



The Magnet

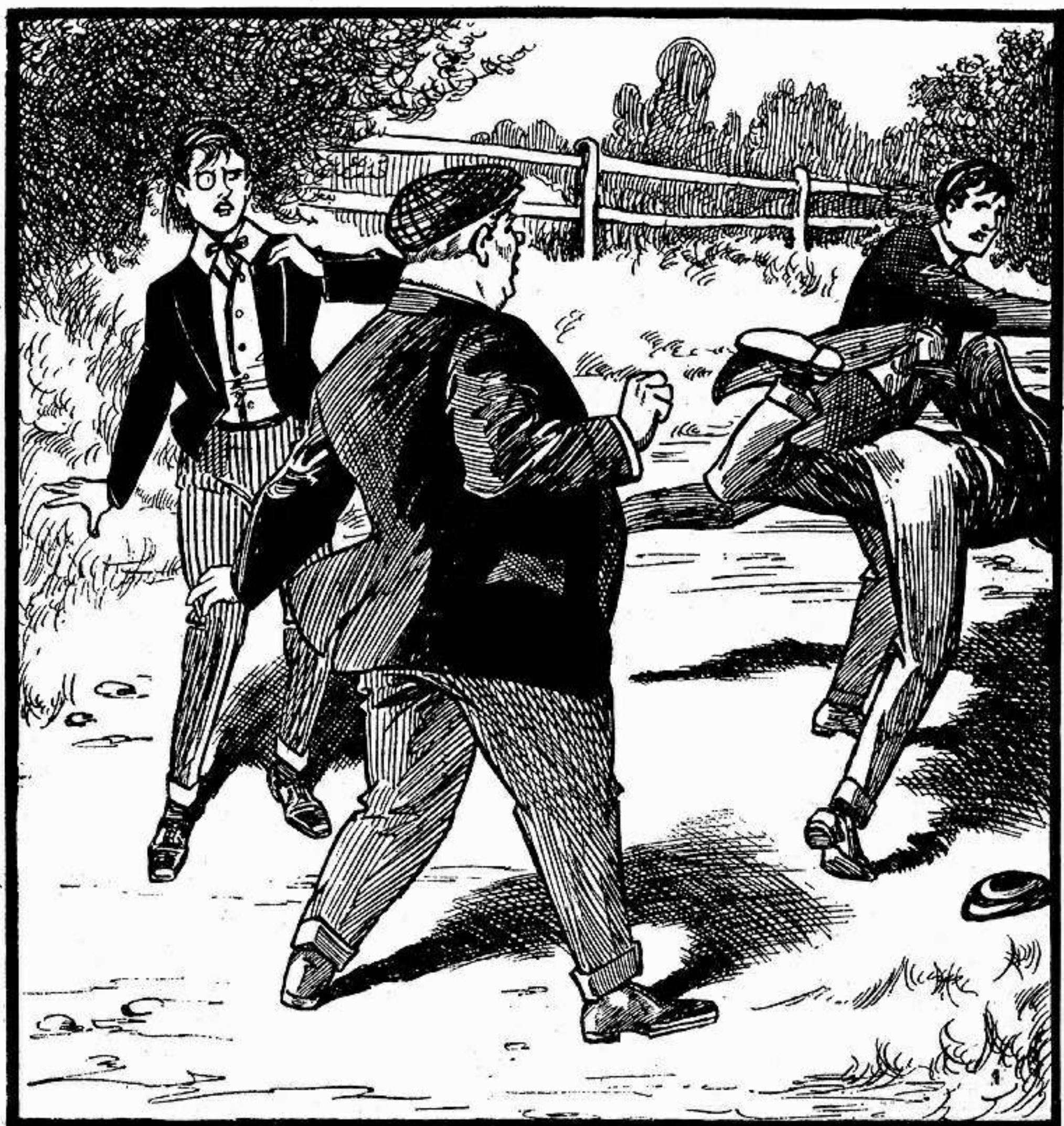
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BILLY BUNTER'S WHEEZE!



BILLY BUNTER'S DOUBLE DOES THE DEED!

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Billy Bunter's Wheeze

A Magnificent Story of Greyfriars School.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Guests at Greyfriars.

BED-TIME, kids!" Wingate of the Sixth looked into the junior Common-room at Greyfriars with a good-humoured smile upon his face.

The Common-room was unusually full that evening.

Harry Wharton & Co., of the Remove, were chatting round the fire with a group of juniors who did not belong to Greyfriars.

They were Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's, who had arrived at Greyfriars that afternoon for a footer-match, and were stranded there by a railway strike, which prevented their return to St. Jim's.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, of St. Jim's, glanced at the clock.

