

UNDER BUNTER'S THUMB!

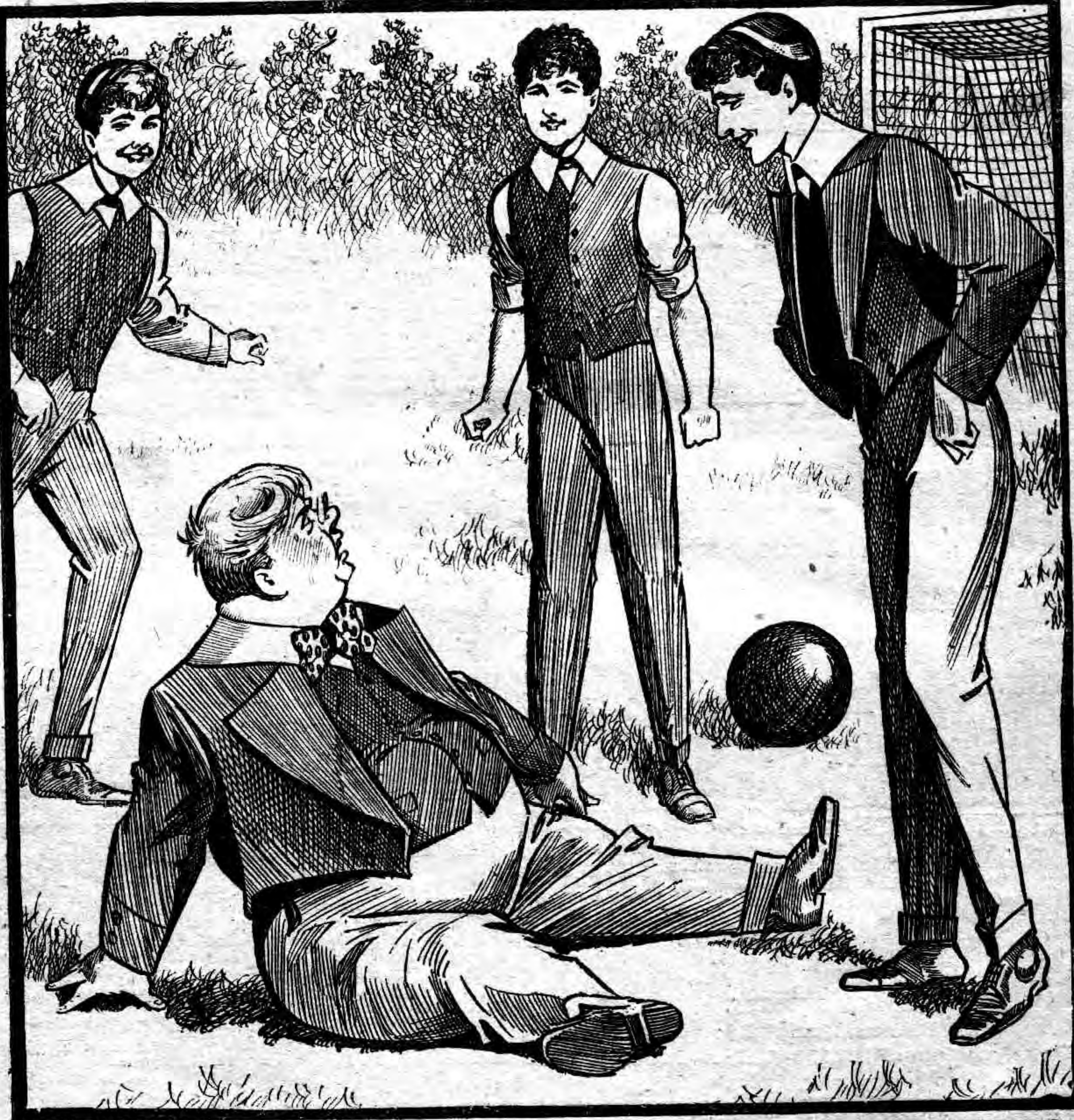
A Grand Long Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.



The Magnet Library

No. 455, Vol. 10.

OCTOBER 28th, 1916.



A SHOCK TO BUNTER'S SYSTEM!

(An Extraordinary Scene in the Grand, Long, Complete Story in this Issue.)

MY READERS' PAGE

OUR COMPANION PAPERS:

"THE BOYS' FRIEND," 1d., Every Monday. "THE GEM" LIBRARY, 1d., Every Wednesday. "THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3d. COMPLETE LIBRARY. "THE PENNY POPULAR," 1d., Every Friday. "CHUCKLES," Price 1d., Every Saturday.

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.

For Next Monday:

"THE RASCAL OF THE REMOVE!"

By Frank Richards.

The rascal of the Remove is Harold Skinner, and next week's fine story tells of the persecution to which Skinner subjected Herr Gans, the German master at Greyfriars. Now Herr Gans, though a German, is no Hun, and the decent fellows in the Remove feel a good deal of sympathy with him in a family trouble which causes him much grief. But Skinner and his cronies have no sympathy at all, and they do all that they can, in spite of the opposition of the Famous Five and others, to make the life of Herr Gans a misery to him. But at length they run against Mr. Quelch, and then there is a warm time for

"THE RASCAL OF THE REMOVE!"

A NOTICE IN THE PRESS.

There is nothing some people, and some papers, are keener upon than a notice in the Press. We really don't mind much about it; our critics are our readers, and some of them are pretty acute critics, too, let me tell you. One enthusiastic reader, who takes good care to let all his chums know what first-rate papers the "Magnet" and "Gem" are, can do us more good than a slap on the back by a newspaper critic, for the simple reason that our possible readers, speaking generally, don't bother about the columns of a newspaper which are devoted to matter other than the War news.

But it is always of some interest to see what the Press says about us, and I was particularly interested in reading a recent article in the "Westminster Gazette," under the title, "What Sailors Read." It is one of a series called "A Grand Fleet Chaplain's Notebook"—a series which I have read pretty regularly since it started.

Says the Grand Fleet Chaplain, after enumerating other kinds of stories:

"There is also another type, very popular among the younger members. It is a semi-serial; that is to say, it appears in the form of a complete story each week, yet deals always with the same characters—the boys of an imaginary public school. The dialogue in these stories is very thrilling, and holds the reader with a magnet's force." (Unless anyone should miss it, I may remark that the G.F.C. is guilty of a rather cheap joke here.) "Here is a typical specimen of it:

"'Wow!' cried Billy Bunter. 'Goo! Yarp!'

"'Biff! Bang!'

"'Wee! It hurts! Leggo!'

"'Hoosh! Bim! Barroo!'

"'Tally-ho! Yoicks!'

"'Ha!' exclaimed the doctor, entering at that instant.

"This, you must understand," says the G.F.C., "is not a direct quotation, but I think I have caught something of the spirit of the thing. It makes very good reading, but it must be very much more interesting still to write it."

I really don't think the G.F.C. had caught the spirit of the thing quite as nearly as he imagined, and I rather wonder whether, though he thinks it all very easy writing, he would be capable of turning out such a story as, say, "A Split in the Study."

FOOTER NOTICES.

Matches Wanted By:

VALLEY ROAD JUNIOR F.C. (13-14)—5-mile r.—A. W. Jaynes, 82, Valley Rd., Meersbrook, Sheffield.

THORNYCROFT JUNIORS F.C. (14-15)—4-mile r.—A. Brenigan, 13, Porchester Rd., Woolston, Southampton.

SAVINGS BANK UNITED F.C. (15-16).—A. Verge, 84, Herbert Gardens, Willesden, N.W.

GROVE F.C. (15-16)—anywhere in London.—Arthur Harper, 25, Wennington Rd., Bethnal Green, N.E.

ST. PETER'S JUNIOR F.C.—Lower Edmonton district.—S. Rowbotham, 2, Exeter Rd., Lower Edmonton, N.

BARNBURY A.F.C. (16)—within reasonable distance.—F. Parrish, 35, Poultny St., Barnsbury, N.

FLAXMAN F.C. (11-12)—2-mile r.—C. Laws, 22, Redan Terr., Flaxman Rd., Loughborough Junction, S.E.

MYTLE F.C. (16, medium)—5-mile r., away matches preferred.—C. W. Howse, 2, Corney Rd., Chiswick, W.

SELBOURNE UNITED F.C. (15).—A. Harrison, 18, Killowen St., Low Fell, Gateshead-on-Tyne.

CROWN ATHLETIC F.C. (16)—5-mile r.—G. W. Charters, 88, Telham Rd., East Ham, E.

ST. GABRIEL'S F.C. (15-16).—G. Lees, 167, Newington Butts, S.E.

BROAD STREET SENIOR F.C.—A. C. Brown, Broad St., Old Scholars' Club, 27, Broad St., Ratcliff, E.

G. LLEWELLYN'S "GEM" AND "MAGNET" LEAGUE (15)—4-mile r.—Harold Foster, 13, Gladstone Street, Darnall, Sheffield.

Other Footer Notices.

I. Burns (15) and J. Macarthy (16) want to join team, Clapham or district; play any left-wing position.—Write or call, J. Macarthy, 65, Crescent Lane, Clapham, S.W.

AMAZONS F.C. (13-14) want 4 or 5 players.—D. Crown, 110, Kensington Park Rd., Bayswater, W.

A. Sanders, 125, Flaxman Rd., Loughborough Junction, S.E., wants members (11-13½) for team.

CLIFFORD RANGERS F.C. (14-16) want members. Club and gym.—Apply after 7.30 p.m., or by letter, R. Butteridge, 41, Crawford Place, Edgware Rd., W.; or R. French, 9, Shirland Mews, Shirland Rd., W.

Back Numbers Wanted.

By R. Hamer, High Street, Gresford, near Wrexham—"Bob Cherry's Barring-Out," "Billy Bunter's Love-Affair," "Bunter's Postal Order," "Surprising the School," "Wun Lung's Wheeze," and the number in which Squiff makes his first appearance. Double price offered.

By Louis Cannon, 28, Ballymony Street, Old Park Road, Belfast—"Stage Struck," and any numbers of the "Magnet" earlier than 200.

By J. B. Spencer, The Elms, Brierley, near Barnsley—The "Magnet" yarns in which Vernon-Smith got the Famous Five expelled one by one, and the "Gem" stories in which Noble, Clifton Dane, and Wally D'Arcy made their first appearances.

Private Fred J. Camden, 4823, Lewis Gun Section, 4th Gloucester Regt., B.E.F., France, would be grateful for back numbers of the companion papers.

By Hugh McDougall, 13, Ardgowan Street, Kingston, Glasgow—"The Boy Without a Name" and "Through Thick and Thin."

Private A. Nash, 8999, 16 Platoon, D Company, 2nd Worcester Regt., B.E.F., France, would be glad to receive back numbers of the "Gem" and "Magnet."

Private Harry Coe, 26439, B Company, 17th Battalion, Welsh Regt., B.E.F., France, would be grateful for back and current issues of the companion papers.

By Martin Drake, 22, Vauxhall Road, Preston, Lancs—The halfpenny series of both "Gem" and "Magnet."

Private A. Norman, 24116, B Company, 12th Leicestershire Regt., Usworth Camp, co. Durham, will be glad to receive back numbers of the companion papers.

Private E. Pugh, 1592, 14 Platoon, D Company, 108th Provisional Battalion, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex, would be glad if some reader would send him a mouth-organ.

Your Editor

A Complete School-
Story Book, attrac-
tive to all readers.

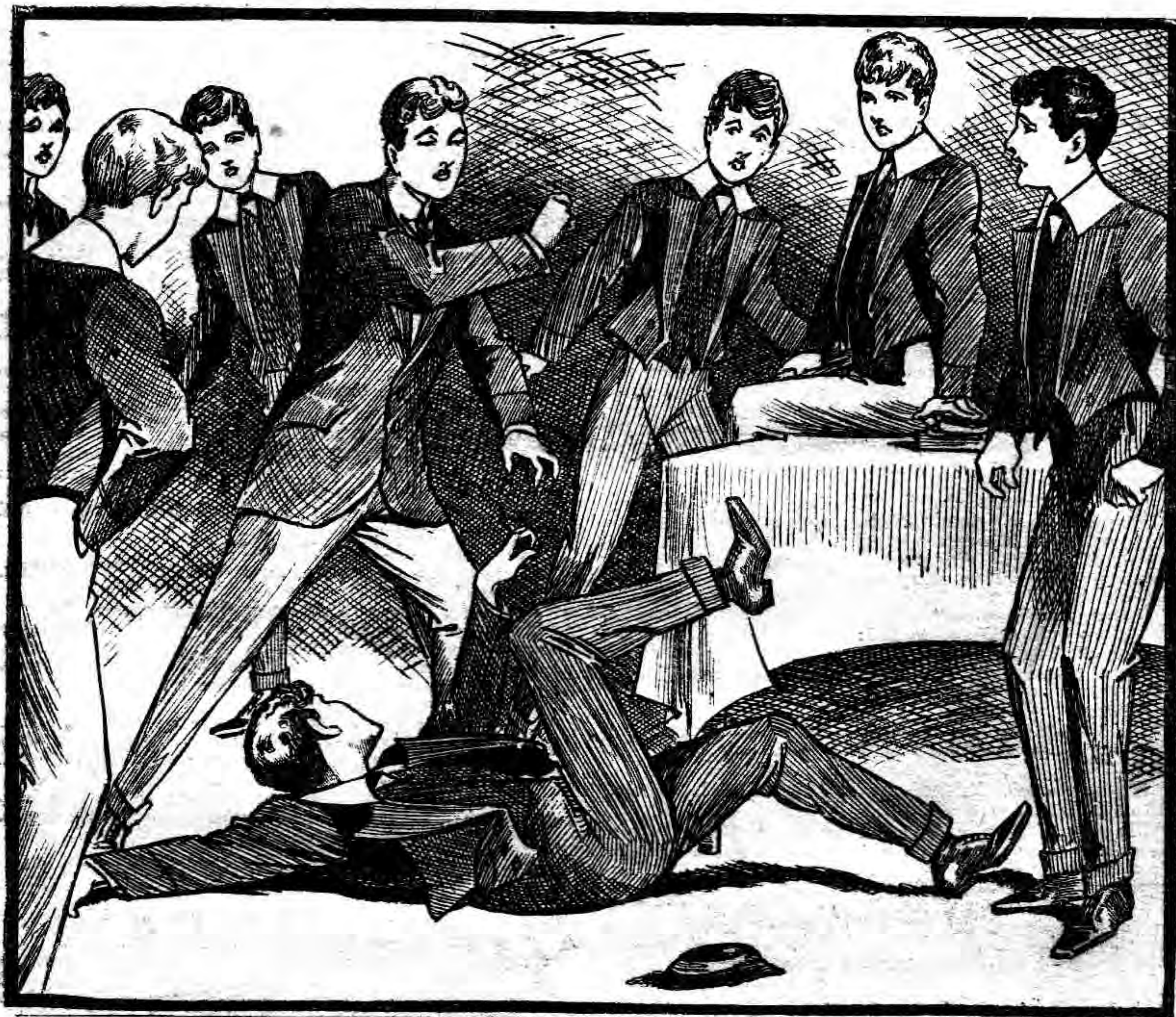


The Editor will be
obliged if you will
hand this book,
when finished with,
to a friend. . . .

UNDER BUNTER'S THUMB!

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

By FRANK RICHARDS.



Wharton's feet left the floor, and he was down. He blinked up at the Caterpillar in amazement. "My hat!" he gasped. (See Chapter 2.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Corn in Egypt!

"WHAT ripping luck!"

Five voices spoke in unison.

Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, had just opened a letter. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull, Hurree Singh and Frank Nugent, stood round him, watching him open it.

It was a very important letter.

In the first place, it was from Wharton's uncle, the colonel, who was home on leave from the Front. In the second place,

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it was getting near tea-time, and the Co. were expecting visitors, and the study cupboard, like the celebrated Mother Hubbard's, was bare.

Frank Courtenay was coming over from Highcliffe that afternoon, with several of his friends, and the Co. naturally wished to provide a spread that was a little out of the common.

But funds were low.

Such things would happen in the best-regulated junior studies. The heroes of the Remove had hoped that something would turn up. As a last resource, they would have

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undertaken a borrowing expedition up and down the Remove. Billy Bunter, indeed, had offered to stand a stunning feed if his postal-order came that afternoon, but that would have been a decidedly rotten reed to lean upon.

So when the postman delivered that letter to Wharton, addressed in his uncle's hand, his chums stood round watching him like footballers watching a penalty-kick.

And the first thing he turned out of the letter was a crisp, rustling five-pound note!

It was no wonder that the Famous Five, with one voice, pronounced that it was ripping luck.

The vision of famine in the study faded away like a nightmare. Corn in Egypt, in one of the lean years, could not have come more opportunely.

"A fiver!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "A whole giddy fiver! Blessed if your uncle oughtn't to have the D.S.O., Wharton!"

"Or the esteemed V.C.," remarked Hurrree Singh.

