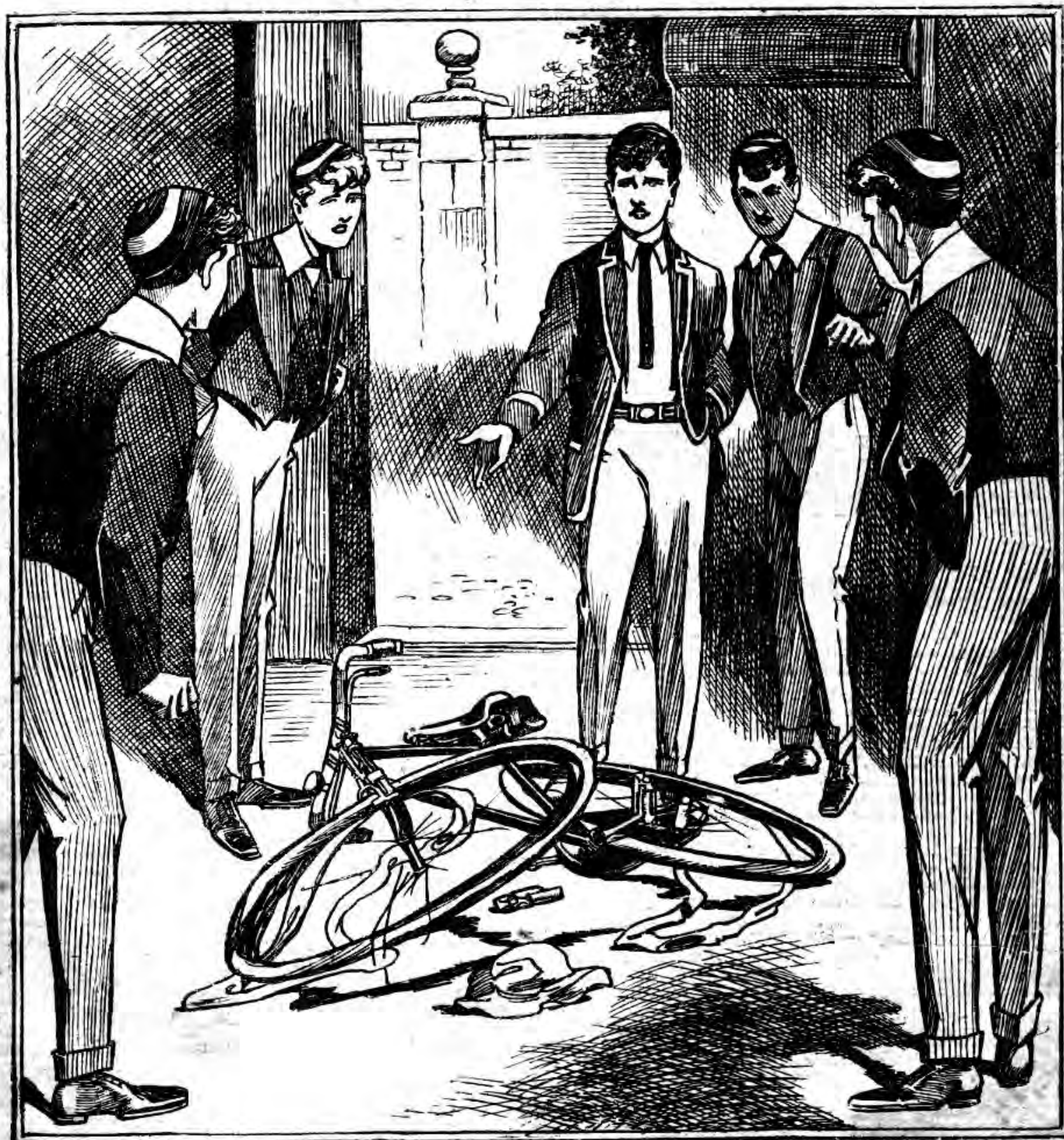


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WILLIAM THE GOOD!



REPAIRED—BY BUNTER!

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WILLIAM THE GOOD!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

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

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter is Alarmed!

"TODDY, old fellow—"

Billy Bunter spoke in very honeyed tones.

Peter Todd looked grim.

Bunter had just rolled into Study No. 7 in the Remove, which he shared with Todd and Tom Dutton. Toddy was there, and Bunter's fat face fell as he saw him. But he addressed his study-mate in honeyed tones.

"Well?" grunted Peter.

"There—there's something going on in the Remove, Toddy."

"Really?"

"Yes, there is," said Bunter nervously.

"S-something to do with me, Toddy?"

"Go hon!" said Peter.

"Yes, really, you know! I—I say, there's a sort of meeting in Wharton's study," said Bunter, blinking uneasily at Peter through his big spectacles. "I heard Bob Cherry mention my name!"

"Listening again!" snapped Peter.

"I—I happened to be passing the door. And I heard Nugent, too—"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"And Johnny said—"

"Rats!"

"And Horree Singh, too—and Smithy—and Squiff—"

"You seem to have heard a lot of fellows speaking while you were passing the door," remarked Peter Todd.

"I—I stopped to tie my shoelace," said Bunter. "Quite by chance, of course. I—I say, Peter—"

"Well?"

"Hadn't you better go to the meeting? The study's simply packed! I heard Tom Brown and Ogilvy, too, and—and Redwing, and Russell. You ought to go, Toddy! You're being left out in the cold."

"I don't mind," said Toddy cheerfully.

"But—but you're an important chap in the Remove, Toddy," urged Bunter. "You ought to be there."

"First time you've noticed my importance, fatty," said Peter Todd, with a grin.

"Well, you know, I think you ought really to be captain of the Remove, instead of Wharton, Toddy. And—and I think you ought to attend that meeting—I do really!"

"I'm staying here," answered Peter Todd calmly.

"Look here, Toddy—"

"Rats! What are you doing with that door?"

"I—I'm shutting it."

"Leave it alone!"

"I—I say, Toddy; I heard Wibley asking for you," stammered Bunter. "He—he's in the Common-room."

"He can come here if he wants me."

"Hadn't you better go to him, Toddy?" asked Bunter anxiously.

"Not at all."

Bunter paused. His desire to get Toddy out of the study was very evident, though he was not aware that it was evi-

dent to Peter Todd. Bunter had the impression that he was being very deep.

"N-n-now I come to think of it, Toddy, Mr. Quelch wants you!" said Bunter desperately.

"Does he?" smiled Peter Todd.

"Yes. He—he asked me to send you to his study at once. He—he's waiting for you, Toddy."

"Let him wait, old top!"

"I—I mean it was the Head! The Head wants you. You can't keep the Head waiting, Toddy. Now, can you?"

"I don't suppose he'll miss me, Bunt. I'm not going, anyway."

"D-d-don't you believe me, Toddy?"

"Of course not!" answered Peter Todd, in surprise. "You don't expect me to believe you, do you?"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Let that door alone!" roared Peter Todd, so suddenly that Bunter jumped.

"Look here, you rotter!" exclaimed Bunter, coming out into the open at last, as it were. "I'm going to lock this door and keep those beasts out. They're coming after me!"

"I know that," said Peter Todd, with a chuckle.

"You—you knew it?" howled Bunter.

"Exactly. And I'm staying here to see that you don't lock the door," explained Peter Todd. "So you can spin me yarns till you burst your crop, Bunt, and I sha'n't clear out. Savvy?"

"I'm going to lock the door!" howled Bunter.

"Well, perhaps you may," said Peter thoughtfully. "Go ahead! It won't take me long to unlock it when the fellows come along."

Billy Bunter gave him a glare that nearly cracked his spectacles. Whatever the Owl of the Remove had heard outside Study No. 1, it had plainly alarmed him.

"I—I say, Toddy, you're my study-mate, you know!" murmured Bunter.

"That's not my fault. It's my misfortune."

"We've been pals!" urged Bunter.

"Have we? First I've heard of it!"

"I—I've always shared my rations with you, old chap."

"You've always raided my rations, you mean."

"I—I mean I would have shared them, if—if I hadn't been so jolly hungry. If you're alluding to the butter, Toddy, it's mean. I never really meant to finish it. As for the sardines, there were only twelve. And I really shouldn't have thought you wanted to keep that tin of pineapple from a chum," said Bunter reproachfully.

"Br-r-r-r!"

There was a tramp of feet in the Remove passage, and Billy Bunter gave a yelp of alarm. He slammed the study door and turned the key, and then fixed an imploring blink on his study-mate, who grinned heartlessly. Considering what chums they had been—according to Bunter—Peter Todd certainly seemed very unfeeling. Possibly he missed the sardines, though they were only twelve,

and had not forgotten the butter, though Bunter had not meant to finish it.

Thump!

The door shook under Bob Cherry's heavy fist.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" boomed Bob's powerful voice outside. "It's locked!"

"Toddy's there!" came Squiff's voice.

"Open the door, Toddy!"

"Is Bunter there?" called Harry Wharton.

"Bunter's here, and so am I," answered Peter Todd. "I'll have the door open in a jiffy!"

"Toddy!" gasped Bunter. "Stand by a pal, old chap! It's a ragging, you know!"

"Yes, I know," assented Peter. "Get aside!"

"It—it's a Form ragging!" howled Bunter.

"Exactly. Are you going to roll out of the way, or do you want me to roll you?" demanded Peter Todd.

But William George Bunter was desperate. He stood with his back to the locked door defensively.

"Stand by a pal, Toddy!" he pleaded.

"I'm going to. I've got to let them in before I can stand by them, though."

"Toddy—dear old chap—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Dear old chap," repeated Bunter.

"My hat!"

"I—I always liked you, Toddy!" gasped Bunter. "I did, really. I—I never meant it when—when I looked down on you for being a poor solicitor's son."

"Oh, you didn't?" asked Peter.

"N-n-not at all, old boy. Not a bit. I—I think you're quite as good as me, Toddy. I do, really!"

"I agree; perhaps even a little better," remarked Peter. "Are you going to roll out of the way, barrel?"

"Keep off, you beast!" roared Bunter. "You—you come here and—and I'll jolly well punch your nose, Toddy!"

"Go it!" said Peter cheerily. "I'm coming!"

And he came.

Billy Bunter hit out—a remarkable proceeding on Bunter's part; but he did. His fat fist was knocked into the air, and Peter Todd took him by the collar and rolled him away. Bunter sat down on the rug with a gasp.

Then Peter Todd unlocked the door and threw it open, and a crowd of the Remove swarmed in.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Reformation Required!

HARRY WHARTON, the captain of the Remove, led the way, with Nugent, Bob Cherry, Johnny Ball, and Horree Jamset Ram Singh. The Famous Five were followed by Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing, Ogilvy and Russell, Tom Brown and Wibley and Dick Rake, and several more of the Remove. It was quite a representative gathering of the Lower Fourth Form at Greyfriars.

Billy Bunter set his glasses straight on

his fat little nose, and blinked at them in terror.

"Oh, here he is!" exclaimed Squiff.
"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Get up, Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Yaroooh!"
"Fathead! You're not hurt yet," said Bob. "Keep your yells till you're hurt, duffer! You're going to be, you know, and you will need all your breath then!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"The hurtfulness is going to be terrific, my esteemed Bunter," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "We are terrifically infuriated."

"The vials of our wrath are full and overflowing. Bunter!" said Sampson Quincy Ifley Field solemnly.

"The hour has struck!" said Wibley, who was always a little dramatic. "Villain, retribution has arrived!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" came distantly from Bunter.

"Up you get!" said Johnny Bull. "Kick him till he gets up, Bob! You've got the biggest feet."

"Why, you silly ass, what about your own thumping hoofs?" demanded Bob Cherry warmly.

Billy Bunter jumped up in a hurry. He did not want to be helped by Bob Cherry's somewhat heavy feet.

"I—I say, you fellows—" he said feebly.

"Tremble, villain!" said Wibley.

"I—I say, if you've come to tea—" "Tea!" exclaimed Wharton.

"I—I'm jolly glad to see you!" gasped Bunter.

"You look glad!" commented Tom Brown.

"The gladfulness is terrific!"

"I—I am, you know—honest Injun! Always glad to see my—my dear old pals in my study!" stammered Bunter.

"Never mind your dear old pals—if any," said Wharton. "It's us this time!"

"I—I mean you, you know. I say, Harry, old chap, I—I used to be in your study," said Bunter. "D-d-don't be a beast, you know!"

"Don't remind me of that awful time!"

"Oh, really, you know—" "Bunter!" rapped out the captain of the Remove sternly.

"Ye-es, old fellow."

"Don't 'old fellow' me!"

"I—I mean old chap!" gasped Bunter.

"Silence! William George Bunter, a committee of the Form has met to decide what is to be done with you," said Wharton sternly. "The Remove are fed up. You, William George Bunter, are a disgrace to Greyfriars!"

"A disgrace to Greyfriars!" echoed the whole committee with one voice.

"You have committed sins too numerous to mention—" "Oh, really, you know—" "The indictment is a long one," said Wharton sternly. "You listen at keyholes."

"Listen at keyholes!" repeated the committee.

"You raid other fellows' grub," continued Wharton.

"Other fellows' grub!" said the committee sternly.

"You tell whoppers!"

"Whoppers!" roared the committee, in such terrifying tones that William George Bunter gave a yelp of alarm.

"You exceed the grub rules!" said Wharton.

"Grub rules!" agreed the committee.

"You're a food-hog!"

"Food-hog!"

"You swank about getting big remittances, and try to borrow money on them," said Wharton. "You spin yarns about expecting postal-orders."



Bob is brutal! (See Chapter 5.)

"Postal-orders!" snorted the committee.

"You're a fat worm!"

"Worm!"

"You shirk cricket, you dodge practice, and at the same time you brag about being a cricketer, and put on side."

"Side!" shouted the committee, apparently acting as a sort of chorus. "You put on side!"

"The Remove have come to the conclusion that they are fed up."

"Fed up!" said the committee heartily.

"And that the time has come for you to be slaughtered!"

"Slaughtered!" roared the committee.

"So prepare to meet your doom!"

"Doom!" came in a roar.

Billy Bunter's fat knees knocked together.

"I—I say, you fellows—" he murmured.

"Hanging," continued Wharton, "is too good for you. The committee have decided not to hang you."

"Oh, really, you know—" "But the hour of reckoning has come," said the captain of the Remove, with unbending severity. "It is decided unanimously that you must be slaughtered. I am sorry, Bunter, but duty is duty. Duty must be done!"

"Duty must be done!" said the committee solemnly.

"I—I say, you fellows, I know you're only joking, you know!" murmured Bunter feebly.