"Bai Jove! Half-past nine!" he said. "Weally, the evenin' has wun away!"

"Yes, hasn't it, old chap?" said Billy Bunter, who was hovering near the swell of St. Jim's with a persistently agreeable grin on his fat face.

Arthur Augustus repressed a wince. "Old chap" from Billy Bunter appeared to have an unpleasant effect upon his noble nerves.

"Get a move on!" said Wingate.

"I say, Wingate—" began Bob Cherry.

"Well?"

"Couldn't you make it ten to-night?" suggested Bob. "Special occasion, you know—distinguished guests, and—"

"I'll make it a hundred lines if you don't move!" answered the prefect.

"Oh, in that case I'll make a move!" said Bob cheerily. "Come on, you fellows! Four of you are coming into the Remove dorm. Are you going to toss up for it?"

Billy Bunter slipped a fat arm through D'Arcy's.

"Come along with me, old boy!" he said.

"Bai Jove!"

"This way, Bunter!" said Bob Cherry, observing the suppressed discomfort of the swell of St. Jim's; and he playfully took the Owl of the Remove by the collar. "I'm waiting for you."

"Yah! Leggo!"

"Come on, my fat tulip!"

Bob Cherry marched Bunter off, and the fat junior had to relinquish D'Arcy's arm, much to the satisfaction of Arthur Augustus.

Billy Bunter and Bob were the first to arrive in the dormitory, and Bunter arrived there in a state of breathless indignation.

The rest of the Remove followed, with four of the St. Jim's juniors—Tom Merry, Blake D'Arcy, and Lowther. The other guests were accommodated in other junior dormitories, where extra beds had been made up.

Billy Bunter, having escaped from Bob Cherry, approached Arthur Augustus with a beaming smile as that elegant youth was taking his boots off.

"Jolly cold, ain't it?" said Bunter affably.

"Yaas; it is wathah cold, deah boy."

"Like a hot-water bottle?"

"You are vewy kind, Buntah."

"Not at all, old fellow! I'll out off and get a hot-water bottle, if you'd like one."

"Pway don't bothah, Buntah."

"No bother at all!" answered Bunter, blinking genially at Arthur Augustus through his big spectacles. "I know you'd like one, and I insist! I'll be back in a jiffy."

"You can't get a hot-water bottle, you owl!" said Johnny Bull, as the fat junior rolled to the door.

"Weally, Buntah, I wish you would not twuoble—"

"Leave it to me!" answered Bunter.

And he rolled out of the dormitory.

"You chaps are jolly lucky to have hot-water bottles on cold nights!" said Tom Merry.

"We don't!" said Harry Wharton. "I'm blest if I know where Bunter expects to bag one! Loder generally has one, but he's in the Sixth."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Nugent.

It occurred to him that Billy Bunter, in his keen desire to make himself agreeable to the son of a lord, intended to raid Loder's hot-water bottle, and if Loder of the Sixth caught him raiding it the results were likely to be quite unnerving.

"The esteemed Bunter will get it neckfully if he is caught!" murmured Hurree Jamsot Ram Singh. "He is after the excellent and disgusting Loder's bottle, my esteemed chums."

"Serve him right!" grunted Johnny Bull.

Before the juniors had turned in there was a hurried step in the passage, and Billy Bunter bolted breathlessly into the dormitory with a big hot-water bottle clutched in his hand.

"Here you are, Gussy!" he gasped.

"Bai Jove! I weally do not want it, Buntah."

"Nonsense, old chap! I insist!"

"But weally—"

"Here you are! I'll shove it in your bed."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy could make no further demur; the laws of politeness forbade any further resistance to Bunter's officious attentions. The hot-water bottle was placed in his bed.

Billy Bunter, having disposed of it, blinked rather nervously at the doorway. It was pretty plain where he had bagged the hot-water bottle for his dear pal Gussy; and it was also pretty plain that he was thinking of the possible consequences.

Billy Bunter listened, with almost painful intentness, as he got into his pyjamas, expecting to hear the tread of Loder of the Sixth in the passage. He had found Loder's room empty when he raided the bottle, but he did not know whether he had been seen scuttling away from the Sixth Form quarters with it.

He gave a jump as a heavy tread was heard from the direction of the stairs.

Bob Cherry grinned at him.

"Look out, Bunter!"

"I—I say, you fellows—" stuttered Bunter. "If—if Loder comes here—"

"He's coming!" grinned Nugent.

"You stand by a chap, you know!" gasped Bunter. "Don't let Loder show off his beastly bullying when—when we've got guests, you know! Oh, dear!"