"Gorgeous!" said Johnny Bull heartily. "But let's hear what he says. It's only fair to read the letter when he sends a fiver with it."

"Yes, that's only fair play," agreed Bob.

Wharton laughed, and read out the letter. It was written with military brevity:

"Dear Harry,—I am just home, safe and sound, so far. I shall try to run down and see you next Wednesday.—Your affectionate uncle,

"Enclosure.

JAMES WHARTON."

"Good egg!" exclaimed Bob. "Then he'll be able to watch the first match of the season, and see us whop Highcliffe."

"Or see Highcliffe whop us," said Harry, laughing. "Courtenay's team is hot stuff now."

"It's a bit different from Ponsonby's gang, that we used to play," admitted Bob. "But we shall mop them up. We're bound to, with the colonel looking on. I'm jolly glad he's safe and sound—that's better than the fiver. Jolly thoughtful of him to put that fiver in. He's been a boy himself, I dare say."

"Ha, ha!"

The Famous Five were in great spirits. Fivers were not unknown in the Remove studies; but they were rare—rarer than ever in war-time. And Colonel Wharton had been rather too busy for letter-writing of late, having more important business on hand. But in the thunder of the guns in Flanders the old soldier had not forgotten the schoolboy at Greyfriars, and his first thought when he landed in "Blighty" was for him.

"It's ripping!" said Harry. "Ripping to know he's safe, and that he's coming here! Wednesday is going to be a red-letter day. You fellows are going to get in top-notch form to beat Highcliffe. And now we'll change the fiver—the Highcliffe chaps will be along soon."

"Hear, hear!"

"I say, you fellows—"

With one voice the Co. replied:

"Buzz off, Bunter!"

"I say, you fellows, my postal-order hasn't come," said Billy Bunter.

"Go hon!"

"Are you sure that letter wasn't for me, Wharton? I'm expecting a letter from the Front, from my uncle the general."

"Not your uncle the field-marshal!" asked Bob Cherry, with crushing sarcasm.

"Oh, really, Cherry, I don't think you ought to be jealous because my uncle's a general, and your pater's only a common or garden major—"

"Why, you fat duffer—"

"I shouldn't wonder if that letter's for me, as there's a fiver in it," pursued Bunter. "As a matter of fact, I was expecting a fiver from General Bunter. General Bunter generally sends me fivers. Perhaps I had better read the letter and make sure."

Wharton put the letter into his pocket.

"If you don't let me see the letter, Wharton, I can only conclude that you've opened my letter by mistake, and that that fiver is really mine!"

"You can conclude what you like, fatty," said Wharton. "If you'll conclude your remarks at the same time it will be a favour."

The Famous Five started for the tuckshop, and Billy Bunter rolled after them. A fiver had a fascination for Bunter; it brought before his eyes visions of unlimited tuck, of unnumbered jam-tarts and untold dough-nuts.

"I say, you fellows, I was going to stand you a feed if my postal-order had come! Under the circumstances, you can stand me one!"

"Bow-wow!"

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"I don't mind doing the cooking for you—"

"There isn't going to be any cooking. It's a cold collation," said Bob Cherry, rather pleased with that way of putting it.

"Well, I'm coming. The Caterpillar would like me to be present—you know how pally we are."

"Yes, we know—exactly," grinned Bob.

"You see, we've both got lots of titled relations—that's why I get on so well with De Courcy," explained Bunter. "I suppose you're laying out the whole of the fiver, Wharton? I think you'd better. It's—ahem!—patriotic to help on trade in war-time by spending money."

"Are you ever going to dry up?" asked Wharton.

"Oh, really, Harry—"

"Shurrup!"

The juniors crowded into the school shop, and proceeded to give their orders to the value of ten shillings. Billy Bunter snorted his contempt for that moderate limit. He was prepared to be patriotic to the extent of expending the whole of Wharton's fiver for the good of trade.

"Is that all you're going to get, Wharton?" he asked, as Mrs. Mimble made up the packages on the counter.

"That's the lot," said Harry.

"Then, what are you fellows going to have?"

"Eh?"

"That lot's about enough for me, you know."

"You wouldn't be satisfied with about a tenth part of that lot?" asked Harry.

"No!" said Bunter, with emphasis. "Certainly not!"

"Then it's no good your coming to the feed—that's the limit. Can you change this fiver, ma'am?"

"Dear me, no!" said Mrs. Mimble, shaking her head. "I could change a one-pound note, I think."

"Never mind—I'll ask Mr. Quelch to change it after tea, and come in and settle for the things then," said Harry.

"Very well, Master Wharton."

And the chums of the Remove carried away their purchases. Billy Bunter lingered in the tuckshop, blinking at Mrs. Mimble through his big spectacles.

"You can hand me out the same, Mrs. Mimble," he remarked. "Just the same lot will do for me—make it ten shillings."

"Where is the ten shillings, Master Bunter?" Mrs. Mimble knew the Owl of the Remove.

"Oh, really, ma'am! If you can trust Wharton for ten bob, I suppose you can trust me?" said Bunter indignantly. Mrs. Mimble shook her head very decidedly.

"Master Wharton has the money, and, besides, his word is as good as gold," she replied.

"Isn't my word as good as gold, or better?" demanded Billy Bunter warmly.

"I'm afraid not, Master Bunter!"

"If you decline to trust me for a paltry ten shillings, Mrs. Mimble—"

"Yes, I do. You owe me seven shillings now—"

"That's an old account," said Bunter peevishly. "You're always talking about that seven shillings, Mrs. Mimble, whenever I bring you an order! Suppose you make it up to an even pound—even money is always best—"

"Nonsense, Master Bunter!"

"Well, if you decline to oblige a good customer, Mrs. Mimble, I shall go down to Uncle Clegg's in the village when my postal-order comes, and you will lose my custom," said Bunter, with dignity.

And the Owl of the Remove rolled out of the tuckshop, leaving Mrs. Mimble quite undismayed by his terrible threat.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Caterpillar Surprises the Natives!

HOW do you do, Caterpillar, old chap?" Frank Courtenay and his companions came in at the gates of Greyfriars. Billy Bunter had stationed himself there to meet them. The Famous Five were busy in Study No. 1.

The Highcliffe party consisted of four—Courtenay, the captain of the Fourth; De Courcy, his chum; and Smithson and Jones minor, two members of the Highcliffe junior team. It was De Courcy whom Bunter addressed with especial effusiveness. De Courcy was the nephew of an earl, the brother of a baronet, and the relation of half the peerage, and so—according to Bunter—there was a sort of affinity between them. Bunter being famous also for his titled relations. But the Caterpillar seemed quite unconscious of the affinity.

"Toppin'," he said, looking at Bunter.

"So jolly glad to see you again!"

"By gad! Have we met before, then?"

"Oh, really, Caterpillar!" said Bunter reproachfully, while



Bunter leaped up, kicking the chair backwards, as Wharton poured the tea over his fat knees instead of into a tea-cup.
(See Chapter 2.)

the Highcliffe fellows grinned. "I—I say, how's Ponsonby?"

"I really forgot to inquire," said the Caterpillar. "Yaas, I'm comin', Franky!"

He quickened his pace a little, but William George Bunter was not to be shaken off.

He trotted on beside De Courcy, as affable as ever.

"Playing in the match on Wednesday?" he asked.

"Yaas."

"So am I!" said Bunter.

"By gad!"

"You're in the Remove team, Bunter!" exclaimed Frank Courtenay, in surprise.

"Rats!" said Smithson, who lacked the urbane manners of the Caterpillar; and Jones minor remarked, "Gammon!"

"Ahem! The fact is, my name isn't down," explained Bunter. "There's a lot of jealousy in footer matters, you know. There's a set against me in the Remove. But Wharton can't really leave out his best forward. I shall put it to him very plainly. His uncle's coming to see the match, too. He's sent him a fiver," added Bunter confidentially.

"Really?"

"Yes. They don't have many fivers in Study No. 1," said Bunter disdainfully. "I get lots myself. My pater's on the Stock Exchange, you know, and he does jolly well out of the war!"

"Very pleasant to hear that it benefits somebody," yawned the Caterpillar. "It must be grateful and comfortin' to the

fellows in the trenches to know that Bunter senior is doing well out of the war."

"Yes, mustn't it!" said Bunter fatuously. "I heard a chap grouching about the Big Push the other day, because his brother was killed. But my pater says it sent up prices in the money market."

"After which, there's nothing more to be said," remarked the Caterpillar, with a sarcasm that was wholly lost upon Billy Bunter.

"Of course not," assented Bunter. "By the way, I'm coming to tea with you. I came near standing the tea, but my postal-order didn't come. But Wharton's got a fiver in his pocket—if it is his fiver. The fact is, I was expecting a fiver, and Wharton refused to show me the letter, though I suggested to him that perhaps the letter was for me, and he'd opened it by mistake. I say, Caterpillar, old chap, don't walk so jolly fast!"

But "Caterpillar, old chap," walked faster still, and Billy Bunter was left panting behind.

Harry Wharton spotted the Highcliffe party from the study window, and came down to meet them.

They proceeded to Study No. 1, where the festive board was spread.

"I hear that Bunter is going to stagger humanity at footer next Wednesday," the Caterpillar remarked, as they sat down.

"Bunter!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Yaas. I sha'n't slang Franky any more for makin' me play footer if I can have the pleasure of seein' Bunter play."



"The fat duffer!" said Wharton, laughing. "He can't play the game for toffee. He's a shade worse than Coker of the Fifth."

"Oh, really, Wharton"—Billy Bunter blinked into the study—"you shouldn't run a chap down behind his back, you know!"

"Why, you—you—"

"I overlook it," said Bunter magnanimously, with a wave of his fat hand. "But don't do it again—Yaroooh!"

A loaf hurled by Bob Cherry caught Bunter on his ample waistcoat, and he went into the passage like a skittle. There was the sound of a loud bump, and a louder yell.

"Yow! Beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Johnny Bull kicked the door shut.

But a few minutes later it opened, and Bunter blinked in cautiously.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Scat!" shouted Bob.

"He, he, he!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What are you he-he-being about?" demanded Bob.

"Your little joke. He, he, he!" Bunter rolled in. "Of course, I'm coming to tea with my old pal Caterpillar—"

"Your old pal!" ejaculated the Caterpillar.

"Yes, dear boy."

"Then I must have met you before, after all!" said the Caterpillar, in a tone of conviction.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"As you're short of chairs, Wharton, I'll sit here," said Bunter, seating himself in Wharton's chair as the latter rose to handle the kettle. "I hope you don't mind the coal-locker?"

"Well, my hat!"

"Pass the ham-and-tongue, Johnny, old chap. Under the circumstances, Wharton, I sha'n't say anything more about my fiver," said Bunter affably.

"Your fiver!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Yes. I'm willing to say no more about it. Pour out my tea!"

Wharton glared at the Owl of the Remove. He was willing to suffer the Owl's obnoxious presence, but not his colossal nerve. He poured out the tea on Bunter's fat knees instead of into a tea-cup.

There was a fiendish yell from Bunter, and he leaped up, kicking the chair backwards.

"Yaroooh! You clumsy ass! Yoooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I believe you did that on purpose, you beast!" roared Bunter.

"Right on the wicket!" said Wharton cheerily. "Do you want any more tea, Bunter?"

"No—yah—yoop—grooh—no, you rotter! I refuse to stay to tea now!" roared Bunter.

"Hear, hear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I shall expect you to hand over my fiver!"

"You fat idiot!"

"I'm sorry to have such a scene before you chaps," said Bunter, blinking at the visitors. "But you'll agree with me that Wharton ought to give me my fiver—"

"Why, you—you—"

"I'm waiting, Wharton," said Bunter, with dignity.

Wharton seemed at a loss for a moment. Then he seized the Owl of the Remove by the collar, and jerked him to the doorway. His boot came behind William George Bunter, and Bunter travelled out.

The door closed on him.

This time William George did not return. The little party in Study No. 1 proceeded without the assistance of the Owl of the Remove.

The juniors chatted about footer, and especially about the match that was coming along, over tea, in merry mood. Both parties were looking forward to the first match of the season, which was to result in a tremendous victory—for somebody. As a matter of fact, Frank Courtenay had a good deal of confidence as to the result. He had made up a team at Highcliffe out of somewhat unpromising materials, but by dint of steady practice and good coaching he had brought them into first-class form. Wharton realised that the match would be a tough one; but he, too, had done his best with his team. There were few fellows in the Remove who were not anxious to distinguish themselves in that match—even Bunter was ambitious—but only the very best had a chance.

The Caterpillar settled himself in the armchair when he had finished tea, and listened to the keen footer talk with half-closed eyes.

It was wholly for Courtenay's sake that the Caterpillar had "bucked up" and taken to games; but though he could play footer, and play it well, he was, as he had dolefully confided

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to his chum, almost as inexpressibly bored by footer jaw as by war jaw.

But he endured it heroically, chipping in every now and then with a remark which showed that he was thinking of anything but the game in question.

"Let's talk about neckties!" said Smithson sarcastically. "The Caterpillar's fed-up with footer!"

"Not at all, dear boy," said the Caterpillar calmly; "I'm enjoyin' it. I'm only sorry Bunter isn't goin' to play on Wednesday. It would make the game so entertainin'."

"Very entertaining—for the other side!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Surprisin' the amount of energy you fellows have," said the Caterpillar thoughtfully. "Cricketin' and rowin' and runnin' and bikin' and boxin' and footer, and now you're takin' up ju-jitsu, I hear!"

Wharton nodded.

"It's a good thing to learn," he said. "Wun Lung has been giving us some tips. He's a Chinese, and knows it from beginning to end."

"Let's see how you do it," suggested the Caterpillar.

"Good!" said Courtenay. "I've been thinking of it myself."

"Right-ho!"

The table was pushed back, and Wharton stood up.

"Go it, ye cripples!" said the Caterpillar. "I'll watch you. I'm very good at watchin' anythin'."

"Wouldn't you like a turn?" chuckled Bob.

"No. I'll watch Franky. Go it, Franky!"

Courtenay smiled and came forward. Wharton had learned a good deal already, as he soon showed, for in a few moments Courtenay was locked in a grip he could not escape from.

"Good egg!" said Courtenay. "I give in!"

"I'll try that!" said Smithson.

Smithson tried, and was set down on the carpet almost unresistingly. Then Jones minor essayed, with the same result. Then three voices at once exclaimed:

"Go it, Caterpillar!"

The Caterpillar rose, stretching his elegant limbs.

"Oh, I don't mind!" he said. "I suppose you won't rumple my jacket, Wharton?"

"Not if I can help it," said Harry, laughing.

"Or disarrange my tie—what?"

"Can't answer for that."

"Well, I'll risk the tie. Life's full of risks," said the Caterpillar philosophically. "Here goes!"

Wharton held him, expecting to lay the slacker of Highcliffe on the carpet without an effort. To his surprise, he found himself held, and, greatly to his astonishment, his feet left the floor, and he was down. He blinked up at the Caterpillar in amazement.

"My hat!" he gasped.

"You spoofing bounder!" roared Bob Cherry. "You know the game!"

De Courcy smiled sleepily.

"Let's try again," he suggested.

They tried again, with the same result. Then Wharton shook his head.

"'Nuff's as good as a feast," he said. "You were spoofing. You're better than I am."

The Caterpillar stretched himself in the armchair again, smiling. The Greyfriars juniors regarded him very dubiously. Courtenay laughed.

"I didn't know," he said. "There's more in the Caterpillar than meets the eye."

And the juniors agreed that there was.

A little later the visitors took their leave, the Caterpillar in an especially good humour. The slacker of Highcliffe had "astonished the natives," and it amused him.

Harry Wharton & Co. walked down to the gates with the Highcliffe fellows, and about a minute after the study was deserted a pair of large spectacles gleamed in at the doorway.

Billy Bunter had returned.

"Beasts!" murmured Bunter. "Hardly a crumb left! Rotters! And that beast has got my fiver all the time! I've

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a jolly good mind to speak to Quelchy about it! My hat! What's that?"

The Owl of the Remove, blinking round the deserted study, caught sight of an envelope on the floor. It was Wharton's letter.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Missing Money!

"T A-TA, till Wednesday!"

The Highcliffe party walked away down the road, and Harry Wharton & Co. turned in at the gates.

"Surprising boulder, the Caterpillar!" Bob Cherry remarked. "Who'd have thought it?"

"I shouldn't," said Harry, smiling.

"The surprisefulness was terrific!" remarked Hurree Singh.

"I'd better ask Quelchy to change the fiver now, and settle with Mrs. Mimble," said Harry, as they entered the School House. "I think he's come in."

He felt in his pocket.

"Hallo! Where's that letter?"

"Not lost the fiver?" grinned Bob.

Wharton looked puzzled.

"No. But the letter isn't here. I shoved it into this pocket, with the fiver in it."

"Absent-minded beggar! Try another pocket."

Wharton tried all his pockets in turn, but the colonel's letter did not come to light.

"Dropped it somewhere," suggested Nugent.

