' into bankruptcy with both feet, and I can't have a gamble because I'm judging the show. Gee-whizz! I'll see the boys don't miss it. The course in fifty minutes! Thunder, it's a scoop!"

When the news of the insane wager spread, Mr. Saltash was kept busy. He totted up the figures at last, and put his pocket-book away. The "mad Englishman" stood to lose over a million of money, or to win half that vast sum. If the airship did not appear he would lose. Landward and seaward the blue sky held no cloud or speak. Where was Unconquerable the Second? Did she exist, or was she a myth—the empty image of a disordered brain?

Tells of the Race—and an Unlooked-for Competitor.

It was nearing midday. Paul Guthrey's name had acted like a magnet. No other man in America could have attracted so vast a crowd to witness an attempt at a task that all felt was as yet impossible. In years to come, when flying-vessels are as common as motor-cars, Paul Guthrey may be honoured as one of the most successful of the aerial pioneers, but few believed that he would succeed to-day.

"Old man Hagenback isn't giving anything away," was the general verdict; "but Guthrey will put up a big fight. If anybody can do it, Paul can do it, but it isn't going to be done."

The man whose name was on a thousand lips seemed to have grown old in an hour. He heard the boom of a gun.

"Arkland," he said hoarsely, "you'll steer her. I've lost my nerve. Curse it, can't you see how my hands shake? You'll steer her, won't you?"

"Not for every dollar you own!" said Arkland. "If Hal Honour is here, I wouldn't put foot aboard the Icarus for the wealth of a province. If the jackal has come, Paul Guthrey, you may be sure the wolf is not far behind. I'm for the shore, and away by the first train. You'll be wise if you do the same. Disguise yourself and come with me. Blow the machine up, and make them believe it was an accident."

"No, no!" cried the millionaire. "It's a bluff—a gigantic bluff! They cannot have built another vessel in the time. Slink away, then; abandon me like the hound you are! I'll not play the coward. He dare not do me any harm. They'll lynch him if he touches me. And I can win; I must win! Yes, I'll face it out. You've had your pay, so take to your heels. Turn this man out; pitch him into the sea!"

"Take care you are not pitched into the sea yourself, Guthrey," said Martin Arkland. "I owe you nothing, for I have earned every dollar you have paid me. Do not put your hand on me," he added to the footman. "I am going quickly and peaceably. I wish you good fortune, Guthrey. I shall not see the race. When you see the dog, you may depend the master is close behind. Look to yourself!"

Paul Guthrey unlocked a drawer and took out a key. He pushed the decanter of brandy away after filling a pocket-flask. He did not hear the thunderous roar of voices, or see the swarm of boats scatter right and left like a shoal of roach pursued by a pike.

"A submarine—a submarine!"

For a moment the Icarus was forgotten. All attention was concentrated on the vessel that had risen out of the depths of the sea. Her low decks became packed with white-uniformed men, and the sunlight sparkled on the glass of her dome-shaped conning-tower. In a second the boats were crowding round the new wonder.

"A Britisher!" came the cry. "She's run up the Union Jack!"

With a warning blare of her siren, the submarine drew

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ONE
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astern. A few motor-boats, filled with curious sight-seers, followed her. Then the vast crowd on the beach swayed. A murmur arose that swelled into a roar, and the roar culminated in a crash of tongues, a babel of strained, madly-excited human voices. The doors of the great shed had opened. A dozen balloons were released and mounted into the air.

"There she is! Bravo, Guthrey! Bravo, Icarus! There she is—there she is!"

At last the shed had given up the secret that had been guarded so well. With a low, humming sound a grey, cone-shaped monster glided into sight. She resembled a gigantic flying-fish with her four enormous fins. Her stern propeller alone was in motion. Her deck was flat, and carried a glazed superstructure that tapered to an angle to break the force of the wind. Through the glass the crowd could see her crew moving to and fro.

The Icarus was no mere overgrown gasbag, driven by a dangerous and unreliable petrol-motor, no silken bubble to be at the mercy of every breeze. And when they realised it, hats were waved, flung up, and lost in a wave of frantic enthusiasm. Ted Holland stood ready, watch in hand. All who cared to look could see the dial of the monstrous clock by which the official time was to be judged. The Icarus sailed gracefully and easily to the south, and then came round half a mile behind the two lofty masts through which she had to pass.