The heavy tread sounded in the passage. It was not Wingate returning to put the light out. The juniors knew Loder's tread. It was the bully of the Sixth, on the track of his hot-water bottle.

"You young ass, Billy!" murmured Wally Bunter, who had the next bed to his cousin Billy. "You're in for it now!"

Bunter blinked at his cousin Wally.

"I—I say, Wally," he muttered.

"G-g-g-go out into the passage and—and see if that's Loder, will you?"

Wally chuckled.

"So that Loder can take me for you, and give me what he's coming to give you?" he asked.

"Oh, really, Wally—"

"Scat!" said Wally.

"Look here, you beast!" muttered Bunter. "You're my guest here, ain't you? It was jolly kind of me to ask you here, wasn't it? Tain't every public school chap who would ask a poor relation here, I can tell you! You just go into the passage and—and see if that's Loder."

Wally Bunter did not move from his bed.

Wally, though otherwise very different from his cousin Billy, was his exact double in appearance, excepting that he did not wear glasses; and so he did not need telling why Bunter wanted him to face the irate prefect.

Wally Bunter was a good-natured and obliging fellow, but he did not consider it one of a guest's duties to take a thrashing intended for his host.

So he did not move.

"Wally, you rotter!" said Bunter in a fierce whisper. "Look here, I won't ask you here again! I'll—"

Bunter broke off. Loder's heavy and hurried tread was just outside the door now; and Bunter bolted under his bed, and squirmed there, palpitating. A moment after he had disappeared from sight Gerald Loder strode into the dormitory, with a black brow and a gleaming eye.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Mistaken Identity!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. grinned as the prefect strode in. It was pretty clear that Gerald Loder had missed his hot-water bottle, and was looking for it—and the fellow who had bagged it.

WEEK AFTER NEXT!

REAPPEARANCE of the

PENNY POPULAR,

with all the Old Attractions,

and a

SPLENDID PLATE!

Bunter was quite out of sight under the bed, shivering there in a state of terror, and probably wishing that he had not been quite so attentive to D'Arcy of St. Jim's.

Loder glared round the dormitory.

The fact that there were guests present did not make any difference to the bully of the Sixth. He was not renowned for his good manners.

"Bunter!" he roared.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Looking for somebody, Loder?" asked Bob Cherry.

"That young villain Bunter!" roared Loder. "He's taken the hot-water bottle out of my bed!"

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus.

"I saw him streak off with it!" roared Loder. "Don't tell me he hasn't got it! I saw him, though the blind owl didn't see me! Oh, here you are!"

Billy Bunter was invisible; but Wally Bunter was sitting up in bed, with a grin on his fat face. Loder strode directly towards him. Wally Bunter gave a howl as the Sixth-Former's heavy grasp descended on him.

"Yaroooh! Leggo! Wharrer at!"

"I'll show you what I'm at!" shouted Loder, dragging the fat youth bodily out of bed, and landing him with a bump on the floor. "Where's my hot-water bottle, you fat young rascal?"

"Yaroooh!"

Spank, spank, spank!

Loder was evidently under the impression that it was Billy Bunter he was handling; a natural mistake under the circumstances.

It was an unfortunate mistake for Walter Bunter, however.

He roared and wriggled as the heavy slaps smote his pyjamas. Loder seemed to think he was in training as a carpet-beater.

Smack, smack, smack!

"Yaroooh! Help! Oh, crikey! Yah!" roared Wally.

"Loder," shouted Harry Wharton, "let him alone! That's not Bunter!"

Loder did not reply; he went on spanking.

But the chums of the Remove were not likely to see a guest handled like that without interfering. Loder was a prefect, certainly; but the laws of hospitality came before everything else. The Famous Five rushed to the rescue, and Squiff and Todd and Tom Brown and several other fellows rushed with them. Loder was grasped on all sides, and dragged away from his victim.

"Let go!" roared Loder, in wrath and indignation. "You young sweeps! How dare you touch a prefect!"

"Yow-ow-ow-woop!" came from the unhappy Wally.

Under his bed Billy Bunter lay very low. His chief hope was that Loder would not discover that he had made a mistake.

The bully of the Sixth struggled furiously in the grasp of the juniors.

Tom Merry and his comrades looked on with wide-open eyes. This was an exciting interlude that the St. Jim's fellows had not expected while they were guests under the roof of Greyfriars.

"Let go!" yelled Loder.

"I tell you that's not Bunter!" shouted Wharton, dragging Loder back by the hair. "It's his cousin!"

"Let go!"

"Ow-ow-ow-ow-wow!" came from Wally.

"By Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, screwing his eyeglass into his eye, and surveying the scene with great interest. "This is vewy excitin'! Go it, deah boys! Mop him up, bai Jove!"

