

HEROES OF HIGHCLIFFE!

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



BILLY BUNTER IN THE WARS AGAIN!

(An Amusing Scene in the Splendid Long Complete School Story in this Issue.)

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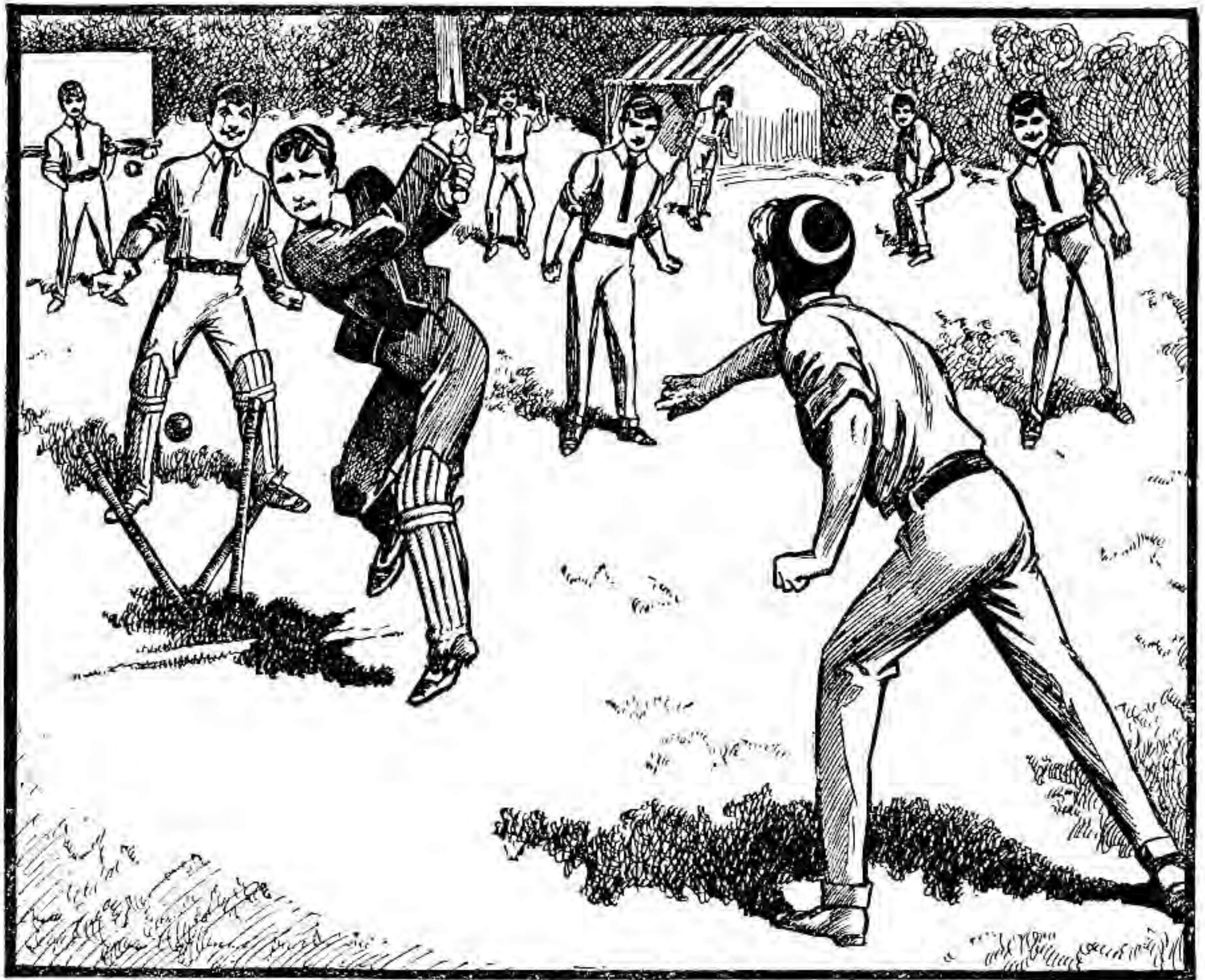


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HEROES OF HIGHCLIFFE!

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

By FRANK RICHARDS.



Bob Cherry sent down a very easy ball. De Courcy looked at it, and watched it spread-eagle his wicket, as if he found it a very interesting phenomenon. "How's that?" chuckled Bob. "Out!" said the Caterpillar. "I'm not a great cricketer, but I know when I'm out. Thanks awfully. I won't try again." (See Chapter 4.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

In High Feather!

"WHEREFORE this thushness?"

Bob Cherry asked the question.

He asked it in a tone of great surprise. The Famous Five of the Greyfriars Remove all looked surprised as they met Billy Bunter in the doorway of the School House.

Billy Bunter blinked at them through his big spectacles, and snorted a contemptuous snort. Billy Bunter was not looking his usual self. As a rule, the fat junior

was the most slovenly fellow in the Remove. Generally there was a spot or two of ink on his collar, a spot or two of grease on his ample waistcoat, and more than a spot or two on his fat hands.

But for once the Owl of the Remove was spotless.

His collar was bright and shiny, his silk hat was well brushed, his boots were clean, every button of his waistcoat was buttoned, there was no grease or jam to be seen on him anywhere, and there was a flower in his jacket.

Harry Wharton & Co. were surprised. Naturally, Bob Cherry inquired the wherefore of that "thushness."

"He's been brushing his clothes!" said Frank Nugent.
 "He's been washing his neck!" said Squiff, in almost an awed voice.

"He's been oiling his hair!" said Harry Wharton.
 "He has been creasefully pressing his esteemed trousers!" remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh, in wonder.

"And his paws have been washed since yesterday!" said Bob Cherry. "Look at them! Bunter, old man, wherefore—oh, wherefore this thushness?"

Billy Bunter drew himself up to his full height. He had not very far to draw himself. He was more impressive viewed horizontally.

"I'm going to see some friends!" said Bunter loftily. "I'd take you fellows with me, but I'm afraid it couldn't be done. My friends are rather particular."

Harry Wharton & Co. ought really to have been crushed by that remark, but they weren't. They only smiled.

"They must be awfully particular if you wash your neck before going to see them!" agreed Bob Cherry heartily. "You never do these things for us!"

"You rotter! I haven't washed my neck—I—I mean, you know I always wash my neck!" howled Bunter.

"Kindly let me pass!" said Bunter, relapsing into dignity again. "I've no time to waste on you fellows! My friends will be expecting me. If you've stopped me to borrow some money you can ring off. I'm not whacking my remittance out among you fellows. You refused to cash a postal-order for me the other day, Cherry—a postal-order I was expecting."

"Oh, you've had a remittance, have you?" said Bob Cherry.

"A fiver," said Bunter carelessly.

"Chance for you to settle up some little accounts!" suggested Nugent.

"Ahem! I've no time now," said Bunter hastily. "When I come back from Higheliffe I'll settle up any small sum I may happen to have forgotten, Frank Nugent. I should certainly decline to remain in your debt."

"You're going to Higheliffe?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Ponsonby & Co.—what?"

"Yes," said Bunter disdainfully. "Ponsonby has been very decent to me lately. He can see that I'm a sport like himself. I get on very well indeed with Ponsonby. Rather more go in him than in you fellows. Sorry I can't take you, but Pon is rather particular."

"You silly young ass!" said Wharton, frowning. "Pon will have your five-pound note before you can wink your silly eye, if he gets you to play cards with him. And I suppose that's what he's after, or he wouldn't bother about you."

"We may have a little game," said Bunter airily. "None of your business! You can go and eat coke! Go and play cricket! That's about your mark!"

And Billy Bunter ambled out of the School House, with his little, fat nose high in the air.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked after the Owl of the Remove. There had been a change in Billy Bunter of late. Once the most impecunious junior in the Remove, always trying to raise little loans in advance upon a postal-order that never seemed to arrive, Bunter was now the happy recipient of frequent remittances, some of them very big. Bunter senior was supposed to be doing remarkably well on the Stock Exchange, and Billy Bunter sometimes talked of his "operations" there, making mysterious mention of "bulls" and "bears" and "stags," of contango and carrying over and settling up, of options and bear raids and backwardation—expressions he had picked up from his pater's talk at home, and which puzzled the Removes, and probably Billy himself, very much. But whatever bulls and bears might be, and whatever might be meant by contango and carrying over, there seemed no doubt that Bunter senior was doing remarkably well in the midst of those weird things, to judge by the handsome remittances he sent at times to William George.

Bunter's remittances generally found their way to the school tuckshop, and a day or two after receiving them he would be as "stony" as ever, and then the story of the postal-order he was expecting would be revived again. But on this special occasion it was not the tuckshop that attracted him. His half-holiday was to be

spent in company with the "blades" of Higheliffe, the old rivals and enemies of Harry Wharton & Co.

"The silly ass!" said Bob Cherry, half amused and half compassionate. "I suppose Pon has found out that the duffer has some money, and is going to save him the trouble of looking after it."

"It would be only a kindness to lock him up in a box-room for the afternoon," suggested Squiff.

"Though you brayfully put a fool into the mortar, yet will not his folly departfully leave him," said Hurree Singh, with a shake of the head. "As your English proverb says, experience bought is better than a stitch in time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hold on!" said Bob. "I've got an idea—a wheezy good idea, as Inky calls it. Go and ask Bunter to have a ginger-pop before he goes."

"What on earth for?"

"It's a wheeze, I tell you. Buzz off!"

Bob Cherry rushed away to his study, and his chums, somewhat puzzled, proceeded to do as he requested. Billy Bunter was lounging gracefully across the Close towards the gates when they overtook him.

"Hold on, Bunter!"

"I've got nothing to lend you, Wharton."

Harry Wharton came very near to knocking the fat junior's shiny silk hat over his eyes, but he nobly refrained.

"Come and have a ginger-pop?" he said instead.

"I'm not standing treat."

"Our treat," said Nugent.

"Oh, all right!" said Bunter. "I'll have some tarts, too, if you like. It's nearly an hour since dinner, and I'm rather hungry."

And the fat Remove trotted off quite contentedly to the tuckshop. His noble friends of Higheliffe could wait so long as the chums of the Remove were prepared to stand treat.

Mrs. Mible served the ginger-pop and the tarts, and Bunter tucked in with great gusto. Bunter had a marvellous speed with tarts, and Harry Wharton & Co. looked out anxiously for Bob. Unless Bob arrived pretty soon, their funds would be exhausted, and Bunter would be gone.

The Owl of the Remove was on his tenth tart, when Bob Cherry appeared in the doorway. Bob was smiling blandly, and he had his hand behind him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Not gone yet, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter blinked round at him.

"Just going," he said. "Did you say cream-puffs, Wharton?"

"No, I didn't," said Wharton promptly.

"It wasn't worth while stopping me for a few tarts!" said Bunter, with a sniff. "However, if you're going to be mean, I'll get off."

"There's a spot of dust on your jacket, Bunter," said Bob Cherry.

"Brush it off for me, then!" growled Bunter.

Bob Cherry brushed off the spot of dust from the back of Bunter's tight-fitting Eton jacket, and his chums grinned. At the same moment Bob's concealed hand came from behind him, and a card was fastened on Bunter's back with a fish-hook. Billy Bunter rolled out of the tuckshop, quite unconscious of the additional ornament, and there was a chuckle from the Co., echoed by the juniors in the quadrangle, as Bunter rolled down to the gates.

Upon the fat junior's back the white card showed prominently, and in big, black letters on the card was the inscription:

"JUST ESCAPED FROM THE ZOO.
 PLEASE THROW SOMETHING."

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Anything to Oblige!

WHIZ!

"Oh! What! Yow! Yah!"

Billy Bunter whirled round in a rage as a small apple caught his shiny topker, and set it rakishly over his left ear. He blinked furiously at the fellows in the Close, and there was a howl of laughter.

"Bolsover, you rotter——"

Whiz!

Another missile caught Bunter's topper, and set it straight again. Then another caught him in the neck.

"You silly asses!" roared Bunter. "Wharrer you up to?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sure, and ye're askin' for it," chuckled Micky Desmond. "Phwy do ye ask for it if ye don't want it, bedad?"

Whiz! Whiz! Whiz!

Everybody within sight was sending some missile or other, and Billy Bunter made a rush out of the gates to escape, followed by shouts of laughter.

"The thumping idiots!" snorted Bunter, taking off his topper to brush it with his sleeve. "The silly duffers! It's those beasts put them up to it, of course, because they're jealous of a chap rolling in money. They're jealous of my nobby friends, too. Yah! The rotters!"

He blinked back at the school gates. He could see the Famous Five and a crowd of other juniors there, laughing. Billy Bunter was puzzled. Certainly he often caused laughter in the Remove, but he did not see any reason for this sudden outburst of merriment. He shook a fat fist at the Removites, and tramped on towards Highcliffe.

He was soon out of sight of Greyfriars; but his adventures were not over by any means. He passed a cheery-looking youth in the road. It was Dick Trumper, of Courtfield School. Trumper glanced after him, perhaps surprised to see the Owl of Greyfriars looking so spick and span, and burst into a chuckle as he spotted the notice on the broad back.

Naturally he acceded to the request thereon formulated. He kindly picked up a soft, fat turf, and it whizzed after Billy Bunter, and caught him on the neck.

Bunter spun round in a fury.

"You rotter! What are you up to?" he yelled.

"Throwing something, as requested," said Trumper cheerfully.

"Why, you beast, I'll——"

Trumper was selecting another turf, and Bunter broke off and ran. The turf squashed on the card on his back.

"The rotter!" snorted Bunter. "Why, what—what on earth is the matter with the silly idiots? What is everybody chucking things at me for? Blessed if I don't think they're all going off their rockers! Jealousy, I suppose, because I'm looking so nobby."

He rolled on angrily. He came through Courtfield to get to Highcliffe, and in the old High Street of Courtfield there was a chirrup of laughter from a number of youths who noted the placard on his back. Bunter's evident unconsciousness of it was too funny. Naturally, the Courtfield boys were not slow to oblige. A merry greengrocer's youth obliged with an ancient orange, which squashed on Billy Bunter's shoulder, and splashed over him. And then a young gentleman in the grocer's doorway piled in with an egg, which landed on Bunter's waistcoat as he spun round in a rage. Billy Bunter was almost petrified.

For some mysterious reason, which he could not comprehend, the native population seemed to regard him as a walking Aunt Sally.

"The—the beasts!" gasped Bunter.

"Haw, haw, haw!" roared the budding greengrocer.

"Just escaped from the Zoo! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Please throw something!" chuckled the grocer's youth.

"'Ere you are, guv'nor—'ere's another egg!"

Bunter fled.

To his amazement and fury, missiles whizzed after him at almost every step, till he escaped out of Courtfield, and rolled away down the lane to Highcliffe.

The Owl of the Remove almost fancied he was dreaming. Unless the countryside had suddenly become insane, there was no accounting for this extraordinary phenomenon.

"They must all be dotty—stark, staring dotty!" gasped Bunter, dabbing furiously at the egg on his waistcoat.

"Pelting me—the beasts! Yow-ow!"

"Hallo! Here's the Greyfriars prize porker!"

Three Highcliffe juniors came in sight in the lane. They were Drury and Merton and Monson of the Fourth—friends of the great Ponsonby. Billy Bunter put on an

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agreeable grin. As he was going to meet Ponsonby, he supposed that these cheery youths had come to meet him half-way.

"Hallo!" he said amiably. "Where's Pon?"

Monson & Co. stared at him.

"Do you mean Ponsonby?" he asked.

"Of course I do, old chap."

"Don't call me old chap," said Monson disdainfully. "And what do you mean by calling my pal Pon, you fat porker?"

Bunter blinked at him indignantly.

"I'm going to meet Pon!" he exclaimed.

"Rats!"

"I've got an appointment with him," said Bunter loftily.

"Bosh! Pon wouldn't be found dead within a mile of you," said Drury. "Knock his hat off!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Monson, catching sight of Bunter's back. "Just escaped from the Zoo! Ha, ha, ha!"

"What do you mean, you silly ass?" demanded Bunter.

"Please throw something!" yelled Monson. "Certainly! Anything to oblige."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

To Bunter's amazement, the three Highcliffians grabbed up turfs, and began to pelt. The fat junior's eyes almost started through his big spectacles.

"Stop it, you beasts!" he roared, as the turfs pattered all over him. "Ow! My nose! Yow! My neck! Chuck it, do you hear?"

"Ain't we chucking it?" grinned Monson.

"Oh, really—oh, ow! My hat! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Whiz! Whiz! Whiz! Billy Bunter broke into a wild run. But Monson & Co. were not done with him. They chased him down the lane towards Highcliffe, still pelting, with yells of laughter.

Two elegantly-dressed juniors, Ponsonby and Gadsby of the Fourth, came from the direction of the school, and they stopped as they spotted Billy Bunter, fleeing wildly with the Highcliffians on his track.

"By gad!" said Ponsonby.

"It's our fat friend," grinned Gadsby. "The fellows are after him! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here, look out, Tubby!"

Bunter came up charging like a bull. He did not even see Ponsonby in the way, and he barged into him, and Ponsonby went staggering. The dandy of Highcliffe sat down in the dust, and Bunter reeled and sat down too.

"Grooh!"

"You ass!" yelled Ponsonby.

"Oh, dear! Yow!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER:

Bunter's Pals!

PONSONBY jumped up.

The dandy of Highcliffe came very near to bestowing a series of furious kicks upon the fat Removite of Greyfriars. But he restrained himself. He had designs upon Billy Bunter's latest remittance, and it was necessary to keep his temper. Instead of kicking Bunter, therefore, he frowned at Monson & Co. as they came up yelling.

"Let Bunter alone!" he exclaimed. "Bunter's come to see me."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Monson. "What are you meeting the fat cad for?"

"He's a friend of mine," said Ponsonby.

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Yow! The beasts! They've been pelting me!" howled Bunter. "Look at me! I'm smothered! Yow-ow!"

"Well, you asked for it," said Monson.

"Yow! I didn't! What do you mean, you idiot? Yow!"

Gadsby grinned and jerked the placard from Bunter's back, and shoved it under his nose, so that the short-sighted Owl could see it.

"What do you wear that on your back for, if you don't want to be pelted?" he demanded.

Bunter blinked at the placard in amazement and fury.

"W-w-was that on my b-b-back?" he stuttered.

"Yes, fathead!"

"Oh, my hat! That accounts! It must have been that beast Bob Cherry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tain't a laughing matter!" yelled Bunter, scrambling to his feet, blinking with rage. "I'll jolly well lick him when I get back!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle!" howled Bunter. "I'm done with you, you rotters! If you can't treat a fellow decently, I don't want to have anything to do with you. Yah!"

And Bunter swung away. Cecil Ponsonby left off laughing. He did not mean to let William George Bunter's fiver escape him if he could help it.

"Hold on, Bunter, old chap!"

"Bah!"

"I say, no offence, you know," said Ponsonby. "Don't be ratty! We're all friends here, you know."

Monson and Drury and Merton stared blankly at their great chief. Why Ponsonby should be "sucking up" to the fat Removeite in this way was a mystery to them. They could scarcely believe their ears.

"Have you gone potty?" ejaculated Monson. "What's the matter with you, Pon?"

"You dry up, Monson," said Ponsonby. "Bunter's a friend of mine. Don't you mind these bounders, Bunter. You come with me."

Billy Bunter allowed himself to be pacified. Gadsby kindly brushed some of the dust off him. Ponsonby handed him his hat in the politest manner. Monson and Merton and Drury gasped for breath.

"You just remember that Bunter is a friend of mine, and treat him with proper respect," said Ponsonby, closing one eye at the Higheliffians as he spoke. "Bunter's a good sort—a real sport, too. Not a bit like those cads Wharton and Cherry—very superior to any of the Greyfriars rotters, in fact. Bunter is a fellow it's an honour to know. I'm proud of having Bunter's acquaintance."

"Same here," said Gadsby heartily. "I've wanted to get on pally terms with Bunter for a long time, because I recognised he was the real thing—a real nut, and entirely one of ourselves."

"We're dreaming," said Monson, with conviction.

"If Bunter doesn't object, you fellows can join us," said Ponsonby. "We're going into the barn to have a little game of nap."

Then Monson & Co. understood.

"Oh!" said Monson. "I savvy! I—I mean, I hope Bunter won't take a little joke amiss. I assure him I meant no harm, and I apologise."

"Same here," said Drury. "Bunter, as a real sportsman, will accept a hearty apology, I am sure."

"Bunter's a gentleman," said Merton solemnly. "Of course, Bunter will accept our apologies, and overlook the matter."

Billy Bunter was almost purring with delight by this time. To be buttered up and apologised to by the nuts of Higheliffe in this way was a pure delight. Ponsonby & Co. were vying with one another to soothe the fat junior's ruffled dignity, and the Owl of the Remove found it a very pleasant process. His fat face cleared, and he swelled with importance—indeed, he seemed to "swell wisely," as the great Samuel Weller expressed it.

"All serene," said Bunter loftily. "Don't do it again, that's all."

"Certainly not," said Monson. "I'm sure that if Bunter will be pally with us we shall feel ourselves only too highly honoured."

"Hear, hear!"

Even that was not laid on too thick for Bunter. He could swallow any amount of flattery, and the thicker it was, the better he liked it. He felt that he was properly appreciated by these elegant young fellows. It was ever so different from the kind of appreciation he received in the Greyfriars Remove.