"Gentlemen," said Wharton, "here is the culprit. Is he guilty or not guilty?"

"Guilty!"

"Then it only remains to decide in what manner he shall be slaughtered. Have you any preference, Bunter?"

"Yow-ow!"

"Gentlemen may make suggestions," said the captain of the Remove. "It goes by the majority."

"What about the boilfulness in oil?" suggested Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Too easy!" said Bob Cherry ferociously. "Besides, there's a shortage of oil. He ought to be on German war-bread!"

"Hanged, drawn, and quartered!" suggested Squiff.

"Yaroooh!"

"He ought to be put to the torture!" declared Vernon-Smith. "We'll read out to him a dozen eloquent speeches from the last House of Commons' debate. We can take on the job in turns, so that we don't perish, too."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows—" "Tar and feathers!" said Nugent.

"Bump him!"

"Frog's-march!"

"Or the lot together!" said Ogilvy.

"Make a thorough job of it!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Good!" exclaimed Wharton. "A bumping, a frog's-march, tar and feathers, and a sooting from the chimney. Is that agreed?"

"Hear, hear!"

"Are you ready, Bunter?" demanded Peter Todd.

"Yaroooh! I—I say, you fellows, I—I—I know you're only joking!" wailed Bunter. "Keep off, you beasts!"

"Do you confess?" demanded Wharton sternly. "Have you any defence to offer?"

"I—I say, I—I'm sorry I've raided the chaps' rations!" moaned Bunter. "I get awfully hungry, you know. Look how thin I'm getting!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The stern gravity of the committee was quite overcome by Bunter's pathetic plea. Certainly there were no outward signs of his getting thin.

"I—I won't do it any more!" mumbled Bunter. "I—I won't listen to anything any more. It was always quite by chance, you know. I—I—I—I say, you know, don't be cads, you know!"

"Are you prepared to meet your doom?" roared Bob Cherry.

"Slay him!"

The whole committee made an advance on Bunter. The Owl of the Remove dodged round the table, panting.

"Yaroooh! Keep off! I'll tell Quelchy! I'll call Loder! Yaroooh! I say, you fellows— Yaroooh!"

"Seize him!"

"Oh, crumbs! Help! Rescue! Fire!"

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"Murder!" roared Bunter, as he was seized. "I say, Toddy, you beast, stand by a pal! Yow! Leggo my neck! Leggo my ears, Peter Todd! Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter wriggled in the grasp of the avenging hands. He was in lively anticipation of a bumping and a frog's march, and other horrors to follow. He deserved them, and more, but he did not want them.

"Now, all together!" said Bob. "My hat! What a weight!"

By the effort of six or seven fellows the fat junior was swung into the air. He yelled dismally.

"Hold on!" said Harry Wharton. "Suppose we give Bunter a last chance? If he promises to reform—"

"He never keeps promises!" said Nugent, shaking his head. "Better slaughter him. It will save time."

"Yaroooh! Gimme a chance!" howled Bunter, catching at that prospect of escape. "I say, you fellows, give a chap a chance. I—I—I'll reform! I will, really! I—I'll do anything you like! Honest Injun! Yaroooh!"

"You mean that?" demanded Wharton.

"Yow-ow! Yes! Put me down! You'll drop me, you beasts—I—I mean old chaps, Oh, dear!"

"You promise to reform?" demanded Wharton.

"Yes, yes! Ow! Yes!"

"You won't tell any more lies?"

"Yow-ow! Never! Not one!"

"You won't listen at doors?"

"No! Never! Ow!"

"You won't raid a fellow's grub?"

"Honour bright! Ow-ow!"

"You'll do cricket practice?"

"No—I mean yes! Yes, rather! I—I love cricket! Pumme down!"

"You won't slack, and laze, and over-eat?"

"Nunno! Never!"

"Well, we'll give you a chance," said Wharton. "Mind, we expect you to keep those promises, Bunter! If you don't you'll get the slaughtering. Understand?"

"Yow-ow! Yes!"

"Gentlemen, the committee may now retire. Bunter has promised reform, and his sentence is postponed during good conduct. Put him down!"

Billy Bunter was put down—rather hard. The committee, grinning, crowded out of the study. Bunter sat on the rug and gasped for breath. He was not quite sure yet that he was not hurt.

"Oh, dear!" he gasped. "Beasts! What are you grinning at, Toddy, you brute? I—I don't believe they meant to rag me at all, now; it was only a rotten joke, the beasts! Oh, dear! Ow!"

"You've promised to reform now!" grinned Peter Todd.

"Yah! Go and eat coke!"

"I'll call the committee back—"

"Ow! Don't! I—I'm going to reform!" gasped Bunter. "Haven't I said so? Of—of course I mean it, Toddy! Oh, dear!"

Bunter scrambled up, and collapsed into the armchair. He realised now that the slaughtering was only a Remove joke; and he did not know how far he was expected to keep his promise of reform—or what would happen to him if he didn't keep it. He was in quite a painful state of doubt upon that point. All things considered, it was safest for Bunter to reform—if he could manage it. But that was likely to be uphill work for the Owl of the Remove.

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THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter Begins!

THE next day William George Bunter might have been observed to be wearing a very thoughtful expression—if anybody had been sufficiently interested in Bunter to notice the fact.

Probably nobody was.

Bunter, anyhow, was looking thoughtful. Perhaps the scene in Study No. 7 had made some impression on his mind. Perhaps he was in dread of the wrath to come if he did not change his ways. There had been many signs of late that the Remove were getting fed up with those ways. In times of plenty Bunter's raids on study cupboards were only exasperating, but in the lean years food-hogging was worse than exasperating. And that was not Bunter's only sin; he had others too numerous to count.

Certainly, William George regarded himself with complete satisfaction. In his own eyes Bunter seemed to be the just man made perfect, so to speak. He put criticisms down to personal jealousy, chiefly to his good looks.

But perhaps the little scene in No. 7 had made him think. For Bunter was thinking now—seriously. He realised that he was not popular, and was not receiving the admiration that was his due. Possibly he realised at last that he did not come up to the absolute pitch of perfection! Reform, too, was needed, unless the postponed slaughtering was to take place. Billy Bunter was thinking of reform!

Harry Wharton & Co. had hoped that that warning would do Bunter good; but it must be confessed the warning had been given chiefly because it was raining that afternoon, and the juniors had to do something to kill time. Billy Bunter had come in useful, in the way of entertainment. Still, the fat Owl of the Remove was in a state of deep reflection the next day.

After morning lessons Bunter rolled out of the Form-room still thoughtful. He might have been observed pacing the quadrangle with his fat brow wrinkled in thought.

When the juniors came in to dinner Harry Wharton & Co. happened to notice Bunter.

There was a new expression on his face. They could not quite make it out at first. Bunter was looking smug—that was the only word for it! Smugness was written all over his fat features.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry. "Have you reformed yet, Bunter?"

Bunter blinked at him.

"I trust so," he answered.

"Wha-a-at?"

"I trust so," said Bunter calmly.

The Famous Five simply blinked at him. That reply was so utterly unexpected that it took their breath away.

"You—you—you trust so?" gasped Nugent, at last.

"Yes, Nugent! I fear," said Bunter, "that my conduct hitherto has been somewhat lacking in ideals."

"What?"

"I am going to endeavour to correct it," said Bunter, humbly but firmly. "I hope you fellows will do the same. We can all make ourselves better with effort."

He passed into the dining-room, leaving the Co. staring.

"Wha-a-at does he mean?" asked Bob Cherry dazedly. "Is he making fun of the Head's sermons?"

"Is he potty?" said Frank Nugent, in wonder.

"Blessed if I ever heard the silly idiot talk like that before!" said Johnny Bull.

"Must be loose in the onion."

"The looseness must be terrific!"

Harry Wharton & Co. followed Billy Bunter in. The juniors took their places at the Remove table, the head of which was taken by Mr. Quelch, their Form-master.

To the astonishment of his Form-fellows, Bunter did not attempt to annex a third helping.

Peter Todd nudged him.

"You haven't quite cleared the table, Bunter," he murmured.

Bunter blinked at him.

"Pray do not suggest, Peter, that I should take more than my share!" he said loftily.

"Wha-a-at?"

"I am endeavouring to exercise the virtue of self-restraint," said Bunter.

Todd could only blink.

Such a flow of language had never been heard from William George Bunter before; and certainly he had never seemed to have any acquaintance with the virtue of self-restraint at meal-times.

What was the matter with Bunter?

"Cherry!" said Bunter, loud enough for Mr. Quelch to hear.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Are you not taking rather more pie than you are entitled to?"

"What?" gasped Bob.

"You must remember, Cherry, that it is war-time," said Bunter chidingly.

"They do not have pie in the trenches. Everyone now is expected to exercise self-restraint."

"M-m-my hat!" stuttered Bob.

"I hope you do not mind my mentioning it, Cherry," said Bunter calmly.

"Oh, crumbs!"

To be lectured on such a topic by the greediest food-hog in the school was a little too much for Bob Cherry. He mentally promised himself an interview with Bunter after dinner.

Bunter did not take more pie than he was entitled to. That was a miracle in itself.

When the Remove left the dining-room Bob Cherry's heavy hand fell on Billy Bunter's shoulder.

"You fat worm—" he began indignantly.

"Please don't call me names, Cherry! I forgive you—"

"What?"

"I forgive you," said Bunter cheerfully. "It is our duty to forgive those who offend us. But it is wrong, Cherry—very wrong!"

Bob Cherry almost staggered.

Unless Billy Bunter had suddenly gone mad, he was apparently suffering from a severe attack of self-righteousness. It was really too amazing.

"Control your temper," went on Bunter. "We should all control our tempers, Cherry! It is our duty!"

"I suppose I'm dreaming!" said Bob.

"Look here!" roared Johnny Bull, grasping Bunter by the shoulder and shaking him. "What's the game? What are you mimicking Good Little Georgie in the story-book for? Are you setting up as a prig as well as a pig?"

"Yow-ow-ow-woop!"

That sounded like old Bunter again, as Johnny Bull shook him vigorously.

"Bull!"

Mr. Quelch came out of the dining-room. Johnny had unfortunately forgotten that he was still there. Johnny Bull released Bunter very suddenly, and stood in confusion.

"Bull, why are you shaking Bunter so roughly?" demanded Mr. Quelch, with a frown.

"I—I—I—" stammered Johnny, with a crimson face.

"I shall cane you, Bull!"

"Oh!"

Billy Bunter chimed in.

"Please do not cane him, sir, I beg you."

"What?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Bull was bullying me, sir, because he is bigger than I am; but I forgive him," said Bunter. "I think Bull will be sorry for bullying me, sir, when he reflects upon what he has done. I hope you will not cane him, sir. Bull is not bad at heart."

Mr. Quelch looked at Bunter as if he were mesmerised, as the Owl made that remarkable speech, worthy of Good Little Georgie at his very best.

"Really!" ejaculated the Form-master. "I—I— You may go, Bull!"

He whisked away, evidently astonished.

"I am so glad, Bull, that I have saved you from punishment," said Bunter to the astounded Johnny. "You treated me very roughly, but I forgive you. Pray try to control your temper, my dear friend."

And Bunter rolled out into the quadrangle, leaving Johnny Bull rooted to the floor. The chums of the Remove stared after him. They could do nothing else.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Too Good for No. 7!

PETER TODD looked fixedly at Bunter when the latter came into No. 7 to tea that day.

Bunter's queer line of action had attracted a good deal of attention in the Remove.

He seemed to have changed.

Squiff suggested that it was fatty degeneration of the brain. Many of the fellows thought he was a little potty. There seemed no other way of accounting for it.

Bunter's faults had always been too numerous to enumerate; and now he seemed to have added to them a peculiarly offensive smugness and self-righteousness.

Self-righteousness, indeed, was written all over his fat, smug face.

He looked like a fellow who was good, and knew how good he was, and wanted everybody to observe how exceedingly good he was.

Goodness was not exactly popular in the Greyfriars Remove. Fellows were expected to be decent and to play the game; that was good enough for Greyfriars. Smug goodness was really unknown there. Good Little Georgie, though he was loved by his teachers, would not have found life worth living in the Remove. And now, it seemed, William George Bunter had started being good in the most offensively priggish way he could think of. If this was reform, Bunter unreformed was less intolerable.

Billy Bunter smiled at Peter as he came into the study—a friendly smile, and a smug. Peter seemed to gulp something down.

"Not much for tea to-day, I suppose?" asked Bunter.

"Is there ever much?" answered Todd. "Still, there's enough, if you give other fellows a chance to get in their whack."

"I hope you do not think me greedy, Peter?"

"My hat! Have you ever been anything else?" demanded Peter.

"I am sorry to say, Peter, that I fear that I have sometimes been greedy."

"Wha-at?"

"It is a serious fault," said Bunter. "I am endeavouring to correct it. It is my hope, Peter, to set an example to this study."

"Oh, my aunt!"

"If I can be a model to the Remove," said Bunter modestly, "I shall be satisfied. I should be very happy to bring about a higher tone in the Form."

"I'm dreaming, of course!" murmured Peter dazedly.

Bunter sat down at the table. Instinc-

tively he helped himself to more than half the supply of sardines, though there were three to tea. But at once he put back a portion of his helping, and very carefully allowed himself one-third. Peter watched that proceeding in amazement. Certainly, this much was an improvement in the food-hog of Greyfriars.

"I suppose you bought these sardines, Peter?" said Bunter, blinking at his study-mate's astonished face.

"Yes, ass!"

"Do you mind if I have some?"

"Eh? They're for tea, of course."

"But I cannot pay my whack to-day," said Bunter. "Owing to being short of money, you know—I've been disappointed about a postal-order."

"What?"

"I—I mean, I haven't been disappointed about a postal-order, Peter. I am not expecting a postal-order."

"Not?" yelled Peter.

"No."

"Well, my hat!" said Peter dizzily. "Some ass said the age of miracles was past! Yet here's Bunter telling the truth!"

"I hope I shall always be truthful, Peter," said Bunter. "It is wicked to tell lies."

"Have you just found that out?" inquired Peter sarcastically.

"I have found it out, Peter. I used to be a bad boy," said Bunter.

"D-d-did you?"

"Yes. I am shocked to think of my badness. But that is all over. Once I was as bad as you are, Peter—"

"What?" shouted Peter.

"But now I am enlightened," explained Bunter. "I can see the sinfulness of my former ways. It will make me very happy if I can set an example of high-minded conduct to my thoughtless school-fellows."

"Oh, great pip!"

"As these sardines are yours, Peter, I have no right to take them. I am poor," said Bunter, with meek pride, "but honest. Unless you give me your permission, I shall not touch them."