There was a hurried step in the door-

way, and George Wingate came in. The captain of Greyfriars had been returning to the dormitory to put the lights out when he heard the uproar, and hastened his steps.

"Stop that row!" shouted Wingate, as he strode in. "You young sweeps! My hat! Loder, stop this at once!"

The juniors released Loder, who staggered to his feet, breathless, and crimson with rage.

"What on earth does this mean, Loder?" demanded Wingate.

"I—I—I—" Loder spluttered with rage. "I—I—I— The young villains! Bunter's taken my hot-water bottle—yow!—and I came here for it—groogh!—and they set on me—ow-ow-ow!"

"Bunter"—Wingate stared at the gasping Wally—"if you've taken Loder's hot-water bottle—"

"Yow! I haven't!" gasped Wally.

"I saw him!" roared Loder. "I saw him, and followed him here!"

"That settles it!" said Wingate, frowning. "Bunter—"

"I haven't been out of the dormitory!" howled Wally. "Yow-ow-ow!"

Loder made a stride towards him, but Wingate stopped him.

"Hold on!" he exclaimed. "There's two of those fat bounders. Blessed if I know t'other from which. Which are you, you young sweep?"

"Ow! I'm Wally! Nice way to treat a guest, this is, isn't it?" hooted Billy Bunter's unfortunate cousin.

"Then where's Billy?"

No answer came from under Bunter's bed. William George Bunter was lying very low indeed.

"Oh!" ejaculated Loder, taken aback.

He remembered now that he had seen Bunter's cousin about the school during the day.

"Where's Bunter?" demanded Wingate. "He was in the dorm when I was here ten minutes ago!"

"Hiding somewhere!" said Loder savagely.

"Under a bed, very likely," said Wingate.

"Ow!"

That gasp of terror was almost at the feet of the Greyfriars captain. He stooped and looked under Bunter's bed.

"Here he is! Come out, Bunter!"

"Yow-ow! I'm not here—"

"What?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come out, you fat rascal!" roared Loder.

He plunged an angry hand under the bed to grasp Bunter and yank him out. The Owl of the Remove, too scared to be clear as to what he was doing, kicked out, and his fat foot came in violent contact with Loder's nose. A terrific roar came from Loder as he sat down suddenly, clapping his nose in anguish.

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

"Oh, cwikey!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus. "How vewy funnay! Ha, ha!"

"I—I—I'll slaughter him!" spluttered Loder.

He made another furious grasp under the bed, and this time captured Bunter's fat ankle. The Owl of the Remove came rolling out, squirming and roaring.

"Yaroooh! Help! Murder Fire!"

"Shut up!" snapped Wingate, in great exasperation.

"It wasn't me! Yaroooh!"

Spank, spank!

Loder's heavy hand descended, and Bunter yelled. Wingate caught the bully of the Sixth by the shoulder, and jerked him away.

"That's enough!" he said curtly.

"Look here, Wingate—"

"Leave this to me. Bunter, have you

taken Loder's hot-water bottle from his room?"

"Yaroooh!"

"Answer me!"

"Yoooop!"

"Bunter!" Wingate jerked the fat junior to his feet. "Hold your tongue, you fat idiot, and answer me!"

"Yow-wow! How can I answer you if I hold my tongue? Yoop!"

"Where is Loder's hot-water bottle?"

"Yow-ow! How should I know?"

"Did you take it?"

"Certainly not! I—I never knew Loder had a hot-water bottle. I didn't know he was so soft."

"What?" shouted Loder.

"Better look in his bed," said Wingate.

Loder savagely looked in Bunter's bed, and then in Wally Bunter's bed, but the hot-water bottle did not come to light. Arthur Augustus' feet were resting on it at that moment, but he did not feel called upon to make a remark.

"It doesn't seem to be here," said Wingate. "Are you sure you saw him take it, Loder?"

"Yes, I am. I saw him scud off with it under his arm."

"Bunter—"

"Loder's mistaken, Wingate!" howled Bunter. "I didn't—I never—I wasn't! I haven't even seen his hot-water bottle!"

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, almost overcome as he listened to that statement.

"Are you telling the truth, Bunter?" exclaimed Wingate, in perplexity.

"Oh, really, Wingate! Ask any fellow here. They'll tell you how truthful I am. I don't believe I could tell a lie if I tried. I don't know how!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, you can tell Wingate that I haven't been out of the dorm," continued Bunter, blinking at the Removites.

There was a unanimous silence. The Remove fellows were not likely to join the Owl in a lying competition.

"Ask Wharton, Wingate!" continued Bunter. "Ask D'Arcy! Ask anybody! Just as if I'd touch Loder's hot-water bottle!"