"Come on!" said Ponsonby, taking Bunter's fat arm in

quite an affectionate manner. "This way, Billy. You don't mind if I call you Billy?"

"Not at all," said Bunter. "I'll call you Cecil!"

"Do!" said Ponsonby solemnly.

He led the way, arm-in-arm with Bunter, and the other young rascals followed, suffering internal pains from suppressed laughter. It was amazing to them that Bunter could not see that his fat leg was being pulled. But Bunter was not likely to discover the real opinion the Higheliffians had of him until his financial resources were quite exhausted. Then the discovery was likely to come with painful clearness.

Ponsonby led the way into the barn. There they were out of view—rather an important point, as they were going to gamble. Although Higheliffe School was in a state of slackness and "rot" and the fellows did very much as they liked, even Ponsonby & Co. had to draw the line somewhere. As for Bunter, he would have received the "order of the sack" immediately if his conduct had become known to the powers at Greyfriars.

Ponsonby produced a pack of cards, and four of the Higheliffians began to play with Bunter, Merton looking on and smoking. Billy Bunter produced his five-pound note with a flourish.

"Got some change, you fellows?" he asked carelessly.

"Well, we're not rolling in money like you, Bunter," said Ponsonby. "We'll see if we can make it up among us."

Five pounds in change was produced among them, and Ponsonby put the fiver into his pocket. There was no doubt that the change would follow it sooner or later. Cecil Ponsonby was not playing merely for pleasure.

They played on cheerfully, Billy Bunter's supply of cash being slowly but steadily transferred to Ponsonby & Co. At the end of half an hour Billy Bunter had precisely a pound left, and he was looking a little blue.

"Looks as if luck's turning," said Ponsonby, as he shuffled the cards. "I've got a feeling that Bunter's going to clean us out."

"He's a masterly player," remarked Monson. "He's not afraid to take chances."

"You'll always find me a good sportsman," purred Bunter, somewhat consoled for his losses by this high praise.

"Besides, what does the money matter to Bunter?" remarked Gadsby. "Bunter simply rolls in it. His people are frightfully rich."

Billy Bunter nodded.

"That's so," he agreed. "My pater has been simply raking in tin, you know. He was a bear."

"A—a what?"

"A bear," said Bunter, proud of his knowledge of Stock Exchange jargon.

"You are alluding to his manners?" asked Gadsby.

"Oh, really——"

"Shut up, Gaddy!" said Ponsonby, frowning. "Your jokes are too personal, and you cannot expect Bunter to like them. What is a bear, Bunter?"

"Something on the Stock Exchange," said Bunter, whose own knowledge was somewhat limited. "I've heard my pater talking about it at home. A bear is a chap who sells shares and things without having any, you know."

"My hat!"

"Then the price goes down, you know, in the market, with a lot of selling off, and before the time comes to deliver the shares he's sold, he's able to buy 'em cheap, so he makes a profit," explained Bunter.

"I suppose they have to keep it awfully dark," said Monson. "Jolly careless of your pater to talk about it. Suppose the police got to hear of it?"

"Why, you ass," exclaimed Bunter indignantly, "that isn't against the law!"

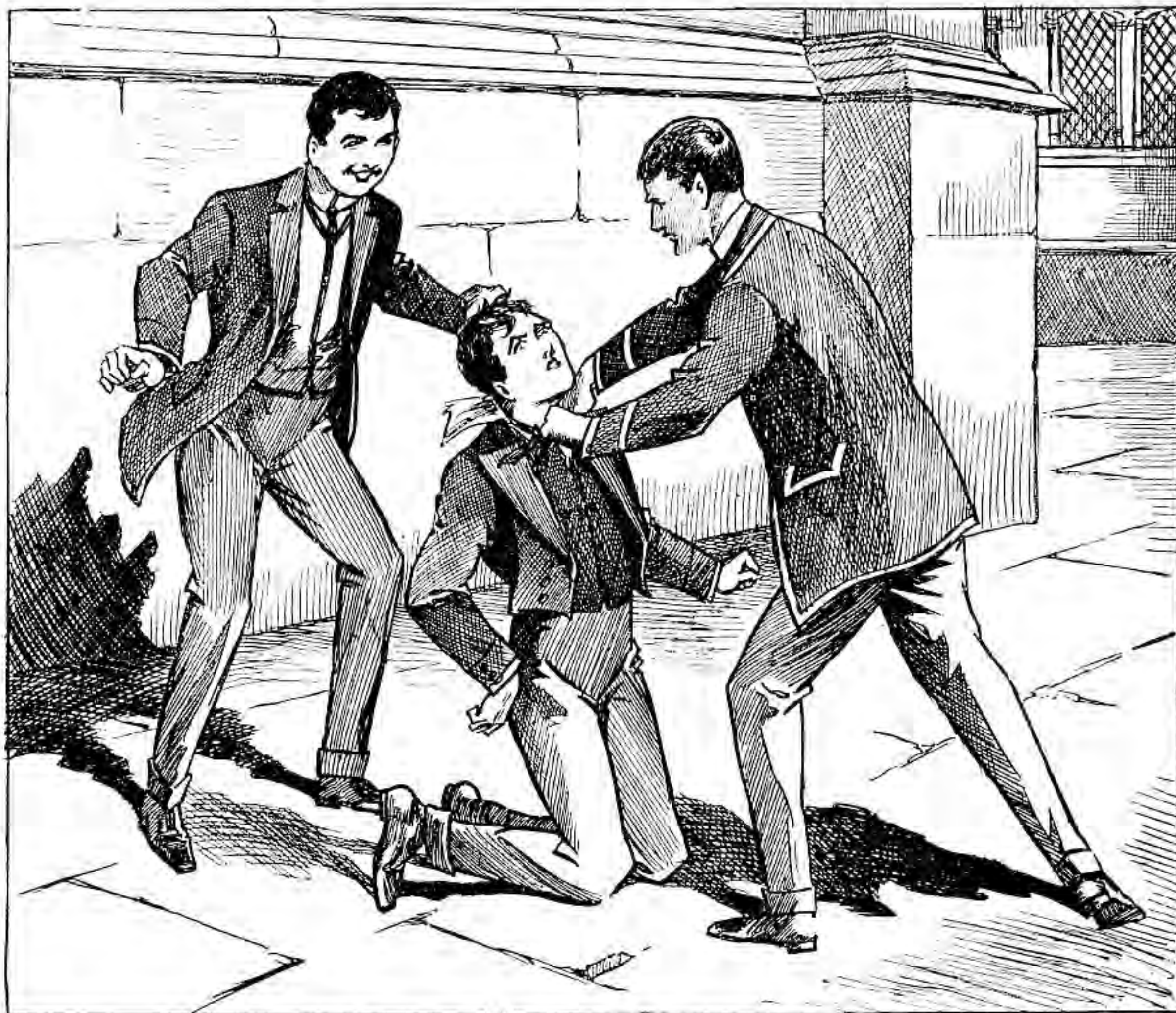
"Isn't it? Must be something jolly wrong with the law, then."

"Look here, Monson——"

"My deal," said Ponsonby. "Hallo!"

There came an interruption at that moment. Two juniors looked into the barn. They were Courtenay and De Courcy of the Fourth Form at Higheliffe. The latter, a very elegant youth, looked at Ponsonby & Co. with an amused smile.

"No place for us," he remarked.



The Caterpillar shifted his grip to Ponsonby's collar, and shoved him down on his knees. It dawned upon the Greyfriars fellows that the Caterpillar, slacker and dandy as he looked, must be an athlete, to handle Ponsonby in that way. "Go ahead, Pon! On your knees, you know! Ask the dear boys to please pardon you for your naughty rudeness." (See Chapter 13.)

"Come on, Caterpillar," said Courtenay shortly. He was not on good terms with Ponsonby & Co.

"Spoilin' the Egyptians, Pon, what?" asked the Caterpillar.

"Come and take a hand, Caterpillar," said Ponsonby affably. "You used to be fond of a little game."

De Courcy shook his head.

"Chuck'd all that," he replied. "I'm under the eye of my pal Franky, and he doesn't allow me to play the giddy ox. I'm afraid of shockin' him. Franky has introduced a new tone of morality into Highelife, and I have to mind my P's and Q's."

Courtenay laughed.

"Don't be an ass, Caterpillar. You don't want to join in that rotten game. Come on!"

"No harm in watchin' the fun," said the Caterpillar. "Hold on a bit, if you're not too shocked, and let's see Bunter welshed."

"Why, you rotter!" shouted Ponsonby. "Do you dare to insinuate—"

De Courcy raised a manicured hand deprecatingly.

"Don't shout, Pon. You know it gets on my nerves."

"Look here—"

"Well, I'm lookin'," said the Caterpillar, leaning in an elegant attitude against the wall of the barn. "Do

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let me watch the fun, Franky, and don't make shocked faces at a chap."

Courtenay frowned and remained. The Caterpillar watched the progress of the game with great interest. Ponsonby & Co. did not seem at all easy under his gaze. There was a cynical smile upon the Caterpillar's lips, a peculiar glimmer in his sleepy eyes. His remarks, too, were not exactly pleasant.

"You've overlooked that ace, Pon—the one you've dropped on your knee. You'll be takin' that as a card in your hand by mistake, if you're not careful."

Ponsonby frowned furiously, and put the ace back in the pack and shuffled it. But it did not dawn upon Billy Bunter that he was being swindled. The Owl of the Remove was quite satisfied that he was far too keen to be "done." As a matter of fact, the young rascals of Highelife were cheating him almost openly.

"Go nap, Gaddy," said the Caterpillar a little later, as Gadsby appeared to reflect. "Take my tip, and go nap. With four kings in your hand you can go nap safely, I should say, as the other's an ace."

"What do you mean?" roared Gadsby, who had dealt that time.

"I mean what I say," replied the Caterpillar lazily. "Go nap!"

Ponsonby jumped up.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE PUNISHMENT POLICIES!"

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

"Look here, Caterpillar, get out! I'm fed up with your rotten insinuations. Get out!"

The Caterpillar yawned.

"But I wanted to see Bunter's last bob go," he protested. "It's amusin'."

"Come away," said Courtenay, seizing his chum by the arm and dragging him out of the barn. And the Caterpillar, with another yawn, went.

Ponsonby & Co. felt more at ease when he was gone. The Caterpillar's caustic remarks had worried them.

Ten minutes after the Caterpillar's departure Billy Bunter's last shilling was handed over, the Owl of the Remove sitting with a blank expression on his face. Cecil Ponsonby shuffled the cards.

"Tired?" he asked.

"Ahem! I've run out of cash," explained Bunter. "I'll give you my I.O.U."

Ponsonby rose to his feet.

"Time we got off, you fellows," he remarked.

"Look here," exclaimed Bunter warmly, "I'm expecting a postal-order shortly—I mean, a banknote—and my I.O.U. is all right."

"Right as rain, my dear chap!" said Ponsonby. "But we happen to be in rather a hurry. I dare say you've heard that there was a burglary at Highcliffe the other night. We—we've promised the Head to go down and ask Inspector Grimes how he's getting on with his investigations. We've really left it rather late."

"But I say——"

"Yes, we shall have to cut off," said Gadsby, looking at his watch. "Give you your revenge any time you like, Bunter. You'd have cleaned us out if—if you had been in the vein, you know. Give us a call next time you're in funds."

"Yes, but——"

"The inspector is expecting us," said Ponsonby. "Come on, you fellows! Ta-ta, Bunter!"

Ponsonby & Co. sauntered out of the barn, leaving the unfortunate Bunter sitting with a blank and dismayed expression on his fat face. His five-pound note was gone from his gaze like a beautiful dream, and even the "buttering-up" he had received from the nuts of Highcliffe could not wholly console him.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Caterpillar Plays Cricket!

"TIME our giddy visitors were here," remarked Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton & Co. were improving the shining hour at cricket practice that afternoon. King Cricket was reigning at Greyfriars once more, and the chums of the Remove were devoting their attention to preparing for the great summer game. The Remove Cricket Club had a good proportion of their holidays booked ahead through the season. There was the Rockwood match and St. Jim's coming off quite soon; to say nothing of Redclyffe, and St. Jude's and Lantham, and many more to follow. Harry Wharton & Co. intended that season to play cricket, with the accent on the "play," as Bob Cherry expressed it.

Harry Wharton & Co. were expecting visitors that afternoon—from Highcliffe of all places. While William George Bunter was gone to meet Ponsonby & Co., the Famous Five were expecting a visit from some of Ponsonby's Form-fellows, but a very different kind of fellows.

The Famous Five were very much "up against" Ponsonby & Co. There were few fellows at Highcliffe indeed with whom they were likely to pull. But there was a new fellow in the Fourth Form at Highcliffe whom they liked exceedingly. They had made his acquaintance in a curious way. When he had first come to Highcliffe School Ponsonby & Co. had "japed" him by guiding him to Greyfriars, and planting him there under the belief that it was Highcliffe. So Harry Wharton & Co. had come to know him, and had taken a liking to him. And his curious story made him interesting, too, for they had met him as Arthur Clare, a supposed foundling who did not know his own people, and since then he had found his father in Major Courtenay, a tremendous personage

from India, who was the uncle of Ponsonby of Highcliffe. Arthur Clare, or Frank Courtenay, as he was now called, had never forgotten the kindness he had received at the hands of Harry Wharton & Co., and their friendship continued, though it seemed to the chums themselves a little odd to have a "pal" in Ponsonby's cousin.

But Courtenay and his cousin Ponsonby were about as like as chalk and cheese, and they were far from being chummy.

Courtenay was coming over to tea in the study with the Famous Five on this especial afternoon, and he had told them that he was bringing a friend with him. They did not know his friend yet, but they were prepared to give him a cordial welcome.

While they waited for the arrival of their visitors Harry Wharton & Co. were at cricket practice, with a crowd more of the Remove. Squiff, the Australian junior, was wielding the bat he had brought with him from New South Wales, with all his famous skill. Squiff—otherwise Sampson Quincey Illey Field—was a rod in pickle for the St. Jim's team when that great match came off. And he was needed, too, for Johnny Bull, once a tower of strength to his side, was indisposed.

The Removites were busy when two juniors in Highcliffe caps strolled in at the gates, and came down towards Little Side, seeing that a practice was on.

They were the two fellows who had dropped in on Ponsonby & Co. while those cheery youths were fleecing Bunter in the barn.

Courtenay's face brightened up as he came towards the cricket-field. He was a keen player, but there were not many chances for a keen player at Highcliffe. At Highcliffe slackness was the order of the day—in games as in everything else.

Courtenay's companion, De Courcy, who seemed to rejoice in the peculiar nickname of the Caterpillar, did not seem so delighted. He yawned portentously as he came down to the field with Courtenay.

"Faggin' at cricket, Franky," he remarked.

"Yes; we'll join them at it," said Courtenay.

"Oh, by gad!" exclaimed the Caterpillar, in alarm. "Draw it mild, you know. We've come over to tea."

"We'll get an appetite for our tea."

"My appetite's all right; and I tell you what—I'm not going to fag at cricket. Must draw a line somewhere."

"Don't be such a blessed slacker, Caterpillar. You're as slack as Ponsonby."

"Besides, we're not in flannels."

"Never mind that."

"But I do mind," said the Caterpillar, who was not disposed to exert himself that sunny afternoon. "I'll tell you what—you can fag at cricket, and I'll watch you."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, coming off the field with Wharton to greet the Highcliffians. "Here we are again!"

The chums of the Remove looked rather curiously at the Caterpillar as he was presented to them. If ever a fellow looked like a slacker, the Caterpillar did, and they wondered that Courtenay had picked him out as a chum. Lord Mauleverer of the Remove was a champion slacker, but they could see at a glance that De Courcy could give Mauly points, and beat him easily in that line. The dandy of Highcliffe really seemed to look as if he found it too much trouble to live at all.

"You're playing?" asked Courtenay.

"Only practice," said Wharton. "We'll chuck it now, unless you'd like to have a whack, Clare—I mean Courtenay."

"Just what I should like," said Courtenay; "and the Caterpillar, too."

"I'm going to look on," said the Caterpillar affably. "I know all about cricket; I'm splendid at watchin' it. You pile in, Frank; you can put in enough energy for two. I'm going to sit down."

And the Caterpillar found a seat outside the pavilion, and sat down promptly.

Courtenay smiled, and went into the field with the Removites. Harry Wharton gave him his bat, and Courtenay stood up at the wicket, and Squiff bowled him

a few. The Highcliffe junior knocked them away without difficulty, and Squiff opened his eyes a little.

"That chap can bat," he remarked to Wharton.

"Looks like it," said Harry, with a nod. "He's a good chap, but we're not going to have our bowling knocked about by a Highcliffian. Get him out, Inky."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh caught the ball, and smiled a dusky smile.

"I will tryfully do my best," he said. "But that esteemed bat is firstful-class, and his form is terrific."

"Look out, Courtenay!" called out Wharton. "Inky is a terror, and your sticks will want looking after."

"Pile in!" said Courtenay.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh took his little run, and curled himself up like a catherine-wheel, and sent down a ball that would have beaten many a keen batsman. But the Highcliffe junior was not beaten. There was a click, and the leather went sailing away, and some of the Greyfriars fellows cheered.

"Bravo!"

"Well hit, by gum!" said Bob Cherry. "My hat, if there were many bats like that chap at Highcliffe, we shouldn't have walked over them so easily in our matches."

It was not till his tenth ball that Hurree Jamset Ram Singh succeeded in scattering Courtenay's sticks. And before then the Removites had had a good deal of exercise in fielding the leather. The Caterpillar looked on with great admiration. When his wicket fell, Courtenay handed over the bat, and came up to the Caterpillar.

"Congrats, old chap," said the Caterpillar, in great admiration. "You're astonishin' the natives, old scout."

"And now you're going to astonish them," said Courtenay, laughing.

"By gad, I should astonish them if I played. But I'm not going to."

"Rats! Get up!"

"Do go easy on a fellow, Franky. I've been watchin' you like anythin'."

Courtenay collared his chum and dragged him from his seat, and the Caterpillar, groaning, was marched into the field.

"Like a turn?" asked Wharton cheerily. "My bat will suit you, I think?"

"Too long," said the Caterpillar.

"Try Inky's."

"Too short."

"Well, here's mine," said Bob Cherry.

"Too heavy."

"My hat, you're rather particular about your bats!" said Wharton. "Lend him your bat, Smithy."

Vernon-Smith held out his bat, but the Caterpillar shook his head.

"Too light."

"What the deuce sort of a bat do you want, then?" demanded Wharton.

The Caterpillar yawned.

"I don't want a bat at all, dear boy. Franky is only pullin' your leg. I never play cricket. Too much fag."

"Take that bat, and don't play the giddy ox!" said Courtenay, shoving it in his chum's hand. "Buck up, Caterpillar!"

De Courcy groaned again, and stood up at the wicket.

"Give him an easy one, Bob," said Wharton, aside.

"Of all the rotten slackers that ever slacked, I think that chap takes the bun."

Bob Cherry sent down a very easy one. De Courcy looked at it, and watched it spreadeagle his wicket, as if he found it a very interesting phenomenon.

"How's that?" chuckled Bob.

"Out!" said the Caterpillar. "I'm not a great cricketer, but I know when I'm out. Thanks awfully; I won't try again."

And he lounged back to the pavilion, leaving the Greyfriars juniors staring. Frank Courtenay laughed, and coloured a little. He was used to the Caterpillar's little ways, but he knew that they required some getting used to. However, Harry Wharton & Co. showed no signs of being "huffed" by the Caterpillar's remarkable conduct.

"Jolly near tea-time," said Bob Cherry. "Let's get in. We must be careful not to overtire your pal, Clare."

"The exertfulness has been terrific!" remarked Hurree

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE PUNISHMENT POLICIES!"

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ONE
PENNY.

Jamset Ram Singh, with a shake of his dusky head. "Too much exertion might lead to a hornpipe!"

"To a what?" asked Courtenay, in amazement.

"Inky means a breakdown," chuckled Bob Cherry. "You'll get used to Inky's English in a century or two, and begin to understand it."

The Caterpillar found energy enough to accompany the juniors into the School House, and in No. 1 Study he sank into the arm-chair, and watched the fellows getting tea, with an expression of great interest.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Makes a Discovery!

"BEASTS!"

Billy Bunter made that observation with a great deal of emphasis, when he rolled at last out of the barn.

Ponsonby & Co. had long been gone—but Bunter had remained for some time, thinking dolefully over his losses, and the rottenness of his select friends in refusing to play on with I O U's. Ponsonby, however, had no mind at all to spend his afternoon collecting waste-paper.

Early that afternoon, Billy Bunter had been the proud possessor of a five-pound note. Now he was the possessor of a single penny—one penny, which had already been refused at three shops as it was a bad one. Bunter was likely to remain in possession of his last coin, unless he sent it to a fund.

It was getting towards tea-time, and Billy Bunter was hungry. He was in low spirits now. The excitement of the "little game" had passed off, and it left him feeling very flabby. And when he thought of the amount of tuck he could have purchased for five pounds, he groaned in anguish of spirit.