Wharton nodded.

"Yes, of course—in the study, where we were wrestling."

He hurried up to the Remove passage, his chums following. In No. 1 Study he looked round for the letter, but there was no letter to be seen.

Wharton's brow wrinkled.

"Dash it all! Where is the blessed thing?" he exclaimed.

"Must be here somewhere," said Bob, looking serious.

"Search the whole room. A fiver's a fiver!"

"And Mrs. Mimble's got to be settled with. I promised her."

"The esteemed fiver cannot be far off," said Hurree Singh.

But the juniors searched the study in vain. After ten minutes, during which they had looked in every possible and impossible place, they stopped, and gazed at one another.

"Must have dropped it somewhere else," said Johnny Bull.

"But I couldn't have," said Wharton, perplexed. "I put it in my pocket in the tuckshop, and we came straight here. I went down to the door, but—but I couldn't have dropped it there—that pocket doesn't come open. It must have been while I was doing the ju-jitsu."

"Better look in the passage and on the stairs, all the same."

"Yes; but it's impossible!"

The juniors left the study, and searched along the passage. A good many of the Removites observed them, and, hearing that a letter was lost, they joined in to help.

Wharton did not mention the banknote; it was in the letter, and if the letter was found, the banknote was found. He had his own reasons for not proclaiming abroad that a banknote had been lost.

Vernon-Smith and Penfold and Tom Brown and Squiff and Kipps joined in the search, and several more fellows.

But it was in vain.

Between the tuckshop and the School House, and from the lower door to the door of No. 1 Study, there was no sign of the missing letter.

The Famous Five returned to No. 1 in a worried mood.

"I say, this is rotten!" said Nugent. "I'm glad you haven't mentioned the banknote. It would sound beastly to say we missed money after visitors had been here. Some rotter like Skinner or Snoop might make unpleasantness out of it."

"I thought of that," said Harry.

Bob Cherry looked startled.

"It isn't possible—" he ejaculated.

"Of course it isn't," said Harry hastily. "We know Courtenay and De Courcy too well, and Smithson and Jones are decent chaps, though we don't know much of them."

"Of course," assented Bob; "but it looks queer enough for ill-natured fellows to make a yarn out of it, when it comes out that the banknote's missing—because, where on earth can it have got to?"

"Somebody might have nipped into the study after we left," said Nugent. "We were away ten minutes, seeing those fellows off."

"Bunter!" exclaimed Bob.

"The Bunterfulness is terrific!" said the Nabob of Bhani-pur. "The esteemed fat beast has nosefully come in and collarfully taken the letter."

"I—I—I suppose so," said Wharton, after a pause. "But

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ONE
PENNY.

—but there's no proof, and if we mention this to Bunter, that means telling all Greyfriars."

"But he can't be allowed to keep the banknote if he's got it," said Bob warmly.

"No fear!"

Wharton wrinkled his brows. The suspicion of the juniors naturally turned on Billy Bunter.

"Suppose we find out first whether he came to the study after we went out with those chaps?" said Harry, after a pause.

"Yes, that's a good idea. The fat boulder will be in No. 7 now. Let's go and see him."

The Famous Five went along the passage to No. 7. They found Billy Bunter there—fortunately, alone. His study-mates, Peter Todd and Tom Dutton, were still on the cricket-field. The Owl of the Remove blinked at the juniors as they came in, with a discontented frown.

"Hallo! I thought it was Toddy!" he growled. "When are those silly asses coming in to tea? I want my tea!"

"Have you been in my study, Bunter?" asked Wharton.

Bunter sniffed.

"Have you missed a breadcrumb, or the tail of a sardine?" he asked sarcastically. "Go and eat coke!"

"Somebody sneaked into my study while we were gone down to the gates with Courtenay," said Harry.

"Did they? Well, I didn't see them!"

"You didn't?"

"Of course I didn't!" said Bunter peevishly. "I'm not in the habit of sneaking into studies, I hope!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob Cherry.

"The sneakfulness of the worthy Bunter is terrific!" said Hurree Singh, with a shake of the head.

Bunter waved his fat hand to the door.

"You can clear out of my study!" he said. "I don't want you here! If you've come to tea, you'll be disappointed! You refused to ask me to tea, though I was willing to let Wharton keep my banknote. Under the circumstances, Wharton, I withdraw that. I shall expect you to let me have my note!"

"You fat duffer!" exclaimed Wharton. "I've a jolly good mind—"

He restrained himself, and strode out of the study. The chums returned to No. 1. There they regarded one another.

"Now, where in thunder is the banknote?" said Bob Cherry.

"Goodness knows!"

"What's going to be done?"

Wharton looked worried.

"Blessed if I know! We can't afford to lose the note, and we can't screen a thief, if there was one. But—but if we say that the banknote is missing, it will look rotten, too! We can't prove that anybody came into the study in that ten minutes. And—and the merest hint about the Highcliffe chaps would cause no end of trouble. Skinner would take care they heard of it—that we'd missed money here directly they were gone. He would carry the tale to Ponsonby, and that cad would keep it up against Courtenay as if we suspected him!"

"That means losing the note for good," said Johnny Bull.

"I know. Better that than be put into the position of suspecting our guests, for that's what it would come to!"

"Dash it all, it does look bad!" muttered Nugent. "Of course, Courtenay and De Courcy are above suspicion. We don't know much about Smithson and Jones. And—and they were wrestling with you, and it must have been then that you dropped the letter. It would be a rotten yarn if it got out!"

"Shush!" said Bob Cherry softly.

He stepped quietly to the study door, and jerked it open.

"Oh!" came in a sudden gasp.

And Billy Bunter, who was stooping outside the door, tumbled headlong into the study.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter is Master of the Situation!

"B UNTER!"

"You spying cad!" shouted Harry Wharton furiously.

"Yow-ow!" Billy Bunter sat up on the carpet and blinked at the juniors. "Oh, dear! You startled me, you beast! I—I was just stooping to tie up my bootlace!"

"You were listening at the keyhole, you fat worm!" shouted Nugent.

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"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Scrag him!"

"I—I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter jumped up, and dodged round the study table. "I—I say, you know—hands off, you know! I—I'll jolly well tell the whole school about Courtenay stealing the banknote if you ain't careful!"

The Famous Five glared at Bunter.

They had been prepared to keep the matter a secret to avoid unpleasant comment, even at the cost of losing the colonel's fiver; but there was not much secret about it now. Billy Bunter knew, and that meant that all Greyfriars would know.

The fat junior realised that he held the upper hand, and his confidence returned. He grinned at the angry juniors across the table.

"Keep your wool on!" he said. "I'm not going to talk about it, you know, if you're civil! Shocking thing about Courtenay!"

"You silly idiot!" muttered Wharton. "Nobody has dreamed of suspecting Courtenay!"

"Oh! You think it was the Caterpillar, then?"

"Of course not!"

"Of course, it might have been Smithson or Jones," agreed Billy Bunter. "Which one of the Highcliffe chaps do you think it was, Wharton?"

"None of them!"

Bunter winked.

"Oh, don't try to spoof me, Harry, old chap! I'm fly, you know. You know that one of the Highcliffe fellows had the banknote. I heard all you were saying—quite by chance, of course. I was tying up my shoelace. You were wrestling with them, and any one of them could have whipped the letter out of your pocket. They knew you had a banknote; I told 'em. I dare say they're hard up. Shocking thing! He, he, he!"

"You cackling rotter!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Listen to me, you worm!" said Wharton, with knitted brows. "The banknote's gone, but we don't suspect the Highcliffe chaps!"

"Then who had it?" grinned Bunter.

"I think somebody must have sneaked into the study while we were gone down to the gates—you most likely!"

"Oh, you'll jolly well have to prove that!" said Bunter coolly. "And I'll give you a chance of proving it, too!"

He rolled to the door.

"Where are you going?" demanded Harry.

"I'm going to Quelchy."

"Wha-at!"

"You've accused me!" said Bunter, with dignity. "I can't do less than appeal to my Form-master! Quelchy will see justice done. He will inquire whether any Remove chap came into this study at that time. That means the whole affair getting out, but that's not my fault!"

"Stay where you are!"

"I refuse to do anything of the sort! I'm going to Quelchy! You've accused me, and my good name's at stake!"

Bob Cherry grasped the fat junior as he was turning the handle of the door, and jerked him back forcibly into the study. Billy Bunter collapsed on the hearthrug with a roar.

"Yah! Beast!"

"You're going to say nothing about this, Bunter!" said Wharton, between his teeth. "We don't suspect the Highcliffe chaps. But if there was talk about it, it would make a lot of unpleasantness. You're not going to say a word!"

"Yaroo!"

"You've shoved your fat nose into what doesn't concern you, and now you're going to keep it quiet! Understand?"

"Yow-ow!"

"If you say one word," went on Wharton, in tones of concentrated anger, "I'll give you such a larruping with a cricket-stump that you'll think life isn't worth living!"

"And then I'll smash you, you sying cad!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Do you understand, you fat fool?"

"Yow!"

"Give me a stump, Franky! I'll give him something now to impress it on his mind!"

Billy Bunter leaped up.

"Yaroo! Keep off, you beast! Yow-ow-ow! I'm not going to say anything, am I? Of course, I'll keep it dark!"

"You'd better, confound you!"

"Oh, really, Harry—"

"If you call me Harry, I'll shove your silly head in the coal-lecker!" shouted Wharton angrily.

"Then I'll jolly well tell the whole Form all about it!" said Bunter defiantly.

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"Oh! You—you—you—"

"I'm willing to be a pal, if you treat me decently," said Bunter. "I don't want to give the Highcliffe chaps away. I should be sorry to see Courtenay sacked for stealing. They ain't very particular at Highcliffe, but they draw the line at pinching banknotes. It would mean the sack for him. Well, I'll keep it dark to oblige you. But I expect you to treat me as a pal!"

"You—you worm!"

"If you call me names, Wharton, I shall have to refuse to have anything further to do with you, and then—"

"Oh, squash him!" growled Johnny Bull.

"I shall expect to be treated decently, if you want me to be friendly," said Bunter calmly. "I know how to treat a fellow well if he treats me well. If you like to ask me to tea on the rare occasions when I happen to be short of money, I shall not refuse. I might let you make me a small loan occasionally—not often—and, of course, I should square up immediately I get a postal-order. I shall expect to be given a fair show in the football. I'm fed-up with rotten jealousy and envy on that subject!"

The Famous Five looked at Bunter as if they would eat him.

The Owl of the Remove blinked at them quite cheerfully. He had the whip-hand, and he meant to use it.

If Bunter spread the yarn of the missing banknote, there was no difficulty in guessing how he would spread it. It would be represented that Wharton had missed the money as soon as his visitors had gone, and that he suspected them of taking it. Denials would be useless. It could not be denied that the fiver was missing, that it had been missed immediately after the departure of Courtenay & Co., or that Wharton, in whose pocket it had been, had wrestled with each of the Highcliffe fellows in turn.

The thing did, in fact, look very suspicious in itself, without the additions and amplifications Bunter was sure to add.

In their mind's eye the chums of the Remove could already see the outcome.

Skinner and Snoop and their cronies would seize upon the story with avidity. They would convey it joyously to Ponsonby at Highcliffe. Ponsonby would rejoice in such a weapon against Courtenay, his rival in the Fourth and his old enemy. True, the chums could declare that they did not entertain any suspicion. But the unpleasantness would be endless, and distrust and coldness were certain to ensue. A pleasant friendship would be broken off—it was inevitable. And could they, after all, declare that they had no suspicion? Courtenay and the Caterpillar, certainly, were above suspicion; but they hardly knew Smithson or Jones minor.

Somebody had taken the banknote. They could hardly be expected to conclude that the Highcliffians were necessarily innocent and a Greyfriars fellow necessarily guilty. But the slightest breath of suspicion would, naturally, give mortal offence at Highcliffe.

Billy Bunter held them, as it were, in the hollow of his fat hand!

It only needed his tattle to make an end of the friendship between the Famous Five and Courtenay & Co. of Highcliffe.

The chums of the Remove felt an almost irresistible yearning to seize the fat junior and bump him on the study floor.

But they refrained. It was a case that could not be met by corporal punishment.

He could guess quite clearly the thoughts in the minds of the Remove chums, and he was feeling elated. It was not often that the Owl had a chance of bringing the Famous Five to heel. He did not mean to miss the opportunity now that it had presented itself.

"Well, what do you say, Harry?" he grinned.

Wharton let the "Harry" pass without comment. Billy Bunter had it in his power to be as familiar as he liked now.

"You'll keep it quiet, Bunter," he said. "You'll get the licking of your life if you say a word. That's all!"

"If you put it like that, Wharton, I shall refuse to make any terms at all with you. If you ask me as a pal, I'll give you my word," said Bunter, with dignity.

Wharton made an effort.

"Well, I ask you," he said.

"As a pal?"

"Ye-es."

It was a bitter pill for the captain of the Remove to swallow, but he got it down. At any price, Bunter's mischief-making tattle must not be allowed to reach the chums of Highcliffe.

Bunter grinned affably.

"In that case, I'm your man," he said. "You'll find me all right, if you treat me decently, Harry."

The door opened and Peter Todd looked in.

"Is my porpoise here?" he asked.

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Why haven't you got the table laid, you fat slacker?" demanded Peter. "Buzz off!"

DELICIOUS TUCK-HAMPERS ARE GIVEN AWAY TO READERS OF THE "BOYS' FRIEND," 10.



"Look here, I'm going to smash him!" roared Johnny Bull, jumping up. Bunter dodged round the armchair. "Help!" he yelled. "Help!" (See Chapter 6.)

"I was just talking football with Harry," said Bunter loftily. "Harry's thinking of putting me in the Form team for the Highcliffe match on Wednesday."

"Oh, don't be funny!" said Peter. "Clear off! There's rashers to cook."

Billy Bunter did not need telling that twice. He rolled away in a great hurry. Peter followed him, and Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another grimly.

"Well, here's a pretty kettle of fish!" growled Johnny Bull.

"We seem to be under that fat beast's thumb," said Nugent, with a grimace. "What the dickens is going to come of it?"

"It's got to be kept quiet till we find out what's become of the banknote," said Harry.

"And perhaps that fat beast has it all the time!"

"It's possible, I suppose. Somebody's got it."

"But if we don't get the fiver, how the merry thunder are we going to pay Mrs. Mimble?" asked Bob.

"Borrow it from somebody, I suppose," growled Wharton.

"I think Mauly's come in. I'll try him. We can settle up on Saturday."

Lord Mauleverer, fortunately, was able to hand out a ten-shilling note to settle Mrs. Mimble's account. The problem of the missing fiver remained a problem. The possibility that Bunter had it all the time was intensely exasperating. But there was not an atom of evidence, and if the letter had been picked up in the study during the brief absence of the Co., it might have been picked up by anyone. But if the story was told, the chums knew well enough what the general opinion

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would be—that one of the visitors from Highcliffe had taken it.

It was possible that that was the case; but, again, there was no evidence. Such a suspicion, which could never be proved, would be bitterly resented at Highcliffe, and it would mean a break in the connection with Courtenay & Co. To avoid that, there was only one alternative—for the present, at least, the Famous Five had to remain under Bunter's fat thumb. It was not a pleasant alternative.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Begins!

"ROT!"
"Rats!"
"Bosh!"
"Piffle!"

Several juniors were making those remarks together, in a kind of chorus, when the Famous Five came into the Common-room after prep that evening.

Vernon-Smith and Squiff and Tom Brown and Hazeldene and Bulstrode and Bolsover major were all speaking at once, and their complimentary remarks were addressed to William George Bunter.

William George was standing with his fat thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat, an expression of fatuous satisfaction upon his podgy face. He seemed quite unmoved by the opinions so freely expressed by the Removites.

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"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" sang out Bob Cherry. "What are you chaps complimenting Porpoise about?"

"The silly chump!" said Hazeldene, laughing. "He says he's going to play in the match on Wednesday!"

"In the Highcliffe match, by gad!" said Vernon-Smith.

"And the howling ass looks as if he really believes it!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"I suppose there's nothing in it, Wharton?" roared Bolsover major. "Even you couldn't be such a silly idiot as to play Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Thanks!" said Wharton. "No, I am not quite such an idiot as that. Not idiot enough to play Bunter, any more than idiot enough to play you, Bolsover!"

"I knew he was lying," growled Squiff.

"I say, you fellows, it's a fact, you know! I've been talking it over with Harry, and we've agreed that all jealousy is to be dropped on this occasion."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you burbling about?" exclaimed Wharton angrily. "I might play you in a match with the Second Form, to have something to laugh at without risking the match. That's about the best I could do for you."

"If you don't want my services in the Highcliffe match, Wharton—"

"Well, I don't fathead!"

"Then I shall be compelled to withdraw my friendship," said Bunter, with dignity. "I can't pal with a fellow who runs me down as a footballer."

The Remove fellows stared at Bunter.