"I saw you with it!" raved Loder.

"You couldn't have! Perhaps you'd been drinking, and saw double!" suggested Bunter cheerily.

"Wha-a-at?" stuttered Loder.

"You couldn't have seen me, or I should have seen you," said Bunter, as a clincher. "There wasn't anybody at all in the Sixth Form passage."

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

"Then you have been in the Sixth-Form passage?" exclaimed Wingate.

"No, I haven't! Not at all!"

"But you just said—"

"I—I was only making a remark, Wingate," stuttered Bunter. "No harm in making a remark, I suppose?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I saw him from the door of Carue's study as he scuttled off," said Loder. "He's admitted it now."

"I haven't!" yelled Bunter. "I didn't notice that Carue's door was open—"

"What?"

"I—I mean—"

"Never mind what you mean," said Wingate, taking the fat junior by the ear. "You'd better produce that bottle at once. Otherwise, I shall ask Loder to spank you till it's found."

"Oh, dear!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy looked inquiringly at Bunter. He felt that it was time for the bone of contention to be produced. But Billy Bunter was watching Loder in great apprehension, and he did not look at the swell of St. Jim's.

"Keep off!" howled Bunter, dodging round Wingate as Loder made a stride towards him. "I tell you I haven't seen it! Some other fellow may have taken it—it may be in some other fellow's bed—D'Arcy's, for instance—"

"Oh, bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

He groped in the bed and produced the hot-water bottle, and held it out.

"Is this your pwopanty, Lodah?" he asked politely.

Loder grabbed it.

"I twust you will excuse Buntah," said Arthur Augustus, with dignity. "He was kind enough to—"

"I'll excuse him! I'll—I'll—"

"Keep off!" roared Bunter, dodging again. "Twasn't my fault if D'Arcy bagged your hot-water bottle, was it? I'm surprised at him—not at all the thing a guest ought to do! Cheek, I call it! Twasn't my fault, was it?"

"Oh, cwumbs!"

"You fat villain! I saw you—"

"You must have mistaken D'Arcy for me!" wailed Bunter. "He had it, you see."

Even Loder grinned at the idea of mistaking the slim and elegant Gussy for Bunter.

"Well, you've got your bottle, Loder," said Wingate. "That's enough. Bunter, you are a lying young rascal! You will take two hundred lines."

"I—I say, Wingate, you can see that it was D'Arcy—"

"Shut up!" snapped Wingate.

He followed Loder from the dormitory, turning off the light, and Bunter was left to scramble into bed in the dark. Then there was a regular chorus from the other beds.

"Bunter, you worm—"

"Bunter, you cad—"

"Bunter, you Hun—"

"I say, you fellows, you might be a bit sympathetic!" gasped Bunter. "This is what comes of being hospitable; I'm really the only hospitable chap here. I say, Gussy, old chap—"

Grim silence from Gussy!

"D'Arcy, old fellow—"

No answer.

"Are you asleep, Gussy?"

Apparently Gussy was, for he did not speak; and Billy Bunter gave it up at last.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Wally Finds a Pal!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were down early in the morning, and they punted a footer about before breakfast with the St. Jim's fellows. Tom Merry & Co. breakfasted in the old dining-room with the Greyfriars fellows; and after that they had to be left to their own devices, when the Greyfriars fellows went into the Form-rooms.

The stranded footballers were at liberty to join the Greyfriars fellows at classes if they liked; but Tom Merry & Co. preferred to pay a visit to the footer-ground, where they probably found more enjoyment than in the Form-rooms. How long the railway strike would land them upon Greyfriars the St. Jim's fellows did not know; but, in these circumstances, they did not at all object to a long stay.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy did not join the footballers, however. He walked down to the village later in the morning to inquire at the station for news of trains. The strike was still on, but he heard from the stationmaster that trains were expected to begin running again that afternoon, as the trouble on the line promised to be brief.

Arthur Augustus was sauntering back

to Greyfriars, timing himself to arrive for dinner, when there was a whir of bicycles on the road ahead of him.

He glanced at them, and recognised Ponsonby and Gadsby, of Highcliffe School, whom he had seen before, and remembered very well.

He stepped aside to allow the two Highcliffians to pass.

Ponsonby and Gadsby had recognised him at the same time, and they exchanged a glance and a grin.

"That's D'Arcy of St. Jim's," muttered Ponsonby. "What's he doin' in this part of the world?"

"Must be stayin' at Greyfriars," said Gadsby. "Slang him as we go by, Pon."

Pon grinned.

"Better than that—run him down!" he answered.

"Ha, ha!"