"Oh, wire in, and don't talk like a goat!" gasped Todd.

"Thank you, my dear friend."

"Don't call me your dear friend!" shrieked Peter. "You fat idiot, do you think you are living in a book?"

"Pray do not be angry, Peter. That is a fault you should endeavour to correct. Follow my example, my dear friend."

"Is this a game?" asked Peter, breathing hard. "Are you trying to pull my leg?"

"Is not that rather an inelegant, not to say coarse, expression, Peter?" asked Bunter. "Should you not be more careful in your selection of phrases? I only make the suggestion."

"You silly, fat chump!" roared Peter, in exasperation.

"Go on!" said Bunter calmly. "Call me any names you like. I shall still treat you with kindness and friendship, Peter. It is my duty to return good for evil."

Peter Todd seemed to be choking.

Bunter ate his sardines and war-bread sedately, and Peter attended to his own meal. Bunter was too much for him. Tom Dutton, the deaf junior, was regarding Bunter very curiously. He did not hear what the two juniors were saying; but he had observed that Bunter did not attempt to annex the lion's share of the meal, and that naturally surprised him.

"Are you ill, Bunter?" he asked, when William George rose from the table at last, leaving some jam still in the dish.

"No; I am very well, thank you, Dutton," answered Bunter.

"Eh?"

"I am well!" shouted Bunter.

"What? Who's a liar?" exclaimed Dutton.

"I did not call you a liar, my dear fellow," roared Bunter. "My object is to set an example to this study of moderation in language."

"Language!" exclaimed Tom. "Who's using language? Bad language, do you mean?"

"Oh, my hat! Nothing of the kind!" Tom Dutton jumped up.

"Out of my mind, am I?" he roared.

"You cheeky, fat ass, why, every chap in the Remove is saying that you are potty. Out of my mind! I like that! Do you want me to punch your silly nose?"

"You may punch my nose if you choose, Dutton," said Bunter. "I shall not return the blow. That would be wicked. I shall try to forgive you, Dutton, if you are brutal."

"Shut up, you soapy little beast!" shrieked Peter Todd.

"I am sorry, Todd, but I cannot act against my conscience," said Bunter. "I hope in time to see you and Dutton equally conscientious. I have hitherto been somewhat wanting in conscientious scruples. To my shame, I confess it."

"Oh, holy smoke!" gasped Peter.

"What's the fat rotter burling about?" asked Tom Dutton. "I've a jolly good mind to mop up the study with him! Out of my mind, indeed!"

"Strike!" said Bunter.

"What?"

"Strike! I shall not resist."

Tom Dutton stared at Bunter, as that youth's fat face was thrust towards him, as if inviting a blow.

"Take your silly phiz away, or I shall hit it!" snapped Dutton.

"I shall forgive you if you do, my friend."

Peter Todd rose to his feet, and took Billy Bunter by his fat little nose.

The Owl of the Remove gave a muffled howl.

"Grrrrgh!"

"This way," said Peter, leading the fat junior to the door by his nose. "I don't know what you're playing this funny game for, Bunter, and I don't want to. But I know you're not going to play it in this study. Outside!"

"Yurrrgh!"

Peter led him into the passage, bumped him against the opposite wall, and retired into the study, considerably red and wrathful.

For some moments he could hear the Owl of the Remove spluttering and gasping. Then Bunter's fat face was put into the study.

"Peter!"

"Hallo, toad!"

"I forgive you!"

"What?" yelled Peter. A soft answer is said to turn away wrath, but it did not have that effect in Peter Todd's case. Quite the reverse, in fact. He glared at the forgiving Bunter like a basilisk.

"I forgive you," repeated Bunter calmly. "I hope you will regret this brutal action when you are calmer, Peter."

Peter Todd did not show any sign of returning calmness just then. He made a jump for his bat, and another jump for Bunter. The Owl of the Remove dodged out of the doorway, and fled along the passage, without waiting to get anything more to forgive Peter Todd for.

"Come and forgive me again, you toad!" roared Peter. "Come on! I'm waiting to be forgiven, you horrid little fat prig!"

But Bunter did not return. The bat Peter was brandishing was too much even for his newly-awakened conscience, and he left Peter unforgiven.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Good Boy's Diary!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Swotting?" asked Bob Cherry.

It was the following day, and the Famous Five, after lessons, came on William George Bunter in the quadrangle.

He was seated on a bench under one of the old elms, with a book on his fat knee in which he was scribbling with a pencil.

If Bunter was swotting, it was surprising enough. The Owl never did any work unless he had to. But after the queerness he had shown of late the Co. would hardly have been surprised even to see him working.

Billy Bunter looked up with a smile—a very carefully cultivated smile, which displayed self-satisfied smugness in the completest possible manner.

"No, dear Bob," he answered; "I am not swotting."

"Dear Bob!" repeated Cherry.

"Potty!" said Johnny Bull.

"Not at all, dear Bull. All my school-fellows are dear to me," explained Bunter. "It is my duty to love my school-mates."

"What?"

"Hitherto," said Bunter, "I have been backward in recognising my duty. That, I trust, is past. My eyes are opened. I have been a sinful youth, my friends."

"A—a—a sinful youth!" gasped Wharton.

"I fear so. I can say that I am truly repentant," said Bunter. "I hope to show my repentance by acting always in a high-minded manner. As you are here, Wharton, I will take this opportunity of asking your forgiveness."

"Mum-mum-my forgiveness?" stammered the captain of the Remove.

"Yes, dear Harry."

"Dear Harry!" yelled Wharton.

"You do not mind my calling you so?" asked Bunter meekly. "I look upon you as a dear friend, Harry."

"You'd better stop it, then, unless you want the end of this bat on your neck!" growled Wharton.

Bunter shook his head. He was meek, but firm.

"However brutally you treat me, dear Harry, I shall always look upon you as a friend, and love you," he answered. "If you strike me with your bat, I shall forgive you, and hope that you will regret it. Last week, dear Harry, I took a tin of pilchards from your study cupboard."

"I thought you had them, you toad!"

"I beg you to forgive me," said Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!"

"When I have some money I shall reimburse you for the cost of that tin of pilchards," said Bunter. "At present I am stony."

"Expecting a postal-order I suppose?" remarked Frank Nugent.

"No, dear Frank, I am not expecting a postal-order. I say, to my shame, that I have hitherto misrepresented the means of my family," said Bunter sadly. "My father has lost money, and we are poor. Now that my eyes have been opened, I am not ashamed of it. I glory in it."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Do you forgive me, Wharton?"

"Are you potty?" was Wharton's reply. Bunter sighed.

"I hope you will forgive me, dear Harry. I shall endeavour to merit your good opinion in the future by good conduct and high-mindedness. Perhaps you dear fellows would like to see my diary?" said Bunter, with a gentle smile. "You may care to keep diaries yourselves in the same manner. Read it, dear Harry."

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"So you're keeping a diary?" said Bob, staring at the Owl.

"Yes, dear Bob. By keeping a daily record of my thoughts and actions I am able to correct little faults in my character," explained Bunter.

"Oh, crumbs!"

"The crumbliness is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, who was staring at Bunter like a fellow hypnotised.

Harry Wharton mechanically took the diary.

"Read it, all of you," said Bunter encouragingly. "It may do you good, and raise your thoughts to better things."

The Famous Five blinked at the diary. It was really worth reading. It showed Bunter in his new role as an insufferable prig at its very best.

"Wednesday.—This day I was brutally ill-treated by some of my Form fellows, whom I forgave freely. They took exception to my conduct, which, I confess, to my shame, has not always been high-minded. I promised to reform, and shall endeavour to keep that promise, and struggle against the weakness of the flesh."

"Thursday.—This day my dear school-fellow, Bull, ill-treated me, and I had the great satisfaction of interceding for him with Mr. Quelch. Oh, how delightful it is to return good for evil!"

"Thursday Evening.—At tea-time my dear study-mate, Todd, was cruel and unfeeling, and I forgave him at once. I am sorry to note that my forgiveness only made him very angry; but I shall hope and pray that he may reach a better frame of mind."

"Friday.—This morning I did my construe badly, and when Mr. Quelch asked me whether I had done my preparation, I was tempted to tell him an untruth. I am happy to be able to enter in my little diary that I resisted the temptation."

The Famous Five read it, and blinked at it, and blinked at Bunter. If the fat junior was pulling their leg, he seemed quite in earnest about it. He met their astonished stare with a meek smile.

"What have you scribbled down this silly piffle for, Bunter?" asked Bob Cherry, breathing hard.

"I am sorry you should regard it as piffle, dear Bob. I shall pray for you."

"What?" shrieked Bob.

"It is my duty. But oh, my dear friends," said Bunter eloquently—"my dear, dear schoolfellows, why do you not follow my example? Perhaps you could not, all at once, reach my high level; but you could try. Tell me, my dear friends, that you will try, and you will make me so happy!"

"Your high level?" stammered Bob.

"The high level of a sneaking toad!"

"Call me names if you like," said Bunter. "I shall bear them meekly. It is my duty to be humble and meek."

"You fat idiot!"

Bunter did not reply to that, but he made a fresh entry in his diary. The Famous Five read it as he wrote, and it ran as follows:

"Friday Afternoon.—This afternoon Bob Cherry abused me coarsely and vindictively, but I did not allow my temper to rise. I remembered that it was my duty to be meek. Mem.—I must try to show Bob Cherry some great kindness."

Biff!

Bob Cherry took a running kick at the diary, and it flew out of Bunter's fat hands and whizzed through the air. Bob was fed up.

"Yaroo!" yelled Bunter, with a jump. But he recollected himself in a moment. "Dear Bob, why are you so brutal? I forgive you."

"Hallo, there's Wingate!" murmured Nugent.

Bunter's precious diary dropped fairly at the feet of the captain of Greyfriars, who was crossing the quad. Wingate looked round sharply.

"Hallo, what's that game?" he demanded.

"Ahem!"

"It is nothing, Wingate," said Bunter. "Bob Cherry brutally kicked my book out of my hands, and gave me a very painful shock; but I hope you will not punish him. Bob is not bad at heart."

"Don't talk to me like a born idiot, Bunter!" snapped Wingate. "Cherry, you are too hefty with your boots. What the thunder do you mean by kicking a book out of a kid's hands? Pick it up and give it to Bunter."

Bob, with a crimson face, obeyed. Bunter received the book from him with a smirk, indicating that he forgave Bob from the bottom of his heart.

"And take fifty lines, Cherry!" added Wingate, frowning.

"Yes, Wingate," stammered poor Bob.

"Please do not punish Cherry, Wingate," explained Bunter. "He has been very brutal to me, but I forgive him freely."

"Do you want me to give you a taste of the ashplant, Bunter?" asked the captain of Greyfriars, staring at him.

"Nunno."

"Then don't talk in that strain any more, or you'll get it!" And Wingate walked on, frowning.

"Dear Bob—"

"You sneaking little beast!" muttered Bob Cherry.

"Dear Bob, shall I do your lines for you?" asked Bunter meekly.

"My—my lines?"

"Yes, dear Bob. I feel that I am the innocent cause of your punishment, and I shall be very happy to do your lines."

Bob Cherry ought to have been grateful for that forgiving kindness. But he wasn't. He gave Bunter, instead of thanks, a lunge with his cricket-bat, and the Owl of the Remove uttered a yelp. Then Bob, with a ruffled brow, strode away to the cricket-ground, followed by his chums.

"Beast!" howled Bunter.

Then he remembered that he was reformed, and opened his diary again and made another entry:

"Friday Afternoon.—Again Bob Cherry treated me with savage brutality. I must try hard to forgive him."

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Reward of Goodness!

BILLY BUNTER was the cynosure of all eyes in the junior Common-room that evening.

Bunter's new departure interested all the Remove.

That the Owl of the Remove had reformed nobody believed for a moment. The general impression was that he was spoofing, though really he seemed to be living up to his new profession. Reform in the case of a fellow like Bunter, if genuine, was very likely to take the shape of an intolerable self-righteousness. But "Good Little Georgie" was a new phenomenon in the Greyfriars Remove. The juniors concluded that Bunter was spoofing. They supposed it was his way of getting his own back for the ragging in No. 7 Study.

Certainly, Bunter reformed was about a hundred times as unpleasant as Bunter unreformed!

Nearly every fellow looked at him when he rolled into the Common-room, looking as self-satisfied and smug as ever. Cecil Reginald Temple, of the Fourth,

extracted an eyeglass from his waistcoat pocket, and turned it on Bunter. Cecil Reginald was in possession of the most comfortable armchair, and Bunter cast an eye on that chair. He liked lazy comfort.

"Hallo, here's the merry prodigy!" grinned Temple. "This way, Bunter! We want to look at you."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"I hear you're settin' up as a giddy model," continued Temple.

"I hope to be a model to my school-fellows, dear Reginald," answered Bunter meekly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dear Reginald!" repeated Temple. "You cheeky toad, don't call me Reginald, or I'll biff you!"

"He will forgive you if you do!" grinned Skinner. "Won't you, Bunt?"

"I hope so, Skinner," said Bunter. "It is my duty to do so. The good and the meek are always persecuted by brutal fellows. I expect it."

"The—the good and—the meek!" stuttered Temple. "Has the silly idiot gone quite potty?"

"The pottiness is terrific," remarked Hurree Singh. "The puffiness of the leg is also great."

"I hope I am sincere," said Bunter. "I endeavour to be so."

"Ye gods!" said Temple.

"I endeavour to correct my own faults, and to point out their faults to my school-fellows," said Bunter. "I shall continue to do so in spite of misunderstanding and persecution. I am sorry to say, Temple, that you are a selfish fellow. This is a very serious fault."

"What!" ejaculated Cecil Reginald.

"You know I like that chair," said Bunter. "You do not offer it to me. I will not take it away from you—"

"You'd better try!" exclaimed Temple.

"I shall not, Temple. I forgive you; but I am shocked and pained."

"I'll pain you a little more," said Temple; and he rose from the chair, and took Bunter by the collar and sat him down on the floor with a bump. "Now, you fat spoofer, what have you got to say?"

"Grooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow-yow! Beast!" howled Bunter.

"That sounds like the merry old Bunter!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Owl of the Remove struggled to his feet.

"I forgive you, Temple!" he gasped. "I shall not complain to my Form-master. I shall try to forgive you."

"Take him away and put him in a strait-jacket!" said Cecil Reginald, in disgust, and he sat down again.

Billy Bunter blinked round him, evidently quite pleased with the limelight he was getting.

"Isn't it about time you chucked playing the giddy ox, Bunter?" asked Peter Todd, with an ominous look.