"Beasts!" he repeated, as he rolled homeward by the path through the wood. "Rotters! I shall be late for tea in Hall, and Todd will have finished in the study. Beasts! They won't take my paper, and they were glad enough to take my fiver! Beasts! What am I going to do for tea? Oh, dear!"

It was a serious case.

The whacking remittance was gone, and Billy Bunter was reduced once more to his former state of impecuniosity. However generous his pater might be, in his new prosperity, he was quite certain not to send another remittance yet awhile. There was a period of "lean years" before the Owl of the Remove.

All the "buttering-up" he had received from the young rascals of Highcliffe did not compensate for this. The Owl of the Remove could have kicked himself for his folly.

The fat junior loitered disconsolately along the woodland path. He was turning over in his mind various schemes for raising the wind. It was a good distance to Greyfriars—for a poor walker like Bunter—and half-way through the wood he sought out a log and sat down to rest among the thickets.

"Five quid!" he murmured. "Oh, the rotters! I shouldn't wonder if they swindled me, too. I've heard Smithy say that they cheat. The beasts!"

To such a low ebb had fallen Bunter's opinion of his noble and select friends of Highcliffe!

The Owl of the Remove was about to resume his way, when a rustle in the thickets caught his ear. He blinked round him curiously. A thick-set man moved through the bushes, in a curiously quiet and stealthy manner. He did not see the fat junior, who was almost hidden by the thickets round him; but through an opening in the foliage, Bunter saw him pass. The man's stealthy manner roused his curiosity at once. He was a roughly-dressed fellow, with a coloured muffler round his neck, and a fur cap drawn low over his brows.

He halted, and remained in a listening attitude for some minutes, without glancing in the direction where the fat junior sat on the log.

"Safe as houses!"

Bunter heard the muttered words, and the man disappeared, and in a few minutes the rustling died away.

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

The fat junior sat perfectly still, hardly breathing.

The man was such a rough-looking customer, that Bunter was very glad he had not been observed by him. It was a lonely spot. And from the man's stealthy manner, and his muttered words, it was pretty clear that there was something very shady about him. It occurred to Bunter at once that the man in the fur cap had been hiding something in the wood—stolen property, in all probability.

"Some beastly pickpocket, hiding his beastly plunder, very likely," murmured Bunter, and he remained very still.

He allowed a quarter of an hour to pass before he moved, fearful that the ruffian in the fur cap might return. But there was no sound in the wood, and the fat junior rose to his feet at last.

His eyes gleamed behind his big spectacles.

The thought of searching for what the man in the fur cap had hidden was in his mind. But it was growing dusky in the wood, and the danger that the man in the fur cap might return deterred Bunter from the idea. The ruffian had had a thick cudgel under his arm, and the thought of that cudgel made Bunter feel uncomfortable.

"I'll jolly well come back to-morrow and have a look," murmured Bunter. "He looked like some beastly thief, and there might be a reward."

But, at the present moment, William George felt that it would be only prudent to get out of the vicinity. If Fur Cap had hidden something in the wood, it was quite possible that he was lurking in the vicinity, to make sure that all was safe. Billy Bunter departed on tiptoe, and not till he was two hundred yards away, did he venture to break into a run. And when he started running, he did not slacken down till he was out of breath.

But he saw nothing more of the fur-capped man, and he dropped into a walk in the lane, and rolled on to Greyfriars.

He reached the school in a dismal mood. He had determined to keep to himself what he had seen in the wood. If there was anything to be "made," Billy Bunter intended that it should be made by him, personally, without anybody else taking a whack.

But a more pressing matter was tea.

Tea in Hall was over; and he was stony. He met Vernon-Smith as he came in, and the Bounder grinned at his glum face.

"Had a good time?" he asked.

"I've lost my tin!" groaned Bunter.

"What the dickens did you expect?"

"Ow! I'm stony!"

"Serve you right!" said Vernon-Smith. "I gave you a lesson once—won your silly money, and gave it back to you afterwards. I suppose you didn't expect Pon to give it back?"

"The Beast! He wouldn't take my I O U's after I'd lost all my cash."

"Ha, ha, ha! Why should he collect up leaves of your pocket-book, with your silly initials on them?"

"Oh, really, Smithy! I say, I'm expecting a postal-order shortly——"

"Go hon!"

"You might lend a fellow five bob. I'm stony."

"Not a ha'penny," said the Bounder. "You've had a lesson, and if you miss your tea, it will rub it in. Ta-ta!"

"Oh, really, Smithy——"

The Bounder walked away chuckling, and Bunter rolled on towards the School House. He met Skinner, and Snoop, and Stott, and Fisher T. Fish, and Bolsover major, and each of them declined in turn, with more or less politeness—generally less—to advance anything on the postal-order he was expecting. In a faint hope that there might be something left in the study, Bunter made his way to No. 7. Peter Todd and Alonzo and Tom Dutton were there, but tea had been cleared away.

"Hallo!" said Peter Todd, "missed your tea? Not hungry to-day?"

"I'm fearfully hungry," said Bunter pathetically. "Famished! I suppose you've left me something?"

"Not a bite!" said Peter cheerfully. "Tuck-shop's still open."

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"I'm stony!" groaned Bunter.

"Why, you had a fiver this afternoon," said Todd, in astonishment. "If you'd been decent, you'd have stood something for tea here. But I suppose you can stand your own tea for once. You haven't been paying your debts, I suppose?"

"I—I've lost it!" mumbled Bunter.

"How very unfortunate," said the gentle Alonzo Todd, with great commiseration. "I trust you ascertained the number, Bunter? If you inform the police at once, you may recover the note."

"Fathead! I lost it at nap!"

"My dear Bunter, I am shocked at you! My Uncle Benjamin would be disgusted!"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Bunter crossly. "Look here, there must be something left. I'll look in the cupboard—— Yow—leggo my ear, Toddy! I know there's something in the cupboard."

"You're not feeding in this study," said Peter Todd, leading Bunter to the door with an iron grip on his fat ear. "We don't want any gambling blackguards here. Outside!"

"Oh, really, Toddy—yowp!"

Bunter spun into the passage, and Todd slammed the door after him. Bunter staggered against the opposite wall and gasped.

"Yow! Beast! I'll jolly well——"

The Owl of the Remove opened the study door again.

Whiz!

"Oh, crumbs! Yow!"

A heavy cushion, unerringly aimed, caught Billy Bunter under his fat chin, and he went into the passage again, and sat down with a terrific bump.

"Ow! Oh! My hat! Beast! Yow-ow!"

Peter Todd fielded the cushion, gave Bunter a swipe with it, and slammed the door once more. Billy Bunter sat up gasping. He did not venture to open the study door again. Peter Todd was evidently disinclined to listen to reason.

"Beast!" groaned Bunter. "Ow, I'm hurt! I'm famished! Yow!"

The fat junior drifted away disconsolately down the passage. The sound of clinking tea-cups and merry voices from No. 1 Study caught his ears, and he brightened up.

Tea was evidently still on in No. 1 Study. Billy Bunter paused outside the door and listened. The sound of strange voices in the study reassured him. The chums of the Remove had visitors, and in the presence of visitors they would not be able to eject William George "on his neck." A fat smile came over Bunter's face. He tapped at the door and opened it.

There were seven juniors in the study—the Famous Five and Courtenay and the Caterpillar. There was a plentiful spread on the table, and the seven were doing it full justice. The sight of the array of good things made Bunter's eyes gleam behind his glasses. The glances cast upon him by Harry Wharton & Co. were far from welcoming. But Billy Bunter did not mind that.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Good-bye!" said Bob Cherry.

"He, he, he!"

"What are you he-he-heing about?" demanded Bob.

"Your little joke—he, he, he!"

"I don't see the joke. Travel along."

"Yes, buzz off," said Harry Wharton.

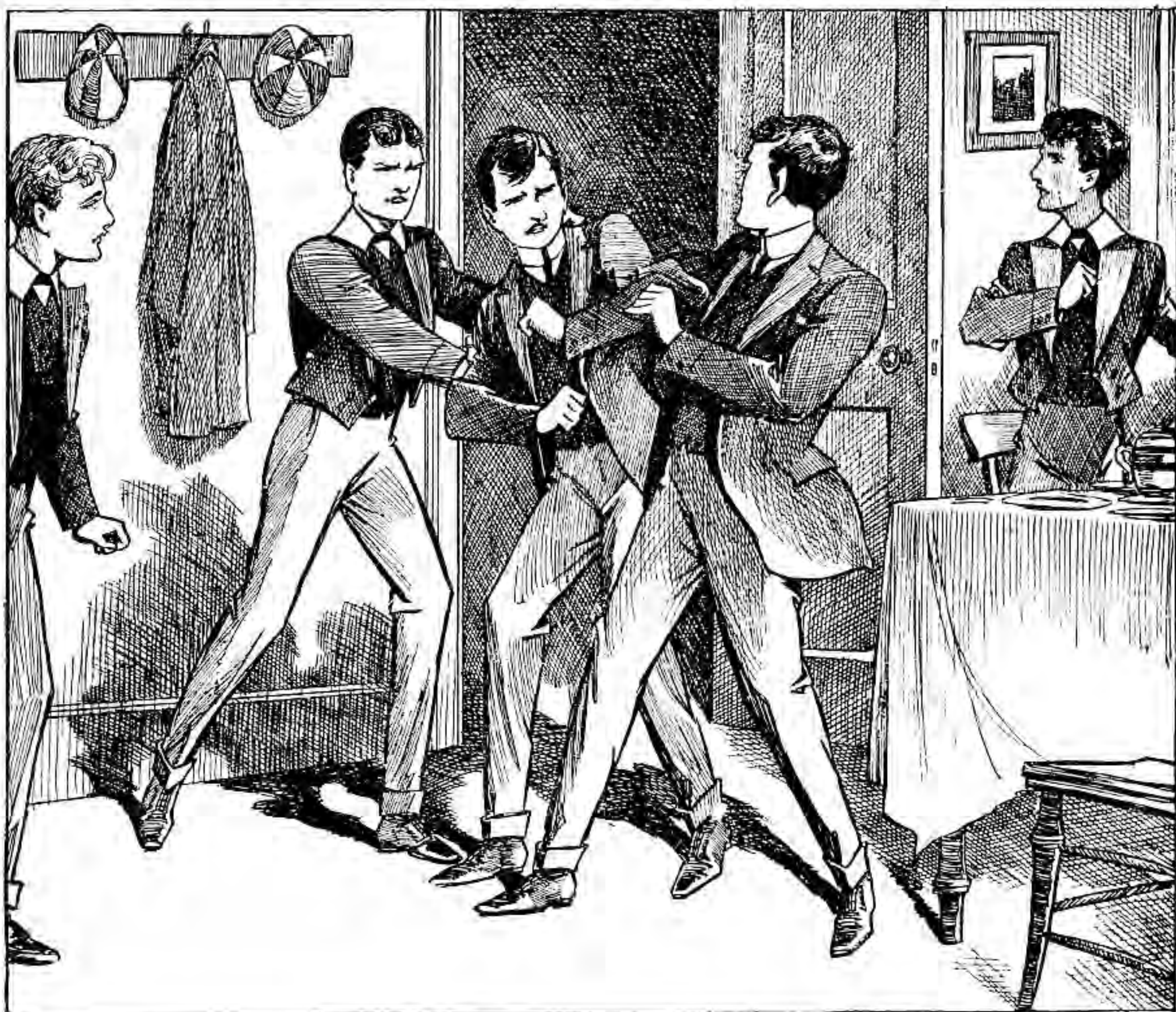
Billy Bunter deliberately closed the door of the study and came towards the well-spread tea-table. The Caterpillar eyed him curiously.

"How do you do, you Highcliffe chaps?" said Bunter affably. "Glad to see you! Quite pleased to have tea with you. That you, Courtenay? I'm very pally with your cousin, you know. You remember looking in on our little game—what?"

"Yes," said Courtenay shortly.

"By gad!" said the Caterpillar. "It was a very

ANSWERS



The door opened as Courtenay was speaking, and Vavasour of the Fourth put his somewhat vacant face in, with his vacant smile. "You fellows missed anythin'?" he began. He had no time to get further. Courtenay was upon him with the spring of a tiger. (See Chapter 12.)

interestin' game. How much did you have left, Bunter?"

"I was cleaned out," confessed Bunter—"simply stony! Nothing for tea! But my old pals here are going to stand me a tea, so that's all right."

His old pals there glared at him, but they did not care to hurl him out in the presence of the visitors. So Bunter drew a box up to the table, as chairs were lacking, and sat down cheerfully, and started. The fat junior was in clover at last.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Tea in No. 1 Study!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. had been chatting cheerily with their visitors. It was a very merry little party in No. 1 Study. The Caterpillar they found it difficult to understand; but they liked Courtenay immensely, and they were willing to make the best of his pal for his sake. The talk ran on cricket—a subject the chums of the Remove could have talked upon for hours, and which was also keenly interesting to Frank Courtenay—but which bored the Caterpillar fearfully. But the slacker of Higheliffe nobly repressed his inclination to yawn.

"You used to have matches with Higheliffe?" Courtenay asked.

"That was before I came to Higheliffe. You don't play them now?"

"Well, the fixture was dropped," said Wharton a little awkwardly.

He did not like to explain to the Higheliffe junior why the fixture had been dropped. It did not redound to the credit of Higheliffe.

"Yaas, it was chucked," remarked the Caterpillar. "Pon was such a sport. They got away a Greyfriars player one day and shut him up to keep him out of the game. 'Nother occasion they mobbed these kids because they won the match. Our young friends got fed up. Pon was too sporty."

Courtenay coloured a little.

"Oh, that was it, was it?" he said. "I'm not surprised. That makes it rather awkward for what I was going to suggest."

"Oh, pile in," said Bob Cherry.

"I was thinking that the fixture might be renewed," said Courtenay. "You see, I'm trying to get up a team in the Fourth over at Higheliffe. Ponsonby & Co. slack like the deuce at cricket, and they always get licked. Some of the fellows are as fed up with it as I am, and we might make up a team, and leave Ponsonby out if he won't back up and come into line."

"Jolly good idea!" said Wharton. "You'd be skipper, I suppose?"

"Yes, most likely!"

"Then we'd play your team with pleasure," said Wharton at once. "We can't get on with Ponsonby, and that's a fact. Still, if you had him in your team, we'd be civil, of course. If you make up an eleven you can count on us for a match."

"Yes, rather!" agreed the Co.; and Inky stated emphatically that the ratherfulness was terrific.

"Jolly good idea!" chimed in Billy Bunter. "And if you were short of a man, Courtenay, you could borrow a good man on this side. I'd play for you with pleasure."

"By gad!" said the Caterpillar; and Courtenay stared.

"You!" he said. "Are you a player?"

"Ask these fellows how I play," said Bunter loftily.

"No good!" remarked Squiff. "Words couldn't describe how Bunter plays. It beats anything I've ever seen on the cinematograph!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter snorted.

"That's the worst of a cricket club," he said; "there's so much beastly personal jealousy. You'd hardly believe, Courtenay, that Wharton keeps me out of the Form eleven, because he knows I should put him in the shade."

"Certainly I should hardly believe that," said Courtenay.

"It's a fact, all the same. I'll help you with pleasure if you make up a team. You won't get much in the way of players in your Fourth at Highcliffe," said Bunter, in quite the manner of a connoisseur; "I've seen 'em. They're no good. Set of slackers. By the way, you're Ponsonby's cousin, ain't you?"

"Yes."

"Then I'll tell you what," said Bunter, "we'll have a little game before you go. I suppose you won't mind playing for I O U's?"

Courtenay stared.

"Playing what?" he asked.

"Nap!" said Bunter. "I'm a regular dab at nap, you know. You saw me playing with your cousin this afternoon. I had bad luck—he cleaned me out of a fiver."

"More duffer you!" said Courtenay.

"Oh, a fellow must have some excitement!" said Bunter. "I tell you what—we'll have a little game."

"Thank you; I don't play."

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, you fellows——"

"Oh, let him run on," said the Caterpillar. "This is quite amusin'! I like to see a really bold blade, a sad bad dog. I can see by the gleam in Bunter's glases—I mean his eyes—that he is a regular wild beggar."

"Yes, I flatter myself that I'm a bit of a goer," said Bunter, with a fat smirk. "Precious few games I'm not up to, you know."

"A bold, bad blade," said the Caterpillar.

"That's it. I'll tell you what, De Courcy, I'll have a little game with you. I'll have your quids off you before you can say knife."

"What an inducement, by gad!" said the Caterpillar. "So sorry I can't oblige you, Bunter. My uncle won't let me."

"Oh, blow your uncle!" said Bunter. "He needn't know!"

"I am alludin' to my Uncle Franky, here present," said the Caterpillar, with a nod towards Courtenay. "Under the sternly moral eye of Franky, I never dare to follow the primrose path of dalliance."

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Courtenay, colouring a little.

"It's a fact!" said the Caterpillar. "Gentlemen, you would be astonished to learn the highly moral effect Franky has on a chap. Like the gentleman with the big drum at the street meetings, I used to be everything that was bad. Then Franky came. Like Cæsar—was it Cæsar?—he came, he saw, he conquered. That was before Franky found his father, and I put it down to the stern morality of the workin' classes from which Franky boasted that he came. Now——"

"Dry up, you ass!" said Courtenay, as the Removites chuckled. "Let's get back to the cricket."

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"Oh, don't!" said the Caterpillar imploringly. "Have mercy on a slacker! I'll tell these chaps about the burglary for a change!"

"A burglary?" said Bob Cherry. "Whom have you been burgling?"

"It was in the passive, not in the active," explained the Caterpillar. "Last night Highcliffe was burgled. Lots of silver pots and things taken, and Dr. Voysey is awfully waxy about it. Inspector Grimes has a clue—which means that he won't be able to find the burglar. Awfully hard lines on old Voysey—the stuff's supposed to be worth two hundred quid."

"And nobody woke up?" asked Bob. "We had a burglar here once, and we jolly well collared him."

"Ah, you are so energetic!" sighed the Caterpillar. "We slept through it, being, as Bunter so justly remarked, a set of slackers. The rascally person got clean away with the silver pots and things, and the burglary wasn't discovered till the morning. Nobody knows who did it, and I can't guess—unless it was Bunter."

Billy Bunter started so suddenly that his seventh cup of tea went the wrong way, and he gasped and spluttered.

"Me!" he gasped.

"Yaas!"

"Why, you idiot——"

"Thanks! You see it was evidently the work of a bold bad man," explained De Courcy, "and you have just been describing yourself as a bold, bad, reckless blade."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was an aw'fly excitin' mornin' at Highcliffe," went on the Caterpillar lazily. "Mobby—that's our Form-master, Mobby—was quite off his onion. He's told everybody in the school six times that the silver plate was worth two hundred pounds. He telephones every ten minutes or so to the police-station for news. Of course, there isn't any news. Inspector Grimes don't know where to look for the man, and I'm not going to mention Bunter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here!" roared Bunter.

"Yaas, dear boy; I'm lookin'. I sha'n't say a word about you," said the Caterpillar. "Of course, you may fall under suspicion as the only desperate character in the neighbourhood."

Bob Cherry closed one eye at his chums.

"Come to think of it, I fancy De Courcy has hit on it," he said gravely. "It's only a step from gambling to stealing. We all know that."

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"And Bunter was in possession of a large sum of money to-day," said Squiff, entering into the joke.

"It was a remittance from my pater!" roared Bunter.

"Do you mean to say that your pater was your accomplice?" demanded Nugent.

"Why, you—you rotter! My pater makes his money on the Stock Exchange!" howled Bunter. "He's a bear."

"That's all very well," said Wharton, shaking his head. "Look at the evidence. There's a burglary at Highcliffe; that's a fact. Bunter is suddenly found in possession of money, when he's always hard up; that's another fact. Bunter is a gambler, and a gambler is next door to a thief; that's a third fact. Where were you last night, Bunter?"

"Why, I was in bed, of course!"

"Can you prove that?"

"Why, I—I—— You were all there!" howled Bunter. The grave looks and shakings of the heads around him were beginning to make him feel nervous.

"But we were asleep," said Bob Cherry. "You can't call us as witnesses, Bunter. We can only witness to your desperate character."

"It looks very black to me," said Squiff.

"Why, you—you—you——"

"The best thing Bunter can do is to hand over the loot to these chaps, and let them take it back to Highcliffe," said Nugent. "Then we'll agree to keep it dark."

"I—I—I haven't—I didn't—I—I wasn't——" stuttered Bunter.

"That's agreed," said Bob Cherry. "Hand over the loot at once, Bunter, and we'll keep the guilty secret."

"Hear, hear!"

"But I tell you I haven't—I wasn't—I didn't——"

"Will you hand over the loot?"

"Of course I won't, when I haven't——"

"Then you must clear off," said Wharton. "If we harbour a suspected burglar here it will draw suspicion on this study."

"Why, you—you—— Leggo! Yah! I tell you—— Oh, dear! I haven't finished tea! I—I—I—— Yawp!"

Bump! Billy Bunter sat down in the passage, deposited there by many hands, and the door closed upon him. He ventured to open the door, and Bob Cherry raised a jam-pot to hurl, and Bunter hastily slammed the door and fled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The tea-party in No. 1 Study chuckled merrily. The bold, bad blade of the Remove had been disposed of.