The nuts of Highcliffe remembered D'Arcy, and not with friendly feelings. Arthur Augustus was surprised to see that the bikes swerved, and still headed for him, though he had drawn to the side of the road. He drew closer to the hedge, and the bikes swerved a little farther.

"Bai Jove! Mind where you are comin'!" shouted D'Arcy. "You will wun me down!"

The two bikes came rushing on, and it dawned upon Arthur Augustus that the Highcliffians intended to run him down.

He jumped out into the road again, the bikes close on him now. They swerved out to catch him, and he made another jump, like a kangaroo, and just escaped. Pon's hand knocked off his cap as they rushed by.

"You uttah wottahs!" shouted Arthur Augustus, in great wrath. "If I could ovahtake you I would give you a feahful thwashin'!"

Ponsonby and Gadsby jumped off their machines.

Being two to one, the nuts of Highcliffe felt that a ragging was likely to be quite safe and very amusing; and they were greatly entertained at the idea of ragging a Greyfriars guest. It would be something off their old score against Harry Wharton & Co.

"Stick him in the dashed ditch!" muttered Ponsonby. "There isn't much water, but there's lots of mud. It will be nice for his bags."

Gadsby chuckled.

Arthur Augustus had fielded his cap, and was putting it on, when the two Highcliffians came up, evidently with hostile intentions.

The St. Jim's junior disdained to give ground. The noble Gussy was not wont to count his foes. He put up his hands at once as Ponsonby and Gadsby came on.

"You wottahs!" he exclaimed. "I shall be vewy pleased to give you a feahful thwashin'!"

"Nail him!" exclaimed Ponsonby.

Arthur Augustus had to give ground, but he put up a gallant fight. But the odds were too much, and in a few minutes the swell of St. Jim's was struggling on the ground in the grasp of the Highcliffians.

"Gwoogh!" he gasped. "Welease me, you wottahs!"

"Shove him into the ditch!" gasped Ponsonby breathlessly.

Pon's nose was streaming red, and he was in a savage temper by this time.

"Oh, deah!" gasped Arthur Augustus, in horror, as he was yanked towards the muddy ditch. "Oh, cwikey! You uttah wascals! Oh, cwumbs!"

He struggled furiously as he approached the ditch; but the two young rascals dragged him on.

Arthur Augustus was on the verge of

the ditch, when a fat figure came rolling through a gap in the hedge. It was Wally Bunter. Wally did not waste time on words; he rushed on the scene at once.

Ponsonby glanced round quickly at the sound of footsteps.

"Only that fool Bunter!" he said carelessly. "Shove him in!"

If it had been Billy Bunter the Highcliffe nuts would have had nothing to fear, and they supposed it was Billy. But they quickly found out their mistake. Wally charged them behind, and Pon and Gaddy found themselves grasped simultaneously by their collars and dragged back.

Crack!

There followed a loud concussion, and louder yells, as the Highcliffians' heads came together.

"Ow!"

"Oooooop!"

Pon and Gadsby went spinning into the road, where they sat down. Wally, with a fat grin, gave Arthur Augustus a hand up.

"Just in time, old scout!" he grinned. "Gwoogh! Thank you, deah boy!" gasped Arthur Augustus. "They were goin' to put me in the mud, the howwid wottahs! Gwoogh!"

"Come on, and lick 'em!" said Wally.

"Yaas, wathah!"

Wally and Arthur Augustus rushed to the attack; but Ponsonby and Gadsby were already fleeing for their bikes. They were not looking for a conflict on equal terms.

They reached the machines, dragged them into the road, and threw themselves desperately into the saddles. Just in time they ground at the pedals, and shot away out of reach.

"Stop, you wottahs!" roared Arthur Augustus wrathfully. "I am goin' to thwash you! Come back, you howwid funks!"

But the nuts of Highcliffe disappeared at top speed round the nearest corner. Wally Bunter burst into a laugh.

"Bai Jove! What wotten funks!" said D'Arcy. "Buntah, deah boy, I am vewy much obliged to you!"

"Not at all," said Wally.

"You are—are—" Arthur Augustus screwed in his eyeglass, and surveyed Wally doubtfully. "I—I pwesume that you are Walter, not Billy—"

Wally chuckled.

"That's it!" he said. "Blessed if I know why people think I'm so much like Billy!"

"You are wathah like, you know."

"But he's fat!" said Wally.

"Oh!"

Arthur Augustus really did not know what to say to that. Possibly in point of circumference Billy Bunter had the advantage—if it was an advantage—of his cousin; but the difference was not really perceptible to the naked eye. Apparently Wally was satisfied that there was a considerable difference.

"There's a difference between being plump and being fat," he added.