"What an awful blow!" ejaculated the Bounder. "How will Wharton rub along without Bunter's friendship? What will he do with his odd shillings?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Unsay those cruel words, Bunter!" urged Squiff. "Poor old Wharton's on the point of breaking down. See, he weeps!"

"Oh, really, Squiff—"

"Lean your head on my chest, Wharton," said Squiff sympathetically. "Weep and relieve your feelings! Perhaps Bunter will relent."

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

Billy Bunter surveyed the crowd of hilarious Removees with a lofty blink. Harry Wharton did not join in the merriment; he frowned. He realised that he was gathering the first-fruits of being under Bunter's thumb.

The Owl of the Remove, having the whip-hand, intended to demand a place in the Form team for the Highcliffe match, which would give him an opportunity to show all Greyfriars his wonderful powers as a footballer. Bunter, to do him justice, was far from realising that he was a hopeless duffer at the game, as at nearly everything else. He was not troubled with any doubts on that score.

"In fact, I shall insist upon a place in the eleven!" went on Bunter, with dignity. "Wharton can scarcely leave out the best player in the Form on such an occasion—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I shall refuse to be left out! Understand, Wharton? Either you play me, or I decline to treat you as a friend!"

"That settles it," grinned Tom Brown. "No choice left. The only question is, whose place is Bunter going to have?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why don't you bump the fat idiot and shut him up?" demanded Bolsover major, staring at the captain of the Remove.

Wharton made an irritated gesture.

"Let the fat fool gas if he likes," he snapped.

"Oh, really, Wharton! Does that mean that you're not going to play me on Wednesday?" demanded Bunter, with a threatening blink.

"Of course it does, you ass!"

"You decline to put me in the team?"

"Of course, fathead!"

"Then it's understood that our friendship's at an end. Under the circumstances, you can't expect me to keep your blessed secrets!"

"Shut up, you fool!"

"I'm not going to shut up! I—"

"Hallo, secrets!" exclaimed Skinner. "So Wharton's got secrets!"

"Mind your own business!" snapped Wharton.

"Spin us the yarn, Bunter!" howled Skinner, in great delight.

"Certainly! I refuse to—"

"Shut up!" roared Bob Cherry.

"I decline to shut up, Bob Cherry! However, I'm willing to give Wharton a chance. You'd better think about it, Wharton."

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Wharton's face was a study.

Either he had to shut Bunter up by agreeing to "think about it," or he had to hear the story of the missing bank-note blurted out in full Common-room.

The Removees were regarding him curiously. Bunter's hint of a secret had naturally made them curious.

"Well, what do you say, Harry, old fellow?" grinned Bunter.

"Squash him!" growled Johnny Bull.

"I—I—I—" Wharton made an effort. "I—I'll think about it, Bunter!"

"What!" yelled a dozen voices.

Harry Wharton turned and walked out of the Common-room. He felt that he could not have kept his hands off Bunter if he had remained. And he was anxious to get away from inquiries.

"Now, what does that mean?" exclaimed Vernon-Smith, in amazement. "Wharton can't mean that he's going to think about putting that fat idiot into the team!"

"No harm in thinking about it, so long as he doesn't do it," said Squiff. "He's pulling Bunter's leg, I suppose."

"I know there'll be a thumping row if Bunter goes into the team," snorted Bolsover major. "Why, I'm left out!"

"Oh, really, Bolsover! You're not quite the same kind of player as I am, you know."

"No; thank goodness for that!" growled Bolsover major.

"But what's the secret?" persisted Skinner. "Do you know some secret about Wharton, Bunter, and is that why he's going to think about putting you in the team?"

"Ahem! That—that was only a figure of speech," said Bunter. "Wharton's going to do this on grounds of friendship, you know."

"Oh, don't be funny! What have you found out? Has the Magnificent Wharton been playing the giddy ox, and have you found him out?" grinned Skinner.

"Yes, tell us the yarn," urged Snoop. "What is it Bunter knows about Wharton, Bob Cherry?"

"Go and eat coke!" was Bob's polite reply. And he tramped out of the Common-room.

Billy Bunter was keeping the secret in his usual way! Half the Remove knew now that there was a secret. And several fellows, at least, had already made up their minds to know what it was.

But Bunter was not wholly a fool. He knew that, once the secret was told, the power would have departed from his hands. And, chatterbox as he was, he was mum as an oyster on this occasion.

"The fact is, there isn't exactly a secret," he explained. "I may be keeping something dark for my pal Harry, or I may not. Wharton may want me to hold my tongue about it, or he may not. I wouldn't say a word about the Highcliffe chaps—"

"What the merry dickens have the Highcliffe chaps to do with it?" exclaimed the Bounder.

"Nothing at all!" said Bunter promptly.

"You mentioned them, you fat idiot!"

"Well, I might happen to mention anybody," said Bunter, with great caution. "I might happen to mention the Head, in a general way, without meaning that he had anything to do with it."

"Of all the born idiots—"

"But what has Wharton been doing?" demanded Skinner. Skinner had a charitable hope that he was on the track of a shady secret.

"Nothing at all, Skinner," said Billy Bunter.

"Then what has he asked you to keep dark?"

"Nothing."

"What are you keeping it dark for, then?"

"Oh, Harry's my old pal, you know!"

"Then there is a secret?" exclaimed Ogilvy.

"Not at all, Ogilvy!"

"You silly ass!" roared Ogilvy. "How can you keep it dark if there's no secret?"

"It's no good pumping me," said Bunter. "I'm not going to say anything. I know how to keep a thing dark, I can tell you! As a matter of fact, there isn't a secret at all—nothing of the kind. And I'm going to keep it jolly dark!"

And Bunter rolled away, feeling that he had dealt with the inquirers in a really masterly way. He left some of the juniors laughing, and many of them in excited discussion. Whether the obtuse junior was merely "talking out of the back of his neck," or whether he had really spied out something the captain of the Remove wished to be kept secret, was a puzzle. But one thing was certain—if Billy Bunter was played in the Highcliffe match, there would be only one opinion on the subject—that he was thus gratified because he knew some shady secret about the captain of the Remove. And the Remove would have something decidedly emphatic to say about that!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Yes or No?

HARRY WHARTON wore a worried look the next day.

He felt himself in a cleft stick.

He had been prepared to endure the infliction of Bunter's friendship for the sake of keeping dark the story of the missing banknote, hoping that the note would turn up sooner or later.

But Bunter's preposterous demand to be played in the Remove eleven worried him.

He consulted with the Co., who agreed with him that it was absolutely impossible to accede to Bunter's demand. Playing Bunter meant, in effect, playing a man short. And the match would be hard enough without that. And the club would have something to say about it. Wharton was skipper, and had a right to select the players he chose; but there were limits. If he played a hopeless duffer like Bunter the match would almost certainly be lost, and there would be general discontent, and probably rebellion, in the Remove. Bunter's chatter made matters worse. After what he had said in the Common-room, the Remove fellows could only conclude that Wharton played him because he was somehow under Bunter's thumb.

It was impossible! Not to be thought of!

But William George Bunter meant business.

It was his chance of shining in the Form eleven, and he did not mean to let it pass.

"What on earth's going to be done?" said Wharton, appealing to the Co. at tea-time in the study. "I can't play that fat idiot! We want to win!"

"Of course you can't!" growled Johnny Bull. "There would be a row! The fellows are all curious about it already!"

"But if I refuse?"

"Then the whole story comes out," said Nugent, "and it will look worse than ever for having been kept dark. Everybody will conclude that we know the Highcliffe chaps had the banknote, and have been trying to screen them."

"I wouldn't screen them if I thought they did it," said Harry. "But that's impossible! But I suppose it will look like that."

"Ponsonby will make a song about it at Highcliffe, and Courtenay will come over here for an explanation," said Bob, with a grimace. "What the dickens could we say to him? We know he didn't take it, but we're not certain about his friends. Somebody took it!"

"And, naturally, he would be waxy," said Nugent. "He would never visit us again. We don't want that. Bunter's got to be bottled up somehow."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is."

Billy Bunter ambled into the study, with an amiable grin.

"You didn't tell me you were having tea," he remarked.

"Haven't you got a chair for a visitor? I suppose you wouldn't mind sitting on the coal-locker, Franky?"

Nugent silently gave up his chair, and Bunter plunged into it with a grunt of satisfaction.

"Pass the grub, dear boys," he said. "My hat! Not much of a spread to ask a chap to! Still out of funds—what?"

"Yes!" snapped Wharton.

"I'll stand you something decent when my postal-order comes. You might fill a fellow's cup, Nugent, as you're standing."

Frank Nugent filled the visitor's cup.

"You don't mind if I finish the sardines—what?"

"Oh, tuck in and don't jaw!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Johnny! Bless you, I don't mind short commons once in a way!" said Bunter affably. "There's enough here for me, if you fellows don't want any more."

The Famous Five watched him in silence.

"Talking about footer," went on Bunter, with his mouth full, "I've been thinking, Wharton, that as I'm playing next Wednesday, you might want me to captain the team."

"What!" ejaculated Wharton.

"It's the first match of the season, you know; we want to start with a victory. It isn't really a time for you to swank, is it?" urged Bunter. "Better take it gracefully, and make room for a better man. I put it to you as a pal."

"I shall slaughter him soon!" murmured Bob Cherry, in a suffocated voice.

"We'd better have this out, Bunter," said Wharton.

"You've got a hold over us, owing to your caddish spying—"

"Oh, really, Harry—"

"But you can't play in the Remove eleven. It's impossible! The club would scalp me if I chucked away a match like that!"

Bunter blinked wrathfully at the captain of the Remove.

"More rotten jealousy!" he sneered. "It's a regular plot."

Well, I can tell you straight, I'm not standing any more of it. I'm playing on Wednesday, and that's settled. I decline to listen to any argument on the subject. Pass the cake!"

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EVERY
MONDAY,

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ONE
PENNY.

"You can't play!"

"If you mean that, Wharton—"

"I mean it, of course. Don't be such a silly ass!"

"I suppose you'll lend me your bike after tea, Franky?" said Bunter. "I've got to run over to Highcliffe."

"To Highcliffe! What for?"

"I'm going to see old Ponsonby."

Wharton clenched his hands.

"You mean you're going to spin Ponsonby a yarn, and let him spring it on Courtenay!" he exclaimed.

"That's my business," said Bunter loftily. "If you don't treat me as a pal, you've no right to ask favours of me. I dare say Pon would be glad to hear about Frank Courtenay stealing the banknote."

"You rotten porpoise, he didn't! Nobody thought so for a moment."

"Pon will think so," chuckled Bunter. "Pon will make a regular song of it. Courtenay will come over here raging. He, he, he!"

"You're not going to Highcliffe," said Wharton quietly.

"He, he, he!"

"Mind, we shall keep an eye on you, and if you start, you'll be yanked back by your ears!" said Harry savagely.

"Perhaps, on second thoughts, I may write to Pon," remarked Bunter. "Yes, perhaps that would be best."

The chums of the Remove regarded one another helplessly. Bunter might be prevented from visiting Highcliffe; but he could hardly be prevented from writing to Ponsonby.

What was to be done?

Billy Bunter was enjoying the situation. He knew that every fellow in the study was longing to kick him, but could not venture to do so. It was a new and elating experience to have the Famous Five under his thumb.

He finished the eatables on the table, blinked round to make sure that he had left nothing, and rose to his feet.

"Well, is it settled?" he asked.

"It's settled," said Harry.

"I'm playing on Wednesday?"

"No!"

Bunter's eyes gleamed through his spectacles.

"That's enough!" he said. He rolled to the door. Tom Brown and Bulstrode were passing, and Bunter called to them.

"I say, you fellows—"

Bob Cherry jerked him into the study by the shoulder, and closed the door. Billy Bunter blinked at him furiously.

"You rotter! Lemme alone! I'll yell—"

The door opened, and Tom Brown appeared. The New Zealander was looking surprised.

"Anything up?" he asked. "Didn't you call, Bunter?"

"Yes, I did! I've got something to tell you. I—"

"No, it's all right," said Bob. "Only Bunter's rot. Good-bye!"

He closed the door, and Tom Brown retired, greatly astonished. Bunter made a rush at the door, and was slung back again.

"Stay where you are, you fat rotter!" growled Bob Cherry.

"You can't keep me here, you beast! I'll tell the whole Remove as soon as I get out of this study!" roared Bunter.

"Look here, Bunter—" began Wharton.

"I'm not going to shield a thief! Courtenay stole the banknote, and I'm jolly well going to tell all Greyfriars, and Highcliffe, too."

"You fat rotter!" roared Bob Cherry. "I believe it was you all the time who sneaked in and pinched it!"

"You've got to prove that!" said Bunter, with a sneer. "I fancy a yarn like that won't hold water, just to screen your thieving chums at Highcliffe!"

"What are we going to do with him?" muttered Nugent. "The law doesn't allow us to suffocate the Hun."

Wharton drew a deep breath. It looked as if there was only one possible end to the matter. Either Bunter had to be allowed to start a scandal which would break for ever their friendship with Frank Courtenay, or he had to have his outrageous demands acceded to.

"I suppose it's no good asking you to be decent, Bunter?" said Wharton, at last.

"Oh, shut up!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"I don't want any of your cheek! There's too much gas about you, Harry Wharton. I'm fed-up with it!"

Wharton gazed at him speechlessly. This was quite a new tone for the Owl of the Remove to take with the captain of the Form. Bunter was improving.

"Look here, I'm going to smash him!" roared Johnny Bull, jumping up.

Bunter dodged round the armchair.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE RASCAL OF THE REMOVE!"

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



Bob Cherry saw his chance and took it, scoring with a long, high, dropping shot which completely baffled the goalie. (See Chapter 12.)

"Help!" he yelled. "Help!"

"Keep off, Johnny! Shut up, Bunter!"

"Help!" roared Bunter. "Murder! Fire! Help!"

"Great pip!" Vernon-Smith threw the door open, and looked in. "If you're killing Bunter, for goodness' sake kill him quietly! You'll have all Greyfriars here soon!"

"Shut up, Bunter! It—it's all right, Smithy! Clear off, there's a good chap!"

"But what the merry thunder——" exclaimed the Bunder, in astonishment.

"N-n-nothing! Do clear off!"

"Oh, all right!"

Vernon-Smith withdrew and closed the door. Billy Bunter blinked defiantly at the Famous Five. Their anxiety to hush him showed him the extent of his power, and he grinned.

"I'm going!" he said. "You touch me, and I'll yell for help and bring Quelch here! And unless you promise me a place in the team before I go, Wharton, you can regard our friendship as being at an end."

"Friendship!" gasped Wharton. "You rascal!"

"That finishes it. I'm going!"

"Hold on!"

"Yes or no, then!" said Bunter, in a bullying tone. "Don't beat about the bush! I've had enough of your silly rot!"

"I—I'll think of it."

"That isn't good enough. Yes or no?"

"I—I—I—"

"I'm waiting for your answer," said Bunter; "and I'm jolly well not going to wait long! I don't want any prevarication!"

"Prevarication!" gasped Wharton.

"Yes; that's what I call it. I'm a straightforward and honourable chap, and I expect a chap to be honourable and straightforward with me. I know you fellows ain't quite so

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particular as I am, in some things. But I want a straight answer. Yes or no?"

"I—I'll give you a trial in the team!" stuttered Wharton. "You can play in practice to-morrow, and — and we'll see what can be done."

"That isn't good enough. Do I play on Wednesday or not?"

Wharton looked at his chums. But they could not help him.

"Yes — unless the banknote turns up," said Harry at last.

"Honest Injun?"

"Ye-es!"

"Good enough! You can rely on me, Harry," said Bunter quite affably. "I'll see you through. I quite expect to score at least six goals. Rely on me to beat Highcliffe."

And Bunter rolled out of the study, chortling. He blinked back from the doorway.

"You're going to put my name up in the list?"

"I—I suppose so."

"Yes or no?"

"Yes."

"Right-ho!"

Bunter departed. Harry Wharton & Co. looked grim. The die was cast now, with a vengeance.

"I—I couldn't do anything else," said Wharton at last.

"I suppose you couldn't!" Bob Cherry drew a deep breath.

"The beast ought to be strafed. But there's a chance yet—the banknote has got to be found."

"I shouldn't wonder if he's got it all the time!" growled Johnny Bull.

"The probablefulness is terrific," said Hurree Singh. "But it will not be easy to make the esteemed rotter disgorge."

Wharton set his teeth.

"We've got to find the banknote somehow before Wednesday," he said. "But how the thunder are we going to find it?"

And that was a problem to which the chums of the Remove could find no solution.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Remove Are Wrathful!

"BUNTER!"

"Billy Bunter!"

"Shame!"

An amazed crowd of Removites gathered before the notice-board in the hall after lessons on Saturday morning.

On the board the list of the Remove eleven for the next match was posted up. The list, as it originally stood, had run: Wharton, Vernon-Smith, Cherry, Nugent, Bull, Linley, Hurree Singh, Field, Brown, Todd, and Ogilvy. The name of Nugent had been crossed out, and in its place was written, in Wharton's hand:

"W. G. Bunter."