"Interestin' character, Bunter," remarked the Caterpillar. "Not exactly the kind of fellow you'd take for a bold, bad, rorty blackguard. I should like to watch him blagging. It would be amusin'."

"Time we were off," said Courtenay. "We'll have another jaw over the cricket, you fellows, when you come over to tea in our study."

"Right-ho!" said Wharton heartily.

"And I'm sure you'll excuse me if I go for a walk on that occasion," said the Caterpillar meekly. "Franky shall do the honours, and I'll come in when you've finished talkin' cricket. Anybody seen my hat?"

Harry Wharton & Co. walked half-way home with the Higheliffe juniors. They went by way of the path through the wood. The dusk was thickening under the trees, and the footpath was very gloomy.

The juniors started a little as a thick-set figure came suddenly out of the bushes—a man in a fur cap, with a cudgel under his arm. He looked at them in a suspicious way and passed on, and they glanced after him.

"I've seen that fellow before," said Courtenay. "He was hanging about the school yesterday. Lucky you fellows were with us, I think."

"Just what I was thinkin'," remarked the Caterpillar. "There might have arisen a question of a redistribution of wealth, and that blackguard's stick looked too heavy to argue with. I should have handed over my watch like a lamb, and congratulated myself that it wasn't a big gold one like Gaddy's."

"We'll come with you to the end of the wood," said Wharton. "I don't like that fellow's looks."

At the end of the wood the juniors parted, and Harry Wharton & Co. walked back along the shadowy path. They kept their eyes well about them. There were five of them, but the man in the fur cap, if he had been a footpad, looked a very dangerous customer to tackle. But they did not see him again. And by the time they reached Greyfriars they had forgotten the man in the fur cap.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Blunder!

BILLY BUNTER wore an exceedingly morose expression the next day.

The loss of his five guids worried him. He had played the bold, bad blade, and that was some satisfaction. But it was not enough to console him for the loss of the five-pound note. He was stony, and there was no prospect of any further remittance from home. Of course, he could not venture to inform his pater of his loss. Bunter felt that his little speculations at nap did not differ very widely from Bunter senior's little speculations in the stock market, and so Mr. Bunter ought really to have had a fellow-feeling for him. But Bunter felt instinctively that he wouldn't have anything of the sort.

He was much more likely to stop sending remittances if he discovered the way in which his hopeful son disposed of them.

There was only one break in the dismal horizon, and that was the curious discovery Billy Bunter had made the previous day. The more he thought over it, the more convinced he was that that rough character in the fur cap had been hiding something of value in the wood.

Certainly, if the man in the fur cap had hidden any-

thing valuable there, Billy Bunter could not suppose that he had any right to it, even if he found it. But Bunter had a great gift for looking at matters in a way that suited himself.

"If that rotter's hidden something there, he must have stolen it," Bunter reflected, as he sat at lessons in the morning. "So he's got no right to it, anyway. That settles that point. And, of course, I couldn't possibly find the right owner. How could I? But it would be a sin and a shame to leave valuables buried in the wood—simply a crying sin, when I'm so hard up. Findings keepings. I've got a perfect right to keep anything I find, I suppose, and I can't be expected to have all my trouble for nothing. I'll——"

"Bunter!"

The Owl of the Remove started out of his reverie as his Form-master addressed him. Mr. Quelch was glaring.

"Ye-e-es, sir," stammered Bunter.

"Answer my question, Bunter!"

"Your—your question, sir?" Bunter's thoughts had been so busy with the supposed treasure-trove that he had not even heard Mr. Quelch's question. "I—I'm just going to, sir. I—I'm thinking it out, sir."

"You will take fifty lines for inattention, Bunter!"

"Oh, dear!" said Bunter.

After that he strove to dismiss the man in the fur cap from his mind till lessons were over.

Lessons seemed very long to Bunter that day.

It seemed an age before the Remove were finally dismissed in the afternoon, and immediately they were out of the Form-room Bunter rushed for his cap. He hurried out of the school gates at once.

He was half-way to the wood before he remembered that, if the supposed treasure was buried, he would require some digging implement to unearth it.

"Oh, crumbs!" growled Bunter. "I ought to have brought a spade. Still, that fellow in the fur cap didn't have a spade. It can't be buried very deep. I'll chance it."

Bunter blinked round him very cautiously as he entered the wood.

If the man in the fur cap had been anywhere near at hand he would infallibly have spotted the fat junior; Bunter was so excessively cautious.

Fortunately, he was not on the spot.

Billy Bunter reached the log where he had sat down to rest the previous day, still blinking round him very suspiciously into the thickets. The remembrance of the fur-capped gentleman's big stick made him feel uncomfortable.

But the wood was very quiet and deserted. The fat junior proceeded to search in the direction the fur-capped man had come from when he had spotted him the day before. In the eagerness of the search he soon almost forgot the fur-capped man.

His eyes gleamed through his glasses, when, in the midst of the thickets, he found a cut on the trunk of a beech-tree. Billy Bunter was not specially acute, but he could guess that that cut had been made in the bark to mark the spot. He stopped, his breath coming thick and fast.

"This is the place," he murmured. "Now, I wonder——"

He scanned the ground in search of a sign of recent disturbance. Little broken twigs in the thicket soon met his eager eyes. He groped under them, and felt the ground soft as if recently dug up and replaced.

He could have kicked himself for his stupidity in not bringing a trowel, at least, but it was too late to think of that now.

With his fat hand he clawed away the softened earth, and a thrill went through him as his fingers came into contact with some hard substance, not more than four inches below the surface.

"I've got it!"

Bunter's fat fingers closed on the hard object. It was in the form of a handle. He grasped it, and dragged it out of the earth.

"My only hat!"

It was a silver teapot; it was a large teapot, very

massive, and weighed a great deal, and was of solid silver.

The metal glimmered through the earth that clung to it. Billy Bunter blinked at it with wide-open eyes.

That the silver teapot was part of the proceeds of a theft there could not be any doubt. That Bunter had no more right to it than the ruffian who had concealed it there was equally certain. But Bunter did not look at it in that light. He comforted himself with that bad old saying, "Findings keepings."

"My hat! Perhaps there's a lot more—a regular haul!" gasped Bunter, his round eyes glistening.

There was a rustle in the thickets in the direction of the footpath.

Bunter sprang to his feet, his heart thumping. The fur-capped man came back into his mind at once. If the ruffian spotted him there, rifling his treasure? Billy Bunter turned cold at the thought.

The bushes were swaying and rustling; someone was evidently coming towards the spot from the footpath. It was easy to guess that the thief, who had hidden his plunder in that secluded spot, would come back at intervals to make sure that it had not been disturbed. If he was coming now, he had come at a most inopportune moment for Bunter.

The fat junior almost shrieked as a fur cap appeared in sight over the bushes. Still grasping the teapot—all that he was likely to ever handle of Fur Cap's hidden plunder—Billy Bunter turned and plunged away.

He heard a sharp exclamation behind him. His movement had been heard.

A heavy body came plunging through the thickets towards the marked tree. Bunter ran as he had never run before, stumbling over roots, tearing his clothes and hands on thorns, palpitating with fear, but still grasping the silver teapot.

"Stop!"

A hoarse, savage voice rang out behind him. The man had seen him. Bunter heard his rapid, heavy steps in pursuit.

Fear lent the fat junior wings.

The crashing footsteps of the pursuer behind him drove him almost into a frenzy. He plunged out of the bushes into a track through the wood, and followed it, running as he would never have dreamed himself capable of running. The wood was thinning before him. He caught a glimpse of Courtfield Common and the road beyond. Once in the open he was safe!

He did not venture to look back. He knew that his pursuer was gaining on him; the crashing footfalls came closer and closer every second.

With perspiration streaming down his fat face and his heart beating in great throbs, the fat junior bounded on.

Whiz!

A heavy cudgel passed within an inch of his ear, struck a tree, and fell to the ground. If it had struck him? Bunter turned almost sick for a moment.

But he bounded on desperately. He was clear of the wood now—dashing away across the open common towards the road.

It was several minutes before he realised that the heavy footsteps were no longer audible behind him.

The pursuer had stopped on the edge of the wood; he had not ventured out into the open. Gasping for breath Bunter halted, and turned, and blinked back towards the wood. Only the green trees met his gaze—the man in the fur cap had disappeared.

Bunter stood pumping in breath, with the perspiration streaming down him. His breath came almost in sobs.

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" groaned the Owl of the Remove. "Ow, ow, ow! I might have been murdered! Ow, ow! Now the best will move the rest of the things! Ow! Oh, dear! I—I sha'n't be able to lift any more of them. Oh, dear!"

Bunter sat down on the grass to rest, keeping a sharp lookout towards the wood. But the fur-capped man did not appear; he was probably engaged in removing his plunder to a safer hiding-place.

The fat junior staggered up at last. He mopped his streaming face, and blinked with great satisfaction at the teapot. He had secured that at least.

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OUR OCCASIONAL PAPERS: THE BOYS' FRIEND, Every Monday. "THE GEM" LIBRARY, Every Wednesday.

"Must be worth pounds and pounds," murmured Bunter. "I'll jolly well take it to old Lazarus's and pop it! Hurrah!"

And, concealing the silver pot under his jacket as well as he could, Billy Bunter tramped on to Courtfield, to visit Mr. Lazarus, the pawbroker, and dispose of his ill-gotten booty for hard cash.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Findings Keepings I

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"What on earth have you got there, Bunter?"

"The esteemed fat Bunter is going to raise the cash popfully."

Billy Bunter started and flushed uneasily. He had just reached Mr. Lazarus's corner shop in Courtfield, and was stealthily heading for the pawbroker entrance, when five cyclists stopped outside the other entrance.

Mr. Lazarus, of Courtfield, was a gentleman who played many parts, and his lines of business were many and various. Harry Wharton & Co. were well-known customers in some of his departments, especially for the supply of costumes and make-up for amateur theatricals; but they had never patronised the entrance which was adorned by three brass balls. And as they jumped off their bikes outside the shop, they were astonished to see William George Bunter slinking to the side entrance, under the three brass balls, with something hidden under his jacket and bulging there.

Billy Bunter blinked at them with intense annoyance. He did not intend to say a word about his discovery in the wood; though not a bright youth, he had sense enough to know that the theory of "Findings keepings" would satisfy nobody but himself.

"Popping the furniture?" asked Bob Cherry, with a grin. "Is that the study table you've got under your jacket, Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I—I'm not really going in at all!" stammered Bunter. "I—I was only just looking at the place, you know."

"Ananias!" said Bob. "What's that under your jacket?"

"N-n-nothing."

The Famous Five looked very curiously at Bunter. If the impecunious junior chose to raise the wind by the method of "popping" his goods and chattels, it was no business of theirs, of course. But Billy Bunter's idea on the subject of "meum and tuum" were so extremely free and easy, that it was more than probable that the article hidden under his jacket was only "borrowed."

"Is it Todd's silver inkstand?" asked Nugent.

"Oh, really——"

"Or Tom Dutton's silver pot?"

"Look here——"

"Or Alonzo's volume, 'The Story of a Potato, from the Seed to the Saucepan'?" demanded Squiff, and the chums chuckled.

Alonzo's valuable volume, though almost priceless in the eyes of the good Alonzo, was not likely to raise very much cash with Mr. Lazarus.

"You mind your own business!" said Bunter angrily. "I suppose I can pawn a family heirloom if I like?"

"Family heirloom, by gum!" said Squiff. "Relic of the ancient line of Bunter de Bunter, who came over with the Rothschilds—what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry cheerfully jerked open Bunter's jacket, and there was a general exclamation of surprise at the sight of the silver teapot.

Bunter gave a howl of rage, and closed his jacket round it again.

"Will you mind your own business?" he roared.

"Where did you get that teapot?" asked Wharton.

"It's a family heirloom."

"You young ass! Look here, Billy!" said the captain of the Remove, not unkindly. "We all know what a silly ass you are. If that teapot doesn't belong to you, you will get into trouble if you pawn it. Don't be a silly goat!"

"I suppose a family heirloom does belong to a chap," said Bunter. He almost believed it was an heirloom in the Bunter family by this time. "If you can't take my word, I decline to talk to you about the matter at all! Mind your own business, hang you!"

And Bunter dodged away, and "slithered" into the side entrance of Mr. Lazarus's establishment.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another very oddly. Bunter's story of a family heirloom was preposterous, and they could not doubt that the duffer of the Remove was getting himself into trouble again.

"Where on earth did he bag that?" said Squiff. "I've never seen it before. It doesn't belong to Greyfriars. I've seen the school plate."

"It can't be his," said Wharton, frowning. "Goodness knows where he collared it! It looks to me as if he's landed in trouble at last, the fat idiot! We can't yank him out of the place, anyway, so we shall have to let him rip. Come on!"

Harry Wharton & Co. entered the shop. They had come there on behalf of the Remove Dramatic Society, and they proceeded to make their purchases. But they could not help feeling worried about Bunter. They felt that the Owl of the Remove was looking for trouble, of a rather more serious nature than usual. They were right!

Billy Bunter did not exactly intend to look for trouble; but he was finding it. In that special case, too, he found that findings were not keepings!

He presented the silver teapot over the counter in the "spout" department, and the young man in attendance took it, and stared at it, and stared at him. He was a young man with a shiny face, a bumpy forehead, and a big, black moustache, the colour of which hinted that he was himself a good customer of the hair-dye department of Mr. Lazarus's establishment. The young man took the teapot with one hand and twisted his dyed moustache with the other, and looked Bunter over with a very keen scrutiny.

"How much on that, please?" asked Bunter, assuming a jaunty air, as if he had been in the habit of patronising pawnbrokers all his life.

"On this?" said the young man. "Wait a moment, sir. I shall have to value it."

"I think it's very valuable," said Bunter. "It's a family heirloom—been in our family for years and years."

"Quite so," agreed the young man. "An old family property—what? Would you mind taking a seat for a few minutes, sir?"

"Certainly!" said Bunter.

He sat down, and the young man disappeared through a doorway. There was a pause, and then Bunter heard a telephone bell ring. He did not dream of connecting that circumstance with himself.

He waited patiently for a few minutes, and then the young man came back. A smile was lurking round the corners of his lips, and he was rubbing his hands.

He placed the silver teapot on the counter, out of reach of Bunter, however. The fat junior blinked at him inquiringly.

"How much?" he asked.

"How much do you ask?" inquired the young man.

"Ten pounds!" hazarded Bunter.

"Ten pounds!" said the young man thoughtfully, cocking his eye at the teapot. "Very good. Will you have it in notes or gold?"

Bunter simply jumped with glee. He was going to get ten pounds—ten solid quids—for that silver teapot. It was worth the trouble of digging it up in the wood; worth even the terrible fright he had had.

"Gold, please!"

"Very good. Will you wait a few minutes? I shall have to send to the safe for the gold. We usually use currency notes—"

"Oh, currency notes will do," said Bunter, who was anxious to get his fat fingers on the money. "I'm in rather a hurry."

"Of course, it's all the same," said the young man pleasantly. It did not occur to Bunter for a moment that the gentleman with the dyed moustache was talking against time, in order to keep Bunter waiting and unsuspecting.

"Of course," said Bunter.

"A very handsome teapot, sir," purred the polite young man. "We do quite an extensive business in silver goods."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 320.

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

This is a really genuine old article. Silver has gone down in late years, of course, but it is still a very valuable article—very valuable indeed. Perhaps, sir, you might prefer to sell this teapot outright? Of course, it is only a suggestion."

"How much for it outright?" asked Bunter eagerly.

The young man took quite a long time to consider. He had one eye on the door all the time, as if he were expecting somebody—perhaps another customer.

"Well?" said Bunter, who was on tenterhooks.

"Suppose we say fourteen ten?" suggested the young man.

"Fifteen," said Bunter.

The young man reflected again—again taking a very long time.

"Fourteen fifteen," he said.

"Oh, all right! Hand it over."

"Immediately, sir." The young man stepped to a cash desk, and felt in his pocket, apparently for a key. "Bless me! Where have I put that key?"

The young man went through pocket after pocket, with exasperating deliberation. Billy Bunter waited with growing impatience. He could not really believe in his good luck until he actually had the cash in his hand.

"Lost your key?" he said gruffly.

"Mislaid it, I'm afraid," said the young man, knitting his brows. "Now, where can I have put that key? You don't see a key lying about, sir?"

Bunter blinked up and down the counter.

"No, I don't."

"So sorry to keep you waiting, sir. I shall find it in a minute. Perhaps you wouldn't mind taking a seat for a minute or two? Fourteen pounds fifteen shillings, I think we said, sir."

"That's it."

Bunter sat down again impatiently. Really it was very careless of the young man to have lost his key. He felt in all his pockets over again, and Bunter could not help thinking that he was an extremely unbusinesslike young man, and wondering that Mr. Lazarus employed him at all.

There was a heavy step in the doorway, and the young man smiled, and left off looking for the elusive key. A portly man in uniform entered. It was Inspector Grimes, of the Courtfield Police.

The young man grinned and nodded.

"Good-afternoon, inspector! Here's the stolen property, and there's the thief. A very neat capture, I think."

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Findings Not Keepings!

BILLY BUNTER started up, and sat down again.

His fat legs failed to support him.

His face turned a sickly yellow in colour, and his eyes grew round and saucer-like behind his big glasses. His foolish brain swam for a moment or two.

The young man behind the counter was grinning and rubbing his hands. Inspector Grimes advanced towards Bunter, and dropped a heavy hand on his shoulder.

"You'll come with me, you young rascal! Much obliged, Mr. Montague."

"Not at all," said Mr. Montague, still rubbing his shiny hands as if for a wager. "You made quick work of it, inspector."

"Came the minute I put the receiver down," smiled the inspector. "I must say I wasn't expecting anything of the kind. For the thief to try to pawn the things here, half a mile from the scene of the robbery, is thick—very thick."

"A new hand at the game," grinned the young man.

"Very new, I should say," said the inspector, looking at Bunter, who was dumb with horror. "I should say he didn't even know that a description of stolen goods is always circulated among the pawnbrokers."

"Probably not," said the young man. "Quite new at the game. Reformatory, I suppose; rather young for Dartmoor. He, he, he!"

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE PUNISHMENT POLICIES!"

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

Bunter sat frozen with horror.

He understood it all now. The silver teapot was part of the proceeds of a robbery; the description had been circulated in all the pawnbrokers' establishments, and the young man with the dyed moustache, the cheerful Mr. Montague, had recognised the plunder from the description. He had gone to the telephone at once, and called up the inspector, and then had calmly kept Bunter talking until Mr. Grimes arrived.

Mr. Montague was not so unbusinesslike as Bunter had supposed. He was, in fact, a very diplomatic young gentleman.

The inspector's grip fastened more tightly on Bunter's shoulder. The grip of an octopus could not have horrified the wretched Owl of the Remove more.

"Come with me," said Mr. Grimes pleasantly.

"Wha-a-at!"

"Come! Let up!"

"I—I—I—What's the matter?" panted Bunter.

That question seemed to tickle Mr. Montague immensely. He went off into a shriek, and even the stolid inspector grinned.

"The matter is that you're found out, my fine fellow," said Mr. Grimes. "Mind, I warn you not to say anything. Everything you say may be taken down to be used in evidence against you."

"But—but I haven't done anything!" wailed Bunter.

"He, he, he!" came from Mr. Montague, in a sort of explosion. "He hasn't done anything! He, he, he! Never mind, you're going to do something. He, he, he! You're going to do time!"

"Come, come!"

"I won't come!" howled Bunter. "Do you think I've stolen that rotten teapot?"

The inspector stared.

"Of course you have," he replied.

"I haven't," shrieked Bunter—"I haven't! I found it. I'm a Greyfriars chap. I won't be arrested. Mr. Lazarus knows me. I'm a Greyfriars chap! Oh, dear!"

"Yes, I've seen him about Greyfriars," said the inspector, with a nod. "For a schoolboy like that to take to burglary is a regular corker, I must say."

"I'm not a burglar!" shrieked Bunter. "I tell you, I found that teapot."

"Told me it was a family heirloom," grinned Mr. Montague. "Of course he found it—in the sideboard at Highcliffe. He, he, he!"

Bunter jumped. He remembered now that Ponsonby and the Caterpillar had both mentioned that there had been a burglary at Highcliffe on Tuesday night. He could guess now that the fur-capped man was the burglar. And he had "found" part of the proceeds of the robbery at Highcliffe.

"D-d-d-did that thing belong to Highcliffe?" he stammered.

"Did it?" gurgled Mr. Montague. "Did it? Of course, he doesn't know. Blessed if I think he's a new hand, after all! He's deep. His record will bear looking into, Mr. Grimes."

"Oh, dear!" groaned Bunter.

"Better come quietly," said Mr. Grimes.

"I—I won't come! I say, you fellows!" yelled Bunter, hoping that Harry Wharton & Co. would hear him from the other part of the establishment. "Help! Rescue! Rescue!"

"You young idiot!" said the astonished inspector.

Mr. Lazarus came into the department, in great surprise. He blinked at Bunter.

"Dear me! A Greyfriars young shentleman!" he said. "This is ferry shad!"

"Mr. Lazarus!" howled Bunter. "You know me! Tell him I ain't a burglar! I'm a Greyfriars chap. My friends are in your shop now. Explain to him."