"Dear Peter—"

"Ring off, idiot!"

"Abuse will not prevent me from doing what I know to be right," answered Bunter firmly. "Dear Peter, I should be so glad if you would follow my example, and try to rectify the very serious faults in your character."

Peter Todd picked up a cushion, but he laid it down again, and turned away with a snort.

"My esteemed Bunter," murmured Hurree Singh, "the jokefulness is great, but it is possible to overdo the jokefulness."

"That reminds me, Inky," said Bunter cheerfully. "I beg your forgiveness. I

am sorry to say that I have always looked down on you for being a nigger, Inky."

"What?" exclaimed the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"I am going to try to regard you as a schoolfellow, and check my disposition to look down upon you," said Bunter. "Is it your fault that you are a nigger? Certainly not. It is wrong to despise you because you have a black face. I feel that this is so."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's olive face was quite a study. Billy Bunter rolled away, leaving the astonished nabob to digest his speech and his forgiveness, and joined Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing, who were chatting in the window-recess. They did not give him welcoming looks. In fact, the Bounder snapped:

"Buzz off!"

But Billy Bunter did not buzz off. He blinked at Tom Redwing through his big spectacles.

"Redwing—" he began.

"Hallo!" said Tom.

"Please forgive me!"

"What!"

"I regret that I have shown so much contempt towards you because you are a common seaman's son, and have no right to shove yourself into a school like this!" exclaimed Bunter cheerfully. "This is class prejudice, and a fault. I regret it, Redwing, and I ask your forgiveness."

Tom Redwing could only stare. The Bounder's brow grew as black as thunder. Billy Bunter certainly seemed to have a knack of saying decidedly unpleasant things in his new role as a virtuous youth.

"I am willing to shake hands with you," said Bunter, "although you are a low fellow and a pushing bounder. I must mention that I think it would have been better for you to remain in your proper social station, but I am trying to learn not to regard you with contempt and— Yaroooh!"

The Bounder's boot was introduced at this moment, and it smote Bunter like a battering-ram. The Owl of the Remove staggered three or four paces, and dropped on his hands and knees. He gave a roar that rang to the other end of the passage outside, and it was echoed by a roar of laughter from the juniors in the Common-room.

"Go it, Smithy!" yelled Bob Cherry.

Smithy was going it. He was kicking Bunter for all he was worth, and the Owl was scrambling and squirming wildly to escape. His yells rang and echoed with a terrific din.

"Smithy!" exclaimed Tom Redwing.

"Don't! I don't mind his silly cheek, old chap. Don't!"

But the Bounder did not heed. If Redwing did not mind his chum did, and he was giving the virtuous Bunter a lesson. And Bunter, virtuous as he was, did not receive any sympathy—another instance of the inevitable persecution of the meek and righteous.

"Yoop! Help! Fire! Yaroooh!" roared Bunter. "I say, you fellows— Yarooop! Stop it! Oh, my hat! Yah! Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Vernon-Smith!" thundered a voice at the door.

"Oavv!" shouted Wharton, rather too late.

Mr. Quelch was frowning in at the doorway. Bunter's wild yells had drawn him there.

The Bounder dropped his too active foot. He was panting with exertion. Billy Bunter rolled on the floor and roared. The Remove-master, with an angry brow, strode into the room.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Rough on the Remove!

"BUNTER!"

"Yaroooh!"

"Rise to your feet, Bunter!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Harry Wharton helped the yelling Owl to his feet. Billy Bunter set his glasses straight, and blinked furiously at the Bounder. For the moment he was not in a forgiving mood. Even Bunter's virtue had its limits.

"Now, Vernon-Smith," said the Form-master, fixing a stern look upon the crimson Bounder, "kindly explain to me why you were kicking Bunter in that brutal way."

"I—I did not mean to be brutal, sir," stammered Vernon-Smith. "The little beast asked for it!"

"What? Do not use such expressions in my presence!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "I—I mean—"

"Do you mean to tell me that Bunter asked you to kick him?" exclaimed the Remove-master. "Preposterous!"

There was a subdued chuckle. Mr. Quelch evidently misunderstood.

"I—I mean he provoked me, sir," muttered the Bounder.

"That does not excuse you, Vernon-Smith. You have acted in a ruffianly manner. What provocation did Bunter give you, pray?"

The Bounder was silent.

"I insist upon knowing!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Bunter, what did you do?"

"N-n-nothing, sir," gasped Bunter. "I—I wasn't even speaking to Vernon-Smith. I was only speaking to Redwing."

"Is that the case, Vernon-Smith?"

"Ye-es, sir."

"And you attacked Bunter in that manner because he was speaking to Redwing?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

The Bounder was silent. But Mr. Quelch's expression changed as a recollection came into his mind. It had not escaped the Form-master's attention that some snobbish fellows had affected to look down on the sailorman's son of Hawkscliff when he came to Greyfriars on a scholarship. He fixed his eyes on the Owl of the Remove.

"Bunter!" he rapped out.

"Yes, sir!" said Bunter meekly.

The Owl had recovered himself now, and he was as meek as ever, though his little round eyes were glinting behind his glasses.

"What were you saying to Redwing?"

"I was asking him to forgive me, sir, because I had treated him with thoughtlessness and want of consideration."

"What!" ejaculated the Form-master, quite taken aback.

"Redwing will bear out what I say, sir," said Bunter. "I simply told him I was sorry I had looked down on him, and offered to shake hands with him. I don't know why Vernon-Smith attacked me at all."

"Redwing, is Bunter's statement correct?"

"Yes, sir," said Tom reluctantly.

"He was asking you to forgive him for having showing absurd snobbishness?"

"Yes, sir. But—but it was only humbug," said Tom, flushing. "He was putting it that way so as to be able to say insulting things. That's why Smithy kicked him. He deserved it."

"If Bunter was expressing regret, and offered to shake hands with you, I do not see why you should suppose that he was not sincere, Redwing," said Mr. Quelch tartly. "He was not bound to speak to you at all, I suppose. He appears to have offered to make amends."

of his own free will. A very proper step for him to take, in my opinion."

Redwing was silent and uncomfortable. It was natural for Mr. Quelch to take that view, not knowing the new and irritating role taken up by the Owl of the Remove.

"And so you attacked Bunter, Vernon-Smith, because you fancied he was not sincere in what he was saying to Redwing?"

"He was an insulting cad, sir!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Even if you supposed him to be insincere, Vernon-Smith—though I see no reason why you should do so—you had no right to treat him as you did. I shall cane you severely, Vernon-Smith. Follow me to my study."

The Bouncer set his lips hard, but made no reply. In silence he followed the Form-master from the room. Tom Redwing made a step after him, but stopped. There was nothing he could do. The sailorman's son stood looking very troubled and distressed. Billy Bunter dusted himself down with a satisfied smirk, and the juniors gathered about him with dark looks.

"What shall we do with the fat beast?" said Bob Cherry, in tones of concentrated wrath.

Bunter blinked at him.

"Are you angry, dear Bob?" he asked.

"Eh?"

"Have I done anything to offend you? If so, I ask your forgiveness."

"M-m-my word!" muttered Bob.

"You sneakin', peachin' cad," said Temple of the Fourth, "you ought to be boiled in oil! If we had you in the Fourth we'd scrag you!"

"You may call me anything you like, Temple. I shall not retort."

"You worm!" exclaimed Wharton. "You've got Smithy a licking, you unspeakable toad!"

"I am afraid that Smithy's bad temper will cause him to receive punishment," agreed Bunter. "But this may have a good effect upon Smithy by teaching him self-control. Don't you think so, dear Harry?"

Dear Harry's reply was to take the Owl of the Remove by the collar and shake him forcibly.

Billy Bunter spluttered.

"Bump him!" shouted Ogilvy.

"Scrag him!"

"Scrag him terrifically!"

"I—I say, you fellows, I—I'll tell Quelchy!" yelled Bunter, as the angry juniors closed on him. "I—I—Yarooooh!"

Bump!

William the Good sat on the floor with a heavy concussion. Then Bob Cherry began operations on him with a cushion. Billy Bunter yelled like a wild Hun.

"Shut the door!" exclaimed Nugent hastily. "We don't want Quelchy back."

"He's trying to make Quelchy hear!" exclaimed Bolsover major. "Shove this rug over his face."

Biff, biff, biff! came down the cushion on the fat person of William the Good. Russell was scudding to the door to close it, but before it could close Mr. Quelch's angry face looked in. Bunter's yells had reached him, as the virtuous Owl intended they should.

"Release Bunter at once!" thundered the Form-master. "Cherry, if you touch him once more I will report you to the Head for a flogging!"

"Oh!" gasped Bob, dropping the cushion as if it had suddenly become red-hot.

Bunter sat and roared.

"This is disgraceful!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, his eyes flashing at the dismayed

juniors. "It is what, I suppose, you call a ragging. Wharton, I am surprised to see you, the head boy of the Form, taking part in this outrageous hooliganism. I am ashamed of you!"

Wharton crimsoned.

"Every boy here will be detained tomorrow afternoon for the half-holiday!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch sternly. "Bunter appears to have been victimised. I shall certainly take severe measures to prevent anything of the kind. Bunter, if you are molested again, come at once to my study and inform me."

"Yes, sir," gasped Bunter.

Mr. Quelch gave an angry glance at the red faces of the Removites, and swept out of the Common-room. Billy Bunter dusted himself once more, gasping for breath, but with a fat grin on his face. He felt quite safe now.

Bob Cherry breathed hard through his nose.



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It is mostly on the impulse of the moment that we fritter away our money. If we stopped to think we should remember that we are asked to save, so that our money may make things easier for the brave boys "out there."

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In five years' time that certificate will be worth £1.

This is the best way for a patriotic boy to put money by. Won't you try it?

"Detained tomorrow," he mumbled. "That settles the match with the Fourth!"

"You'd have been licked, anyhow," said Temple comfortingly.

"Br-r-r-r!"

"It's rotten!" said Wharton, with a deep breath. "Quelchy thinks we were bullying the little beast. He doesn't understand."

"I think Mr. Quelch does understand, dear Harry," said Bunter softly. "He knows that the good are always ill-treated by the thoughtless and brutal."

"Shut up!" roared Bob Cherry, with a homicidal look.

"Dear Bob—"

"I—I shall slaughter him!" gasped Bob. "Quelchy or no Quelchy, I'm not going to stand him!"

Billy Bunter smirked at the enraged

Removites. Every hand there was itching to thump him; but the juniors knew it would not do. Mr. Quelch had bidden Bunter report to him if he was molested again, and there was no doubt that the virtuous Bunter would do so—not the least. Nobody wanted to be sent in to the Head for a flogging. William George Bunter held the whip-hand for once. He realised it, and his smirk grew more pronounced and more insufferable.

"You'd better shut up, Bunter!" said Harry Wharton, as calmly as he could.

"Certainly, dear Harry, if you wish!" smirked the Owl. "I only wished to say to all of you that I forgive you."

Bob Cherry clenched his hand, and unclenched it again. William George Bunter rolled away to the sofa and sat down, grinning. A few minutes later Vernon-Smith came back into the room, looking a trifle pale, but very quiet.

"Smithy!" called out Bunter softly.

The Bouncer did not heed.

"You treated me very brutally, Smithy. But I forgive you. I am going to make a note in my diary to perform some act of kindness towards you."

Vernon-Smith breathed hard, and his eyes glittered. But Tom Redwing touched him on the arm, and they left the Common-room together. Billy Bunter remained on the sofa, smiling serenely, in the happy consciousness that every fellow in the room wanted to punch him hard, and could not venture to touch him at all.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Still Improving!

THE following day was Saturday, a half-holiday at Greyfriars, and the Remove Eleven had been booked to meet the Upper Fourth at cricket in the afternoon. Nearly all the Remove were detained, however, as a result of Bunter's uncommon goodness, and the match had to be put off. The juniors were wrathful and indignant, and they were not appeased by the remarks of Temple, Dabney & Co., who sweetly assured them that their detention had saved them from a terrific licking on the cricket-field.

Their feelings towards Bunter could only be described as Hunnish. Billy Bunter had never been exactly popular before his reform. Now he had reformed, unpopularity did not describe the estimation in which he was held. If Good Little Georgie, who was loved by his kind teachers, had entered the Greyfriars Remove, he could not have been regarded with more loathing than that inspired by William George Bunter.

And yet, as Squiff remarked, it was really only to be expected that if Bunter ever changed his ways he would change them for the worse. If he ever became "good," it was bound to take the form of self-righteous smugness and priggishness. The Remove fellows had threatened to rag Bunter if he didn't change his ways, but now they felt more inclined to rag him if he didn't change back!

Whether Bunter's reform was genuine, or whether it was all an elaborate spoof, the juniors could not quite decide. Perhaps he was only getting his own back in the most offensive way possible. But if he had really become "good," his Form-fellows would rather have seen him bad. Like the fallen Prince of Darkness, though in a different sense, they "felt how awful goodness is!"

Bunter seemed to be enjoying it, too. The feeling that he was irritating everybody compensated him for the self-restraint he was exercising. Like the gentlemen who stand at street-corners,

and confide to an interested public how wicked they used to be, and how good they have become. Hunter found great joy in confessing his previous sinfulness, and asking forgiveness for it, in return for which he forgave everybody freely, all the more as he perceived that his forgiveness had a most exasperating effect upon the recipients.

After dinner that day the Remove had to march into the Form-room, to spend the afternoon on Latin conjugations instead of cricket. They learned a good deal that afternoon about deponent verbs, without in the slightest degree appreciating that gain in knowledge. From the Remove point of view, deponent verbs couldn't hold a candle to cricket.

It was a dismal afternoon.

Mr. Quelch left them to their tasks, looking in occasionally to see how they were getting on, or perhaps to see that they were not getting off.

In an interval between the Form-master's visits William George Bunter gave them a look-in. Deadly looks were cast at the fat, smug face when it appeared in the doorway.

"I say, you fellows!" purred Bunter.

"Get out!" breathed Bolsover major sulphurously.

"I hope you fellows are benefiting by your industry," said Bunter. "Is it not pleasant to improve the shining hour?"

"Get out!" shrieked Bob Cherry.

"I am so sorry that you do not look happy," continued Bunter, preparing to dodge as Bolsover major clutched up an inkpot from a well in his desk. "I hope you are not angry."

"You fat rotter!"

"You may call me names if you like, Wharton. I forgive you."

Whiz!

Bolsover major hurled the inkpot, which left a trail of ink across the Form-room as it flew.

Billy Bunter dodged promptly, and the missile missed.

But every bullet is said to have its billet, and that inkpot was no exception to the rule.