Bang!

She leapt forward, and raced ahead. As she darted between the masts, Ted Holland pressed an electric button, and a cannon exploded. The race against time had begun. Ur-r-r-r! Ur-r-r-r-r! shrieked the whirling propellers, and the mass of humanity yelled its delight and applause. Motor-launches and steamboats rushed away in pursuit.

Boom!

The crash of a heavy gun shook the air. It was so deafening, so unexpected, that the startled people involuntarily looked seaward.

"Mark the time, Mr. Holland—mark the time!" cried Hal Honour, grasping the judge by the arm. "Here is the competitor I have nominated."

Out of the sea itself leapt another winged monster, smaller than the Icarus, but still a monster. The multitude seemed to have been suddenly changed into stone. A great, hoarse gasp, and it was silent and motionless again—silent, breathless, stunned.

"The time—the time!" shouted Honour. "Have you lost your head, man? Do you want to cheat me out of the race?"

"Unconquerable the Second."

Myriads of lips framed the words painted in gold on her black hull. She glided forward, and stopped sixty feet above the ground, a dozen yards behind the masts. The Union Jack streamed out as Ted Holland pressed the electric button. With a roar she rushed ahead. One tall figure alone was visible on her deck.

"She crossed the starting-line at twenty minutes past twelve to the second," said Ted Holland hoarsely.

"Thanks!" answered Hal. "I'll go and get some lunch."

The Icarus held a long lead, and was travelling well. It was then that a rowing-boat, pulled by one man, crept from under the shadow of the palms. The man was Martin Arkland. Here was his chance to steal away unnoticed. He was a poor oarsman. He kept close to the shore of the island. With that grim battle for supremacy being waged in the air, who would think of casting one glance at a wretched little rowing-boat? He glanced over his shoulder at the sea of strained, upturned faces. The tide was against him, but he pulled doggedly. Arkland had made his plans. He would commandeer one of Paul Guthrey's motor-cars, and rush to White Spring Junction to catch the North-bound mail.

"Safe!" he muttered.

He turned the point, and was hidden from what he dreaded most—the submarine.

"Now, yo' just sit stills and be goods, Martins," said a voice. "I lookings fo' yo'! How yo' likes dat, hunk?"

Arkland dropped the oars, and turned with a scream of terror. Can-Waga, the Eskimo, was clinging to the bow of the boat. He lifted his naked arm, and a revolver gleamed in the sunshine. The boat began to drift back on the tide. Arkland was no coward. He flung himself back to avoid the levelled weapon, and struck downwards with an oar as he fell at the Eskimo's head. The blade of the oar crashed against the gunwale. The next instant the boat was overturned, and when Martin Arkland rose, gasping, to the surface, the revolver was thrust almost into his face.

(A splendid instalment of this grand serial next Monday. Order your copy now.)

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"THROUGH FIRE AND FLAME!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry
Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS



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FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"THROUGH FIRE AND FLAME!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.

Stirring scenes are enacted at Greyfriars in next Monday's splendid story of Harry Wharton & Co. An outbreak of fire having occurred in the wood-shed, through the carelessness of Bunter the Blade and his precious companions, the Remove Form decide to raise a fire brigade. The scheme catches on, and the great Coker, never backward in coming forward, starts a brigade in rivalry to the Remove. The events which follow are of a very lively nature, and the amateur firemen set about their work with more energy than discretion. It is a curious coincidence that the Remove brigade generally contrives to run up against Coker's merry men, and various scrimmages occur in which hose-pipes and buckets play a very prominent part. At length the time arrives when the rival firemen are given an opportunity to prove their true mettle, for a conflagration occurs in the school sanatorium, where Billy Bunter is laid up with a cold. It is then that Mark Linley, with characteristic Lancashire pluck, performs a great deed of valour, and endears himself to all Greyfriars by his gallant dash.

"THROUGH FIRE AND FLAME!"

MORE SPLENDID NEWS!