"Very shad, young shentleman," said Mr. Lazarus. "Take him away quietly; he will bring disgrace on mein establishment."

There was evidently no help to be had from Mr. Lazarus. Mr. Grimes jerked Bunter from the chair, and the fat junior clung to the counter and shrieked. He was terrified almost out of his wits.

Five juniors crowded in by the street entrance. Harry Wharton & Co. had heard Bunter's yell, which rang through the building; and they were apprised that the Owl of the Remove had found the trouble he was unconsciously looking for. The juniors had whipped out of the shop at once, and rushed round to the entrance under the three brass balls. They wanted to help their wretched Form-fellow if they could. Bunter yelled desperately to them as they came in.

"Wharton! Cherry! Rescue! Don't let him take me!" Bunter was blubbing now, in sheer terror. "Tell him I ain't a burglar!"

"A burglar!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Bunter a burglar!"

"You cannot interfere here, young gentlemen," said the inspector. "This boy must come with me!"

"But—but what's the matter?" exclaimed Wharton. "This is very serious, Mr. Grimes. Will you tell us what Bunter is accused of?"

The inspector jerked a fat thumb towards the teapot on the counter.

"Master Bunter came here to pawn that teapot," he said. "It was stolen from Highcliffe School on Tuesday night."

"Very shad!" murmured Mr. Lazarus. "So ferry young, too! Very shad indeed!"

"An heirloom in the family!" gasped Mr. Montague. "Oh, it was rich—very rich! He, he, he!"

"But there must be some mistake," said Wharton. "Wait a minute, Mr. Grimes, till we can have this out. Bunter was in our dormitory on Tuesday night."

"Of course I was!" moaned Bunter. "Fancy thinking me a burglar! Oh, dear!"

The inspector nodded.

"The boy is probably rather an accomplice than the actual burglar," he agreed.

"I ain't an accomplice!" howled Bunter. "I don't know any burglars. Oh, dear! I found that teapot, and findings are keepings, you know."

"You young idiot!" said Squiff.

"I—I always thought findings were keepings!" moaned Bunter. "But I don't want to keep it now! I'll give it up! Oh, dear!"

Inspector Grimes hesitated. His first impression had

been that he had succeeded in "nailing" an accomplice of the burglar. But it came into his mind that it would be more judicious to hear Bunter's story before taking him to the station. He did not want to risk making a "bloomer," and he was loth to offend the Head of Greyfriars. And certainly Dr. Locke would be extremely offended if one of his boys were arrested on a suspicion that turned out to be ill-founded.

The inspector decided to feel his way, as it were.

"Tell me how you came to possess this stolen article," he said. "Mind, you are liable to imprisonment for keeping it, whether you stole it or not. But we shall see. How did you get it?"

"I fuf-fuf-found it!" moaned Bunter.

"Where did you find it?"

Bunter stammered out the whole story. He did not think of adding any imaginary details to it. For once the Owl of the Remove told the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

The inspector listened with the

For Next Monday:

THE PUNISHMENT POLICIES!

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

—By—

FRANK RICHARDS.

Order in Advance.

PRICE ONE PENNY.



The fat junior almost shrieked as a fur cap appeared in sight over the bushes. Still grasping the teapot—all that he was likely ever to handle of Fur Cap's hidden plunder—Billy Bunter turned and plunged away. He heard a sharp exclamation behind him. "Stop!" (See Chapter 7.)

greatest attention. His eyes glanced a little at the description of the fur-capped man.

"I can tell you something about that fellow, too," said Wharton, when Billy Bunter had finished. "We saw him last night, close to the place Bunter describes. He was hanging about there."

"Good!" said the inspector. "The same man, you think?"

"The same?" said Bob Cherry. "The description's exact—especially the fur cap and the stick."

"Well, I am disposed to believe this boy's statement," said Mr. Grimes, who had been making extensive notes. "That, however, does not excuse his attempt to pawn the teapot. He knew it was stolen property, even if he did not know that it had been stolen from High-Gate."

"I didn't!" wailed Bunter. "I—I never thought about that! I—I thought findings were keepings!"

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"He's an utter fool, sir!" said Wharton, in exclamation. "He's always getting into trouble, because he's a perfect idiot, sir!"

The inspector smiled grimly.

"He will get into trouble that he won't get out of, one of these days, if he isn't a bit more careful," he said. "If I did my strict duty, I should take him to the station now, and he would be charged with theft. He is liable to a term of imprisonment for keeping property of value that he has found, even if it had not been stolen!"

"I thought findings were keepings!" groaned Bunter.

"That idea has landed a good many people in chokey," said Mr. Grimes. "Still, I don't want to be hard, and I don't want to give Dr. Locke trouble. You will come with me, Bunter, and show me the place where you found this teapot, and then I will take you to your head-

master, who will be answerable for you if you should be required. That is the best I can do."

That was not a happy prospect, but Bunter was only too glad to escape being taken to the police-station. He trotted out with Inspector Grimes, and the Famous Five followed slowly.

"Well, here's a go!" said Squiff.

Harry Wharton knitted his brows.

"The utter young idiot!" he said. "The utter young rascal! Inspector Grimes is very decent to let him off so lightly. I fancy he wouldn't, only the young fool may have given him a good clue to the burglar. It was that chap in the fur cap, of course!"

"Bet you he's moved the rest of the things, and cleared off before this," said Squiff.

"Most likely! Still, his description must be worth a lot to the inspector. The worst of it is"—Wharton set his lips—"this will make a regular jaw, and it will get to Highcliffe. Unless that fur-capped chap is arrested, you can guess what Ponsonby & Co. will say?"

"Oh, my hat!"

The chums of the Remove mounted their bikes and rode back to Greyfriars with frowning brows. It was impossible, of course, that Bunter's part in the transaction could be kept a secret. Everybody would know soon—and their old enemies of Highcliffe would not fail to make capital out of it. The Owl of the Remove, in his folly and greed, had brought disgrace upon his Form and upon his school.

THE TENTH CHAPTER. Bunter Goes Through It!

"WHAT the deuce——"
"Great Scott!"

The sight of Billy Bunter crossing the Close at Greyfriars, by the side of Inspector Grimes, drew amazed looks from fellows on all sides. Bunter was looking in the lowest possible spirits, and it was evident that he was in serious trouble. The inspector's face expressed nothing but grimness.

The Greyfriars fellows gathered on all sides, in astonishment, as the inspector marched the wretched junior up to the house.

Harry Wharton & Co. were there—they had reached the school long before Bunter and the inspector. They had said nothing of the scene at Mr. Lazarus's shop. But the sight of Bunter in the inspector's charge set the whole school in a buzz.

Through the staring crowd, Inspector Grimes marched Billy Bunter into the School House, and a few minutes later disappeared with him into the Head's study.

"What on earth has happened?" said Peter Todd.

"I guess Bunter's landed at last," said Fisher T. Fish. "He's been finding somebody else's banknotes, in somebody else's pockets, I guess."

"I always thought it would come to this," said Skinner. "I shouldn't like to be in Bunter's shoes now."

"But what can have happened?"

"Ask the inspector when he comes out."

The Famous Five said nothing. But a buzzing crowd waited for the reappearance of Mr. Grimes. He was about a quarter of an hour in the Head's study, and several juniors who ventured into the passage could hear a buzz of voices there, but that was all.

Mr. Grimes came out at last. As he strode down to the big doorway, questions were showered on him.

"Tell us what's happened, Mr. Grimes?"

"What have you nailed Bunter for?"

"What's he been doing?"

"Burglary, highway robbery, or petty larceny?" asked Skinner.

"You may inquire of your headmaster," said Mr. Grimes stolidly, and he went on his way without vouchsafing anything further.

"Secretive beast!" said Tom Brown. "It must be something serious. Anybody going to take his tip and ask the Head?"

There was a laugh. Nobody was likely to do that.

"We'll get it out of Bunter," said Temple of the Fourth. "Can't have been stealing apples, they ain't ripe yet. Picking pockets, perhaps."

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"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed young rascals, these Remove kids," said Temple, with a shake of the head.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Hark!"

There was a wild howl from the Head's study. It was a howl of anguish. Billy Bunter was "going through it!"

Howl after howl succeeded, and the surprised juniors looked at one another. It was not often that Dr. Locke administered severe corporal punishment. But it was clear that Bunter was getting a licking of unusual severity.

"My only hat!" said Bulstrode, "he's getting it! Flogging him, by gum!"

"What on earth can he have done?"

The howls died away at last. The door of the Head's study was heard to open, and Billy Bunter crawled out. The unfortunate Owl was almost doubled up. He was blubbing and groaning dismally, and seemed to be suffering great pain. There was a rush of the juniors to surround him.

"Had it bad?" asked Dabney of the Fourth.

"Ow! Ow! Ow! Ow!"

"What was it for? What have you been doing?"

"Yow! Yow! Wow! Wow!"

"Answer, you fat idiot!" roared Bolsover major. "We want to know! Tell us what you've been doing, or I'll boot you!"

"Wow, wow, wow, wow!"

Harry Wharton grasped Bolsover by the shoulder as the bully of the Remove made a threatening movement towards Bunter.

"Let him alone," said Harry quietly.

"He's going to explain!" roared Bolsover.

"Wait till he's got over that licking, then."

"Rats! Let him jaw now! Now then, Bunter!"

"Oh, leave him alone!" said Vernon-Smith. "Don't be such a beastly bully, Bolsover."

"I tell you——"

"Help him to the dorm," said Harry; and Bob Cherry took Bunter's arm and led him away. The miserable Owl looked as if he could hardly move. The Head, for once, had certainly not spared the rod. Bunter had needed a lesson, and he had had it—badly.

Bolsover major started after him, but he found the captain of the Remove in the way, and he gave it up. The Famous Five followed Bunter to the dormitory. Bob Cherry put him on his bed, and he lay and groaned. He certainly was not in a state for talking. He groaned and moaned, and moaned and groaned, and the chums of the Remove left him to groan and moan.

"Poor beast!" said Bob. "Of course, he deserved it, but he's had it pretty bad. Still, he was lucky not to be locked up."

"The luckfulness was great," said Hurree Singh. "He is making a terrific row. Let us guardfully keep an eye on the dorm, my esteemed pals, and the ludicrous Bolsover will not be able to worry him."

"Good!"

Curious juniors who came up to make inquiries found the Famous Five on guard. Peter Todd and Tom Brown and Mark Linley joined them, so Bolsover & Co. decided to let it drop. Bunter couldn't answer questions just yet.

For a good hour his groans were incessant.

By that time the chums of the Remove heard him moving, and they gave up their sentry-go, and then the curious crowd poured into the dormitory.

Billy Bunter was the picture of woe.

He blinked tearfully at the juniors through his big spectacles, and even Bolsover major felt a little compassionate.

"Well, you look a giddy picture!" said Bolsover. "The Head must have exerted himself this time, and no mistake."

"Oh, dear?" moaned Bunter. "I sha'n't get over this! Oh, dear! The Head is an awful beast! I told him that findings were keepings! Oh!"

"Didn't I calculate that was it?" chuckled Fisher T. Fish. "I kinder guessed that he had been finding somebody else's property and keeping it."

"Oh, dear! All over a rotten silver teapot! Ow!"

"You've been stealing a silver teapot?" asked Skinner.

"No, you beast! Ow! I found it! Yow!"

"In somebody's cupboard?" asked Snoop.

"Yow! In the wood—ow! Oh, dear! Oh, crumbs!"

Little by little the inquirers extracted the whole story from the groaning Owl. Billy Bunter told it as an injured party. As he asserted again and again, findings were keepings, weren't they? He had found that silver teapot, therefore it was his. Mr. Montague at the pawnbroker's was a beast, Inspector Grimes was a beast, and the Head was a special beast!

"Serve you jolly well right!" said Bulstrode. "I wonder the Head didn't sack you. I suppose he knows you're such a silly idiot that you're not responsible for your actions."

"That must be it," said Bolsover major. "One of us would have got sacked for it. Fancy the blithering idiot stealing a silver teapot!"

"I didn't steal it!" howled Bunter. "I found it!"

"Didn't you know it was stolen when you found it?" demanded Tom Brown.

"Well, I didn't go into that. Ow!"

"Besides, it's stealing to keep anything you find, if it's of value," said Bolsover major. "I've read in the papers of people being sent to prison for it. Anybody but a fool like Bunter would know that."

"Yow! I didn't know it! Wow!"

"My word, the Highcliffe cads will make something out of this," said Vernon-Smith, with a whistle. "They'll make out that Bunter burgled Highcliffe. They'll say we've got a thief here."

"Well, so we have!" growled Bolsover major.

"I ain't a thief!" howled Bunter. "Don't I keep on telling you I found it! That beast in the fur cap was the thief, the rotter! He very nearly brained me with his stick this afternoon. Oh, dear!"

"No need for Highcliffe to know anything about it," suggested Tom Brown.

Bolsover major snorted.

"Of course they'll know! Grimes will take the teapot back to Dr. Voysey, and he will tell him how it was found. The other masters will get it from him, and then the fellows. Besides, that cad Ponsonby does betting with that nose-fellow Montague at the pawnshop. He'll get it from there."

"Then let's hope they'll find that fur-cappy merchant," said Hazeldene. "If they don't, all Highcliffe will set the robbery down to Bunter."

"I suppose it wasn't Bunter," grinned Skinner.

"Why, you beast—" roared Bunter.

"Well, it was in the local paper to-day," said Skinner. "I read the account. It said that the burglary wasn't done by a regular cracksmen, because things had been smashed open instead of locks being picked. It was some ruffian who'd broken into Highcliffe, and couldn't pick a lock to save his life. He left the safe quite alone, and there was a lot of money in it, so the paper says. He made a clean sweep of the silver, because he could get at it. Quite an amateur. Blessed if I should be surprised if it turned out to be Bunter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The Highcliffe fellows will say it was, anyway," growled Bolsover major. "We shall hear from them about it jolly soon, you can bet your Sunday socks on that!"

And Bolsover major's prediction was very soon verified.

Whether through Inspector Grimes's visit to Dr. Voysey to return the silver teapot, or through Ponsonby's sporting connection with Mr. Montague, or through some other source, the Highcliffians were not long in learning the adventure of Billy Bunter at the pawnshop. And, naturally, finding themselves in possession of so telling a weapon against their old enemies, those amiable young gentlemen were not slow to use it.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Pleasant Reminders!

"THE hound!"

Harry Wharton's brow was dark with rage as he uttered that energetic exclamation.

It was the day after Bunter's flogging, and the Removites had come out of the Form-room after morning lessons. There was a letter in the rack for Harry Wharton, and he opened it at once.

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"THE PUNISHMENT POLICIES!"

Inside was a card, upon which was depicted, with some skill in drawing, a masked burglar breaking in at a window. Under the picture was written, in Cecil Ponsonby's handwriting, "BUNTER THE BURGLAR!"

"The hound!" repeated Wharton. "I was expecting something of this kind. Hallo! Is that one for you, Bob?"

"Well, there's a letter for me, but it's not in Pon's fist," said Bob, and he opened the letter.

There was a card inside. The juniors gathered round to look at it, and their brows grew dark with rage. There was a drawing on the card—it depicted the interior of a study, with six juniors seated round a table dividing the "swag." Silver teapots and urns were depicted piled on the table. The six juniors in the picture were not recognisable—the artist's skill was not in portraiture—but a name was written on or under each one, and the names were Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, Field, and Hurree Singh, and Billy Bunter.

The chums of the Remove looked at one another speechlessly.

That was Ponsonby's little joke. The dandy of Highcliffe chose to regard Bunter as the thief, and Harry Wharton & Co. as his accomplices sharing out the loot. It was a little "thick" even for Ponsonby.

"Oh, the cad!" said Bob Cherry at last, between his teeth. "I wish he were here now! He'll take jolly good care not to come and say these things."

"Of course, we know they don't think that," said Frank Nugent, "but it's pretty rotten, all the same."

"They may think Bunter was the thief—and we can't deny that he did keep the teapot, anyway," said Wharton moodily.

"Here's a letter for me," said Nugent. "Shall I open it?"

"Better—it's not Pon's fist."

"That's his little game," said Wharton savagely. "If he sent this blackguardism on postcards they wouldn't be taken in—and if he addressed the letters in his own hand, we could throw them into the fire unopened. He's got somebody else to address the envelopes."

"Well, I know this is from Highcliffe, anyway," said Nugent. "It's got the Highcliffe postmark."

"Might be from Courtenay. We're going over there to tea to-morrow, you know."

Nugent nodded, and opened the letter. But it was not from Courtenay. It contained a thin card, with a pen-and-ink sketch on it like the others. This time it was a representation of Billy Bunter and the Famous Five being led away handcuffed by a policeman.

"Pon is getting quite humorous," said Squiff, trying to grin. "Quite artistic, too. I think it's high time Pon had another hiding."

"Let us proceedfully call upon him, and give him the esteemed kybosh!" suggested Hurree Singh. "This may go on fully if we do not stop it. A stitch in time saves ninepence, as your English proverb says."

The juniors did not even smile at the English proverb. They were not in a mood for smiling.

"There's something in that," said Bob. "This is only a beginning. We shall have lots more of it. Pon won't let a thing like this rest."

"We could cut over on our bikes before dinner, and give him a licking," said Squiff. "I'm game."

"The gamefulness is terrific."

"Well, it's jolly awkward now," said Wharton, knitting his brows. "We're on friendly terms with that chap, Clare—Courtenay, I mean. We've agreed to go over to tea with him to-morrow after the cricket practice. It'll be a bit thick to go over on the warpath to-day and to tea to-morrow."

The juniors nodded assent. Certainly that would be rather "thick."

"Pon would get into a row if we showed these things to the Head," remarked Nugent. "His headmaster wouldn't allow this kind of caddishness. But the rotter knows that we won't give him away."

"Well, what's going to be done?"

"We are!" growled Squiff.

And it really looked as if Squiff was right. The new friendship between the chums of Greyfriars and

Courtenay of the Fourth at Highcliff made it exceedingly difficult for them to treat Ponsonby as he deserved. They could scarcely pay Courtenay a friendly visit after a warlike visit to Ponsonby. They were a little worried, too, over that friendly visit of the morrow. They were inclined to put it off, or drop it entirely. But Courtenay, of course, knew nothing about Ponsonby's conduct, and he would be expecting them. To write to Courtenay and ask to be excused from the visit on account of his cousin's caddish conduct was a little difficult.

"The only thing I can think of is to slaughter Bunter," said Bob Cherry, "and he's been slaughtered enough, the fat idiot!"

Billy Bunter looked as if he had been slaughtered enough. He had been in the lowest of low spirits that morning, and seemed still to find it excessively uncomfortable to sit down. He came up to the Famous Five as they stood in the passage with a lugubrious visage.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Oh, get out!" growled Wharton.

"Yes; but I say, you know how I was done yesterday," said Bunter. "I'm stony, you know. I've been disappointed about a postal-order, and that beast Grimes has taken my silver teapot!"

"Your—your what?"

"My silver teapot—the one I found!"

The Famous Five gazed speechlessly at Bunter. They had been thinking that the Head had overdone it with the birch the previous afternoon. But it was evident that he had underdone it, so to speak. Billy Bunter was not yet clear on the important distinction between "mine and thine."

"I should have got ten quids on my teapot," said Bunter, "but that cad in the pawnshop phoned for that bullying beast Grimes, and he's taken it. I shouldn't wonder if he keeps it himself. He doesn't look to me very honest."

"Oh, my hat!"

"In fact, I shouldn't wonder if it was a swindle between them to get my silver teapot," said Bunter.

"Oh!"

"I've been done—simply swindled," said the Owl of the Remove, "and licked by the Head into the bargain! The worst of it is, there's no more there."

"No more what?"

"Silver! That beast Grimes made me show him where the stuff had been buried, you know, and he took a bobby with a spade with him, and they dug up the place, and there was nothing at all. That fur-capped villain had moved it all. If it hadn't been for that I might have made another haul, and I'd have tried a different pawnshop next time, and it would have been all right."

"Good heavens!" said Bob Cherry. "Is Bunter really such an idiot, or is he trying to pull our legs?"

"Oh, really, Cherry! Under the circumstances, as I've been practically swindled by Inspector Grimes, I think you might lend me a few bob. I'm expecting a postal-order——"

"Squash him!" said Bob.

"Here, I say—— Leggo! Wharrer you up to, you beasts? Oh, dear!"

The Famous Five left Billy Bunter in a breathless state on the floor. He was rolling there, trying to get his second wind, when Peter Todd came along. Peter halted, and stared at him in astonishment.

"What on earth are you crawling about there for?" he demanded.

"Yow-ow-ow! Those beasts—— Yow! I say, Toddy!" Bunter scrambled up, gasping. "You know how I was swindled yesterday out of my silver teapot. Oh, yah!"

Bunter was on the floor again, and Peter Todd walked off.

"Beast!" howled Bunter.

"Bunter, what are you doing there?" It was Mr. Quelch this time. The master of the Remove looked down severely at the sprawling Owl. Bunter sat up, spluttering.

"Yow! It was that beast Todd. He floored me, just because I mentioned that I was done out of my silver teapot!"

"Your what?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

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"Mum-my silver teapot, sir!"