"Yaas; I—I suppose there is," assented D'Arcy. "Yaas, now I come to think of it, I am suah there is."

"Let me dust you down," said Wally. "You're a bit dusty."

"Thank you vewy much!"

Arthur Augustus was dusted down, and the two juniors started for Greyfriars together. They chatted on the way in a very friendly manner. The day before Wally had played for Tom Merry's team in the footer-match, the Saints being a man short; and he had kicked the winning goal for the visitors, which had given them a very good opinion of him. Arthur Augustus had already found that Billy Bunter's odious familiarity was quite absent from Wally, and he liked

Bunter's cousin, though his feelings towards Billy Bunter were not exactly pally.

"I am jolly glad that you are comin' to St. Jim's, deah boy," Arthur Augustus remarked, as they walked on to the school. "Wharton told me yestahday that you were goin' to do so."

"That's right!" said Wally.

"I am suah we shall be fwiends there," said Arthur Augustus. "Pew-waps you will be in the Fourth. That's my Form. What Form are you in now, deah boy?"

Wally coloured.

"I—I'm not at school now," he said.

"Oh! I supposed that you were changin' your school," said Arthur Augustus. "Been havin' a long holiday—what?"

Wally Bunter paused before replying.

"I've been at work," he said. "I was in an office at Canterbury, and it's a stroke of good luck my being sent to a public school."

"Bai Jove! You w'ite figahs in ledgahs and things?" asked Arthur Augustus, with great admiration.

"Something like that!" grinned Wally.

"That's jolly clevah! I suppose you can add up long columns of figahs and make them come wight?"

"Well, rather; I had to."

"You wequiah plentay of bwains for that," said Arthur Augustus. "I am wathah a bwainy chap; but I often find that if you add up figahs fwom the top it comes to a diffewent wesult fwom addin' them up fwom the bottom. I suppose it depends a lot on how you do it."

"Well, yes, it does, a little," grinned Wally.

"I suppose school will seem wathah slow to you, aftah bein' at work," remarked Arthur Augustus. "Still, it will come easy."

"I'm jolly glad of the chance!"

Wally was smiling cheerfully now. Apparently it did not matter to Arthur Augustus whether he had worked in an office or not, and Wally felt rather relieved. Gussy's views were evidently quite different from Billy Bunter's.

Gussy was so cordial, in fact, that Wally told him the whole story, on the way to Greyfriars. Arthur Augustus listening with keen interest to his description of the burglary at Mr. Penman's office, when Wally had won the gratitude of his "governor" by saving the contents of the safe from the thieves.

"Bai Jove! That was awf'ly pluckay of you," commented Arthur Augustus. "I shall tell the fellows about that at St. Jim's. That governah of yours must be a wegulah old sport, to send you to St. Jim's as a weward. But, of course, if he's an old St. Jim's man, he would be a sport!" added Arthur Augustus innocently.

By the time they reached Greyfriars Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and Walter Bunter were friends; and it was settled that they were to see a great deal of each other when Wally arrived at St. Jim's. They came in to dinner together; and Billy Bunter blinked at them in pained surprise. The fact that his "poor relation" was taken up in this chummy way, while he, William George, was kept at arm's length, caused the Owl of the Remove to feel an astonishment he was never likely to recover from.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

An Interesting Experiment!

"WALLY!"

"Hallo?"

"I'm going to do you a favour!" said Billy Bunter impressively.

Wally looked sceptical, but he nodded. Billy Bunter had run him down in the

quad after dinner, finding him in conversation with Tom Merry and Monty Lowther of St. Jim's. The two St. Jim's fellows had strolled away. It was really remarkable how fellows strolled away when Billy Bunter came along.

But Wally, being in some sense Billy's guest, could not stroll away, and he submitted with his usual fat cheerfulness to the infliction of Bunter's company.

"I've been thinking about you, Wally," went on Bunter.

"My hat! Have you?"

"Yes. It will be a bit of a change for you, being at a public school, won't it? You'll find it rather strange at first."

"I dare say."

"It will do you good to pick up some of the manners and customs in advance, won't it?"

"Yes," said Wally, astonished by this unusual thoughtfulness on his fat cousin's part. "Wharton and Nugent let me go through their prep with them last evening, like good chaps. I was glad of it. But—"

"I'm going to do more than that."



A bump for Bully Boisoever! (See Chapter 6.)

"Go ahead!" said the mystified Wally. "Not much time to heap your benefits on me, Billy, as I'm going this afternoon."

"No hurry," said Bunter. "You needn't go till this evening, if you come to that."

"What do you want me to do?"

Bunter blinked at him loftily.