It was sheer bad luck that Mr. Quelch, returning to see how the Remove were getting on, arrived at that moment behind Bunter.

Bunter escaped the inkpot, and it whizzed past him and landed upon the sacred waistcoat of the Form-master.

Biff!

Mr. Quelch staggered back.

The sudden shock surprised him, and for a moment he did not know what had happened. But as the inkpot crashed on the floor at his feet, and he saw the ink streaming down his gown, he understood. The expression that came over Mr. Quelch's face then was like unto the look of a Von Tirpitz at his very worst. Almost stuttering with wrath, he strode into the Form-room, and William the Good winked into the passage. He foresaw trouble.

Bolsover major sat frozen in his seat, realising what he had done. The Remove seemed turned to marble.

"Who threw that inkpot?"

Mr. Quelch's voice was like the rumble of thunder.

There was a frozen silence.

"Who threw that inkpot?"

Still silence.

"Boys! Do you hear me? Who threw that inkpot?"

The juniors did not answer. They couldn't! The sight of Mr. Quelch with the ink streaming down his gown overcame them. They stared at him, frozen, as if he had been a new edition of the fabled Gorgon.

Mr. Quelch calmed himself with an effort. But his calmness was more deadly than his wrath.

"Someone," he said, in a voice like



One for Quelch! (See Chapter 8.)

the concentrated essence of the bitterest acid—"someone hurled an inkpot at me! The missile smote me forcibly. I am drenched with ink. I did not see the perpetrator of the outrage. I command him to stand up!"

Bolsover major did not stand up. He was wishing that the floor would open and let him slip through.

"Who threw that inkpot?"

Mr. Quelch's voice was like that of the great huge bear.

Awful silence!

"Very well!" said the Remove-master. "You refuse to reply. I conclude that all the boys present were parties to this unheard-of assault. It shall not pass unpunished."

"If—if you please, sir—" began Wharton, finding his voice at last.

"Have you anything to say, Wharton?"

"The—the inkpot was not meant for you, sir."

"Did you throw it, Wharton?"

"Nunno."

"Then how do you know for whom it was meant?"

"It was meant for Bunter, sir!" said Squiff.

"Did you throw it, Field?"

"N-n-no."

"Once more, and for the last time, I command the boy who hurled that inkpot to rise to his feet and confess!"

Bolsover major remained glued to his form.

"Very well. Every boy present will be punished with the utmost severity!" said Mr. Quelch. "This is apparently a conspiracy. All half-holidays are cancelled for the remainder of the term!"

"Oh!" gasped the Remove.

Expressive glances were cast upon Bolsover major. That sentence played havoc with the cricket fixtures, and a good many other things. It was time for Percy Bolsover to own up, and he realised it. Bolsover was a good deal of a bully, but he was no funk. Up he jumped, as if moved by a spring.

"I threw it, sir."

"Good old Bolsover!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Oh! It was you, Bolsover?" rumbled Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir. The—the other fellows

hadn't anything to do with it!" stammered Bolsover.

"I accept your assurance on that point, Bolsover. I excuse the other boys," said Mr. Quelch. "You, Bolsover, will follow me to the Head. I have not the slightest doubt that you will be expelled from the school. Come!"

Bolsover gave a gasp.

"I—I didn't throw it at you, sir!" he stammered. "I—I didn't know you were there, sir! On my word! I chucked it—I mean, I threw it at that grinning little beast! I—I mean, Bunter."

Mr. Quelch gave him a searching look. There was truth in Bolsover's crimson and dismayed face, and the Form-master was growing cooler, too. He realised that this incident was not the terrific outrage he had supposed at first. He had received the inkpot by mistake. That was serious enough, certainly; but it was not the immeasurable offence he had believed.

"B-b-believe me, sir," stammered Bolsover, "I—I wouldn't have thrown it at you for anything, sir! Not for a million pounds, sir!"

Which was true enough. Not for the whole of the War Loan would any fellow in the Remove have thrown an inkpot at Mr. Quelch. Twisting a tiger's tail would have been a gentle and harmless amusement in comparison.

Bolsover major's terror was a witness to his sincerity. Mr. Quelch's face looked a little less like a German offensive on a large scale.

"I believe you, Bolsover," said the Form-master at last. "Indeed, it is scarcely credible that any boy in possession of his right senses could be guilty of such an act. You hurled that dangerous missile at your Form-fellow?"

"Ye-es, sir."

"Are you aware, Bolsover, that you might have caused him serious injury?"

"Oh, no, sir! I—I only chucked it at his tummy."

"His what?" shrieked Mr. Quelch.

"His stomach, I mean, sir," said Bolsover, abashed.

"And you struck my waistcoat instead, Bolsover."

"I—I'm sorry, sir! I—I wanted it to

to help me, you may leave me to the task," said Bunter gently.

"I will!"

Bunter was left to the task. Harry Wharton joined his chums, and, after a time, they came along to the bike-shed to see how Bunter was getting on. If he had really cleaned that muddy bike it looked as if his reform was not all humbug.

Bunter was not there. The bike lay on the floor, with both tyres detached, and holes in each of them. One pedal was twisted, and the other was off. Several of the spokes had been broken.

Harry Wharton gazed at that unhappy bicycle speechlessly for some moments.

"The—the toad!" he gasped at last. "He—he's mucked up my bike! It will take hours to mend it now! Oh, my hat!"

"The muckfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Singh. "I shall not let the esteemed Bunter perform any acts of kindness to me."

"Scalp him!" exclaimed Bob Cherry indignantly.

Harry Wharton rushed out of the shed in search of Bunter. He found that happy youth sunning himself just under Mr. Quelch's study window. Wharton grasped him by the neck.

"You young rotter!" he shouted.

"You—you—"

"My dear Harry— Yarrah—"

"You've mucked up my bike!" yelled Wharton.

"I did my best with it!" gasped Bunter. "I really worked very hard at that bike— Yarrah! Leave off shaking me, you beast— Yow-ow! Help!"

Crash! Up went Mr. Quelch's window.

"Wharton!"

"Oh, my hat! Yes, sir?"

"How dare you!" thundered the Remove-master. "What does this incessant persecution of Bunter mean?"

"I—I—I—"

"Wharton is angry because I have not cleaned his bicycle quite to his satisfaction, sir," purred Bunter. "I did my best."

"What? What? Has Bunter cleaned your bicycle, Wharton?"

"Yes, sir; but—"

"You have no right to set him to such a task, as you know very well!"

"He—he offered, sir!" gasped Wharton. "And—"

"What? Bunter offered to clean your bicycle, and you are shaking him in that rough manner because you are not satisfied with it? Wharton, I am shocked! You appear to be lacking in the most elementary feelings of gratitude. Wharton, you will take two hundred lines!"

Slam! The window closed. Harry Wharton stood breathing hard, and Bunter smiled at him sunnily.

"Dear Harry, shall I do your lines for you?" he murmured softly. "I should be so happy to please you, and make you like me!"

Harry Wharton strode away without replying. He could not trust himself within arm's length of Bunter.

William the Good winked at the old elm trees. The path of reform was a more pleasant path than could have been expected.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Not So Pleasant!

ON Monday there was a meeting in Study No. 1, Remove. The Famous Five were there, and Squiff and Hazeldene and Brown and Mark Linley and the Bouncer, and several more. There was a warm discussion, and the subject of the discussion was William the Good.

Billy Bunter had fairly forced the Removites to take note of his hitherto unimportant existence. It was agreed on all hands that Bunter had to be suppressed somehow. But suppression was not so very easy, since Bunter's extreme goodness had caused him to become a sneak and a tale-bearer.

If Bunter went on improving on those lines he would finish as a regular Prussian, and it was time it was stopped.

But how was he to be stopped? The old Bunter could be ragged for spying and eavesdropping and grub-hunting. But the new Bunter couldn't be ragged for being good. The Form-master would never understand how extremely oppressive and exasperating Bunter's kind of goodness was.

There was a long discussion in Study No. 1, and a decision was reached at last. It was a simple decision. It was resolved unanimously to leave Bunter severely alone, and let him be as good as he liked in the cold shades of Coventry. This, at least, was within the powers of his Form-fellows. They had a right to decline to speak to Bunter if they chose. And when it was decided the decision was communicated to the rest of the Form, and unanimously assented to.

Even Skinner and Snoop backed up Harry Wharton & Co. for once, for they lived in dread of Bunter's new virtue compelling him to give them away to the Form-master—and many of Skinner's little secrets were known to the Owl. In fact, Bunter had already told Skinner, with great solemnity, that his conscience moved him to report to Mr. Quelch that he smoked and played cards. He felt that, for Skinner's own good, Mr. Quelch ought to know. That was true enough, if tale-bearing had not been involved.

Skinner was quite scared, and he gave up cigarettes in the study for a time, and even stood the virtuous Owl several packets of toffee—which Bunter's conscience fortunately allowed him to accept. But Harold Skinner's feelings were humbled while he bribed Bunter.

Every fellow in the Remove agreed to the new mode of treatment for the virtuous youth; and it was agreed that nobody should lose his temper with him, or punch him, or throw things at him. It was simply to be as if Billy Bunter did not exist at all. And, when they came to think of it, the juniors felt that this was as severe a punishment as they could have planned for the chatterbox of the Form, who loved talking almost as much as he loved eating and sleeping.

Billy Bunter came into No. 7 to tea soon after the meeting in No. 1 broke up. Peter Todd and Tom Dutton were there, chatting amicably. They stopped as Bunter came in, and went on with their tea in silence.

Bunter sat down at the table, smirking. He was no longer in dread of Peter's cricket-stump. Peter did not want to be reported to Mr. Quelch for stamping a study-mate simply because he was good.

"Pass the war-bread, please, dear Peter," said Bunter.

Peter passed the bread in silence.

"I am so sorry I haven't been able to make any contribution to the tea," said Bunter. "I am sure you do not mind, Peter. May I have some of the cheese?"

Silence.

"May I have some cheese, dear Peter?"

Peter Todd seemed to have become as deaf as Tom Dutton. At all events, he did not appear to hear Bunter's question. The Owl of the Remove blinked at him in surprise.

"Are you deaf?" he demanded.

No answer.

"Look here, Peter, you silly ass—" began Bunter, annoyed.

Peter Todd stared at him as if he were an article of furniture, and remained stone deaf.

Not a word could Bunter extract from him, and, with a snort, he turned to Tom Dutton. He was bound to talk. His tongue never could keep still.

"I say, Dutton!" he shouted.

Never had Tom seemed so deaf, though he was very deaf sometimes, especially when Bunter talked to him.

"Dutton, you ass!" roared Bunter.

Tom Dutton helped himself to war-bread and margarine sedately.

"Can't you hear me, you deaf idiot?" shrieked Bunter, growing crimson with his vocal exertions.

Stony silence.

Billy Bunter glared at his solemn-faced study-mates, his very glasses glittering with wrath. But no word passed their lips during tea, and Bunter rose at last, ill-tempered, and looking much less smug.

"Look here, you silly idiots! What's this game?" he demanded.

Bunter, like Brutus, paused for a reply. But no reply was forthcoming. The Owl of the Remove snorted, and rolled out of the study.

Harry Wharton & Co. were chatting in the window. The fat junior joined them, composing his podgy features into as smug an expression as his irritated feelings would allow.

"I say, Harry—"

"We can manage the Fourth Form match on Wednesday," Harry Wharton continued what he was saying regardless of Bunter. "Temple's agreeable."

"Dear Harry—"

"The weather looks like being fine, too."

"I say, you fellows—"

The Famous Five walked away to the landing. Bunter blinked after them in exasperation and surprise.

"Look here, you rotters!" he shouted.

The Co. went downstairs. Billy Bunter snorted after them. Bunter was in a talkative mood, as he generally was. He wanted to say unpleasant things, too; and in those circumstances it was really hard to find no listeners. Tom Redwing and Vernon-Smith came along the Remove passage, and Bunter hastened to intercept them.

"I hope you've got over your licking, Smithy, old fellow," he said. "I really hope it did not hurt you much."

The two juniors walked on heedlessly.

"Redwing!" Bunter rolled after them. "You remember what I told you the other day? I was quite sincere, Redwing. I am sorry I hurt your feelings by showing you the contempt I felt for you."

Redwing went into the Bouncer's study with him, unheeding Bunter. The fat junior was following, when the door slammed. Bunter jumped back just in time to save his fat little nose.

He stood puzzled, wondering what this peculiar conduct on the part of his Form-fellows might mean. He rolled along to Snoop's study at last, and blinked in, finding Snoop and Stott and Skinner there. They were talking, and they went on talking.

"I say, you fellows—"

The juniors did not heed. They did not seem to hear.

"Are you getting deaf, too?" demanded Bunter.

Sidney James Snoop pointed to the door without speaking. But Bunter did not go. He stood where he was, glowering.

"I suppose you think that's jolly clever?" he sneered. "Look here! What's this silly game?"

No answer.

Harold Skinner was fumbling in his

pocket. He took out a cardboard cigarette-box and laid it on the table.

"Oh, good! You've got 'em, Skinner?" said Snoop.

"Fifty of the best," said Skinner.

"Good man!" said Stott.

"I am sorry to see you fellows indulging in smoking," said Bunter, in his most virtuous tone. "Skinner, I feel that I cannot allow this to go on! It is very wrong, Skinner!"

Snoop rose to his feet, pushed Bunter gently out of the study, and closed the door on him.

Bunter stood fairly quivering with wrath.

He began to understand now the tactics of the Remove fellows. He was in Coventry, and the whole Form were in agreement to keep him there. But Skinner, at least, he could bring to heel, on his new system of tale-bearing for virtue's sake. He rolled away to Mr. Quelch's study.

"If you please, sir—" began Bunter meekly, as the Form-master laid down his book and looked at him.

"Well, Bunter?"

"I feel that I am bound to tell you, sir—"

Mr. Quelch raised an admonitory forefinger.

"I trust that you are not about to tell me tales, Bunter! You are well aware that I do not approve of tale-bearing."

"Oh, sir!"

"If you have been ill-used, you have a right to place a complaint before me," said Mr. Quelch, more kindly.

"It is not that, sir," said Bunter meekly. "But I feel that you ought to know that Skinner is smoking in Snoop's study. It seems so very wrong to me."

"It is wrong, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch, rising to his feet. "I cannot, however, approve of your giving information in this way. I hope your motives are good?"

"I hope so, sir."

"You will come with me!" said Mr. Quelch, frowning a little.

Bunter followed him contentedly enough to the Remove passage. The vials of wrath were about to be poured out on Skinner & Co., and the virtuous Owl felt a great satisfaction at the prospect.