"Then the flogging administered by Dr. Locke yesterday was not sufficient," said Mr. Quelch. "You do not yet realise, Bunter, the revolting dishonesty of your conduct. I shall attempt to bring the realisation home to you. Follow me!"

"Oh, dear!"

"Follow me to my study instantly, Bunter!"

"I'm c-c-c-coming, sir!"

Bunter rolled dismally after the Remove-master. In Mr. Quelch's study there was a sound of swishing and whacking and wailing.

"Now you may go, Bunter, and I trust you will meditate upon your rascally conduct, and see matters in a better light!"

"Wow-wow-wow!"

Bunter rolled out of the study, squeezing his fat hands under his arms. Whether he meditated upon his rascally conduct, and saw matters in a better light, never transpired, but he was not heard to make any more remarks about "his" silver teapot.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER. Ponsonby's Little Rag!

"CATERPILLAR!"

"I won't!"

"You must!"

"Can't be did!"

It was Saturday afternoon, and in No. 3 Study in the Fourth at Highcliff, an argument was proceeding.

The Caterpillar was obstinate.

He had explained pathetically to Courtenay that another long talk on the subject of cricket would be fatal to him. He had nobly endured it once. But a second time was more than any fellow could be expected to stand.

"You entertain the giddy visitors," he said. "I'll mooch out for a bit. When you've done talkin' cricket shop I'll mooch in again, and be as civil as you like. Don't be a hard-hearted beast, Franky. That chap Cherry makes me quite fatigued. As for that wild Australian, Whiff—is his name Whiff?"

"Squiff, you ass!"

"Well, Squiff, you ass! As for Squiff, you ass, he exhausts me. Such superabundance of energy is frightfully exhaustin' to a fellow. Excuse me. You don't want to see me fall at your feet in anguish, and breathe out my last sigh on the floor of the study, Franky?"

"You're not going out," said Courtenay. "It wouldn't be civil. Besides, you're going to take up cricket."

"By gad!"

"You're going to play the game this season, and I'm going to teach you."

"Oh, dear!"

"Dash it all, Caterpillar, you've chucked up smoking and playing bridge and rotting about with Ponsonby & Co. Why not go the whole giddy unicorn, then!"

The Caterpillar groaned.

"You'll be the death of me!" he said feebly. "If I have to listen to Bob Cherry talkin' cricket I shall fade away like a flower. My death will be at your door, Franky. My blood will be on your hands, you Prussian!"

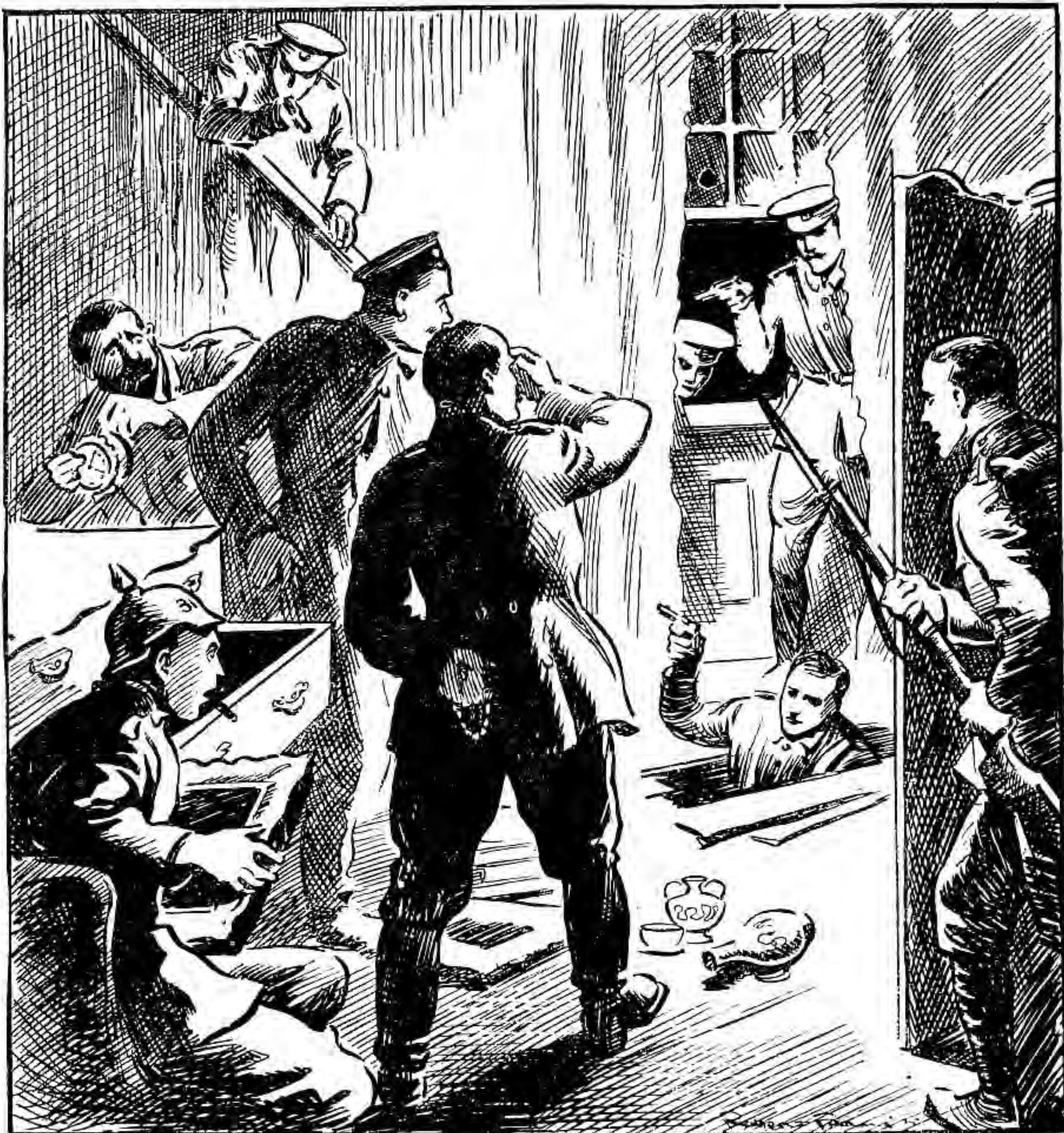
"Looks comfy, doesn't it?" said Courtenay, with a satisfied glance round the study. "They did us well, and we're going to be civil, and you're going to put on your best manners and customs, Caterpillar."

"Let me escape in time——"

"Too late!" grinned Courtenay, as there was a trampling of feet in the passage. "Here they come! I spotted them from the window."

"And you never told me in time," said the Caterpillar reproachfully. "Oh, Franky! Was that actin' like a pal?"

Thump! came at the door, and the unfortunate Caterpillar guessed that it was Bob Cherry. Courtenay flung the door open, and five ruddy-faced, cheerful-looking juniors streamed in. Harry Wharton & Co., fresh from the afternoon's cricket practice, had come with good appetites to tea.



The house of a wealthy Frenchman was recently in danger of being marauded by a band of German looters. It transpired, however, that a party of British Tommies were ambushed in the shrubbery near at hand, and before the unscrupulous Huns could make off with their plunder, they were surrounded on all sides and successfully captured.

"Trot in!" exclaimed Courtenay. "Jolly glad to see you. Shove the kettle on, Caterpillar!"

De Courcy shoved the kettle on. He shoved it a little sideways, and there was a stream from the spout into the fire, and a loud fizzing.

"Ass! Set it straight!" shouted Courtenay.

"Oh, by gad!"

Courtenay rescued the kettle. The Caterpillar bestowed his most graceful bow and politest smile on the fellows from Greyfriars.

"Awf'ly glad to see you this afternoon," he said affably. "I hope we're goin' to have a really good, long, heart-to-heart talk about—about football."

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"Football?" said Harry Wharton. "It's rather late—or rather early—to be talking about football, isn't it?"

"I mean cricket," said the Caterpillar gracefully. "I'd offer you a game of bridge after tea, but Franky doesn't allow anythin' of the sort. We'll talk football—I mean cricket—instead. You play the Rugby game—what?"

"Yes," said Squiff solemnly; "we play the Rugby variety of cricket, but we follow Association rules in marbles. In shove-ha'penny we stick to the Northern Union code."

The Caterpillar smiled feebly. He realised that this was a joke.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE PUNISHMENT POLICIES!"

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

"My mistake," he murmured. "I'm not really up in cricket, though I'm very good at watchin' a game. I could watch a game for hours if I get a comfortable seat in a corner and an interestin' book."

"Volunteers to open the jam," said Courtenay; and the visitors piled in and made themselves useful.

Smithson of the Fourth came in to join the tea-party, and quite a merry gathering sat down round the table.

The talk, as the Caterpillar dreaded, immediately ran on cricket. Smithson of the Fourth was very keen on backing up Courtenay's new idea of raising a really effective team in the Highcliffe Fourth, and Harry Wharton & Co. were naturally interested. They wished Courtenay the best of luck in his praiseworthy attempt, though they had very big doubts whether Ponsonby & Co. would come into line.

But that cricket talk, which bored the unfortunate Caterpillar so dreadfully, was destined to be interrupted. There was a tap at the door, and Cecil Ponsonby looked in. There was an agreeable smile on Ponsonby's face.

"Excuse my interruptin' the merry meetin'," said Ponsonby. "I looked in to ask you two fellows a question."

"Pile in!" said Courtenay.

"Have you missed anything?"

"Missed anything? No!"

"Nor you, Caterpillar?"

"Nothin'," said the Caterpillar, puzzled.

"Nor you, Smithy?"

"No," said Smithson. "What are you getting at?"

Harry Wharton & Co. understood well enough what the cads of Highcliffe were getting at, though their entertainers did not. Their faces flushed, and Bob Cherry half-rose, and then sat down again. Even the warlike Bob did not want to have a row in Courtenay's study.

"Oh, all serene!" said Ponsonby airily. "I thought I'd give you a warnin', that's all."

"A warning?" said the perplexed Courtenay.

"Yaas! There are burglars about."

"I don't understand. Do you mean they've caught that chap who burgled us the other night?"

"They haven't caught him—or, rather, they've caught him and let him go," said Ponsonby. "He's got a lot of accomplices—five, I think. Look out, that's all!"

Ponsonby grinned and closed the door and disappeared.

Courtenay looked in amazement at his visitors. Their flushed and uncomfortable faces showed that they comprehended the "true inwardness" of Ponsonby's mysterious remarks.

"Is the good Pon goin' off his rocker?" said the Caterpillar in wonder. "What the merry dooce was he drivin' at?"

Harry Wharton & Co. were silent. They did not feel inclined to explain, but they were wishing fervently that they had sent excuses instead of paying that visit.

There was another tap at the door, and it opened. This time it was Gadsby, who looked in with a cheerful grin.

"You fellows missed anythin'?" he asked.

Courtenay rose to his feet with a gleam in his eyes.

"I don't know what you're getting at Gadsby," he said. "It looks to me as if it's some kind of a jape on our visitors. If it is, my advice to you is to chuck it, or you'll find yourself in trouble."

"I'm only givin' you a warnin'," said Gadsby.

"You should keep your warnin's for your friend Bunter, Gaddy," drawled the Caterpillar. "Why don't you warn him when Pon keeps an extra ace on his knee?"

"Why, you rotter—" began Gaddy.

"And why don't you warn him when you are hidin' a king up your sleeve, Gaddy?"

"I didn't hide a king up my sleeve!" roared Gadsby.

"Was it a jack? Might have been a jack," agreed the Caterpillar. "I thought it was a king when I saw you put it there the other afternoon."

There was a general chuckle in the study, and Gadsby departed without completing the humorous remarks he had come to make.

Courtenay looked inquiringly at his guests. Their expressions showed him that they knew Ponsonby's little game, whatever it was.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 380.

OUR COMPANION
PAPERS

THE BOYS' FRIEND,
Every Monday.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

THE DREADNOTCH,
Every Thursday.

THE PENNY POPULAR,
Every Friday.

CHUCKLES, 1d.
Every Saturday

"I don't catch on to this," said Courtenay. "Is it a rag on you fellows? We'll jolly soon put a stop to it if it is, and if there's any more of it!"

"All serene," said Wharton.

"But what are they getting at?" said the Caterpillar. "I suppose they're not simply talkin' out of the backs of their necks, are they?"

"They haven't told you, then?" said Wharton, with a curl of the lip. "The fact is, we'd better not have come. We can't lick those cads while we're here on a friendly visit, and we can't stand their cheek, so—"

"But what does it mean?" asked Courtenay, getting a little red.

Wharton drew three cards from his pocket and handed them to Courtenay. It was the easiest way to explain. Courtenay and the Caterpillar and Smithson looked at the artistic efforts of Ponsonby, and then they understood.

Courtenay set his teeth.

"The unspeakable cads!" he exclaimed. "So that's it! Of course, we've heard about that fathead, Bunter—the young idiot ought to be licked!—but we know he had nothing to do with the robbery. That was only a joke of the Caterpillar's the other day in your study, of course."

"A harmless, necessary joke," sighed the Caterpillar. "I withdraw it. I annihilate it! I blot it out!"

"That had nothing to do with it," said Harry; "we spoofed Bunter ourselves on that subject. But Bunter certainly did find a silver teapot on Wednesday, part of the things stolen from this place, and the fathead thought findings were keepings. I don't try to excuse him; he's a young rascal. But, of course, he didn't realise that he was stealing. Grimes understood that; he—he let him go, only taking him to the Head for a flogging."

"But you had nothing to do with that?" said the Caterpillar.

"Of course we hadn't!"

"Then what does this mean—these cards, and Pon's little jokes?"

"It means that he's an utter cad," said Wharton. "He doesn't really think that Bunter was mixed up with the burglar—he can't. And if he did he'd know we knew nothing of it. But he's pretending that Bunter stole the things and whacked them out with us, to get our rag out. That's all!"

"Oh, my only uncle!" said the Caterpillar. "Pon is improvin'! I thought Pon had reached the limit. But he's improvin', by gad!"

Courtenay's eyes gleamed with anger.

"I understand," he said. "I can't say how sorry I am that you fellows should get that kind of thing here. But there won't be any more of it, I promise you."

The door opened as Courtenay was speaking, and Vavasour of the Fourth put his somewhat vacant face in, with his vacant smile.

"You fellows missed anythin'?" he began.

He had no time to get further. Courtenay was upon him with the spring of a tiger, and Vavasour gave a wild yell as he was dragged headlong into the study.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER. Painful for Ponsonby!

BUMP!

Vavasour sprawled on the study carpet.

The guests and entertainers were all on their feet now. But Courtenay did not require any assistance in dealing with the slacker of the Fourth.

He looked down on the sprawling Vavasour with gleaming eyes.

"Hand me that jam, you fellows," he said.

"Oh, gad!" gasped Vavasour. "I say—only a little joke, you know—keep that jam away—absolutely, you know!" Pon said it was a ripping idea—oh, gad!"

Vavasour howled dismally as the enraged Courtenay swamped jam into his face, and daubed it on his carefully-parted hair. He made a wild scramble to escape, but Courtenay, without ceremony, kicked him back into his place again. Vavasour was not to escape so easily.

"Ow! Ow! Grooogh!" mumbled Vavasour. "I say, don't be a cad—only a little—groo!—joke, you know, absolutely!"

"Give him the marmalade, too!" chirruped the Caterpillar. "Hurrah! This is only a little joke, Vavvy. Tit for tat, you know."

"Rub his head in the cinders!" shouted Smithson.

The Famous Five of Greyfriars looked on cheerfully. The three Highcliffe juniors seized Vavasour and jammed his jammy head into the ashes in the grate. Smithson shoved a round of hot buttered toast down his back, and Vavasour yelled with horror. The Caterpillar jerked up the teapot and started pouring tea over him. Vavasour, as a rule the most elegant junior in the Fourth Form at Highcliffe, presented a shocking appearance.

The door opened and Monson stepped in, apparently unaware of the dreadful fate that had overtaken Vavasour.

"You fellows missed anythin'?" he began. "Oh, my hat—what—here, I say let go, do you hear?"

Courtenay's grasp was upon him, and he was hurled down on Vavasour. Smithson promptly helped him to the jam and ashes. The Caterpillar, having poured out all the tea, started with a jug of lemonade, and Monson's elegant trousers were drenched.

"Oh, dear! Help!"

"Yow! I'm drenched—absolutely! Oh!"

"Kick them out!" said Courtenay.

Bump! Bump!

Vavasour and Monson descended in the passage.

"Now, if there's any more funny jokers, tell them to come along," said Courtenay; "we've got plenty of jam, and lots of ashes."

And he slammed the door.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm sorry for this, you chaps," said Courtenay. "Of course, we can't help those fellows acting like cads. They won't begin again in a hurry, I think."

"All serene!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Vavvy's chivvy was worth a guinea a box. I'm glad he came. Ha, ha, ha!"

The tea-party settled down to tea again. There were no more visitors to the study to ask if anything had been missed. The severe lesson given to Vavasour and Monson had had its effect.

But some of the cheerfulness of the little party was gone. Harry Wharton & Co. could not help feeling a sense of constraint.

They wondered, too, whether they were done with Ponsonby. No consideration of good taste or good form held the cad of Highcliffe in check. He was not likely to miss the glorious opportunity of scoring over his old enemies, while they were on the spot, within his reach.

Harry Wharton suspected that this was only a beginning. In spite of his efforts, he could not chat on cheerfully as before; and the Caterpillar was not bored with that long and deadly talk on cricket that he had dreaded so much. But the Caterpillar, who felt keenly the incivility shown towards his chum's guests, threw himself manfully into the breach, and nobly began talking cricket himself. He politely asked Bob Cherry how many duck's eggs he had made in his last match, and further inquired whether a duck's egg counted as a bye. The Caterpillar's thirst for information had the effect of restoring smiles to the faces of the juniors.

A sudden blast of music from the quadrangle, below the window, interrupted the talk as it was coming round.

From where he sat, Wharton had a view of the quad through the open window, and he looked out as he heard the bugle.

Ta-rar-ra-ra-ra!

That was evidently to attract attention from the study. Wharton's brows contracted. In the quad, under the window, were ranged a number of the Highcliffe Fourth. He recognised Ponsonby and Monson, Merton, Drury, Vavasour, Gadsby, and some of the nuts. Ponsonby had a cricket-stump in his hand, and he used it as a conductor's baton. The gathered nuts burst into a song, Ponsonby beating time, and Drury blowing a blast on the bugle by way of emphasis at the end of every line.

It was the policeman song from a Gilbert-and-Sullivan opera that the nuts of Highcliffe were chanting, with the full force of their lungs.

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE PUNISHMENT POLICIES!"

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

"When the enterprising burglar isn't burgling—isn't burgling,

When the cut-throat isn't occupied in crime,

He likes to hear the little brook a-gurgling—brook a-gurgling,

And listen to the merry minster chime!"

Ponsonby & Co. reared out that amusing song, which did not amuse the Greyfriars visitors, considering its application to themselves.

Courtenay rose to his feet, his face pale with anger.

"The cads!" he said. "The rotten cads! I can't say how sorry I am for this, you fellows. It's a disgrace to Highcliffe."

"And Highcliffe couldn't stand much more disgracin'," murmured the Caterpillar.

"Go for the cads!" exclaimed Smithson.

Courtenay leaned from the window.

"Ponsonby, you cur——"

"Hallo!" said Ponsonby affably. "Get your second wind for the next lap, you fellows. Did you speak, Clare—I mean Courtenay? You're Courtenay now you've dug up a pater from somewhere."

"Will you stop that?"

"Stop our musical exercises?" said Ponsonby. "Certainly not, Clare—I mean Courtenay! Awfully good for the health to sing in the open air—awfully. You chip us sometimes for bein' slackers. We're not slackin' now."

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

"You rotten cad——"

"Thanks! Always the same nice manners that you picked up in the gutter, before you dug up a pater," yawned Ponsonby. "Go it, you fellows!"

And the nuts burst forth again in chorus.

"Will you fellows back us up?" asked Courtenay.

"We'll go down and mop up the quad with those sweeps."

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry.

The Greyfriars party were far from happy. But they understood that their hosts were feeling it quite as much as themselves; and they were unwilling to take the matter in a way that would make it more unpleasant for Courtenay.

"Any old thing," said Nugent. "Lead on, Macduff!"

Courtenay led the way from the study, and the Greyfriars party and Smithson and the Caterpillar followed. The Caterpillar's eyes were glinting now. The champion slacker of Highcliffe was not much of a slacker at that moment. The fastidious Caterpillar was feeling deeply the blackguardly conduct of his Form-fellows, and he was quivering with anger. All his nonchalance was gone now.

The party came out into the quad with a rush.

Ponsonby & Co. were going at full blast. But the roar of voices in chorus suddenly ceased as Courtenay and his followers rushed upon them.

"Look out!" yelled Gadsby.

It was a terrific attack. The raggers were knocked right and left. The Caterpillar grasped Ponsonby, and got his head into chancery. Ponsonby struggled and kicked in vain. De Courcy pounded away at his head as if he mistook it for a punching-ball.

The rest of the nuts fled, most of them carrying visible signs of conflict. The serenade to No. 3 Study was completely at an end.

But Ponsonby, unfortunately for him, could not fly. The Caterpillar had him round his neck, and was still pommelling away.