The Removites stared blankly at the alteration.

Bunter's gas was evidently well-founded after all. The slacker and duffer of the Remove was a member of the Form team for the first match of the season!

There were plenty of fellows there who considered them-

selves entitled to a place on their merits. Such mighty players as Wharton, Vernon-Smith, Squiff, and Bob Cherry could never be left out of an important match. But for the rest, many of the Removites were quite prepared to suggest improvements. Micky Desmond and Morgan and Rake and Penfold and Hazeldene and Bulstrode were all good men, and keen to play; but they bowed to the decision of the footer captain. Lesser players, like Russell and Wibley and Kipps and Dutton, did not expect a chance in the first match of the season. Bolsover major, who was by no means a duffer at back, did expect a chance, and was disappointed. But any of the fellows named was miles ahead of Billy Bunter, and their indignation at the sight of his name in the list was natural.

They had been left out for fellows who were better players, or who happened to be in better form just then, and that was not agreeable; but it was fair. But to be left out for a fellow who was known to be the worst player in the Form was a little too thick!

The Remove captain could not pretend that he was playing Bunter on his merits. He could not say that Bunter was anything like so good as Russell or Kipps or Wibley, or even Skinner or Snoop or Stott. Even Lord Mauleverer would have been a better recruit. The Removites could scarcely believe their eyes.

Billy Bunter wedged through the group, and blinked at his name on the board with great satisfaction. Bunter was the only fellow there who had no fault to find with Wharton's amazing choice.

"What the dickens does it mean?" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "Has somebody done that for a joke?"

"Sure, it's Wharton's list," said Micky Desmond.

"Bunter in the team!" exclaimed Rake wrathfully. "That's the giddy limit! Wharton told me he'd thought of me, but decided to shove Ogilvy in, on the whole. That was fatheaded—"

"Oh, was it?" said Ogilvy warmly.

"Yes, it was; but a fellow could stand that. But if Nugent is out of the team, there is a place for me."

"For me, you mean!" remarked Penfold.

"Or me, rather!" said Russell.

"Anybody but Bunter!" exclaimed Rake. "It's too rotten! Wharton must be off his rocker!"

"I'm not going to stand it!" roared Bolsover major. "The club ought to kick up a row about this! We want a new skipper!"

"Wharton must have some reason," said Vernon-Smith.

"What reason could there be for playing a born idiot like Bunter, with a dozen good men to choose from?"

"Blessed if I know!" confessed the Bounder. "It's a mystery! It beats me!"

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

"You know what that fat villain was saying—he's got hold



"Gimme my note!" yelled Bunter, making a sudden spring towards the Bounder, who pushed him back unceremoniously. (See Chapter 12.)

of some secret about Wharton, and he's made him do this!" exclaimed Bolsover major.

"Oh, that's rot!"

"Rot, is it? Here's the fat oyster—we'll make him own up!" Bolsover major grasped Bunter by the shoulder and shook him. "You fat spoofer—"

"Ow-ow! Yow! Leggo!"

"How have you managed to wedge into the team, you cad?"

"Groogh! Leggo! I'm being played on my merits, of course!" gasped Bunter. "Wharton's decided to do the sensible thing. I think this jealousy is out of place, Bolsover."

"Better see Wharton about it," said Rake. "We're not going to stand it—that's a cert."

"No jolly fear!"

"Come and see Wharton!"

There was a rush of the juniors to interview the captain of the Remove. Harry Wharton was in the quadrangle. He was expecting the interview, and looking forward to it with uneasiness. For once his conscience was not at ease. It was necessary, it was imperative, that Bunter's silence should be bought; but he realised that, as footer captain, he had no right to buy it at this price. Steady practice for the next few days might make some improvement in Bunter's form, but it could hardly improve him to the extent of justifying his inclusion in the team.

The captain of the Remove could have carried off the matter with a high hand; but though Wharton was sometimes considered a little high-handed by some of the fellows, he was not inclined to be high-handed on this occasion. Unless he felt himself in the right he could not override others. And the

long and the short of it was that he was not in the right, and realised it.

There was a rush of the angry Removites, and Wharton was surrounded. A dozen voices shouted at him at once.

"What are you up to?"

"What do you mean?"

"Is it a joke intirely?"

"What's the game?"

"What does Bunter know about you, Wharton?"

This came from Skinner.

"Give him a chance to speak," said Rake. "Now, Wharton, we're all in the footer club, and we're entitled to an explanation."

"Yes, rather!" said Skinner. "And we're entitled to know what shady things our noble skipper has been up to that Bunter has found out."

"You can shut up, Skinner," said Wharton. "You're not a player. I'm willing to speak to fellow-members of the club."

"Well, go ahead!" said Rake. "I suppose you don't claim that you're playing Bunter on his merits?"

"Well, no."

"No, I should say not!" snorted Bolsover major. "You're leaving out good players to put that fat idiot in!"

"Yes."

"Oh, my hat!"

The juniors stared at Wharton. They had not expected him to own up in this direct way. They had been prepared for a lofty and overbearing manner.

The Removites were somewhat nonplussed.

"Well, that's candid, at all events," remarked Wibley. "But what are you putting the fat fool in for?"

"Yes, that's what we want to know. I suppose a captain's business is to pick out the best men," said Rake. "Of course, in a smaller match you give the second-rate players a turn. But in a match like this—"

"Bunter isn't a second-rate player," said Russell. "He isn't even tenth-rate. He isn't a player at all."

"What do you mean by it, Wharton? Do you really mean to play Bunter?"

"I—I am going to play Bunter, unless—unless something turns up," said Wharton haltingly.

"Well, that sounds jolly mysterious!" commented Morgan.

"And you think you ought to be captain—what?" demanded Bolsover major.

"Dash it all, Wharton, there's a limit!" said Bulstrode. "I don't want to shove myself forward, but I suppose you won't say Bunter's better than I am?"

"And what about me?" roared Bolsover.

"You're not in it, anyway, Bolsover," said Wharton.

"There's several better players than you."

"Is Bunter better?"

"Well, no!"

"Then what are you putting him in for?"

"The chaps have a right to an explanation, Wharton," remarked the Bounder, with a curious look at the captain of the Remove.

"I know that. And—and I can't give one," said Harry, colouring. "I can only say this—I've got reasons for playing Bunter, and if the chaps are not satisfied, I'm ready to resign at once. I've asked Nugent to stand out to make room for Bunter, and he's agreed—as a favour. I know it amounts to playing one man short in the match. But if I don't play Bunter, I don't suppose the match can be played at all!"

"What!"

"What the dickens do you mean?"

"I mean what I say. I can't explain any further; but unless I play Bunter the fixture is pretty certain to fall through."

"You're talking in blessed riddles!" exclaimed Rake. "Do you mean to say that it's in Bunter's hands to muck up the fixture if he likes?"

"Well, yes, it amounts to that."

"And he's going to do it unless you play him?"

"It comes to that."

"The rotten cad!" growled Rake.

"But how—we want to know how?" said Bolsover major. "I don't see how Bunter's got anything to do with the Highcliffe fixture."

"I can't explain," said Harry. "I know it's rotten. But I'd rather play the match a man short than let it drop, and I think you'll agree with me there. But if the club wants me to resign, I'm ready."

"Jolly good idea!" growled Bolsover.

"We don't want that, of course," said Rake quickly. "We know when we've got a good skipper. But it's jolly queer, and you must admit it."

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"I can't say any more."
"Then I call on you to resign!" hooted Bolsover major.
Wharton looked quietly over the crowd. Half the Remove were there.

"Most of the club are here," he said very quietly. "You can put it to the vote if you like. I'll stand by what you say. Hands up for me to get out!"

Bolsover major's hand went up at once, and Skinner's and Snoop's followed it. But no others were raised.

"You don't seem to have a majority, Bolsover," said Harry, with a slight smile.

The bully of the Remove snorted.

"I think you ought to resign!"

"That rests with the club, not with you! If the club chooses to trust me, queer as it looks, that's the club's business. If you fellows change your minds before Wednesday, you've only got to say so, and I'll get out, and you can elect a new skipper—Bolsover, if you like."

And Wharton walked away.

He left the crowd in a buzz. There was a great deal of excitement and exasperation, but the Remove did not want to lose their skipper. Wharton had to have his way, and his unexpected concession disarmed the fellows who were most exasperated. And, as Wharton had been drawn blank, so to speak, most of the fellows made up their minds to have something to say to Bunter—and it was certain that they would say it in exceedingly plain English.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Something Like Footer!

"COME on, you rotter!"

"Oh, really, Bob—"

"Are you coming?"

"If you're going to the tuckshop—"

"I'm going down to practice," growled Bob Cherry. "Are you coming, or are you such a ripping footballer that you don't need any practice?"

"As a matter of fact, I don't," said Bunter calmly. "You can depend on my being in ripping form on Wednesday—ripping!"

"Well, you're coming all the same," said Bob grimly. "If you're going to play for the Remove, you're going to learn the difference between a goal and a goalkeeper. Kim on!"

"Leggo, you beast! Ow-ow!" roared Bunter.

Bob Cherry grasped the Owl of the Remove by the collar, and rushed him down to the footer-field. The Remove fellows had gathered there for practice. Bunter arrived in a state of breathless protest.

Naturally, Bunter wanted to distinguish himself in the match, but he had not the least desire to lag at practice. His overweening vanity led him to believe that he would be quite all right without the necessity of taking trouble in that way.

But he was given no choice in the matter.

"You'll take centre-forward, Bunter," said Bob Cherry.

"That's the right shop for a player of your stamp!"

And the humorous Bob winked at Frank Nugent as he spoke.

"Oh, of course!" said Bunter loftily. "I quite expect to play centre in the match. But, I say, Bob, old man, I can't possibly play in these things, you know."

The Owl glanced down at his clothes as he spoke.

"Why not? Ain't there room in them?" asked Bob innocently. "There looks plenty. Franky and I could both get inside, and there would be still some room to spare."

"Oh, really, Cherry! I'm not a skinny idiot, you know."

"You ain't skinny, as far as that goes," growled Johnny Bull.

"I didn't speak to you, Bull, and I don't want any of your insulting remarks. I can't play in these things, Bob—I can't, really. Who ever heard of a chap playing footer in an Eton jacket and trousers?"

"But you aren't like the ordinary chap, Bunter, old son. You could play just as well in one kind of clobber as in another."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see what there is to cackle at, Bull," said Billy Bunter, the smirk which Bob Cherry's rather doubtful compliment had brought to his face fading away.

"There's always you!" replied the outspoken Johnny. The Famous Five might be more or less under Bunter's thumb for the time being; but if the Owl expected anything in the way of buttering-up from the candid Bull, he was destined to disappointment.

"I shall have to go and change," said Bunter, seeking any excuse to get away. The day was a warm one, and the prospect of sweltering at footer practice in ordinary garb under the charge of the energetic Bob did not appeal to Bunter in the very least.

"You can't, so that settles it!" said Bob firmly.

"Oh, can't I? We'll see about that! I'm going!" howled Bunter.

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ONE
PENNY.

"If you go, you don't play in the match," said Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry! That's not for you to decide, I fancy. My friend Harry put me in the team, so there can't possibly be any question about that."

"You and your friend Harry can scarcely play Highcliffe on your own," answered Bob drily. "You'd be in Queer Street if the rest of us refused to play with a fellow who won't practise. Get to your place, Bunter, and don't forget I shall be close behind you, so if you get slacking you can jolly well look out for squalls!"

With a groan, Bunter took up his position at the middle of the half-way line, with Nugent on one wing and Bull on the other. Bob Cherry was at centre-half behind the Owl. Bulstrode took his stand between the goalposts in front of them, with Ogilvy and Tom Brown at back, and Piet Delarey opposite Bunter at centre-half.

It was not, of course, an organised game at all—merely a kick-about affair—and no one but Bunter took it seriously. Bunter only did so because he foresaw clearly that he would be made to perspire. Billy Bunter hated being made to perspire.

Bob Cherry slammed down the ball at the Owl's feet.

"Now then, Bunter," he said cheerfully, "you kick-off, you know."

Bunter gave the ball the feeblest of pushes in Nugent's direction.

Frank was on it at once, and off down the field like a hare.

Bunter stood stock still.

"Now then, Bunter! Follow up!" howled Bob in his ear.

"I—I—I—oh, don't be so silly, Cherry!" said Bunter pceevishly. "I can't run like that, you know—not in these—"

"Not in these trousers!" grinned Johnny Bull. "But you've got to get a move on you, porpoise! Centre-forward ain't a stationary job—not quite!"

"Buck up, fatty!" hooted Bob Cherry.

"I—I— Yarooooogh!" roared Bunter.

Intentionally or otherwise, Bob had charged him full in the back, and Bunter sprawled forward on hands and knees. Meanwhile Tom Brown had whipped the ball from Nugent's feet, and had sent it far down the field with a lusty kick.

"Ow-yow! That was a foul, Cherry, you beast!" wailed Bunter.

"Not at all. A fellow can't foul anyone on his own side. It's only an accident when anything of the sort happens," answered the humorous Bob, keeping a straight face with exceeding difficulty. "Here, let me give you a hand, Billy, old son."

Grunting and groaning, Bunter allowed himself to be dragged to his feet. By this time someone had kicked the ball back, and Bull had sent in a hot shot, which Bulstrode dealt with neatly.

The ball came to Delarey. He tipped it over to Frank Nugent.

"Give Bunter a pass," he said. "He's got to learn to take them, I suppose."

"Learn!" snorted Bunter. "If I haven't forgotten more about footer than you ever knew, you beastly Boer—Yurrg! What did you do that for, Nugent, you silly ass!"

The pass had been quite straight, but rather higher than a centre-forward expects to get them. The ball smote Bunter hard on his fat left cheek, and it hurt.

"Your own fault entirely," said Bob severely. "You shouldn't talk so much, Bunter. You've got the ball now. Run it down and shoot at goal!"

Bunter looked down at the ball lying at his feet as though it were some strange instrument with which his acquaintance was very limited indeed—as to some extent was the case. Then he gave it a lunge which sent it a yard or two in the direction of the goal, and ambled after it.

He must have felt rather surprised when he caught it up again, to judge by the expression on his fat face. But if he was surprised, he was also encouraged. After all, dribbling seemed quite easy. So he gave the leather another feeble push, and rolled forward in its wake. But now he was approaching Delarey.

It did not appear to occur to Billy Bunter that the



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Afrikaner was at all concerned in the matter. His proper course was to dodge round Delarey—or at least to attempt it. Instead, he went straight at him, evidently anticipating that he would clear out of the road.

Delarey did nothing of the sort. He moved forward, and his shoulder took Bunter full in the chest.

"Ow-yow! Yarooooogh! What did you do that for, you rotter?" hooted the Owl. He had sprawled right over on his back. The charge had not really been a very hard one. When Piet Delarey put all his power into a charge something had to shift. But it did not need all that to tumble over Bunter, heavy as he was, for Bunter's equilibrium was never of the firmest.

Delarey stood with arms akimbo, and looked down at Bunter with the slow, half-cynical smile that Greyfriars had come to know so well.

"Well, Bunter," he answered coolly, "it isn't exactly an unheard-of thing for a centre-half to barge into a forward who's going hot-foot for goal, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Johnny Bull. "Hot-foot for goal is good! The porpoise never in all his giddy existence went hot-foot for anywhere but the tuckshop!"

Bunter lay on the grass spreadeagled. Already the perspiration was pouring in streams down his fat cheeks, and he gasped for breath.

"Help me up, Cherry!" he ordered. "Look here, Delarey, if you do that again— Oh, you utter idiot, Cherry! You've made me split my trousers!"

A rending sound confirmed the statement. It was not really Bob's fault that the accident had happened—though perhaps Bob's help had erred on the side of ultra-vigorousness—it was the Owl's own clumsiness. But the result was the same, for most certainly the trousers were split.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

Everyone was roaring with laughter. No one had the slightest sympathy with the unfortunate Bunter.

"Beasts!" he hooted. "I told you I couldn't play in these clothes! You'll have to get all round me, and give me a chance to get indoors without anybody spotting what's happened. If you don't, I'll—"

But they did. No one minded in the least acting as escort to Bunter in his parlous plight. The one thing in which they failed was in keeping that plight a secret.

So far were they from doing this that everyone they met on the way in was at once informed of it—and not in whispers! Billy Bunter writhed and groaned and protested and threatened, but to no avail.

It was with infinite relief that he reached the seclusion of Study No. 7.

"Beasts! Rotters!" he groaned, when his escort had departed. "But I'll get even with them yet! And they needn't think they'll choke me off playing in the match. I'll show them! It will be a different thing when I get my proper footer togs on!"

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder Takes a Hand!

"MAY I come in?" Vernon-Smith of the Remove looked into Study No. 1 on Monday after lessons. Harry Wharton and Nugent were there. They had just finished tea.

"Come in!" said Harry.

The Bounder came in, and swung the door to behind him.