Mr. Quelch knocked at Snoop's door, and opened it at once, Bunter grinning behind him.

The three juniors were still chatting, and the Form-master caught the word "cricket," as he rustled in. They rose respectfully to their feet. On the table, in full view, was the cigarette-box. There was no atmosphere of smoke in the room, however. If the young rascals had met for that purpose, they had not yet started. Mr. Quelch's eyes fixed on the cigarette-box.

"I have been informed that smoking is going on in this study!" he said sternly.

"Surely not, sir!" said Skinner calmly.

"Nothing of the kind. I'm sure I do not smoke!"

"Certainly not!" said Snoop and Stott together.

"Boys! What is this box, then?"

"Oh, that box!" said Skinner, unmoved. "That's my seed-box, sir."

"What?"

Skinner took the lid from the cigarette-box. Inside were disclosed a number of dried peas.

"We're takin' up gardenin' in earnest, you see, sir," Skinner explained respectfully. "These are first earlies, and I'm going to try to raise a late crop on our allotment. Mr. Mumble gave them to me."

"That—that is a cigarette-box, how—
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ever, Skinner, although it contains peas at the present moment."

"Yes, sir. Mr. Mumble was kind enough to give me the box."

Billy Bunter's face was a study.

Too late it dawned upon his fat brain that Skinner had deliberately displayed that cigarette-box under his nose, with the intention of letting him tell tales to the Form-master on the subject—and put his foot in it.

"Bunter!" Mr. Quelch's voice was very deep. "You informed me that Skinner was smoking in this study!"

"I—I—" stammered Bunter—"I thought—I—"

"You supposed there were cigarettes in this old box?"

"I—I— Yes, sir."

"You did not ask Skinner what it contained?"

"I—I—"

"Yes or no?" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Nunno!" gasped Bunter.

"You did not see Skinner smoking?"

"N-n-no!"

"In short," thundered Mr. Quelch, "you came to me and made a false accusation against Skinner, simply because you had seen this old box, which the gardener gave him to keep the peas for his allotment!"

"I—I thought—"

"You should think a little more carefully, Bunter, before you take it upon yourself to accuse a boy of breaking a strict rule of the school. I shall cane you, Bunter, for speaking untruthfully and wasting my time. Follow me!"

Billy Bunter followed the Form-master once more—not with pleasurable anticipations this time. Skinner & Co. exchanged a delighted grin, and they followed as far as the stairs. They leaned over the banisters to listen, and they were rewarded by the sounds of loud howls from Mr. Quelch's study. A dozen fellows joined them there, all listening in great enjoyment.

Mr. Quelch's door opened again, and Bunter came forth wringing his hands. And the expression on William George's face at that moment was certainly not suitable to a good boy and a model to Greyfriars.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Recovers!

RAP!

"Yaroooh!"

It was the following day, and tea-time in Study No. 7. For twenty-four hours not a word had been spoken to Bunter by any fellow in the Remove, and he was growing decidedly restive. At tea in No. 7 Tom Dutton and Peter Todd were grimly silent, as usual. Perhaps his experience of Coventry had tired Bunter a little of being good, or perhaps the old Bunter was too strong within him. At all events, the cake that, for once, graced the tea-table, proved too strong a temptation to the virtuous Owl.

He helped himself, not wisely but too well. Peter did not speak. He communicated his disapproval by means of the handle of his knife, which came down with a rap upon Bunter's fat fingers. Hence the yell of anguish that rang through Study No. 7.

Peter Todd stuck the knife into the huge chunk of cake Bunter had annexed, and transferred it to the dish again.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" came from Bunter.

"Yow! I'll tell Quelch, you rotter! Ow!" He sucked his fingers and glared at Peter, who seemed oblivious of his remarks.

Bunter rose to his feet, but he sat down again. Mr. Quelch did not encourage tale-bearers, and it was scarcely feasible

to report to him that Bunter had had his fingers rapped for attempting to annex somebody else's cake. Besides, Bunter wanted some more of the cake. He had only had a third of it so far.

"I—I say, Peter—"

Peter carved the cake unheeding.

"I forgive you, Peter."

Formerly that remark was enough to make Peter wild. Now it had no effect upon him whatever. He helped himself to cake, and munched away cheerily.

"I hope you will be sorry for this, Peter, when you are calm," pursued Bunter, actually in the hope of provoking Peter to throw something at him. Anything was better than this tomb-like silence.

But Peter did not throw anything at him. He did not even seem to hear.

"Look here, Toddy, you rotter!" roared Bunter.

Peter did not even look.

"I say, Peter, old chap, let a fellow have some of the cake! Don't be mean, you know!" pleaded Bunter.

A stony, unseeing stare was the only reply. Bunter stretched out a fat paw to the cake again, and Peter took his knife by the blade, ready. Bunter did not touch the cake.

"I—I say, Peter," he mumbled, "don't be a beast, you know. You're selfish, Peter. It's wrong to be selfish!"

Peter finished his cake in contented silence.

"Look here, Peter, this has gone on long enough!" exclaimed Bunter. "Can't you speak, you stone image?"

Apparently Peter couldn't! Anyway, he didn't. Bunter left the table, giving his study-mate a basilisk glare, and rolled discontentedly out of the study. From No. 1 there came an exhilarating scent of grilled herrings. Bunter paused, and sniffed, and sniffed again, and opened the door of No. 1. The Famous Five were there, enjoying a tea of unusual plentitude.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Another herring, Franky?" asked Wharton.

"Yes, old scout!"

"Prime!" said Bob Cherry. "Blessed if I thought Franky could grill herrings like this. You can come and grill my next lot, Franky."

"I say, you fellows—"

"They are good, though I say it!" admitted Nugent.

"Did you ask me to come in, Wharton?"

Wharton did not even look round.

Billy Bunter eyed the juniors hungrily and uncertainly. There was quite a dish of herrings on the table, and Bunter had had only one tea, so he was hungry. The path of virtue, however unpleasant it might be made for others, did not attract him so much now. He would rather have joined in the herring spread.

Somewhat uncertainly he came into the study, and, keeping one eye on the juniors, he drew a box to the table. He sat down, blinking at them.

Still they seemed quite unconscious of his presence. But they woke to consciousness suddenly as Bunter took up a fork to help himself to the succulent herrings.

Five juniors rose to their feet as if moved by the same spring, and five hands were laid on Bunter. He yelled in anticipation of a bumping. But he was not bumped. He was to have nothing to report to Mr. Quelch. He was simply led to the door by the ears and the hair, and the door was shut on him; and all without a word being spoken.

Billy Bunter blinked furiously at the closed door. He stooped, and yelled through the keyhole:

"Beasts!"

Then his heavy footsteps departed.

Bob Cherry chuckled softly.

"That sounds like the old Bunter!" he murmured. "Not a bit like Good Little Georgie! Bunter's recovering."

"I think he's getting fed up," said Harry, laughing.

"The fed-upfulness is terrible!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed and disgusting Bunter will soon give up being so goodful."

"Well, his badness is better than his goodness," remarked Johnny Bull. "If he gives up being good, we won't try to reform him again. He's better as he was."

To which the Co. gave a hearty assent.

William the Good was, in point of fact, growing fed-up. Bunter's variety of goodness was not likely to last, unless it could be made continually unpleasant to somebody. And now the Remove fellows refused to be drawn. Bunter could forgive them as much as he liked, and they said no word, and did not even look at him. And Bunter, with the chatter of a whole day bottled up within him, so to speak, felt that he would really burst soon if he was not allowed to talk. It would have been a great treat to talk, even if he had to avoid saying disagreeable things.

In the dormitory that night he cast an almost imploring blink at Peter Todd.

"Good-night, Toddy!" he said beseechingly.

Peter Todd turned in without heeding.

"Good-night, Wharton!"

No answer.

"Good-night, Squiff!"

Snore.

"Yah! Rotters!" howled Bunter.

"Beasts! Yah!"

And still there came no reply, though a faint chuckle was audible from somewhere.

When Bunter turned out in the morning he was quite glum, and not at all smug. Somehow, his excessive goodness did not sustain him under this trial, though, as he had said himself, the good

are always persecuted by the bad. A chilling silence surrounded him till he left the dormitory.

At breakfast, if he asked a fellow to pass something, it was passed in stony silence.

Billy Bunter looked very thoughtful during morning lessons. When the Remove were dismissed, he caught Peter Todd's arm in the passage. Peter shook him off silently, and went out into the quadrangle. Bunter rolled after him, and found him talking to the Famous Five, discussing the match that was coming off that afternoon.

"I say, you fellows—" began Bunter.

The group of juniors moved off a little. Bunter followed them, and they moved off again, still without looking at him.

"Look here, you beasts, don't play the goat!" howled Bunter at last. "Toddy, you rotter, can't you speak to a chap? You're treating me badly, Toddy," added Bunter pathetically.

The group moved off again.

"Oh, you rotters!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say, you fellows, I—I—I'm not going to forgive you!"

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

"I—I say, don't be beasts, you know!" said Bunter. "You told me you'd rag me if I didn't reform, didn't you? Well, now you're not satisfied. It seems to me that high-minded fellows ain't popular in this school. I—I—I'm going to chuck it!"

"The sooner you chuck your sort of high-mindedness the better, you fat, sneaking toad!" said Bob Cherry, breaking the long silence at last.

Bunter did not forgive him for calling him names, and hope that he would think better of it when he was calmer. He knew what the result would be. Even Billy Bunter's obtuse brain realised that the "Good Little Georgie" game was played out. So long as it was only unpleasant to others, that was all right; but it had become very unpleasant to

himself, owing to its consequences, and that was quite a different matter.

"Own up that you were only spoofing, you fat villain!" growled Peter Todd.

"I'll own up to anything you like, Toddy!" said Bunter. "I—I won't sneak to Quelchy any more—he's a beast, anyway. I—I'm going to chuck it!"

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry. "So you're going to give up sneaking?"

"Yes, old chap!"

"Good! We'll put you to the test," said Bob. "I'll jolly well kick you, and see whether you tell Quelchy. How do you like the idea?"

"Why, you rotter— Yaroooh! Leggo! Yooop!"

Biff! Biff!

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Co.; and they walked down to the cricket-ground, leaving William George Bunter spluttering and gasping.

For some moments William was tempted to be William the Good again; but he refrained. And that well-deserved kicking was not reported to his Form-master. And when Bolsover major, feeling that the hour had come, laid into the Owl with a cricket-stump, Bunter fled to Toddy for protection instead of to Mr. Quelch—a very wise proceeding on his part. Bunter had recovered!

"I say, you fellows," Bunter remarked, blinking into Study No. 1 at tea-time, "I'll have some of that cake. I say, Wharton, can you lend me five bob?"

"What?"

"I've been disappointed about a postal-order," explained Bunter. "I'm expecting a postal-order for a quid from one of my titled relations, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the whole study. Evidently William George Bunter was no longer William the Good!

(DON'T MISS "BOLSOVER'S ENEMY!"—next Monday's grand complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., by FRANK RICHARDS.)

A Great New Serial Story.

THE BROWN TORRENT.

BY SIDNEY DREW.

A Thrilling Story of Adventure, in which Ferrers Lord, Ching-Lung, Gan-Waga, the Eskimo, and other Popular Characters, play their parts.

NEW READERS START HERE.

Rupert Thurston buys an idol bearing the inscription, "I am Sharpra the Slumberer, and at my awakening the world shall tremble!" Ferrers Lord, Ching-Lung, Gan-Waga, Maddock, Prout, and O'Reoney arrive. The idol's eyes are seen to open, and with a terrific crash the hotel collapses.

A lank Indian, named Gadra Singh, is employed as cook; and the one-time rebel, Larput Raj, is the shikari. While watching the idol he sees its eyes open, but they quickly shut.

Duke Payton arrives and joins the expedition to the cactus country. They are out hunting a tiger, and Ching-Lung manages to shoot it. They find a blue-eyed native who has been killed by a python, and bury him. Maddock, Gan-Waga, Barry O'Reoney, and the cook are left in camp. Some rebelling natives fire on them.

(Now read on.)

A Bid for Peace.

FERRERS LORD was brushing his hair when Ching-Lung announced Prout's news.

"Are they more of the same lot, Ching?" he asked, without turning his head. "Are they Afghans—Darhans, I mean?"

"Oh, yes, I think so, chief. You're not expecting any other kind of visitors, are you?"

The millionaire took up a loose silk tie, made the neatest of knots, and pushed a tie-pin, that consisted of one black pearl, into it. Then he put on his coat. In his grey flannel suit and white buckskin shoes and loose silk shirt Ferrers Lord only needed

a racquet and he would have looked ready for a game of tennis on an English lawn.

"It would be a pity to kill any of them," he said lazily. "As a precaution, our fre-eating cook had better load up that blunderbuss of his. They must be reinforcements who have come too late, and by this time I suppose they have heard what a reception the advance attack met with. Have you sent out a scout?"

"The shikari has gone," said Ching-Lung. "I instructed him, as from you, not to shoot unless his life was in actual peril. It seemed to amuse Larput Raj. He hasn't a very lofty opinion about the pluck of these chaps."

"He may be wrong, Ching," said the millionaire, and went out.

They were all on the alert. Larput Raj appeared on the ridge, his figure jet-black against the sunset, and leapt over the barrier. There was a grin on his wrinkled face.

"Well, old wolf?"

"Five score of these grass-eaters less four have I counted, sahib," said the shikari. "They have landed across the stream above the fall. They have the hearts of frogs, and we could beat them away with sticks. Bah!" he added, with all the disdain the hillman feels for the more industrious and law-abiding plainsman. "If I had clapped my hands they would have run like mice."

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Payton, who was listening, nodded. He had fought the mountain tribes, and he shared some of the shikari's contempt for the lowlanders, for in this strange world it is frequently the people who cause most trouble who gain the most respect.

"As they are on the opposite bank they'll hardly attack until dark," said Ferrers Lord. "Go up and keep an eye on the ford, Maddock. They may come in two parties. Old wolf," he went on in the vernacular, "see thou that these frogs do not cross the stream, but keep thy rifle-barrel cool. Thou art a shikari, forget it not, and a warrior, not a slayer of sheep."

Payton rubbed his pink, healthy chin, and shot a quick glance at Ferrers Lord that was not devoid of respect. The millionaire understood how to deal with wild spirits like Larput Raj. His last words to the shikari would keep Larput Raj's finger away from the trigger of the rifle the Viceroy had given him, however much he might be tempted to shoot. With some curiosity Payton waited to see what would happen next.