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Ponsonby. "Stop it, you beast! I give in! I give you best! Leave off! Oh, my nose! Yow! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Chuck it, Caterpillar!" said Courtenay, laughing.

"Yaroooh! Help!"

"I'm not finished yet," said the Caterpillar, pommelling away, while Ponsonby wriggled and yelled and squirmed. "I'm only just gettin' my hand in. Pon—poor Pon—has forced me to exert myself, and he knows how I hate exertin' myself——"

"Ow! Help! Yah!"

"Now he is goin' to pay for it! I'm not goin' to exert

myself for nothin'. You will be properly repentant when I'm done with you, Pon."

"Help!"

"I'm not really tired yet," said the Caterpillar, hitting away. "You should remember the old proverb, Pon—let sleepin' dogs lie, you know. You are reckless, Pon. You've got to go through it now, Pon. You're disgracin' your school, Pon, and you've got to have a lesson, my dear man."

"There won't be much of him left if you don't chuck it," said Bob Cherry.

"Think he's had enough?" asked the Caterpillar, without slackening for a moment. Pon's yells by this time were quite frenzied.

"Ha, ha! I should say so."

"Have you had enough, Pon?"

"Ow! Yes! Oh! Help!" screamed Ponsonby.

"Will you beg pardon on your knees for your dirty tricks, Pon?"

"Ow! Yes! Leave off! Oh!"

The Caterpillar shifted his grip to the back of Ponsonby's collar, and shoved him down on his knees. It dawned upon the Greyfriars fellows that the Caterpillar, slacker and dandy as he looked, must be an athlete, to handle Ponsonby in that way.

"Go ahead, Pon! On your knees, you know! Ask the dear boys to please pardon you for your naughty rudeness."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"P-p-pip-pip-please pardon me!" stuttered Ponsonby. He would have said anything to anybody to get out of the grip of the Caterpillar at that moment.

"For your naughty rudeness," reminded the Caterpillar.

"Fuf-fuf-for my naughty rudeness," gasped Ponsonby.

"Good! And now confess that you were the burglar," said the Caterpillar.

"What!" yelled Ponsonby.

"Gettin' deaf, dear boy? You want some more punchin'—"

"No!" screamed Ponsonby. "Lemme alone! I—I'll say anything you like. Oh!"

"Confess, then!"

"Ha, ha, hā!"

"You idiot!" roared Ponsonby. "I—"

"Confess!" rapped out the Caterpillar, shaking Ponsonby by the collar till every tooth seemed to rattle in his head.

"Ow! I—I confess! I was the burglar!" shrieked Ponsonby.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Caterpillar, with a twist of his arm, sent the dandy of Highcliffe sprawling in the quad.

"Now Ponsonby's confessed, we'll go back and finish tea—what?" he remarked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The tea-party returned to No. 3 Study, and Ponsonby crawled away, feeling more dead than alive. There were no more demonstrations from the nuts of Highcliffe; and the ridiculous scene with which the scrap had ended had had the effect of restoring the cheerful spirits of the party. It was a merry feast, after all, and the visitors from Greyfriars enjoyed themselves. And when the time came for the visitors to go, Courtenay and the Caterpillar came out with them. Nothing more was seen of Ponsonby & Co. The nuts of Highcliffe were too dispirited for any more demonstrations.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER. Lagged at Last!

PHEEP!

A loud, shrill blast on a whistle.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"That sounds like a bobby's toot!"

The party of juniors stopped, and looked about them. They had taken the path down by the river, not being in a hurry to get back to Greyfriars, and were chatting with Courtenay and the Caterpillar, when that loud blast of a whistle interrupted them.

Sheep!

The whistle rang out again sharply.

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OUR COMPANION THE BOYS' FRIEND, "THE GEM" LIBRARY,
PAPER8: Every Monday, Every Wednesday,

THE DREADNOUGHT,
Every Thursday,

THE PENNY POPULAR,
Every Friday,

CHUCKLES, 1d.
Every Saturday 2

It was evidently a policeman's whistle, and it meant that some constable was in trouble, and in need of assistance.

"Come on!" exclaimed Harry Wharton; and he broke into a run in the direction of the whistle.

The rest of the party followed him fast, even the Caterpillar exerting himself.

They heard the sounds of a struggle, and hoarse and savage voices, as they approached the spot. They were near the Black Bird, a low and disreputable public-house close by the river, the scene very frequently of "scraps" among the rough characters of the neighbourhood.

The struggle was going on in the garden behind the public-house—a weedy, neglected patch that extended down to the towing-path.

Harry Wharton bounded over the fence, without stopping to go round to the gate, and plunged through the ragged bushes, and came suddenly on the struggle.

"Inspector Grimes!" he ejaculated.

"Help!"

Three roughly-clad men were piling on the inspector. One of them was a thick-set man in a fur cap, whom Wharton knew at once. It was the ruffian he had passed in the wood when walking home with Courtenay and the Caterpillar a few days before—the rascal whose secret hoard Billy Bunter had discovered.

Harry Wharton did not hesitate for a moment. The inspector was evidently hard beset. The three men had him down, and he had his whistle between his teeth, and had been blowing frantically while he fought.

Wharton piled in instantly.

He grasped the man in the fur cap, and dragged him from the inspector. The ruffian turned on him like a tiger, and the junior pluckily closed with him, and they fell together, struggling.

Bob Cherry was on the scene a moment later, with Courtenay, and they seized the two rascals who were clinging to the inspector, and closed with them.

Plucky as the juniors were, however, it would have gone badly with them if the rest of the party had not been at hand.

But the rest were streaming up in hot haste, and they piled in as they arrived, without waiting to ask questions.

The inspector, almost exhausted, lay panting, while Harry Wharton & Co. struggled with the three ruffians.

Courtenay came to Wharton's aid, only just in time, for Fur Cap had a savage grip on the Removite's throat.

But Fur Cap was dragged promptly off and downed, and Courtenay's knee was planted on his chest, pinning him down.

"Got him!" panted Harry. "That's the burglar!"

"Hurrah!"

Inspector Grimes sat up dazedly.

"Hold them, young gentlemen," he panted—"hold them! That's the man that cracked the crib at Highcliffe! Hold him!"

"We've got him, sir."

"The gotfulness is terrific, honoured sahib!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, as he also fastened a grip upon the man in the fur cap.

The three ruffians were still struggling, but they had no chance. Seven sturdy juniors were a little too much for them.

The inspector staggered to his feet.

He grinned down at Fur Cap with great satisfaction, and blew his whistle long and loud. There were heavy footsteps on the path outside, and a constable burst into the garden.

"Put the bracelets on that rascal!" panted the inspector.

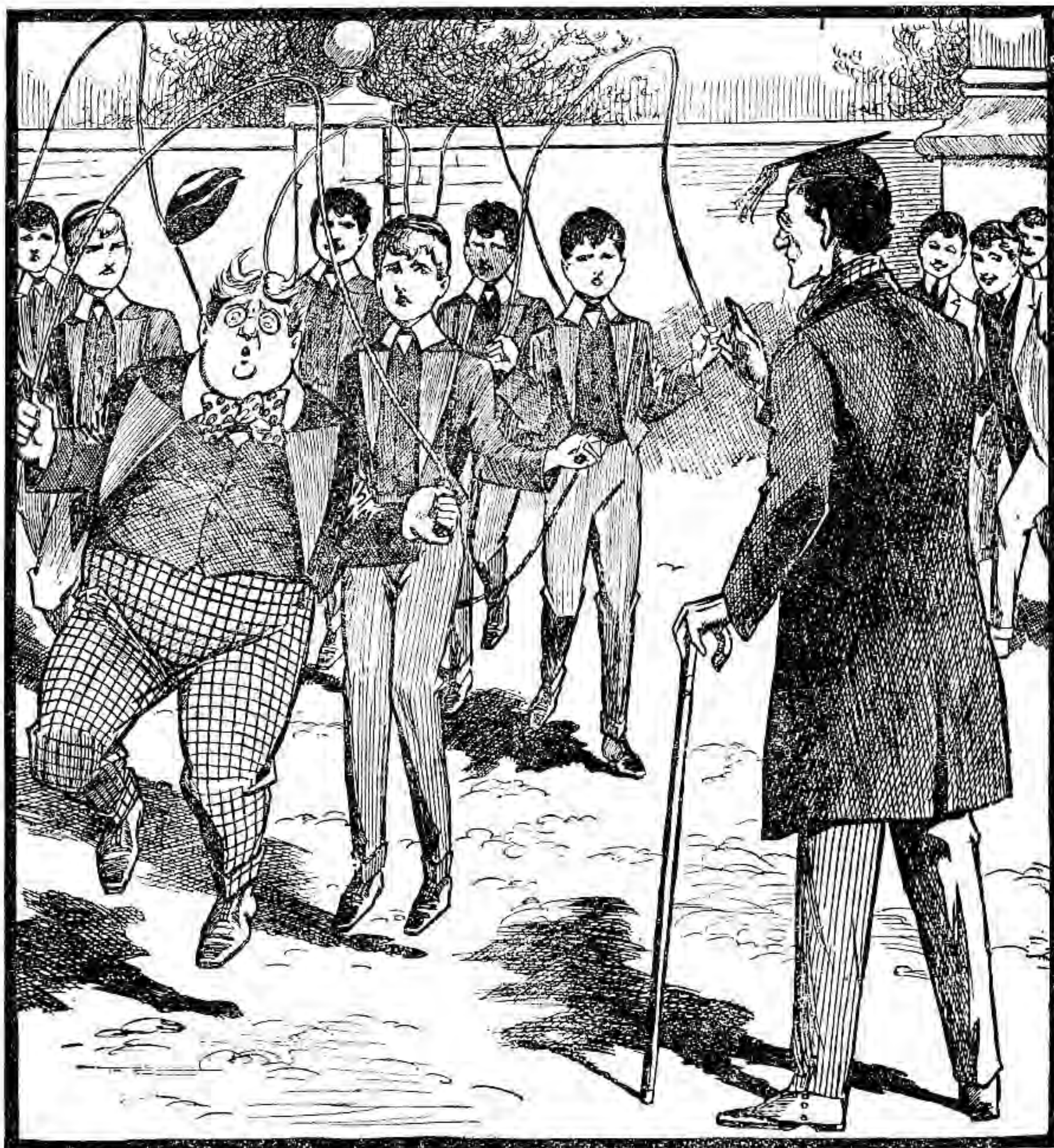
The handcuffs clicked on the wrists of the man in the fur cap. He ceased to struggle then, and lay panting and glaring with rage at his captors.

The other two rascals were speedily handcuffed.

"A clean sweep!" grinned the inspector. "I don't think those two beauties were in the burglary. They were helpin' their pal out when I collared him. I've got you at last, Smiley Joe!"

The man in the fur cap spat out a curse.

"Where's the swag, my bonnie boy?" chuckled the inspector.



With crimson faces the Remove juniors began to skip, while the Upper Fourth fellows burst into an irresistible roar of laughter. Skip, skip, skip! "Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the onlookers. (For this amusing incident see the Splendid, Long, Complete School Story, "THE FADDIST FORM-MASTER!" contained in "THE DREAD-NOUGHT" now on sale. Price One Penny.)

"Hang you!"
"I dare say you'll talk when you're in the stone jug," said Mr. Grimes. "Young gentlemen, I'm much obliged."
"Oh, don't mench!" said the Caterpillar. "Is my tie straight, you fellows?"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Much obliged," repeated the inspector, still breathing hard. "I got the man all right from Master Bunter's description, and I thought it was an easy thing—and then those two hooligans pounced on me. I should have been pretty badly hurt if you young fellows hadn't come up."
"Glad to be of use," said Harry Wharton.
The inspector and the constable, in a state of great satisfaction, hustled the three handcuffed rascals away.
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The juniors followed them out of the garden, and on the towing-path they stood looking at one another.

"By gad! We look a pretty set of guys!" said the Caterpillar. "I think we'll say good-bye here, dear boys. I want a wash and brush up."

"I think we all do," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Good-bye!" said Courtenay. "We'll tell Ponsonby that the burglar's caught."

"And he can withdraw his confession," said the Caterpillar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Courtenay and the Caterpillar turned towards Highcliffe, and Harry Wharton & Co. started for Greyfriars.

(Concluded on page 27, column 2.)

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE PUNISHMENT POLICIES!"

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

THE OPENING CHAPTERS OF OUR NEW SERIAL.



THE STAR OF

A Magnificent
Story
of Thrilling
Adventure and
Circus Life.

THE CIRCUS!"

THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

Sir Richard Battingley, a much-travelled scoundrel, has some mysterious reason for wishing the death of Clive Clare, a handsome and daring circus performer, also known as the King of Equestrians. He therefore engages another villain, named Paul Murdway, to compass Clive Clare's death for the sum of ten thousand pounds.

Paul Murdway follows the circus in its wanderings, and, under the name of Adrian Deering, leagues himself with a member of Cyrano's Circus, named Senor Miguel Gurez, a Mexican dead shot, to bring about Clive's death.

Several plots which the two villains make, however, fail, but they do not give up their intention of injuring Clive when an opportunity occurs.

Adrian Deering, conceiving a liking for May Ellis, one of the circus performers, enters into an unholy compact with Madame Cymeli, a mesmerist, to influence the girl to turn from Clive Clare, to whom she is betrothed, and marry him, and for this purpose he pays the woman fifty pounds.

May Ellis, under the mesmerist's influence, spurns Clive Clare, and a marriage is arranged between her and Adrian Deering. Lieutenant Tremaine, the circus ventriloquist, discovers the plot, and determines to prevent the marriage.

On the wedding morning Adrian Deering is startled by hearing a hollow voice, proceeding apparently from one of the graves in the churchyard where he is waiting, pronouncing his name.

(Now go on with the story.)

How the Ventriloquist Frustrated Adrian Deering.

"Adrian Deering!" said the voice from the tomb a second time.

Deering's heart quickened. There was nobody in sight; there was not a soul in the churchyard that he could see. And yet, from almost under his very feet, his name was being called.

"Adrian Deering!"

He moved his position nervously, gazing furtively round behind the tomb. No one there.

"Adrian Deering!"

"Yes—yes; that is my name!" Deering gasped, in an awe-some whisper. "Who are you, and what do you want with me?"

"Beware of what you are about to do!"

Deering felt the pores of his skin beginning to open. A great bead of perspiration trickled from his brow.

"Who are you? Who is it speaks?" he asked.

"Inquire not into the mysteries of the unknown. Only beware!"

Deering felt his knees beginning to shake under him. He was white in the face, and his hands were moist; his heart almost stood still with fear, and for a minute he could not move.

But upon his ears there came the sound of carriage-wheels, which recalled him to himself. A moment later, and a hired brougham drove up to the gates of the churchyard. From out it stepped May Ellis and her father.

The sight of them roused Deering. He pulled himself

together, and darted from the spot towards the church porch. He raised his hat, and stepped towards May Ellis. She, with a glad look in her eyes, smiled upon him, and held out her hand.

At the same moment there came a sound of hurrying footsteps somewhere from behind, and almost before anybody could realise it there appeared upon the scene four men. They were Lieutenant Tremaine, Bononi, Roly-Poly, and Sando, the strong man.

For a minute Adrian Deering was too surprised to speak. At length, however, he regained his presence of mind, and demanded:

"What does this intrusion mean? Why are you here?"

"You have anticipated a question of mine," remarked Tremaine, stepping forward as spokesman of the party. "I was about to ask you why you are here."

"What has that to do with you?" retorted Deering sharply.

"Just as much as our presence here has to do with you," answered Tremaine.

"But you are intruding. I am here, by appointment, to meet this lady." He indicated May Ellis, who, deadly pale, and with a vacant expression in her eyes, stood by with her father.

"I already knew as much," said Tremaine drily. "You were about to marry Miss Ellis, I think?"

Deering raised his eyes in surprise. He had kept the prospective ceremony a secret, and he wondered how Tremaine knew. He saw it was no use attempting to conceal the facts, however.

"Yes," he replied haughtily, "I am here to marry this lady; and, since you know that, I am the more surprised at your intrusion."

"A marriage in a church," observed Tremaine, "is open to all the world."

"But I object to your presence here, and I request you to leave."

"On behalf of myself and my friends," answered Tremaine,

"I refuse to leave."

"By what right?"

"By the right my knowledge gives me. In ordinary marriages the banns are published, and anyone knowing just cause or impediment regarding the marriage is asked to declare it. In this instance you are to be married by licence, and have thus avoided the publication of banns."

Deering went white with fury.

"What do you mean by that?" he demanded. "What business is it of yours?"

"I have made it my business," retorted Tremaine, "because it concerns a close friend of mine! This lady is the affianced of Clive Clare!"

"She is not! She is to be my wife—she has promised!"

"That may be; but her promise has been wrung from her by foul and cowardly means!"

Deering went whiter than ever. Bononi and Roly-Poly were by this time quietly talking on one side with Professor Durnette. Deering, trying to restrain his rising wrath, turned to the lion-tamer.

"Mr. Durnette," he said, "will you explain to these interlopers that I have the full consent of yourself and your daughter to my marriage with her?"

Durnette stepped forward, obviously agitated.

"Mr. Deering," he replied gravely, "I certainly gave my consent, and my daughter gave hers; but in the last few

minutes I have been told certain facts which, if they do not alter the situation, at least demand consideration."

"Do you mean to imply—"

"I imply nothing, Mr. Deering. I only say this marriage must be delayed."

"It sha'n't be delayed!" cried the other fiercely. "I insist!"

He approached Mr. Durnette almost threateningly.

"Not so fast!" Durnette said sternly, anger coming now into his eyes. "Not so fast, Mr. Deering! You are not my daughter's husband yet, and, till you are, you shall not control her actions!"

"But I tell you she shall marry me!" Deering cried, his eyes simply blazing with fury now. "She shall marry me! She has promised!"

"Not yet," returned the tamer. "Until I have investigated what has been told me she will remain under my care. Come, May?"

He took his daughter's arm and led her back towards the closed carriage.

"She sha'n't go!" exclaimed Deering. "She sha'n't! Out of my way, you!"

He rushed forward as he spoke, and came full-filt against Sando, who had promptly placed himself between Deering and the girl. Deering dodged aside, and then made another rush forward. Once more Sando stepped into his path.

Deering's rage got beyond his control. He raised his arm, doubled his fist, and shot it full into the face of the Strong Man.

Sando winced for a moment at the blow; but only for a moment. For a second later he had grabbed Deering by the collar, and, without a word of explanation, half carried, half dragged him down the path. At the same moment the carriage containing Durnette and his daughter drove away.

"Let me go!" yelled Deering—who up to now had been speechless with fright—"let me go, I say! I—I'll call the police if you don't!"

"You can call the police as much as you like," responded Sando. "But before you do it you're going to have something that'll cool your temper. Now then!"

As he spoke, a horsepond at the side of the road came into view. Without a further word, Sando picked his victim up bodily, strode across the few intervening yards of greenward, and then raised Deering in the air.

He swung the now yelling Deering backwards and forwards twice, then loosened his hold. Uttering a blood-curdling shriek, Deering flopped right in the middle of the slimy-looking pond.

It was not very deep, so no great harm could come to him. But when, a second or two later, Deering picked himself up, what a sight he presented!

For the life of them, Roly-Poly and Bononi could not forbear laughing.

"I'll teach you to laugh!" shouted Deering, as he scrambled to the bank, and tried in vain to clear his face and hands of the horrible slime. "I'll teach you to laugh! I've been grossly assaulted! Wait till I get back into the town! I'll give the lot of you in charge!"

"Hadn't you better withhold your threats?" suggested Sando. "You might get grossly assaulted again, you know."

Deering felt much inclined to retort; but his unexpected bath, if it had not cooled his temper, had at least taught him the wisdom of restraining it. He held his tongue, therefore, turned abruptly on his heel, and then hastened away—looking, in his slimy, dripping garments, the most miserable object possible to set eyes upon.

Alone in London!

"Ten minutes to five," observed Roly-Poly, as, with Sando, Tremaine, and Bononi, he sat in his lodgings that afternoon. "Durnette will be here soon now."

"Yes," answered Tremaine. "He promised to call here at five o'clock and tell us the result of his investigations. What a lucky job we were able to prevent that awful marriage. It's the most fortunate thing in the world that young Jimmy Tribbles overheard them making the arrangements."

"Yes, there's no mistake about that," rejoined Roly. "Twould have been a terrible thing. It would have broke poor Clive's heart. I'm certain of it."

"Well, thank goodness it'll all come right now!" said Tremaine. "The professor's determined to get to the bottom of the affair, and I'd like to bet that he forces that old hag Cyneli to divulge everything. What a fiend she must be, to be sure!"

"I believe you," agreed Roly. "But can't she be imprisoned? Ain't there some law against her mesmerisin' people?"

"That'll have to be gone into, of course," replied Tremaine. "Ha! There's Durnette coming up the street. Now we shall soon hear all about it."

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All four turned their eyes towards the window. The tall, broad figure of the lion-tamer was seen approaching the house. He was walking quickly, and there was a grave look on his face.

On arriving at the house he gave an impatient rat-tat on the door, and a second or two afterwards his heavy step was heard ascending the stairs. There was a rattle of the door-handle of the room in which the four men were sitting, and Durnette entered hurriedly. An unusual pallor was upon his face, his eyes were stern, and his jaw set. For a few moments he did not speak, but stood regarding the others in silence.