"This is a jolly queer business," he began.

"What is?"

"About Bunter."

"Oh!" said Harry, and Nugent whistled a tune.

The Bounder looked from one to the other.

"Bob's been making him practise again to-day," he said.

"The way he plays footer would make an angel weep."

"I know it would!" growled Wharton.

"Yet you're putting him in the eleven for Wednesday?"

"Yes."

"I don't want to be inquisitive," said the Bounder. "But you'll admit that this is a matter that concerns us all."

"I've offered to resign!" said Wharton curtly.

"That isn't the point. Nobody wants you to resign. You've explained that somehow or other it's in Bunter's hands to muck up the Highcliffe fixture. The fellows take your word, but they don't understand."

"I can't explain any further."

"It looks like a licking for us if we play Bunter. Courtenay's team is at the top of its form. We've all talked to Bunter, and it's pretty clear that there's something fishy about the business. He knows some secret, and it's for the sake of that that you're putting him in the team, to keep him quiet."

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Wharton flushed.

"I suppose that's clear enough to everybody," he said. "I don't see what else is to be done, that's all. We don't want to quarrel with the Highcliffe chaps, and let the fixture drop for good."

"It amounts to that?"

"Yes; nothing less. Playing Bunter is the lesser evil, I think; but if the fellows aren't satisfied, I'm ready to get out. In fact, I'd rather resign than play Bunter, if it comes to that," said Wharton moodily.

"As I've said, nobody wants that. But suppose you explain what the matter is, and have my opinion on the subject? I don't know what the fix is, but there may be some way out of it, you know."

Wharton hesitated, and glanced at Nugent. The latter nodded.

"Well, I'll tell you," said Harry, after a pause. "It's understood that it's in the strictest confidence?"

"Certainly!"

Wharton explained concisely the affair of the missing bank-note. Vernon-Smith listened in amazement.

"Well, my hat!" he ejaculated. "So that's it? And you have no idea who took the banknote?"

"Not the slightest. I can't believe it was one of the Highcliffe chaps; but it looks as if it was. Lots of the fellows would think so, anyway. You can imagine Courtenay's feelings if any suspicion of that kind got about. He would break off with us, and the fixture would fall through. And—and I couldn't say that I was certain it wasn't one of his party. I'm not certain. I don't see why a Highcliffe chap shouldn't be suspected as much as a Greyfriars chap. But as they were guests—"

"I understand," said the Bounder, with a nod. "It's certain, anyway, that somebody had the banknote. You've looked for it, of course?"

"Everywhere! It's gone, and the letter, too!"

"You hadn't been outside the gates before you missed it?"

"No."

"Then it was lost within the gates, and either a chap here has it, or it was taken away by one of the visitors. Courtenay and the Caterpillar are as right as rain; but I don't know anything about the other two. But, of course, Courtenay would stand by them unless there was the clearest proof. And there isn't any evidence, let alone proof. And there are some rotters ready to make mischief if the story gets out. It's better to keep it dark, if you can afford to lose the money."

"I've made up my mind to that!"

"You could advertise the number of the note; but not without telling the whole story, of course. Did any of the Highcliffe chaps have a chance to collar it?"

"We were doing ju-jitsu, and I took each of them in turn. I must have dropped the letter then. Anybody might have picked it up. I don't think any of them did, but they might, of course."

"They knew you had the note?"

"Bunter had told them."

"But they didn't know you would keep it dark," said the Bounder shrewdly. "The natural thing would be to kick up a fuss, and let the police know the number of the note, if it didn't turn up. It would be jolly risky trying to pass it. Only a silly fool would do it. Even Bunter would have too much sense. Did Bunter have any chance of sneaking in and getting his fingers on it?"

"He might have. If one of the visitors didn't pick up the letter, it must have been lying here when we went down to the gates to see them off—about ten minutes before we came back."

"Any fellow might have come in and seen it," said the Bounder. "Only a cad would have picked it up and looked into it. That fits Bunter."

"Well, we thought of Bunter, but he says he didn't come into the study, and there's no proof that he did. And it's certain that he hasn't tried to pass the note."

"He wouldn't. He's not fool enough for that. He would be bowled out, and he knows it. But most likely he had it, all the same!"

"What should he want it for, except to pass it?" asked Nugent.

The Bounder grinned.

"To play the little game that he's playing now," he replied.

"To get you chaps under his thumb, with the threat of making serious trouble with Courtenay and his friends."

Harry Wharton gave a start.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed.

"He isn't quite rascal enough to steal, so far as that goes," said Vernon-Smith. "But he has a way of thinking any money is his that he can get his fingers on. I dare say he took the note for a trick in the first place, very likely to stick you for a reward for finding it, and then this scheme came

into his silly head. Ten to one Bunter had the note, and he's keeping it dark!"

"Might collar the cad and search him," said Nugent.

"N. G.! He would think of that, and he wouldn't carry it about him."

"Then I don't see what's to be done," said Wharton. "I had thought of Bunter already, but there's no way of bringing it home to him. And until the note turns up we can't afford to quarrel with him. It's simply impossible to let Courtenay hear the story—especially the way Bunter would tell it."

"Yes; I quite see that. But the matter's got to be cleared up somehow. I'll think it over, anyway," said the Bounder. "You can rely on my not talking about it, of course."

Vernon-Smith quitted the study.

"Smithy may be able to think of something," remarked Nugent hopefully. "He's a jolly keen chap."

"I don't see what he can do," said Harry. "I hope he can help, but I don't see how he can. We're under that fat rascal's thumb!"

But the captain of the Remove felt a little more hopeful, and he was glad that he had confided the matter to Vernon-Smith. He had great faith in the cool sagacity of the Bounder.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Wanted—a Fiver!

"IT'S rotten!" growled Peter Todd.

"Hullo! What are you grouching about now?"

"One sardine each!" grunted Billy Bunter. "If you call this war-time economy, Peter Todd, I can tell you I don't think much of it!"

"Tuckshop's still open," said Peter Todd cheerily. "You can go and buy anything you want, my fat tulip!"

"All those rotters are hard up!" growled Bunter. "They've got nothing but toast in No. 1; I looked in. Wharton had ten bob on Saturday, and he went and paid Manly, like a silly ass, and hadn't even a bob left to lend a pal."

Peter Todd looked curiously at his fat study-mate.

"You mean you wanted to screw money out of Wharton," he said, "because you've spied into some private affair he doesn't want you to gas about? Is that it?"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"If you had as much decency as a Prussian Hun, you'd keep out of the eleven on Wednesday," said Peter.

"I'm accustomed to this jealousy about my form as a footballer," said Bunter loftily. "I decline to take any notice of it."

Peter Todd grunted, and went on with his tea. Bunter discontentedly negotiated his solitary sardine.

"It's rotten!" he growled. "I wonder what silly idiot first thought of putting numbers on notes? Silly, rotten custom!"

Peter stared at him.

"Eh? I don't see that the numbers hurt, so long as you can get hold of the notes," he said. "What are you burbling about now?"

"Well, a chap might have a banknote that really belonged to him, and another chap might claim it out of sheer cheek," said Bunter. "Then, if he'd got the number, a chap couldn't pass it—his own note, you know, that he'd had from his own uncle, a general in the Army."

"You fat idiot!" said Peter, in measured tones. "Does that mean that you've been stealing a banknote, or what does it mean?"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Have you got a banknote?" demanded Peter suspiciously.

"Of—of course not! If I had, I shouldn't have one sardine for tea, should I? I—I was speaking generally, you know."

"It looks to me as if you've been up to some of your tricks," said Peter.

"Br-r-r-r!" said Bunter.

And he rolled out of the study, his frugal tea finished, to avoid further discussion, leaving Peter Todd very suspicious and dissatisfied.

"Hullo!" The Bounder met Billy Bunter in the passage. "Just the fellow I was looking for!"

"Going in to tea?" said Bunter affably. "I'll come with you, Smithy."

"I've had tea. Come into the study and have a jaw," said the Bounder.

Bunter grunted.

"I've got some tarts left," added the Bounder.

"I'm coming, old chap!" said Bunter, with great alacrity.

"Trot in!" said Vernon-Smith hospitably.

The Owl of the Remove rolled in, and devoted his special attention to the tarts.

Vernon-Smith eyed him curiously.

"Rolling in money, I suppose, Bunter?" the Bounder remarked.

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE RASCAL OF THE REMOVE!"

EVERY MONDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

"Stony!" grunted Bunter.

"I hear your pater's making no end of money on the Stock Exchange," said Vernon-Smith. "Don't you get any of it?"

"Oh, I have lots of remittances, of course—postal orders chiefly. But I happen to be stony just now. As a matter of fact, I'm expecting a postal-order this evening," said Bunter eagerly. The unaccustomed friendliness of the Bounder encouraged him to trot out that old yarn again. "If you'd care to cash it for me, Smithy—"

"How much?"

"Five bob—I mean ten!"

"Right-ho! Bring it to me when it comes."

Bunter's face fell.

"I suppose you can trust me, Smithy? You might cash it in advance."

"The fact is, I'd be glad to give you the change for a fiver if you had one," remarked the Bounder. "I could do with a fiver, and I've got some currency notes I'd like to get rid of. If you get a fiver from your pater, you bring it to me, won't you?"

"A—a fiver, Smithy?"

"Yes. Next time you have one, don't take it to the tuckshop; bring it to me," said Vernon-Smith.

Billy Bunter finished the last tart, and blinked at the Bounder.

"The—the fact is, I'm expecting a fiver from my pater," he remarked, after a long pause. "I—I shouldn't care to exchange it at the shop—ahem! Some of the fellows I owe a few bob to would expect me to settle up. I intend to keep my fiver dark when it comes, Smithy."

Smithy's eyes glistened.

"You can't be too careful," he said.

"Yes; just what I think. If you'd change it for me, without mentioning the matter to anybody, especially Wharton—"

"Why Wharton especially?"

"Well, I owe him some tin," said Bunter. "He would expect me to settle out of my fiver, but I'd rather leave it till I get my postal-order."

"I see," assented the Bounder. As a matter of fact, he saw a good deal more than Bunter guessed. The obtuse Owl of the Remove was very much like wax in the hands of the astute Bounder.

"Well, I'll let you have the fiver when it comes," said Bunter—"on condition, of course, that you don't mention it to a soul—not a single soul."

"If you get a fiver by post, and bring it to me to change for you, I won't say a word about it," said Vernon-Smith.

The Bounder was quite prepared to keep that promise. If Bunter got a fiver by post, it would be his own, and Smithy would have no object in mentioning it. If he produced a fiver belonging to somebody else, from some place of concealment, that was quite a different matter.

"Right-ho!" said Bunter, his eyes glistening behind his spectacles. "Not a word about this, of course. I—I'm afraid of those chaps wanting me to settle up, you know. The fiver may be here to-night."

"Good!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Any more tarts?" asked Bunter, blinking round.

"Sorry! None!"

Billy Bunter took his departure.

The Bounder grinned. He knew in whose possession the missing fiver was now, and it only remained to bring it to light.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

No Change For Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER was at practice with the Remove eleven again on Tuesday. He didn't want to practise, but it was not a question of what Bunter wanted. Bob Cherry marched him down to Little Side by the collar, and Bunter was kept fagging away till he was ready to tumble over. Perhaps Bob hoped that the Owl would get fed-up with footer, and resign his place in the team.

If so, he was disappointed. It was Bunter's unique opportunity to shine as a member of the Remove team in an important match, and nothing would have induced him to gratify the rest by getting out.

He growled and grumbled over the practice, but he held to his purpose.

Meanwhile, the Bounder was waiting.

Bunter had not produced the fiver.

If Vernon-Smith had urged him on the subject, Bunter's suspicions would have been awakened at once, and the fiver would never have come to light. Smithy could only wait, and hope that the fat junior's greed would get the better of

his caution. Billy Bunter was yearning to get hold of five solid quids in exchange for what was to him a useless scrap of paper, owing to the troublesome system of numbering notes! Bunter had probably satisfied himself by this time that the colonel's fiver was really his. But a lingering dread of the consequences held him back, and as yet the banknote was not forthcoming.

The Bouncer, repressing his impatience, made no allusion to the matter, and indeed appeared to forget all about it. He was pretty certain that sooner or later the Owl would come along with the fiver. The thing that mattered most was whether that would be before the Highcliffe match came off.

Frank Courtenay came over on his bicycle on Tuesday, and he found the Remove players at practice, and Bunter with them. The Highcliffe junior captain looked surprised as he watched Bunter's wonderful display. He soon learned that Bunter was a member of the team, and he was naturally astonished.

"Looks like a ripping recruit for the Form eleven, doesn't he?" said Bolsover major. "Did you ever see anybody kick like that?"

Courtenay smiled.

"No, I don't think I ever did," he admitted.

He joined Wharton outside the pavilion.

"I hear you've got a new recruit," he remarked.

"Ye-es," said Harry, colouring uncomfortably. "It's not exactly settled, but Bunter may have a chance in the match to-morrow."

Billy Bunter rolled off the pitch, and gave Courtenay an affable nod and a breathless gasp at the same time.

"I'm playing against you to-morrow," he said. "Look out for squalls, you know!"

"We will," said Courtenay, with a smile.

"Wharton's decided to do the sensible thing at last," said Bunter. "You'd hardly think that I'm about the best player in the Remove, would you, considering the way I've been kept out of the team?"

Billy Bunter intended to bestow the pleasure of his conversation on the Highcliffe junior till he went; but he was disappointed. There was no telling what the chattering Owl might let out, and he found himself dragged back to the pitch, and kept at practice till Courtenay cycled away. Courtenay departed in a state of considerable astonishment, unable to imagine why Wharton should include such a hopeless duffer in his team. He could not see any reason for it; and the Co. did not intend to enlighten him.

Bunter crawled back to his study after the practice, and spent an hour or more puffing and blowing in the armchair. But his determination was unshaken.

Peter Todd took him to task in the study that evening.

"I don't know why Wharton's put you in, Bunter," said Peter quietly, "but it's plain enough that it's against his will. You're playing some dirty trick. You know Colonel Wharton is coming down to see the match. Won't you be decent, and keep out of the team?"

Bunter sniffed.

"Nugent's given you his place," went on Peter. "I don't know why he's done it. But you ought to let him have it back. You see that."

"I don't see anything of the sort! I suppose you're afraid that I shall put you in the shade?" sneered Bunter. "It will be known after to-morrow who's the champion footballer of this study. Well, you'll have to stand it, Toddy. I'm not going to hide my light under a bushel, I can tell you!"

Peter seemed to breathe with difficulty for a moment.

"What hold have you got over Wharton?" he asked. "What does it all mean?"

"Better ask Wharton!" grinned Bunter. "The fact is, he's decided to do the right thing. It's time he did, I must say that."

"Do you know that every chap in the Remove despises you for what you're doing, and that it's the talk of the Form?"

"I know there's a lot of jealousy. I despise it!"

"I suppose it's no good talking to you?"

"All the fellows have been jawing me," said Bunter calmly. "They've been calling me all sorts of names. I'd lick 'em all round, only—I don't want to be put off my form for the match."

"Look here, Bunter, I've had a tip of five bob from Uncle Benjamin. Will you take it, and stand out of the match?"

"No, I won't! Blow your money!" said Bunter independently. "I've got lots of tin, if I choose."

And Peter Todd gave it up.

The Bouncer fully expected Bunter to drop into his study that evening for change for the fiver. But the Owl did not appear. Eager as he was to finger Smithy's currency notes, a lingering sense of caution kept him back. In the dormitory that night the Bouncer looked at him with a glitter in his eyes. How long was the fat rascal going to resist the bait?

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The next day was the day of the match.

Vernon-Smith joined Bunter in the quad before breakfast, to give him an opportunity to approach the subject of the fiver. But the Owl of the Remove did not take advantage of it.

The Remove went in to morning lessons.

After lessons the Bouncer strolled out with Bunter. He was getting desperate now. Unless the banknote came to light before the game started, Bunter would play in the match; there was no preventing that. Harry Wharton had given up hope now. He had felt some faith in the Bouncer's sagacity, and he had ascertained the number of the note from his uncle, and given it to Vernon-Smith. But nothing had come of it. He resigned himself to the prospect of playing Bunter in the Remove eleven. He had told Bunter that he should play, unless the missing note came to light before the match; and he had to keep his word. Only the discovery of the note would make it possible for him to exclude the Owl from the team; and that seemed very unlikely to happen now.

But the Bouncer was not at the end of his resources. Sooner or later Bunter's greed would overcome his caution, and the Bouncer intended that it should be sooner and not later. There was nothing for it but to approach the subject in the most diplomatic way possible.

"By the way, did you get that fiver, Bunter?" the Bouncer remarked carelessly. "You remember mentioning the other day—I think you were expecting one."

"Ye-es," said Bunter, hesitating. "You haven't mentioned it to anybody, Smithy?"

"No. Didn't you ask me not to?"

"You see, the fellows would come on to me for some little loans——"

"Of course they would."