"Thy prisoner, Gadr Singh," cried Ferrers Lord. "Thou hast not done badly for a burner of cakes and a destroyer of good meat; but get back now to thy cooking-pots. Every man to his trade, and thou art not yet a shikari or a fighter."

If the lean cook had been a few shades paler his blush of joy would have been visible. The greatest sahib of them all had told him he had not done badly, and that was praise indeed. Moaz pootful! The rest of the millionaire's remark he neither heard nor heeded. His bony chest was so inflated that Gan-Waga could not help hitting it. Gadr Singh doubled up, but he was so happy that he was not angry about it.

"I am still tempted to hang thee, Dandu," said Ferrers Lord, addressing the prisoner. "Thy people are yonder, and they come with weapons in their hands, against us who have done them no wrong. We came not to make war, but to shoot game, and gladly would have been friends with thee and with thy people. Shandza is dead, and thou art chief of thy tribe. I ask not for war, but if you force me to war the guilt will be thine. Thou art free. Go to thy people, and tell them that I wish to be at peace with them, and that I will help them to fight their enemies from the hills and the forests. I ask no hostages, so take the men with thee that are my prisoners. If it be not peace, Dandu, there will be many a widow among the Darhans before the sun sets again and many a babe will be fatherless."

He made a sign to Nacha, and without delay the astonished prisoners were set free from the cords that secured their wrists and ankles. The chief went down on one knee with bowed head and swept his hands round him in a half-circle.

"It is the sign of the snake, great sahib," he said, standing erect, "and it binds my oath. I name thee Azada, which in our tongue means mighty and merciful. If I return not, may the python that slew Shandza slay me also."

"Call in Maddock and the shikari, and then let these fellows go," said Ferrers Lord, turning away.

"What's all the palaver about, Payton?" asked Rupert Thurston, yawning.

Payton explained. Personally he had very little faith in the millionaire's bold experiment. Bitter experience had taught him that kindness and generosity were frequently thought by the curious reasoning of the native mind, or what there was of it, to be a sign of weakness. He hinted to Rupert Thurston that he did not think it would be a success.

"Dear old chap!" said Thurston, with a laugh. "You've been at this game for the best part of your life. You know it from A to Z. We're good friends, and it won't rattle you, I know, when I tell you I'd back the chief for tons of rupees to beat you or any other man in the Indian Civil Service at this kind of thing. It must be some sort of magnetic power which, I suppose, is only another name for high quality brains. I've seen the chief do things like this before. The prince will tell you the very same thing. I believe he'd walk into a country swarming with cannibals with nothing except a cane and a cigarette-case, and in less than a week they'd have elected him king and turned vegetarians. What say, Ching?"

"Something like that," said Ching-Lung. "There's one fact you can rely on, Payton."

If the chief has made up his mind fully—and I think he has—to cross the divide and reach Sharpra, he'll do it. If he doesn't, he'll have to bump up against something hard and heavy. What was the name that brown chap with the plastered chest gave him, Payton?"

"Azada, the mighty and merciful one."

"It sounds more like the name of a new brand of toffee or chocolate," said Ching-Lung. "Well, they can have which they like and ask for, either might or mercy. All I want is quiet, some supper, and a good night's rest. I've not paddled a canoe for a long time, and my arms feel a bit stiff. What's the matter with you, Barry? Are you studying me to write one of your abominable poems about me?"

"'Tis the bane of want, sor," said Barry O'Rooney, "the wan you're sittin' on. Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how O' wonder phwat you are. Up above the world so high, loike a coughdrop in the skoy. O'm aither the lovely Venues and Marses, so d'ye moind movin' whole O' dig him out?"

Ching-Lung moved as requested, and Barry O'Rooney obtained the box of star-shells he required, and also a couple of Veray pistols, with ammunition.

"Whether the chief expects a night attack or not, he's preparing for it," said Thurston. "Jove, I want my supper! All day, and never a thing with fur or hair on it to shoot at! What a rotten country!"

Gan-Waga remembered the Afghan gun he had fished out of the pool, and brought it for Ching-Lung's inspection.

"A gorgeous capture," said the prince. "It's all right to hang on a wall, but take a tip from me and don't fire it, old man. When they don't burst wide open they kick like camels. Go and hit the cook over the head with it, and tell him to hurry up."

The crimson of the sky was fading into pale amber when Larput Raj, who had been standing on the ridge, a black, motionless figure, suddenly raised his left arm. Thurston, Payton, and Ching-Lung sprang up and grasped their rifles. A man was crossing the ford. He was alone, and the shikari dropped his arm again. It was Dandu. Larput Raj let him pass. He ran down the slope fearlessly, vaulted over the barricade, and saluted Ferrers Lord.

"What is thy news?"

"I have talked to my people, Azada," said Dandu, "and they would have peace with thee, and crave thy protection. Zapra, the priest, and those who follow him, are against me. Though not many in numbers, they are strong. Zapra, who swore to us by the snake that the white sahibs had slain his son, swears now that he lives, and will return, and that I am a usurper. He swears that a snare has been laid for us, and that we shall surely be put to death when thou, Azada, hast us in thy power. The young men are with me, for they loved not Shandza, and they love not old Zapra, his father; but Zapra has cunning and magic, and many fear him. To-night we take counsel, and I know I shall prevail. My heart is clean towards thee, sahib, so dread no treachery. At dawn I will bring my young men to thee without weapons in their hands."

Once more Dandu bowed low and made the sign of the snake. Then, jumping the barrier, he ran up the slope and disappeared over the ridge.

"Suppers, Chingy, old dears!" cried the voice of Gan-Waga. "Yo' a butterfins lot of sportamen to go out shooting and not hit nothings, I don't think! Never mind! I gotted a lovelifule fishes, so come and tastes him."

Nothing disturbed the peace of the night except the occasional explosion of a star-shell. And each time the garish blue glare dispelled the darkness it disclosed the shikari standing on the ridge with the rifle on his shoulder as motionless as a carved statue, but as alert as a tigress watching for her prey.

In Dandu's Village—Barry O'Rooney Meets a Snake.

THE pow-wow took place soon after daybreak on the bank of the river. Ferrers Lord, Payton, and Ching-Lung attended it. Dandu and his followers had left their weapons behind. The millionaire was unconcerned, but Payton and the Prince brought automatic pistols in their pockets. It was not difficult to pick out

Zapra, the priest. He was fat and bloated and hideously ugly, with a waist-cloth made of snakeskin and unlimited tattooing. While the others squatted on the ground, looking as like each other as peas in a pod, the priest sat on an elaborately-carved chair, and had a boy to wait on him.

Ferrers Lord made a brief speech. He told the listening tribesmen that he and his people were peaceful hunters, who wished to cross the divide in peace, and to return in peace to their own land. But his people understood war and how to wage war. He was willing to forgive the attack made on them, but he would punish any further treachery. He would even protect Dandu and the tribesmen against their enemies provided they were faithful and proved themselves to be men, not robbers and looters. Here was Payton Sahib, a famous Sahib who represented the Great White Emperor, a mighty warrior, who commanded many warriors, and he would speak.

Payton took his pipe from his mouth and faced the silent tribesmen.

"Great good fortune has come to you, Darhans," he said, "in that you have met Azada, for, indeed, he is strong and he is merciful. For the thing you have done I would have hanged a score of you. Azada has pardoned you, and it is not for me to deny him, for he is our leader. Let it be peace, then, between us. I am an old wolf, and I have hunted many men who rebelled and thought in their foolishness that they could defy me. I can read your hearts, and let me find nothing there that is evil. Let it be peace."

Some of the tribesmen had a smattering of the vernacular, but Dandu translated what Ferrers Lord and Payton had said. He had a good memory, and did it very fairly. Zapra rolled in his chair, smoking a pipe the boy had lighted for him with a flint and steel. There was a frown on his repulsive face that grew darker when Dandu was speaking. The chief thanked the white sahibs for their promise of friendship and protection. He regretted the attack that had been made on them through evil counsel, which they had followed out, not through any love of murder or desire to rob, but on account of their great peril. In the name of his people he promised to be loyal to the great sahibs and to fight beside them when the time came.

Then Zapra, the priest, rose to his feet. He rolled from side to side as he talked and shook his clenched fists.

It was obvious that Zapra was not in favour of peace and friendship. A few of the tribesmen uttered approving grunts, but the majority of them were silent.

"We shall have trouble with that old heavy-weight, Payton," said Ching-Lung. "I can tell by the tone of his voice that he's not saying sweet things about us, the ugly old medicine-man."

Again Dandu translated. Whether he was fair or not this time was difficult to tell. Zapra listened with one ear cocked in a way that made Ferrers Lord think that he was not completely ignorant of the vernacular.

"Zapra tells us, Azada," said the chief, "that if we make this peace evil will surely come of it, for you are here not to kill game but to seize our lands and make us your slaves. But we know him to be a great liar, and the young men are weary of him. He has lost his son, and that, perhaps, has made him more bitter," he added magnanimously. "Stand thou there, Azada! Those who give the sign of the snake will be faithful." He shouted something.

With the exception of half a dozen, the tribesmen sprang up and fled past Ferrers Lord, each dropping on one knee and spreading out his hands. Dandu's white teeth flashed in a gratified smile.

"We are a peaceful folk, Azada," he said, "but for our homes and our women and children we shall fight to the last. In the villages there are still ten score men who are loyal to me. Lead us, then, and may the snake that slew Shandza slay me also if we turn aside!"

Ferrers Lord, Payton, and Ching-Lung went back to breakfast.

"I think we can trust these fellows," said the millionaire. "There seems to be about three hundred of them. If we can knock them into shape they may be useful. Our shikari does not think much of them as raw material, but I am not so sure. Dandu is quite an intelligent chap. The only danger is that corpulent priest."

"They are the cause of half the trouble."

said Ching-Lung. "I rather like the notion of drilling these chaps on the off-chance of a row. Are you thinking of arming them, chief?"

"No; but I am going to arm the bearers," answered Ferrers Lord. "I'll get some of the tribesmen to take their places and pay them, of course. I'll attend to that at once. Where did you find that, Prout?"

"I don't know, sir," said Prout, handing the millionaire his little, gold-topped cane. "One of the brown polishes just brought it in. They look mighty excited about something, by honey! The headman wants to speak to you, sir."

Dandu had brought a perspiring messenger with him.

"The foe is at hand, Azada!" he said. Their skirmishers were seen on the plains last night. They have caught many horses. I return at once to defend the greatest of our villages. Thou wilt follow, great sahib?"

"I need bearers," said Ferrers Lord, "so that I can free my fighting-men. Give me bearers, and I will follow swiftly. I ask labour of no man without pay. Give me bearers and a sure guide, and I shall not be far behind thee."

Jarput Raj rubbed his hands, and old Nacha chuckled when they heard the news.

The shikari lined up his men.

"Listen!" he cried. "To-day you become warriors again and cease to be mules and carriers of burdens. To-day the great sahib, our master, will put rifles in your hands. Truly it is a day for rejoicing!"

Rifles and ammunition were served out.

Nacha was put in charge of the new bearers with an armed guard, and Prout, not at all to his liking, was left in sole command. Prout accepted his orders with a salute, and without the ghost of a grumble or a suggestion that he would have preferred some other duty. He thought it would be slow work, for men have to be trained to carry heavy packs.

"Don't break their hearts, Tom," said Ching-Lung. "They are wiry beggars, but they aren't used to it. Give them plenty of rest and plenty of tuck. To pass away the time, you'd better start teaching Nacha English."

Prout groaned.

"He can say 'By honey' quite nicely now, sir," he said. "I'm not too hopeful about these brown polishes, and I expect we shall rush along at a snail's gallop, but we'll do our best."

Mr. Benjamin Maddock, Mr. Barry O'Rooney, and Mr. Gan-Waga shook hands solemnly with Mr. Prout.

"It's sorry to have ye we are, Tom," said Barry, wiping away a pretended tear. "But as you've been promoted boss of the goods removal department, lave ye we must. Kape on smilin', and don't lose anythin'. O'll bet they'll all have corns and blisters on their feet afore the end of this glorious day. Swate-hearrt, good-bye-ee!"

"Good-bye-ee, Tommy, old dears!" said Gan-Waga. "Keep ye peckers upness. Ye' gotted left badfats, old scouts!"

"Well, by honey, if you ain't a cheerful lot!" said Prout. "You talk as if I was being left for good. I'll be mighty glad to get rid of some of you, anyhow! Oh, push off! I shan't be a thousand miles behind, and don't forget it!"

Weeping Willie caused some slight delay. The mule felt his back tickling and lay down to roll and get rid of the sensation. This created confusion, and a great upsetting of pots and pans and other damage, to the joy of Gan-Waga, and the rage and despair of Gandra Singh, the cook. When this little matter had been put right they made good speed as far as the lagoon. The guide struck away to the right over a grassy plain on which wild ponies were grazing. They were almost as shy and wary as the wild-fowl on the lagoon.

"There's the village," said Thurston at last. "Where? I didn't suspect that."

The guide gave a warning shout. A ravine had opened unexpectedly almost at their feet. It was forty feet wide and more than a hundred feet deep. A stream ran through it, gushing past many huge boulders. The descent was steep and difficult, much more difficult than the ascent on the other side, and the double journey made Gan-Waga blow like a tired grampus.

"Oh dears, dears! I don't fadded upness, Chingy!" he panted. "I gotted no breaths! I cool down a bits!"

There was a nice pond handy, into which Gan-Waga promptly retreated and sat chin-deep to smoke a cigar and get rid of some of the superfluous heat.

As they neared the village all the dogs ran out to bark at them. The village was sur-

rounded by a circular stockade, with wooden towers placed at intervals, from which the archers could discharge arrows at an attacking foe. Around it patches of land were in cultivation. It was quite a small place, consisting of fifty or sixty thatched huts, all clustering together. In the centre was a larger windowless building.

A crowd of veiled women and semi-nude children had gathered round the open gateway to stare wonderingly at the strangers. The guard consisted of a number of lads armed with spears.

"I think it would be more comfortable to camp outside, sir," said Duke Payton to Ferrers Lord. "I don't object to native hospitality altogether, but I don't like to be the feast. By that I'm not suggesting that they are cannibals."

"Outside let it be by all means," said Ching-Lung. "I don't want to be eaten, either; and, by the number of dogs about, like Payton, I suspect fleas. Those nimble insects are fond of me, but I don't return their affection a little bit. So outside for me, too, thank you very much!"

"And the farther you go, the more you know. Whenever you turn the same thing's done. And, be-had, there's nothing new under the sun!" remarked Mr. Barry O'Rooney poetically. "O! take ut, Benjamin, that these young gentlemen are the Boy Scouts of this important city. O! mane the goss-gosses wid the spears."