"Well, professor, what news?" asked Tremaine. "What has old Mother Cyneli to say for herself?"

"I haven't seen her."

"What? Not seen her?"

"No! Cyneli has disappeared!"

All looked at the lion-tamer as he uttered the words, blank amazement written on their faces.

"Disappeared?" murmured Tremaine incredulously.

"Yes; she's gone—gone right away! All that you told me this morning is true, Tremaine. She hypnotised my poor girl. I've found that out. And her disappearance proves her evil intent. Yes; she hypnotised my poor May to such purpose as to obtain absolute influence over her. And not only did she hypnotise her, but she administered drugs, which, if persisted in, would, the doctor says, have partially undinged the girl's mind. As it is, it will take her some little time to fully recover from their effects."

"But where has Cyneli gone to?"

Durnette shook his head.

"I don't know," he replied. "That she's in tow with that scoundrel Deering I'm certain, but where she's gone to nobody knows. She packed up her things and left the town some hours ago."

"Strange—very strange!" murmured Tremaine. "And now, professor, how is poor Miss May?"

The tamer sighed.

"She's better now than she was an hour or two ago," he said. "She's recovering from that old witch's influence, and coming back to her right mind. I must have been blind not to have noticed something was wrong with her the last few days; but I put it all down to a natural agitation at her approaching marriage. I must have been utterly blind! She slept, poor child, for an hour or so, and when she awoke her memory had returned, and the first thing she did was to ask for Clive Clave."

"And did she see him?"

"No. I consulted the doctor about it, and he advised me to delay the meeting for a little. He said that for her to meet Clive at once might agitate her too much."

"Then," inquired Roly, "Clive doesn't know yet of Miss May's change towards him?"

"No, not yet; but he will soon," returned Durnette. "I'm going on to his lodgings now to tell him."

"My eye," said Roly gloomily, "won't young Clive just be delighted to hear it? I say, professor, I don't want to intrude, but the fact is, we've all kept out of Clive's way till

we could see the end o' this business, and I know for a fact that the poor lad's been a-mopin' hisself to death. And now—now that you've got sich great good news for him, I feels that his heart'll swell wi' sich joy as would do a man good to see. So, professor, if you're a-goin' to tell him—why, I'd like to come, too!"

"And I!" said Tremaine and Sando in a breath.

"And I, too," put in Bononi, "if you don't mind!"

"Not at all!" said Durnette, gratified indeed to see the sympathetic interest with which the friends regarded his daughter and his prospective son-in-law. "We'll all go down and see Clive together."

A few minutes later they set out for Clive's lodgings. But they did not see Clive. He wasn't there. He had gone out, so the good-hearted landlady told them, some hours ago—before dinner-time, in fact—and he had not yet returned.

Durnette and the others had, therefore, to put off imparting the information till they should meet Clive before the evening's performance at the circus.

The time for this latter event drew on apace. The dressing-tent was occupied by its usual denizens, all busily engaged in dressing and making-up. But the preparation signal went, and still Clive had not arrived. Adolph Cyrano, who always at that hour dodged about superintending the preparations, hustled up to Roly-Poly and Bononi excitedly.

"Where's Clare?" he asked concernedly. "He's not here. Has anybody seen him?"

The two clowns exchanged glances.

"We haven't seen him," answered Roly—"haven't seen him all day, in fact. We called at his lodgin's, and were told that he went out this mornin' and hadn't returned. We were talkin' about it ourselves only a minute ago, Mr. Cyrano."

"Good gracious me!" exclaimed the proprietor. "What are we to do? Where can Clare have got to? Surely he hasn't disappeared like that old Cymeli! I don't care much about her having gone, the ungrateful old traitor! I only kept her here for the last two or three years on sufferance, because she'd been with me so long. But Clive Clare's a different matter. How on earth are we going to get through the show without him? What shall I tell the audience? Some of 'em will be demanding their money back, I'll be bound. Dear me—dear me! How unfortunate it is! But he must be about somewhere. Where's he lodging? I'll go down myself."

Saying which, and having procured Clive's address, Mr. Cyrano hustled off more excitedly than ever.

"Bill," observed Roly-Poly, "this is a rum go."

"Joe," returned Bononi, with a doleful shake of his head, "it's the rummiest go I've ever heard of!"

A simultaneous sigh escaped both clowns. Both reflected, and both thought of things. Neither uttered the thoughts that were in his heart. But all the sighs, reflections, thoughts, and doleful shaking of heads couldn't bring Clive to the circus.

For Clive at that moment was in London.

Only about an hour before this very conversation took place, Clive had alighted from a train at Paddington Station. What did it mean? Why had he so suddenly, and without a word of warning to anybody, quitted Cyrano's circus and journeyed to the metropolis?

Why, indeed? At that moment, as he stood in a half-dazed state upon the platform at Paddington, Clive could scarcely have explained himself. He was there. That was almost all that he clearly realised. The dull, heavy ache at his heart had numbed his perception almost to paralysis. What he had done that day he had done almost in a dream. From Jimmie Tribbles that morning he had heard the fateful news of the impending marriage between Adrian Deering and the girl of his own heart—May Ellis. The news had, in a fashion, stunned him. He had listened to the boy's story, and the words had bitten into Clive's brain like an acid.

May—she who had promised herself to him—was not to be his, but another's! May herself had told him so. She had repulsed him, and so had robbed him of the right to interfere. He was powerless.

The thought had tortured him that morning; had set his brain on fire; had driven him out of the confined atmosphere of his lodgings into the streets—into the open country. He had walked on and on, without knowing or caring whither he went. Only one phrase rang and echoed through his aching mind: "Lost to me—lost to me!"

To a man in deep despondency a sudden sight or sound will arouse him out of himself. So it was with Clive. The shriek of a shrill whistle tore the air and struck on his ear. He turned his head with a nervous start. Half a mile away, on his right hand, a long trail of smoke moved clondwards, and a great, panting engine was rushing towards the little country station that Clive now perceived scarcely fifty yards in front of him.

That one glance sent a thought through his brain like a lightning-flash: "The London train, perhaps!" he exclaimed. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 380.

Some of the most important steps we take in life are the outcome of mere impulse. It was so now. Without a further thought, Clive quickened his pace, dashed into the booking-office at the station, and asked if the incoming train was going to London.

"It's an up-train," responded the clerk, "but it's a slow. You can get on as far as Radcot Junction by this train, but you'll have an hour and a half to wait there for the express."

"Very well," remarked Clive. "Give me a ticket."

A minute later he was seated in a third-class compartment; a minute after that, and the train was steaming towards Radcot.

It was a dreary wait at the great junction; but even the dreariest wait comes to an end at length, and in due time the London express entered the station. It was one of the Great Western's finest trains, and consequently it was not long ere the London terminus was reached.

Thus it happened, as we have seen, that Clive stood alone, without luggage, and with very little money, amid the bustle of a Paddington platform. After months and months of touring in the country, seeing no more of excitement than the average sleepy old provincial town supplies, the hurry and rush of London startled him. He looked about the station curiously, vaguely speculating as to where this person or that was going to, or had come from. But, though he hurriedly scanned many a face utterly strange to him, he never for a moment caught sight of the one man in the crowd who knew him, and a knowledge of whose presence would have served to put him on his guard.

For, to be plain, Clive was being watched. And the man who watched him was no other than Paul Murdway, alias Adrian Deering.

Strange that he should be here. Only a few short hours ago, even while Clive was on his way to the little station where he had entrained, Deering had been enduring the experience of his distasteful bath. Yet here he was now, right on the heels of Clive Clare!

How had it come about? In a fashion easily explainable. Although Clive was journeying Londonwards even while Deering was changing his begrimed apparel, the latter had been able to catch him up. For it must be remembered that Clive's train, as far as Radcot, had been a slow one. The train which Deering caught was the express—the very express into which Clive had changed after his ninety minutes' wait.

As fate would have it, the very first person on whom Deering set eyes as the train slowed up at Radcot was the one whom it was his perpetual wish to injure—Clive Clare. Deering had watched Clive enter the train; and, when he alighted at Paddington, had never once allowed his eyes to wander from the young circus-rider's unmistakable figure. What was more, the five minutes' wait at Radcot for refreshments had enabled Deering to slip out to the station telegraph-office and despatch to London a wire.

And now here were the two—Clive and Deering, the watched and the watcher—in London.

Not knowing or caring, Clive got on a 'bus. For the ordinary provincial lad, London has a peculiar charm. Seeing for the first time places, the names of which have been long familiar, brings with it quite a feeling of elation. And so Clive gazed with interest at the Marble Arch, and across Hyde Park. Oxford Street had its attractions, too; while the fine shops in the quadrant of Regent Street filled him with something like awesome admiration. Waterloo Place, with its Florence Nightingale statue, was passed, and then a turn took the omnibus into Trafalgar Square, where Clive alighted.

He stood still for a few minutes to gaze through the fast-gathering darkness at the solid grey National Gallery; at the grim statues of General Gordon and other dead and gone military heroes; and then was lost in amazement at the huge fluted column that towered towards the sky to the memory of our greatest sailor—Nelson.

To every young Britisher with the least spark of imagination in him, the first sight of Trafalgar Square cannot fail to arouse his enthusiasm and pride of race. The sight of those great monuments to the dead thrilled Clive through and through, and kept him riveted to the spot where he stood, near the Gordon statue. It was quiet there, for in the dusk scarcely anybody came there, pedestrians keeping to the main path around it.

Even while Clive stood gazing upward at the Nelson column, two figures lurked close behind him. Suddenly, quite unseen by him, they stepped forward. From under the overcoat of one was pulled a cumbrous something, and the next moment it was brought noiselessly down upon Clive's head, forcing him to the ground and rendering him unconscious.

Clive Clare had been sandbagged.

Thirty seconds later, unnoticed by the stream of passers-by, Clive was thrust into a waiting taxi at the corner. The two men got in, and the vehicle drove off.

Quickly it turned out of Trafalgar Square into St. Martin's

Lane and along Long Acre; whence, by a devious route, it threaded its way until it arrived at the mouth of a narrow court off Drury Lane. Here the cab stopped. The men alighted, took out the limp form of Clive, and quickly disappeared into the dark, evil-smelling alley.

Twenty minutes afterwards, four men might have been seen seated in a back room on the ground floor of one of the houses in Belcher's Court. Two of them were the identical ones who had attacked Clive Clare in Trafalgar Square, while the third was the man who had acted as cab-driver. The lamp on the table revealed their faces, showing them to be of the lowest criminal type. They were ill-dressed, bull-necked individuals, with scowling visages.

The fourth man of the group offered a striking contrast. He was well-dressed, with faultless collar and cuffs, and with a couple of rings upon his fingers. It was Adrian Deering.

"Now, then, my lads," he said, rubbing his hands together and surveying the group, "you've managed the business very well so far, and we'll have a drink on it."

He uncorked a bottle as he spoke, and poured out portions into four tumblers.

"Well, boys," he went on, raising his glass—in which action the others imitated him—"here's good-luck to our latest bit of business! It was quite by accident that it came about, I assure you. I only just had time to wire you from Radcot, but you've managed it in A1 style. And how have things been moving since I've been away, Dan?"

Dan Fuller—the burliest of the three ruffians—turned his evil-looking visage to answer.

"Things ain't been movin' at all!" he growled. "They've been a-standin' stock stone still—that's what they've been a-doin'. The Wood Street ware'us plant went wrong, and Spike 'ere made a mess o' the 'Ighgate job, and nearly got us lagged."

"Well, 'ow could I 'elp that?" retorted "Spike" Syers in an aggrieved tone. "'Ow could I 'elp the bloomin' stairs a-creakin' and a-wakin' up the old 'un? It'll be a bloomin' long time afore I tries to crack a ramshackle ole-fashioned crib like that agin!"

"No'mind, we won't argerfy," rejoined Dan Fuller. "We've got other business on our 'ands jest at present. Wotcher goin' to do wi the young cove upstairs?" he asked, turning to Deering and jerking his thumb upwards.

Deering took a pull at his glass before replying.

"You've got him quite safe and sound?" he at length inquired.

"Oh, 'e's safe enough, gov'nor. 'E's in the garret—top o' the 'ouse—and the door's a stout 'un, I gi' yer my word. But wotcher goin' to do wi 'im?"

"Well, returned Paul Murdway contemplatively, "since you must know, I'll tell you. I want the fellow out of the way!"

"Ho-ho! I see. You wants 'im——"

Dan Fuller drew a finger significantly across his throat.

"Precisely! I want him put out of the way. How you do it—whether in that way or any other—I don't care."

"Um! And you want us to take the little job in 'and—eh?"

"That's why I've asked your assistance."

"And what do us chaps get out of it?"

"Fifty pounds."

Dan Fuller shot a quick glance at Murdway.

"Well, then, Mister Murdway, it ain't enough."

"Why, what do you mean?"

"Jest this, Mister Murdway—that if you're willin' to give fifty quid you must be terrible anxious about it, and if you're terrible anxious, it strikes me as you'll be willin' to spring a bit more."

Murdway looked up angrily, but he smothered his anger.

"You're a bit hard, Dan," he said. "You know I'm only a poor man."

"Poor men can't sling fifty quidsies about!" retorted the other doggedly. "No, Mister Murdway, I'm game for a plant at any time, but when it comes to——once more Dan Fuller drew his finger across his throat—"it's wot you may call skilled labour; and if I've got ter do skilled labour, I wants me fair and proper pay as sich."

"Oh, all right!" said Murdway. "Since you must have it, I'll make it seventy-five pounds."

Fuller shook his head, and looked at the other with a cunning leer.

"No, Mister Murdway," he replied. "That's as much as a'llin' us that you expected us to arsk a level hundred, and was ready and willin' ter meet us 'arf-way. Well, speakin' o' be'alf o' meself and pardners, I'm sorry ter tell yer that we ain't ready and willin' to meet you 'arf-way. Make it a hundred quid, and you can reckon the job done."

Paul Murdway sprang to his feet.

"Done!" he exclaimed, thumping the table. "Prove to me that Clive Clare—the fellow you now have upstairs—is dead, and I'll give you a hundred pounds!"

Look out for next Monday's instalment of this exciting yarn. Order your "MAGNET" early!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY. No. 380.

EVERY
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ONE
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HEROES OF HIGHCLIFFE!

(Continued from page 23.)

The chums of the Remove were feeling almost as satisfied as Inspector Grimes. The burglar of Highcliffe was caught now, and Ponsonby & Co. would be deprived of their latest "wheeze." The clearing-up of the matter was eminently satisfactory to the heroes of the Remove.

They reached Greyfriars, and their dishevelled and torn state drew glances and grins from all sides as they went in. As luck would have it, they met Mr. Quelch as they entered the School House.

"Kindly explain at once, Wharton, how you came to be in this state," said Mr. Quelch tartly.

Harry Wharton explained. Mr. Quelch's brow cleared as he listened.

"Ah! Hem! Ahem!" he said, when he had heard all. "Very good! I excuse you! It was very right—ahem!—very right and proper to go to the aid of an officer of the law in need of assistance—and very courageous, too. I commend your conduct. But, please, go and put yourselves tidy at once."

"Certainly, sir," said the Removites demurely.

Mr. Quelch walked away rather hastily; and Harry Wharton & Co. proceeded to the dormitory to put themselves tidy, smiling. Billy Bunter blinked into the dormitory while they were so engaged.

"I say, you fellows, is that burglar beast really arrested?" he asked.

"He is," said Squiff; "he are."

"I suppose they'll find the rest of the things now?" said Bunter.

"Most likely. Anything of yours among them? Any more family heirlooms?" asked Squiff.

"Oh, really, Field! I suppose there will be a reward!"

"We don't want any reward," said Wharton.

Bunter blinked at him.

"You! Who's talking about you! I mean, I suppose there will be a reward for me?"

"A reward for you?" said Harry. "Why the dence should there be a reward for you because we helped to nail the burglar?"

"Oh, rot, that was nothing!" said Bunter, with a sniff. "Anybody could have done that! But I gave the man's description, you know; it was through me that he's been tracked out and collared. I suppose there will be a reward. I ought to have a hundred pounds, at least."

"Well, my hat! What for, stealing the silver teapot?"

"For giving the clue!" howled Bunter. "I ought to have a whacking reward, especially considering the way I was spoofed out of that teapot. Did the inspector say anything about a reward for me?"

"Not that I remember," chuckled Bob Cherry. "Still, you certainly ought to have something for your part in the business. What the Head's given you isn't enough. You ought to have something more. Here goes!"

Bob Cherry yanked a bolster from the nearest bed and made a rush at Bunter. Billy Bunter fled wildly from the dormitory, but he had received "something more" before he escaped. And great as Bunter's deserts appeared, in his own eyes, it was probably all that he was likely to receive.

A few days later the Greyfriars fellows learned that the remainder of the stolen goods had been found: Smiley Joe having confessed where they were hidden. Ponsonby & Co. had found their weapon taken out of their hands, and nothing more was heard on the subject, and Harry Wharton & Co. were glad of it. Only one fellow was disappointed, and that one, of course, was Billy Bunter. There was no reward for the services rendered by the Owl of the Remove, and Billy Bunter considered himself a very injured party, for the flogging from the Head was all that accrued to the fat junior from Bunter's find.

(Next Monday's grand tale of Greyfriars School is entitled "THE PUNISHMENT POLICIES," by Frank Richards. Order YOUR copy of The "MAGNET" Library now.)

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE PUNISHMENT POLICIES!"

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



YOUR EDITOR.

MY READERS' PAGE

The Editor is always pleased to hear from his chums, at home or abroad, and is only too willing to give his best advice to them if they are in difficulty or in trouble. . . . Whom to write to: Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

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of thanking the following readers for their kind letters and suggestions:

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FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"THE PUNISHMENT POLICIES!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.

In next week's grand, long, complete tale of the chums of Greyfriars, Fisher T. Fish, the Yankee schoolboy, who is, in his own opinion, so cute, comes out with yet another of his staggering schemes, whereby he designs to line his own pockets at the expense of his school fellows.

At first the scheme meets with a certain measure of success—that is to say, the Greyfriars fellows are not averse to taking out policies insuring them against lines, lickings, and all the ills which boys are heir to. When, however, the clients find they are being duped, they retaliate in kind. Bob Cherry has a sudden brain-wave, and puts into effect a little plot which brings

"THE PUNISHMENT POLICIES"

to an untimely end, and almost does the same to Fisher T. Fish!

TWO SMART MAGNETITES.

It is seldom indeed that Mr. Frank Richards, the clever "Magnet" author, is caught napping, but such is now the case with a vengeance!

Mr. A. L. Brown, an adult reader of the companion papers, living at Seabrook, writes as follows:

"On page six, column two, of this week's 'Magnet,' entitled 'Special-Constable Coker,' the following quotation appears:

"Of that there wasn't a shadow of doubt, no possible probable shadow of doubt, no possible doubt whatever."

"Your author attributes this quotation to the 'Mikado.' Is it not taken from another opera, namely, 'The Gondoliers'?" I think you will find such is the case.

"I mention this inaccuracy because the 'Magnet' is generally quite correct in its quotations."

LET US BE EXACT!

John Hampson, a Manchester chum, also draws my attention to the above subject. John goes a stage farther than Mr. Brown, and points out that the actual words of the quotation, as given by our author, are inaccurate. They should read:

"Of that there is no shadow of doubt," etc.

I thank my two correspondents for drawing my attention to the error, trivial though it is. Mr. Richards humbly apologises for the inaccuracy, and considers himself let off with a caution!

YOUR EDITOR'S BEST THANKS!

I have of late received a large amount of particularly helpful correspondence. I am sorry that I am unable to write and acknowledge each letter separately, but I take this opportunity

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

"Two Patriotic Dubliners."—Much obliged to you both for your loyal letter!

H. W. S. (Purley).—Horace Coker turns the scale at about ten stone.

W. A. B. (Bradford).—The late G. A. Henty has never written for my papers. I might mention, however, that he was a good and great-minded man, and occupied a high place in boys' literature.

D. D. (Southend).—I am sorry I cannot do as you suggest.

Can any "Magnet" reader supply T. H. Smith, 100, Ingelow Road, Battersea, S.W., with a copy of the "Magnet" Library, entitled "A Schoolboy's Honour"?

George Dando (Bristol).—Special allowances are made for Dutton in class on account of his affliction.

"Yumot" (Brighton).—I do not see the advisability of changing the style of "The Boys' Friend" in the way you suggest.

Will Cardiff readers please note that Mr. J. G. Taylor, of 81, Clare Road, is anxious to form a "Magnet" League in his town?

Hubert Smith (Ipswich).—Thank you very much for the splendid way in which you speak of my papers!

R. B. (Balham).—The character you mention will reappear in our stories shortly.

George Lodge (Liverpool).—Hazeldene's Christian name is Peter. The suspension of the "Gem" Correspondence Exchange was unavoidable.

C. Stenbridge (Feltham).—Even famous Frank Richards is not superhuman, and he cannot be expected to write for half a dozen papers at one and the same time. Still, I will see what can be done in the direction you name.

The Editor

AMAZING BARGAINS FOR BRITISH BOYS.



THE WONDERFUL ISSUE OUT TO-DAY CONTAINS:

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