"And—and I'd rather leave settling up till I get a postal-order I'm expecting," said Bunter, blinking watchfully at the Bouncer.

"That's your bizney," said Vernon-Smith carelessly. "If you get a fiver by the next post, I sha'n't say a word."

"Good! I—I dare say it will come by the midday post," said Bunter. "It really ought to be here by dinner-time."

"Well, if it's here then, I'll change it," said Vernon-Smith. "After that, I can't say. I've got a bill to pay this afternoon—five pounds to my tailor."

"I—I say, I—I was depending on you to change it, you know!" said Bunter, in dismay.

"Can't keep money hanging about for ever," said the Bouncer. "I've got to pay my tailor. I dare say somebody else will change your fiver if it comes too late. Mrs. Mimble might."

"No, she couldn't change it for Wharton—I—I mean, she couldn't change a fiver for Wharton when he asked her," stammered Bunter. "I—I'd really rather you did it. I—I think it will come by the midday post. In fact, I'm sure of it!"

"Well, if it does, bring it to my study after dinner."

"Right-ho! I will!"

The Bouncer walked away, and Bunter went into the house looking very thoughtful. Harry Wharton joined Vernon-Smith in the quad.

"Any chance?" he asked.

"Lots!"

Wharton brightened up.

"Have you found anything out?"

"I can't tell you; I've said I'd say nothing," said the Bouncer. "I can only say that it's ten to one you don't have to play Bunter this afternoon."

"Good egg! If you get us out of this fix, I sha'n't forget it, Smithy!"

"I think it will be all right."

And they went in to dinner, Wharton in a much more cheerful mood. After dinner the Bouncer went to his study. He waited there in keen impatience. He had made it clear to Bunter that it was his last chance of changing the fiver secretly. Surely the young rascal would not allow the last opportunity to pass? But there was still a doubt; and Smithy was greatly relieved when he heard Bunter's step in the passage.

The Owl of the Remove came into the study, closing the door after him.

Vernon-Smith affected to be very busy. He glanced up carelessly.

"Hallo! What do you want?" he asked.

"I—I say, Smithy—it's come!"

"What's come?"

"My fiver!"

"Oh, I see! You wanted me to change it for you, didn't you?"

"Ye-es. And—and not a word about it, you know."

"My dear chap, I've already promised not to say a word about any fiver your people sent you."

DELICIOUS TUCK-HAMPERS ARE GIVEN AWAY TO READERS OF THE "BOYS' FRIEND," 1⁰.

"All serene! Got the change?"

Vernon-Smith opened a pocket-book, and showed a wad of currency notes. But he did not take any out.

"Fiver first," he said tersely.

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"I know you, you see! You're not collaring my currency notes, to tell me afterwards that you're only expecting a fiver by next post," grinned the Bounder.

"I've got it, you fathead!" Bunter fumbled in his pocket.

"There you are. Now hand over the change!"

The fat junior laid a five-pound note on the table. Vernon-Smith's eyes glittered. There was a sound of merry voices outside in the quadrangle. The Highcliffians had arrived, and Harry Wharton was greeting Courtenay & Co.

Vernon-Smith picked up the note, and examined it attentively. Bunter blinked at him uneasily.

"It's a good one!" he snapped.

"Yes, I can see that."

"Well, hand over the change, then; I've got to get off. They'll be waiting for us on the ground."

"Before I hand over the change, I want to know whether this note is yours," said the Bounder calmly.

"Eh? Of—of course it's mine!"

"Where did you get it?"

"It—it came by post, of course."

"The midday post?"

"Ye-e-es. Gimme the change!"

"And it's really your own?" grinned the Bounder.

"Yes, I tell you!" hooted Bunter.

"Then they've made a very queer mistake at the Bank of England!"

"Eh?"

"Never heard of such a thing before," said the Bounder.

"Queer mistake, to issue two notes with the same number—what?"

"The—the same number!" stuttered Bunter. "Wharrer you mean?"

"Only that this note happens to bear the same number as the note that was lost in Wharton's study last week," said the Bounder quietly.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Services Are Not Required!

BILLY BUNTER blinked at Vernon-Smith, his eyes almost bulging through his glasses, his fat jaw dropping.

For a moment or two he seemed stricken speechless. Then he made a sudden jump.

"Gimme my note!"

The Bounder pushed him back unceremoniously.

"Not quite!" he smiled. "I'm going to know whose note this is before I part with it."

"It's mine!" yelled Bunter.

"It's the same number as Wharton's note."

"Wharton never had a note. There wasn't one lost in Wharton's study. What do you know about it, anyway?"

"Wharton told me."

"He—he told you!" gasped Bunter. "Why, he was keeping it dark; he wasn't going to let anybody know that there ever was a note! I—I didn't know he'd told you. You—you rotter, you didn't tell me he'd told you!"

"You wouldn't have produced the stolen note if I had!" grinned the Bounder.

"Give it to me!" roared Bunter.

"Bow-wow!"

Billy Bunter clenched his fat fists, and glared at the Bounder. He was almost on the point of making a frontal attack. He was only restrained by the knowledge that the Bounder could have knocked him spinning with one hand.

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ONE
PENNY.

"Oh, you rotter!" he gasped.

"You may as well own up," said Vernon-Smith. "You stole this note from No. 1 Study after the Highcliffe fellows were there last week."

"I—I didn't! It's my note. It was sent to me, and Wharton opened the letter by mistake, and kept the note. He refused to show me the letter, and I took that as proof!" gasped Bunter.

"So this is the note?"

"Well, if the number's the same, it must be, you know. But it's really mine. I'm certain it was meant for me."

"We'll see what Wharton has to say about that."

"You promised not to tell anybody about it!" yelled Bunter, in alarm.

"I promised not to tell anybody about a fiver you got from your people," said Vernon-Smith. "I'm going to keep that promise. I didn't promise not to say anything about a fiver you stole from Wharton's study."

"You rotter! You knew I had it, and you've been spoofing me!" gasped Bunter.

The Bounder nodded calmly.

"Exactly," he assented.

He put his head out of the study window, and called to a junior in the quad.

"Kipps, old chap, ask Wharton to come here, will you? It's important."

"Right-ho!" called back Kipps.

"I—I say, Smithy." Bunter was in a flutter of dread and apprehension now. "I—I say, keep it dark, you know! They—they think the Highcliffe chaps had it, and—and I'll go halves with you!"

"Thanks! I'm not a thief!"

"I'm not a thief, either, you beast!" howled Bunter indignantly. "Do you think I'd have touched the note if it wasn't mine? It is mine, in a way, anyhow. Besides, I only took it for a joke at first, and then, to make him give me a chance in the match—for the sake of the school, of course. If—if you show it to him, he won't want to play me, and then Highcliffe will beat us!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Bounder.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Gimme my note!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The study door opened, and Harry Wharton came in. He looked eagerly at the Bounder.

"There's your note," said Vernon-Smith. "Bunter helped himself to it—thinking that your uncle really intended to sent it to him, of course. Otherwise, he wouldn't have touched it—would you, Bunt?"

"Of course not," said Bunter. "I hope I'm honest."

"My hat! You must be a sanguine chap, if you hope that," grinned the Bounder. "Well, there's the note, Wharton."

Harry Wharton took the fiver, and his eyes gleamed as he fixed them on the Owl of the Remove. Bunter backed round the table. He did not like the look in Wharton's eyes.

"You young scoundrel!" said Wharton, in measured tones. "You sneaked into my study, as I suspected, and found my letter on the floor?"

"You—you see, I—I—"

"You stole the letter as well as the note. Give me the letter!"

"I—I was going to give it to you, really," mumbled Bunter.

"Only I—I happened to burn it, you know. I was afraid it might turn up—I—I mean, I dropped it into the fire entirely by accident."

"And you pretended to believe that a Highcliffe chap had taken it, and held it over my head that you would start a

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scandal about Courtenay and his friends!" said Harry, his voice trembling with anger.

"I—I— That was only my sense of duty, you know."

"What?"

"It was up to me, as a first-class footballer, to play for Greyfriars, you know. You wouldn't have put me in the team if I hadn't made you—now, you know, you wouldn't," said Bunter, in a tone of patient expostulation. "Be reasonable, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Bounder.

"I ought to go to Quelchy and report this," said Wharton.

Bunter gave a howl.

"You—you silly ass! Why, Quelchy would think I was a thief!" he yelled.

"Well, what are you?"

"Oh, really, Wharton! Look here, I'm willing to admit that I was mistaken!"

"Mistaken?"

"Yes; and that the note is really yours," said Bunter. "I give up my claim to it!"

"Your claim?" said Wharton dazedly.

"Yes. I can't say fairer than that. And now I should prefer the whole matter to drop!"

Wharton looked at the Owl of the Remove, at a loss for words. Bob Cherry put his head into the study.

"Your uncle's come, Wharton!"

"Oh, good!"

Harry Wharton hurried out of the study, without bestowing a further thought on Bunter. The Bounder chuckled.

"It seems to me that you've got off pretty cheaply, you fat scoundrel!" he remarked.

"I don't see what you're calling me names for, Smithy! I'm jolly glad I'm not an unscrupulous chap like you, at any rate!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"I've got no time to jaw to you, either! It's time I was on the ground!"

"On—the ground? Do you still think you're going to play in the match?"

"Of course."

Bunter rolled out of the study, to hurry down to Little Side. The Bounder chuckled, and followed him. If Bunter still expected to play in the Highcliffe match, he was doomed to a woeful disappointment.

Colonel Wharton was on Little Side, talking to his nephew. The bronzed old soldier had arrived in time to see the match begin. It was time to start; but Courtenay and his men politely waited, to give Wharton time to talk to the gentleman in khaki.

The colonel took a seat outside the pavilion when the two skippers tossed for choice of ends. Wharton won the toss.

It was just then that Billy Bunter rolled up breathlessly.

"I'm all ready, Harry, old man!" he said, in quite affectionate tones.

Wharton simply stared at him.

"Ready? What on earth for?" he asked, looking down at Billy Bunter's fat limbs, clad in footer shorts and stockings, as though he could not for the life of him imagine why they should be so clad.

"Oh, really, Harry! Am I going to play centre-forward for the team to-day, or am I not? That's the question, and—"

"The answer is—not!" snapped Harry Wharton, in tones that left no doubt as to his meaning.

Even the obtuse brain of Billy Bunter almost saw that the decision was final. He did, indeed, open his mouth to protest; but Wharton turned away to lead his men on to the field, and Bunter saw Frank Nugent among them, and realised the hard, stern truth.

He blinked and gasped, really indignant, feeling that he had been grossly defrauded. He had not gathered that the recent scene in the study had once and for all settled his chance of playing against Highcliffe; but he began to see it now.

"Bob! I say, Bob, old man!"

Bob Cherry turned, with an unusually grim look on his sunny face.

"What is it, Bunter?" he snapped. "I'm in a hurry!"

"W-w-w-harton sus-sus-says I'm not to play!"

"My hat! What did you expect, you fat spoofer?"

"Bub-bub-but—"

"Oh, clear off, or I'll hoof you!" growled Bob.

Bunter still lingered. Bob suited the action to the word.

"Ow-yow! Yarooooogh! Beast!" howled Bunter, and he rolled away disconsolately.

No better match than that had ever been played between Greyfriars and Highcliffe. The Remove team were in great form, and in great spirits now that they were rid of their wonderful recruit. But Courtenay and his men were also

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on the top of their form. The Caterpillar threw off every vestige of slackness, and played up like a champion.

It was he who scored the first goal of the match. Ten minutes later Nugent equalised with a first-class screw shot from the wing. In the second half Harry Wharton and Frank Courtenay each scored twice, and with only five minutes to go the score was three all.

Both sides piled in desperately, and in the very last minute of the game Bob Cherry saw his chance, and took it, scoring with a long, high, dropping shot from nearly forty yards out, which completely baffled and beat the goalie.

The bronzed old colonel, who had watched every movement of the game with absorbing interest, clapped his brown hands heartily, and joined in the thunderous cheering that greeted the victors as they came off the field. The Remove rejoiced with an exceeding great joy in the result—a result which must have been very different, as everyone realised, had the captain of the Form team been still Under Bunter's Thumb.

(Don't miss "THE RASCAL OF THE REMOVE!" next Monday's grand story of Harry Wharton & Co., by FRANK RICHARDS.)

BRIEF NOTICES

To Readers of THE "MAGNET" LIBRARY.

Correspondence, Leagues, Etc.

Laurence Hutchinson, 8, Danesbury Terrace, Darlington, would be glad to correspond with other boy readers.

More members are required for the Athletic Boys' Club. Will readers interested please call or write to the Hon. Sec. A.B.C., 89, Kelvin Road, Highbury Park, London, N. Chief objects of the club—running, swimming, rowing, jumping, and boxing.

Sydney Wright, 34, Upperthorpe Road, Sheffield, wants more members for his club. Will anyone interested please send stamped and addressed envelope for particulars?

Miss M. Wright, 17, Park Avenue, Longsight, Manchester, would be glad to hear from girl readers of about 18 in the Manchester district who would be willing to join an amateur concert-party. Soubrette and straight singers, also instrumentalists. Stamped and addressed envelopes, please.

E. Redman, High Park Road, Merrow, Guildford, and E. Duffin, 111, Cline Road, Guildford, are forming a "Gem" and "Magnet" League. Stamped and addressed envelopes, please.

Robert Bacon, 79, Westhill Drive, Mansfield, Notts, would be glad to hear from readers willing to join a correspondence club. Open to anyone in the United Kingdom.

A. H. Dyson, 141, Higham Hill Road, Walthamstow, would be glad to correspond with other boy readers.

H. Stevens, 2/52, Cardigan Street, Birmingham, would be glad to join a "Gem" and "Magnet" League in Birmingham, or within a few miles of that city.

Will George Price, of Cosham, write to A. Orme, 16, Temperance Terrace, Swinton, near Rotherham?

David Pontifex, 20, Elleray Road, Teddington, would like to correspond with boy reader abroad.

D. Chambers, 53, Walton Road, East Molesey, wants more members for his "Gem" and "Magnet" League.

Drummer H. J. Clark, 3323, D Coy., 12th Middlesex Regt., B.E.F., France, would be glad to correspond with boy readers.

Kenneth M. Eaton, 18, Vale Road, Finsbury Park, N., would be glad to correspond with Scots boy readers.

H. Baldry, 125, Church Street, Warrington, wants more members (either sex) for his Correspondence Club, which already numbers more than forty boys and girls. No subscription. Monthly magazine. Particulars sent on receipt of stamped and addressed envelope.

G. C. Hopkins, 35, Oakley Road, Redditch, would like to correspond with readers interested in cinematographs.

C. Saxton, 41, Regent Street, Oxford, would be glad to hear from W. F. Swift, of the same city, whose photo appeared in the issue of July 29th. He would also like to meet anyone in the district interested in the study of shorthand, French, or book-keeping, with a view to mutual improvement.

H. Duff, 69, North Road, Papanui, Christchurch, New Zealand, would be glad to exchange New Zealand stamps with a collector in any part of the world for the stamps of his country.

(Readers will find a further List of Notices on cover, page ii.)

DELICIOUS TUCK-HAMPERS ARE GIVEN AWAY TO READERS OF THE "BOYS' FRIEND," 1D.

The Opening Chapters of Our Great New School Serial.

THE FOURTH FORM
AT FRANKLINGHAM.

By Richard Randolph.

THE PREVIOUS INSTALMENTS TOLD HOW

two new boys appeared at Franklingham School on the same day. One is a senior—CONRAD HARDING CARDENDEN—the cousin and enemy of the school's popular captain, HARRY GRANVILLE. The other is JOHNNY GOGGS, a junior, who looks a great deal softer than he is. Goggs plays a trick on AMINADAB JARKER, a rude and morose old cabman, and causes Jarker to fall foul of POLICE-CONSTABLE BUSWELL, who is no friend of the Franklingham boys. The fun is witnessed by three other members of the Fourth Form besides Goggs—BLOUNT, known as Bags; TRICKETT, otherwise Tricks; and WATERS, called Wagtail. The first two rather take to Goggs from the outset; but Waters is longer in coming round, and has to be taught a lesson or two before he becomes civil. Goggs, a ventriloquist and an expert at ju-jitsu, is quite capable of teaching these lessons. It turns out that he is capable in other directions also, and Mr. GRAYSON, the Housemaster, after seeing him run, expresses his opinion that he has a very good chance of carrying off the junior quarter at the sports. Goggs goes to make his entries for the sports events to PARKER, a senior, who is secretary of games. While in Parker's study he is ill-treated by Cardenden, who is there on the same errand. Cardenden enters for the same events as Granville has done, with the idea of beating his cousin in them. Goggs makes a big entry—as many as nine events: Cardenden wants to have Goggs as a fag, but the new junior has already been booked to fag for Granville. This causes a row between the cousins, and Mr. Grayson, coming in, takes a hand. He talks very seriously to Cardenden.

(Now read on.)

Cardenden is Transferred.