There is no lack of good news these days. British successes "all along the line" are continually being recorded; and although such news is always a medium for gladdening many hearts, I have some intelligence to impart this week which will be equally acceptable to my far-reaching circle of "Magnet" readers.

To "cut the cackle and get to the hosses," as Bob Cherry would remark, I will inform my chums that I have made due provision for a magnificent

EASTER DOUBLE NUMBER

of "The Magnet" Library, a number which, given the support which I so confidently anticipate, will be out to break all records.

Never yet has a double number of this paper been anything approaching a failure. In fact, judging by the large success of our last Christmas issue, extra long stories of Harry Wharton are calculated to go like hot cakes.

I have it on good authority that quite eighty per cent. of my "Magnet" chums are also regular readers of our great companion paper, "The Gem" Library, and this loyal following will be delighted to hear that, very shortly after the appearance of "The Magnet" Double Number, a

BUMPER SPRING NUMBER

of the good old "Gem" will grace the bookstalls.

I look to every boy and girl Magnetite to do his or her utmost to make the two numbers of which I have spoken a gigantic success. Much time and trouble will have to be expended in their production, therefore I feel sure I am not expecting too much of my chums in asking them to put their shoulders to the wheel and give this great venture their united support.

A MESSAGE OF THANKS.

I wish to thank all "Magnet" readers this week for so loyally backing up our new companion paper, "The Dreadnought," the popularity of which paper, since I took over its control, has gone up by leaps and bounds.

It is a very encouraging thing for an editor to know that no appeal of his will be disregarded; and when I asked my chums to rally round and make "The Dreadnought" a right-down ripping success, they did so in a manner which was alike admirable and praiseworthy.

The fine stories of Harry Wharton & Co. still continue to be the "star turn" in our companion paper, and, in case there be any who are still unaware of the appearance of these stories, I would urge my chums to leave no stone unturned in pressing the fact home whenever they have an opportunity of so doing.

Once again, then, I render my hearty thanks to one and all for their unselfish loyalty and devotion.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

F. Dickens (Bradford).—The copy of the "Magnet" you desire is unobtainable from us, but perhaps you could get it by advertising. Thank you for your kind appreciation of "The Dreadnought."

G. G. Chadwick (Bradford, Yorks).—Thank you for your suggestions. They shall have my earnest consideration.

H. J. Stevens (Wallaroo, South Australia) has some South Australian stamps for sale (cheap) to readers.

J. Butler (Launceston, Tasmania, Australia).—Many thanks for photo. Regret I cannot publish it.

G. Dunton (Norwood).—You can obtain all the particulars you desire by consulting F. T. Jane's "Fighting Ships" at your local library.

G. H. B. (Loughborough).—The gas at Greyfriars is, of course, obtained from the gasworks at Courtfield. Thank you for your loyalty.

"New Reader."—Many thanks for your letter and offer.

"A Constant Reader" (Dublin).—Send 2d. in stamps to Back Number Department, and the copy you desire will be sent to you. Give particulars and date of issue.

Donald Sutherland requests me to insert the following announcement: Wanted, boy stamp-collectors to join the "Magnet" Stamp Exchange Club.—For particulars, send a stamped, addressed envelope to D. Sutherland, 49, Chatterton Road, Blackstock Road, Finsbury Park, London, N.

"Dragonfly" (Battersea).—No. 172 is unobtainable from us. You could advertise for it.

"A Tottenham Reader."—I have noted your suggestion, and hope to be able to comply with it at a future date.

L. M. (Hereford).—"The Boy Without a Name" proved so popular among all my chums that I shall have much pleasure in requesting Mr. Richards to write another story on similar lines later on. I may say that I was very pleased with the way my chums backed up the threepenny book; it went "like hot cakes."

R. C.—No. 300 of the MAGNET was entitled "The Coker Cup." The incident you refer to was in one of Frank Richards' stories about two years ago.

Madge Wood (Durham).—The persons and places you name are fictitious. Glad you find the MAGNET so fascinating, and hope you will always do your best to support its interest in the north.

"Un Ami" (Radcliffe).—I am sorry I do not know of a publishing firm to whom you might send your French phrases.

"An Interested Reader" (St. Albans).—The caps worn by the Greyfriars boys are dark blue.

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[Vol. 6

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