"And I guess you'd take anything that didn't belong to you, souse me, if it was any good!" said Maddock. "On this occasion I think you're right. I believe they are the local Boy Scouts."

From the guide they learned that Dandu and his men had followed up a detachment of raiders who had captured a number of ponies and driven off some cattle. Zapra, the priest, had returned, and was in the village asking advice from the sacred snakes. Unless the few faithful ones had helped to carry the priest in his carved chair, which was fitted with poles for some such purpose, Zapra was a great deal more energetic and nimble than he seemed to be, judging from outward appearances, for it was a tough journey for a person of his weight. The large, windowless hut was the old medicine-man's sanctum.

Only one tent had been brought. It was a light affair, and easily erected.

Ferrers Lord selected the camping-ground some hundred yards away from the stockade. There was a water-hole not far off, and the water was pure and sweet. There were fowls in plenty, clucking and strutting about.

Orders had been issued that nothing was to be touched unless bargained for and honestly paid for. And a sudden longing came upon Gan-Waga for fresh eggs and a boiled fowl.

The Eskimo had rather vague ideas about the value of coin of the realm, and vague ones about the value of paper money. He looked round for his banker, Ching-Lung, but as the prince was not visible at the moment, he approached Mr. Barry O'Rooney, who was reposing in the shade of a bush, blowing clouds of tobacco-smoke into the air.

"Barry, old dears, ye' gotted any money, hunky?" inquired the Eskimo sweetly. "I brokenness."

"Phwat d'ye mane—money? D'ye want to borrow some, ye candle-devourin' spalpeen? How much d'ye want?"

"My old Chingy pay ye' backsies, Barry," said the Eskimo. "I want to buy a fowlses and some eggies. Only ever such a littleness money, Barry! I think about five hundred pound and tuppence be plenty, Barry."

Mr. O'Rooney groaned.

"Take ut away and larry ut!" he said. "Five hundred pounds and tuppence, is ut? Whoy, ye— Here, give me a fountain-pen, and O'll write you a cheque for ut. But O'll sooner build a noise, quiet little lunatic asylum for you wid ut, Gan. Foive hundred pounds and tuppence! Whoy, ye son of a bob-tailed walrus, O'll be a ould pocket-knife here wid a broken blade, and, be-had, O'll buy enough fowls and eggs wid that to start a poultry-farm! Come along, pudden-head, and O'll show how ut's done!"

Followed by Gan-Waga, Barry approached the gate of the village with a jaunty air. The lads with the spears were still on guard, but they had been told not to exclude the strangers, and they made way for them at once. Barry approached an old gentleman who was nearly as plump as Zapra. He sat outside a hut boiling a little brass pot over a second little brass pot that contained glowing charcoal.

Then Barry took out the pocket-knife, squatted down on his heels, flapped his arms up and down, and said:

"Cluck-a-tuck-a-tuck! Ooodle-oodle-oo-oo!"

Gan-Waga imitated the example of the brainy Irishman, though not with the same grace and beauty; but he did his best. Then rising, somewhat red in the face after his exertions, Barry made a bow, and presented the knife to the plump gentleman, who accepted it with a beaming smile, and went into the hut. He returned with a rush basket filled with eggs and a defunct rooster.

Mr. O'Rooney winked one eye at the Eskimo as he graciously accepted these gifts. He gave the fowl to Gan-Waga.

"Ut's brains that's wanted, son," he said. "Av ye can't spake the lingo ye must act ut. Phwat ilse d'ye want?"

"I want some butterful cheese, Barry," said Gan-Waga. "Some cheese and butters. Act some cheese and butters, Barry, old dears, and make a noises like them. I knows ye' do it, ye' so cleverfuls."

"Phwat d'ye mane—make a noise loike cheese, and butter, ye billy-goat?" said O'Rooney. "Ax me somethin' aisy. How can a man act cheese and butter? As O! may have said afore, O've seen things loike you come out of cheese whin O've looked at them through a magnifyin'-glass, only better-lookin'. Ooh, ut's potty ye are! So come away wid ye!"

Gan-Waga lingered. The villagers had goats and a few cows. Butter was the Eskimo's delight. He had little hope of obtaining any, good as the pasture seemed, but cheese was not to be despised. Gan-Waga smiled at the old gentleman, and the old gentleman smiled back at him in the most friendly way. Then he made gestures to represent the milking of a cow and churning. These had no effect. Evidently there was no butter. Then Gan-Waga tried again. He clutched his little snub nose, and pretended to eat something.

The old man grinned and nodded. He went into the hut once more, and came out with something neatly folded up in a large green leaf.

"Cheeses, Barry!" cried Gan-Waga, unfolding the leaf. "Ooh, butterfuls! Ooh, loveliness! Smellises him, Barry! Oh, deliciousness! Smellises him!"

Barry did not wish to smell that brownish-coloured article, but Gan-Waga held it so close to his nose that he could not help himself. The sun had tanned the Irishman down to the bone, but he paled several shades. A kind of faintness came over him, coupled with a longing to run away and hide or creep down a rabbit-hole.

Nearly half the worst jokes in the world have been made about cheese, and the other half about mothers-in-law. This particular sample of cheese deserved all the jests ever made. The smell hit him like a blow from a brick—or he pretended that it did so. He steadied himself just long enough to push the basket of eggs into Gan-Waga's hand, and then reeled backwards.

"Ye've murdered me, Gan, bad luck to ye!" he moaned. "Phwat a fate for the last of the ould O'Rooneys, to doie loike this! To doie stabbed to the heartt wid a pound of cheese! Ooh, but ut's rough! To die—"

Barry staggered again, for the Eskimo had taken a bite out of the cheese, and he seemed to like the flavour of it. The Irishman's heel struck some obstacle. He spun round to try and regain his balance. The door of the large windowless hut was the only support that offered itself. As his outstretched hands struck the door it opened, and he staggered through. At once the door closed behind him with a crash, and he found himself in complete darkness.

"O! beg your pardon, av anybody is at home," said Barry politely, "for O! didn't mane to intrude. O! was doin' a bit of hanky-panky about the scent of a bit of cheese wid my friend Gan-Waga. Phwat am O! talkin' about at all, at all, whin O! moight as well talk to the moon? That would understand just as aisy."

It was only the bright sunshine outside that made the place appear so dark. The door would not yield, and he could not discover what was fastening it. He peered round him curiously. The floor was of hard-beaten clay, with a few rugs scattered about. He recognised the carved chair as either the one he had seen in Dandu's camp or its replica.

There was a rustling sound. Some shadowy thing was waving and swaying in the gloom with a curious sparkle above it. Barry yelled, and charged at the door like a human battering-ram. He tumbled through, spilling Gan-Waga and the eggs; and as they rolled in the dust Rosti, the rock-python, the sacred snake of the Dachs, poked out eight or nine feet of himself to see where Barry had gone to.

(To be continued.)

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 77.—RODERICK SYLVESTER.

A BRAHAM SYLVESTER, father of Sylvester of the Second Form, was (so reported Fisher T. Fish) the multi-millionaire of San Francisco—“got more dollars, sir, than he could count in a month of Sundays.” Naturally, Fishy was interested in such a man's son, and had every intention of being kind to him when he turned up at Greyfriars, even though he was a mere kid who was going into the Second Form.

But it was not only Fish who wanted to be kind to the youngster. Billy Bunter had also that desire. Bunter has a minor in the Second, and Sammy was also to be kind—under the watchful and almost paternal eye of Billy, of course, and with a clear understanding that the profits of kindness were to be chiefly Billy's.

There were others ready to be kind, no doubt. A new fellow at Greyfriars may count on that sort of kindness—if he is well-to-do. It does not amount to much—certainly not to as much as the comradeship which fellows like the Famous Five and the Three Colonials and Peter Todd and Russell and Rake and Ogilvy and Linley are always ready to extend to the right sort of fellow, no matter what the state of his exchequer.

But there was something interesting about Roderick Sylvester apart from his father's millions. He had twice been kidnapped and held to ransom. Fishy said that it was a regular business in the States to do that sort of thing. One can imagine Fishy's mouth watering at the possible profits of such nefarious activities. There is not much in Fishy's conscience that would shy at them, though he might fink the risk. The case may not be quite so bad as he represented it; but it is nevertheless a fact that many instances of this sort of thing have been known. There never lack—either in the States or elsewhere—people on the look-out for a chance to get possession of other people's money; and the more a man has the greater is his risk of losing some of it in this way. And what more powerful lever could be found by a scoundrel than a father's love for his son?

Little Sylvester was dogged to Greyfriars, and the kidnapers got in a stroke before he even reached the school. Fish had gone to Friardale Station to meet him, and while they were driving back two men attacked them. They left Fish and the tutor who had accompanied Sylvester in the road, and one of them drove away with the youngster. The Famous Five saw it all, but were not near enough to go to the rescue. They pursued the trap—all of them but Inky, whose tyre was punctured. Wharton got ahead; Johnny Bull, Bob Cherry, and Frank Nugent rode close behind. The scoundrel in the trap fired at Wharton; but the four plucky juniors were too much for him in the long run, and, though he escaped, they rescued Sylvester, and took him in triumph to Greyfriars.

Sylvester is a youngster with a very fair share of courage. He told them all about it coolly enough. The man they had overpowered was “Five-Hundred Dollar Smith,” and the youngster guessed that the gentleman with this curious name “meant business.” “He's come all the way from the States, and I guess he won't be very easy to stop,” said Sylvester.

Five-Hundred Dollar Smith certainly did mean business. Fishy was as sure of this as Sylvester was; Fishy seemed to have a feeling that the United States had been done in the eye when four of the Famous Five had put the kybosh on so celebrated a crook as Five Hundred Dollar. But Fisher T.'s suspicions led to his imagining strange things. From a distance he saw someone in cap and gown talking to the small boy from America. After that Sylvester was missing; and Fish was quite certain that it was Five-Hundred Dollar in disguise who had accosted him. It was not; only the Head, who had asked Sylvester to tea, which accounted for his not being easily found when looked for.

Sylvester got on all right in the Second. The fact that he was “well heeled,” as Fishy says, was not at all against his doing that; but unless he had been a decent little chap his money would not have obtained for him the approval of Nugent minor, Gatty, and Myers, though it would have won him the valuable friendship of Bunter minor.

The Second thought it no end rotten that Sylvester should be gated. It was not a punishment, of course; it was merely to safeguard him. But to Dicky Nugent & Co. it seemed like a punishment for something he had not done; and they tempted him to go out with them. He went; but a master met the crowd, and sent the American junior back to do an imposition.

Blagg, the Friardale postman, was off duty at this time, and his work was being done by one Jackson. This was not an official arrangement; officially, Blagg was not off duty, indeed. But Jackson was doing his work, all the same, unknown to the postmaster, and Jackson was—Five-Hundred Dollar Smith! That astute crook was also a Mr. Vincent, an elderly gentleman who took a lot of interest in Sylvester, and sent him cakes.

Cakes, or something of the kind, came practically every day, and Jackson got into what seemed the natural habit of looking up Sylvester to deliver the parcels. Then Sylvester disappeared completely. It was on the afternoon when he had started out with Dicky Nugent & Co., and had been sent back with an imposition to do. It was



from the Form-room he had gone; that was plain, for his half-written lines were there. But how had he gone?

He had been carried off in Jackson's bag! Farkers Locke had to be brought in before that was discovered. But discovered it was; and the kidnapper was arrested, tried, and sentenced to seven years' penal servitude.

Except for that one story, we have not heard much about little Sylvester till lately, when he played some part in the yarn in our last Christmas number—“The Greyfriars Christmas Party”—and that which followed it—“Four from the East.” We saw him there chumming with Hop Hi, and being nagged by Fishy and Buck Finn for cottoning to Chinks. These two might be down on him for differing from them as to the correct course for a good American to adopt with regard to Chinese; but the rest liked him, and were all inclined to pet him, and he found a special friend in Piet Delarey. It

was through that generous, protective friendship for the transatlantic youngster that suspicion fell upon Delarey, and Sir Jimmy Vivian sacrificed himself to avert it, as told recently in “Loyal Sir Jimmy.” Sylvester did a silly thing then; but if it was silly it was also well-meant and generous, and neither Delarey nor Vivian is likely ever to hold it against him. Perhaps he ought to have known that he could not give Piet Delarey money—however badly needed it might be—even anonymously; but he is quite a kid still, and he has more cash than he knows how to use.

Likely enough we may hear of the little olive-faced American again. He is interesting enough to justify more than one future story.

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Monday :

“BOLSOVER'S ENEMY !”

By Frank Richards.

Some of you are at all likely to have forgotten a recent story in which Percy Bolsover, the bully of the Remove, figured prominently—“Bolsover's Way.” The fine yarn which will appear next week is, in a sense, a sequel to that. Bolsover has made an enemy of Mr. Charles Smiles, the rascally sharper, and Mr. Smiles strikes for vengeance.

IF YOU WANT TO GET THE “MAGNET”

In future, you can only make sure of doing so by giving your newsagent a standing order for the paper.

I have told you this before, I know; and, after all, you have found that there were still copies of the paper in the shop windows, for sale to anyone who wanted them. But don't think that this warning is an empty one for that reason. Months ago the Government decree went out that in future newsagents would not be allowed to make returns, and every paper told its readers of this, and asked them to order in advance. But the system of returns—that is, the sending back to the publishers of unsold copies, and getting the price of them returned—is an old one in the trade, and a very convenient one for the trade. Strong arguments were given the Government for its continuance, and the powers that be relented. All that was done was to cut down the proportion of returns. But this time that will not be the case, because it cannot be done. Paper has become so scarce that it must be economised in every possible way, short of that interference with the liberty of the subject which Britons all the world over are very loth to tolerate. An autocratic Government might go over the list of papers published and cut out all that were held unnecessary. And the “Magnet” and “Gem” might have to go—probably would have to go, though I don't regard them as unnecessary, and I am sure you do not. But that is not the way of our Government. As far as may be we shall be allowed all the freedom that we consider our right, but certain things must be done in order to make that freedom possible. Do you see?

I think you will see, and that the great majority of those among you who have not yet given an order for our papers will do so now, and thus make sure of getting what they want. Here is a form which I should like you to sign and hand to your newsagent. Don't send it to me; it is no use doing that!

YOUR EDITOR.

ORDER FORM FOR THE “MAGNET.”

To Mr. _____ Newsagent (fill in name).

Will you be good enough to order and keep for me each week until further notice a copy of the MAGNET LIBRARY, at 1d., which I undertake to accept.

Signed _____

(Fill in your own name here.)

Date _____