Mr. Grayson had made up his mind not to lose his temper, but he found the task of keeping it a hard one.

"If you stayed here, we should be short of a prefect, for there is no other Sixth Form fellow to take the vacant place, and I should see that you did not have it. A boy who cannot control himself is not fit to exert authority over others."

"It seems to me that applies as much to Granville as to me, if it's looked at fairly."

"But it does not seem so to me. Granville acted under extreme provocation," the master answered.

"So did I. He insulted me."

"That I refuse to credit. But I will not be drawn into a controversy with you. One word of advice, Cardenden! It occurs to me that you are resenting your uncle's action in sending you here, where you find Granville in a position that you cannot hope to rival. Don't take it in that way. Try to believe that it was done for the best. And as to your cousin, I am sure that if you try to do him justice he will meet you at least half-way."

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE RASCAL OF THE REMOVE!"

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

"And I'm sure he won't! May I ask you, sir, how you knew of our relationship? We had agreed to keep it dark."

"Not from Granville, Cardenden, if that is what you are driving at. The Head told me, as it was only natural he should."

Mr. Grayson went. Cardenden sat down and buried his face in his hands. He was sick with rage and self-contempt.

"Why can't I hold myself in?" he muttered. "Why does the very sight of that fellow's face make me feel positively murderous? If I could only keep cool I could settle him. Now I've got myself shifted from here. That will mean no end of extra trouble to work any scheme I may hit upon. And I've made that ass Grayson suspicious. I'm simply piling up obstacles in my own way. But, hang him, I'll get on top yet!"

Conrad Cardenden knew what Harry Granville did not—that one or the other of them would be the heir of most of Raymond Dyne's fortune, and that for the one who did not get it there would be only enough for a decent start in life.

The mothers of these two had been Mr. Dyne's only sisters. Cardenden's parents had died first, and he had been adopted by his uncle sixteen months before Granville appeared upon the scene.

Mr. Dyne was no judge of character, and, not being so, of course flattered himself that he was. He meant to choose the worthier of the two, and he made the great mistake of telling Cardenden so. He did not tell Granville, though it would have mattered less in his case. For Harry Granville would have asked nothing better than a fair field and no favour, and in any case had no greed for the wealth that he hoped his uncle would live many years to enjoy.

So from the outset the two were placed in a false position towards one another—the more false because one knew so much more than the other did.

And from the outset Cardenden had schemed and plotted to show his uncle the worst side of Granville, while always keeping his own good qualities prominent. Thus far he had been successful only to the extent of hiding from Mr. Dyne his own character. He had not been able to blacken Granville's, though it had not been for want of trying.

Harry Granville was not of a suspicious nature. But he was no fool, and by-and-by he began to see through his cousin's schemes, even without the key to them. He believed that Cardenden grudged him a share; he had not even guessed that it was not a question of sharing equally in any case. And by this time their uncle had quite forgotten having told one nephew and left the other in ignorance, though he had not forgotten or given up his plan.

There was another thing known to Cardenden and unknown to his cousin—the fact that their uncle's heart was unsound, and that he might die suddenly at any moment. Mr. Dyne had no idea that either knew of this, and the one who did know it had not learned it fairly.

The Housemaster wasted no time. Within an hour a note was brought by a fag to Cardenden.

"You will report yourself to Mr. Hayter, to whose House you are transferred," it read. There followed Mr. Grayson's signature. That was all.

"Doesn't think it worth while to waste any politeness on me," muttered Cardenden.

But, as a matter of fact, it was Mr. Grayson's usual manner of writing to any of the boys in his House.

Cardenden made no move. Twenty minutes or so later Taylor minor looked in to get tea for him.

"Clear out!" ordered the senior, and expedited his fag's departure by a kick.

The door opened again. Cardenden thought young Taylor had come back. He picked up a heavy book and hurled it, without waiting to see whether he was right.

"I say, you know, that's a bit off!" said a voice strange to him.

The owner of the voice gave the book a kick which sent it flying in two directions—the binding one way, the inner part another.

He was a short, sturdy, thick-set fellow, with a fresh-coloured face and very light hair.

"Who are you? And why on earth didn't you tap at the door?"

"I'm Pennell, and I did tap at the door; but I suppose you didn't hear."

"I'm not any forwarder now that you've told me who you are."

"Perhaps you will be when I say that I'm from Hayter's," answered Pennell. "And I can tell you another thing. If it wasn't for old Gran being here I should be jolly sick about the change."

Cardenden scowled. He did not feel kindly towards any friend of his cousin's.

"What do you want?" he demanded.

"If you'd like an answer in half a dozen words, I want you to clear out! My fag's bringing my things across."

"So you're the new prefect, are you?"

"Not yet," answered Pennell cheerfully. "But I understand I am to have the job. I could do without it."

"I wish you joy of it, I'm sure! This place is the rottenest show I ever struck!"

"Oh, it's pretty putrid, I know. But old Gran will pull it together."

If Pennell had known anything of the cause of Cardenden's transference, these references to Granville would have been very lacking in tact. But he knew nothing as yet.

"Do you want to turn me out at once?"

"Not in a desperate hurry. Take your own time. They can dump my belongings down in the corridor till you've cleared. I'll go and talk to old Gran."

He marched briskly off. There was nothing of the lounge about Pennell.

"Hallo!" said Granville. "What brought you over, Penny?"

"Come for good," answered Pennell, with an amiable grin.

"What?"

"Transferred. New fellow goes to Hayter's; I come here."

Granville got up and slapped him on the back.

"Hurrah!" he cried. "The school's best half, our one and only Jessoper, and a fellow with a chance for the mile! Grayson stock ought to go up in the market!"

"What about the man you're losing?"

"We can do without him, Penny."

"And what sort of a prefect am I going to make?"

"A jolly good one, Penny, if you only put your back into it!"

"I'll try, Gran—honest I will! But I've only been in the Sixth five minutes, you see. And—well, I wasn't exactly a model in the Fifth, as you know."

"You've only got to try, and it will be all serene. You're eighteen carat, you know, old man!"

Pennell fairly beamed.

Goggs Plays Footer.

The arrival of Cardenden and Goggs had taken place on Tuesday. The transfer of the former to Hayter's House was made on Friday. It chanced that neither was seen on the football-field before the Saturday.

Cardenden turned out in a practice-game then, and it was evident to all who saw him that he possessed form to be reckoned with. If he was not put into the eleven at once, it must be because there was no vacancy.

Granville was not footer captain, and he felt very glad of the fact. Not to him, but to Ford, head prefect of Waymark's House, would fall the task of deciding whether Cardenden should step straight away into the team, and, if so, who should stand down for him.

One thing was plain—he would be a tower of strength to Hayter's. And he would need to be, to make up for the loss of Pennell.

They talked of Cardenden over tea-tables in the Frankingham studies that afternoon. They also talked of Goggs.

Grayson's had a junior House match with Hayter's, and at almost the last moment Blount, who skippered the Grayson small fry, found himself without a goalkeeper. Whitehouse was laid up.

"The rotter's always getting ill or something!" growled Wagtail. "Now I suppose you'll want me to keep goal, Bags?"

"No, thanks, old man!" answered his chum quickly. "If you remember, you did that when old Blackburn had his last toothache, or measles, or mumps, or whatever it was."

"Yes, that's why—"

"And that's exactly why I don't want you there again. You're some use at left-half. 'Nuff said!"

It was a curious fact that Blount had not even thought of Goggs till that moment. He had fancied, somehow—it certainly was not from anything the new boy had said—that Goggs didn't care about footer.

Even now it was Tricks who suggested his being asked.

"Why not try Goggles?" he said. "He can't be any worse than Benton or Tarver; and they seem to be the only chaps possible."

"H'm!" said Bags. "It's an idea, certainly. Johnny doesn't look like a goalkeeper, but I believe the beggar can do anything he tries to do."

Goggs came in just then.

"Can you keep goal, Goggles?" asked Blount.

"I could try, Bags."

"Have you ever tried?"

"Not seriously. Goalkeeping was not regarded as my forte."

"Well, you couldn't be worse than Benton," remarked Tricks.

"I have not seen Benton in goal. But I cannot say that Benton strikes me as a capable personage anywhere."

"Will you keep goal, Goggles?"

"If you wish it, Bags."

"We're playing Hayter's this afternoon, and I expect they'll lick us. Whitehouse is our regular goalkeeper. Nothing great, but pretty fair. He's ill, and can't play."

"Then I will play, with pleasure, and trust that you will excuse any imperfections on my part."

"All serene! I've a spare shirt, House colours, I can lend you."

The House colours were black and white in broad stripes, and Goggs looked a queerer object than ever when he stood between the posts in the magpie shirt and knickers that left his bony knees bare. Hayter's crowd chipped Bags about his choice of the new fellow as goalkeeper.

"You wait and see!" said Bags; and only then did he realise that he was expecting big things of Goggs. It was queer, too, for Goggs did not claim to be a goalkeeper—had, indeed, laid no claim to any football ability. Yet when once you knew Goggs, and had seen him do things in that quiet way of his, you soon came to expect much of him.

"We shall be all over you!" chortled Allardyce, the rival skipper.

"Wait and see!" replied Bags.

Allardyce was right—to a certain extent.

Hayter's was a bigger House than Grayson's, and its junior eleven carried no passengers. Bags' men included two or three whose usefulness to any side was doubtful. But they were the best he could pick out of the exceedingly scratch lot left when seven or eight places had been filled by fellows who could play.

His left wing that day simply was not in the picture at all. Perhaps it would have paid better to put Tricks there. But Tricks and his partner on the right had a good understanding of one another's play, and combined well with Bags himself at centre. When the ball was taken near the red-shirts' goal

(Continued on page iv of cover.)



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A NEWCASTLE
CHUM.

THE FOURTH FORM AT FRANKLINHAM.

(Continued from page 20.)

it was always by the efforts of these three. If it got over on the left it soon went down-field again.

But its visits to the rival goal were few and far between.

It was kept in the black-and-white half nearly all the time.

Yet at half-time Hayter's had not scored, though Allardyce and Walker and Bliss had put in some very hot shots.

Goggs had never once been flurried, never once at a loss.

He did not do things exactly as any other goalkeeper the spectators had ever seen did them. Some of his saves were effected in a manner that looked very rash—until one observed the meekness of his spectacled face; and then one wondered how it was possible to suspect him of rashness!

"It isn't fair!" said Allardyce, sucking a lemon. "I'd have had half a dozen goals to my own cheek before now if it hadn't been for that image you've put between the posts, Bags!"

"Dare say," answered Bags. "It has looked once or twice as if he had something to do with stopping you. I've noticed that."

"I don't mean anything of that sort. It's the beggar's silly face! He makes me laugh, and puts me off my shot!"

"All serene, old chap! Go on laughing. We don't mind."

"But I do!" retorted Allardyce.

"What do you want me to do? Order Goggs out of goal, or put his head in a sack? You might have a chance to score then!"

Allardyce was doubly keen on scoring after that, naturally. And once he really thought he had managed it. A hot shot into the far corner. It must score, surely!

But Goggs tumbled flat—accidentally, as it seemed—and his fist smote the ball—as if by chance again—and the ball curled round on the wrong side of the post!

And time drew near, and still Hayter's had not scored.

"Tricks," said Bags, when he and his chums found themselves out of work for a moment, "I wonder whether Goggles can play forward?"

"Bit too late to ask him now, I reckon."

"Dunno! We'll never win this game with those duffers on the left mulling everything."

"But the other side will win if you take our Johnny out of goal!"

Bags had an idea, however.

Hayter's lined up for a corner-kick. Bags took the opportunity to speak a word to his left-wing forwards, his outside-right, and Goggs.

When the corner had been taken, and Goggs had relieved pressure by a good, hard kick down the field, he came out of goal, and took up his position on the left wing—alone. The two who had played so badly joined the backs. The outside-right dropped into goal.

It was an unusual formation—goalkeeper, four backs, three halves, three forwards.

But it paid!

Tricks, on the right, got the ball, dodged a half, and passed it in neatly to Bags.

Bags, with a red-shirt bearing down on him, put the leather across to Goggs. Goggs trapped it, and was off like a hare.

"My word! That beggar can run!" cried someone on the ropes.

But there was more than mere speed in it. Goggs kept up his pace, yet never let the ball go more than a few feet from his toes. He eluded a back with the greatest ease, simply swinging round him, as it seemed. He went on. The other back rushed at him. It looked as though they must clash face to face. But somehow the clash never happened.

Again Goggs swerved, left a bewildered opponent behind him, and had only the goalkeeper to beat!

"Shoot—oh, shoot!" roared some enthusiastic Graysonite.

Goggs paid no heed. The goalkeeper hesitated, not knowing whether to run out or to await the shot.

He did not laugh. He did not even think of the queerness of that goggled face. His eyes were on the twinkling, capable feet—feet that controlled the ball so deftly, so easily.

Oh, if the fellow would but shoot!

But he wouldn't! He simply came on with the leather just a few inches from his toes.

The goalkeeper made a desperate rush. Goggs eluded it, was past him, ran on right up to the goal-line, and tapped the ball into the net as gingerly as though it were brittle, and he was bent, above all things, on keeping it unbroken.

Grayson's had scored. But that was not all. Grayson's had found a forward such as no other junior team at Franklinham had—a fellow who could give points to any member of the school forward-line in the art of dribbling.

And Bags had put this genius in goal!

Allardyce might have been excused for laughing at that.

But he did not laugh—not even when Goggs went back into goal for the few minutes left.

Grayson's won by that single goal, after the other side had had nine-tenths of the play.

"A beastly fluke!" said Allardyce.

"A fluke, do you call it?" demanded Bags. "Did you ever see a cleaner, sweeter, single-handed run in your life, you ass?"

"Oh, that wasn't the fluke! Funnyface is good enough to get his school colours, as far as that goes. The fluke was that you didn't know he could play forward at all, and shoved him in goal."

"If he hadn't been in goal, you'd have scored ever so many times."

"And if he hadn't come out, you'd never have scored at all! It really was a fluke, which ever way you look at it, Bags."

Perhaps it was, after all.

"Johnny," said Bags at tea-time, when so many fellows were talking of Goggs' form that his ears ought to have been burning, "why didn't you tell me you could play forward?"

"You did not ask me, Bags," replied the new boy sedately.

The Match-Makers.

"Do you take any interest in love affairs, Goggles?" asked Bags a day or two later.

"I cannot say that I have yet given them any particular attention. That, doubtless, will come later, in the natural order of things. But I am interested in all that concerns human nature. 'Homo sum,' you know—'humanum nihil'—"

"Oh, chuck all that! We don't want it out of class."

"Very well, Bags. I agree with you that we get quite enough Latin in class. But that happens to be one of the three quotations I really know, and it fitted in quite nicely. Are you in love, Bags?"

"Jumping Jehoshaphat, no! Not such an ass, I should hope. It's cook I'm thinking about."

"It is kind of you, Bags. But are you quite sure that cook will appreciate it? Is it not possible that she would prefer to manage her own affairs?"

"Dare say she would. But that's not the thing. Old Buswell's courting her, on and off, but they don't seem to get much forwarder. Now, my notion is to bring Jarker into it—see?"

The bright blue eyes of Johnny Goggs gleamed behind those obscuring spectacles.

"It is a great notion, Bags," he said thoughtfully. "It does you credit. But I do not quite perceive how it is to be brought about. We are not precisely on such terms of affection with the dear Jarker as would seem to warrant our making suggestions of the sort, or—which is more important—as would suggest the smallest chance of such suggestions being received nicely."

"Couldn't it be done some way by ventriloquism?" asked Bags.

"Or by ju-jitsu?" put in Wagtail, who had been an eager listener.

"Or by the application of the binomial theory?" said Tricks sarcastically.

"Think you're beastly clever, don't you, Tricks?" growled Wagtail.

"How do you propose to approach Jarker, Bags?" asked Goggs.

"I was thinking of leaving that to you, old man."

Goggs shook his head.

"I doubt the wisdom of that," he said. "Do you know, I am not at all sure that the dear Aminadab regards me as—as a pal, in short!"

They howled at that.

"But you could make him, Johnny," said Tricks. "You could come round anybody."

Again Goggs shook his head.

"I doubt it," he said. "Aminadab is stony and unprofitable ground. Is he, by the way, a bachelor?"

"A widower," answered Bags. "So is the great Buswell. Buswell has a daughter who keeps house for him. Jarker's daughter chucked him. Won't have anything to do with him. Says he's a dirty and profane old man."

"I should like to know Jarker's daughter," remarked Goggs. "She appears to be a lady of judgment."

"It ought to be a point in Jarker's favour with cook," said Bags.

"Just so. That is, if cook has a partiality for dirty and profane old men. It's a queer taste, but 'de gustibus'—oh, I forgot! But that's one of the other two I know."

"Ass! I mean Jarker's not having a daughter in the way."

(There will be another grand instalment of this exciting story in next Monday's issue of the MAGNET Library. Order your copy in advance.)