"I don't want you to do anything, Wally, but accept the big favour I'm going to do you out of sheer kindness."

"Pile in!" said Wally laconically.

"You're a good bit like me," said Bunter suddenly.

"People seem to think so," grunted Wally. "I'm blessed if I see so much of it myself!"

"Well, we're alike," said Bunter. "My minor, Sammy, tried to borrow a bob of me this morning, thinking it was you, as I'd taken my specs off."

"Ha, ha! I'll bet he didn't get it!"

"Never mind that! What I'm coming to is this—that your resemblance to me enables me to do you a big service. I'm going to let you go into the Form-room to afternoon lessons in my place to-day," said Bunter impressively.

"Wha-a-at?"

Wally stared.

"You see, by that means you'll get an afternoon's work, just like what you will get at St. Jim's, and it will be no end of use of you," said Bunter. "I don't mind missing the lessons—for your sake, Wally."

"But—but—"

"We've only got to change clobber, and there you are," said Bunter. "Of course, you'll have to be careful not to burst my clobber; you're so jolly fat."

"Your clobber will hang loose round me," grunted Wally.

"Don't be a silly ass, Wally! Talk sense, old chap! You can squeeze into my Etons."

"I could swim in them."

"Look here—"

"But suppose I did," said Wally. "I couldn't go into the Form-room in your place. Mr. Quelch would know."

"He wouldn't! Every chap in the Remove would take you for me," said Bunter confidently. "You can try it on one of the fellows first, if you like."

"What about the specs?"

"I can lend you a pair."

Wally snorted.

"I can't see through your specs, you duffer! My eyes ain't wanga—I—I mean, I'm not short-sighted."

"You can stick them low on your nose and look over them," said Bunter. "I do, sometimes. That's easy enough."

"But—but—"

"Now, look here, Wally, you're not going to refuse when I'm taking all this trouble, and giving up the lessons I'm entitled to, just to do you a big favour!" exclaimed Bunter warmly.

Wally Bunter grunted. He knew exactly how much William George was doing for him. The fact that Wally, with a change of attire, was his double, had suggested to the Owl a method of slackening instead of working that afternoon. With Wally receiving Mr. Quelch's valuable instructions that afternoon, instead of himself, Bunter was looking forward to a lazy afternoon.

But Wally did not care to refuse. Inhospitable as Billy was, he was Wally's host; and it was through visiting Billy

that Wally had made the acquaintance of Harry Wharton & Co., whom he liked so much. There was no doubt that Billy's relationship had been useful to him; and, though there was no call for gratitude, Wally felt that it was up to him to do whatever he could.

Moreover, the idea of the impersonation rather appealed to him as being in the nature of a lark. He was curious to see whether it could be carried through successfully.

And although Bunter's real object was to cut lessons for the afternoon, it was true that the experience in the Form-room might be useful to Wally as an insight into his future life as a schoolboy at St. Jim's.

Billy Bunter blinked at him anxiously as Wally thought it out.

"Is it a go?" he asked, at last.

"I'll do it if you like," said Wally, making up his mind.

"Don't put it like that!" snapped Bunter. "I'm doing you a favour, out of sheer kindness of heart."

"Oh, all right!"

"Then we'll get off to the dorm and change," said the Owl, with great satisfaction.

And the cousins retreated to the Remove dormitory, where they changed clothes, and Wally's little fat nose was adorned with a pair of Bunter's glasses—which he put on low down enough not to impair his sight.

He looked in a glass, and started as he saw his reflection.

He was Billy Bunter to the life.

And Bunter, in Wally's tweed trousers and lounge-jacket, and with his glasses off, was Wally to the finger-tips.

"Well, my hat!" said Wally. "I am a bit like you, Billy, and no mistake! It's the clothes chiefly."

"And the specs," said Bunter, who was no more flattered than Wally was by the resemblance. "You look a lot better now, Wally. It's my glasses that give me my distinguished look."

"Oh, crikey!"

"You'll pass for me anywhere, now," said Bunter. "Mind, it's not only to do you a good turn this afternoon that I've suggested this. I've got another idea in my mind, too, that I'll tell you presently—a really corking idea! When you speak, try to use an aristocratic accent, will you?"

"Eh? Why?"

"Otherwise the fellows will spot that it's you, and not me," explained Bunter.

"Oh, crumbs!"

"I'd better keep my glasses off now, as you don't wear 'em," said Bunter thoughtfully. "I hope I sha'n't run into anybody. Here, mind—there's somebody coming!"

The dormitory door opened, and Sammy Bunter of the Second Form came in. He blinked at the two cousins, and came towards Billy, bestowing a sniff upon Wally—evidence enough that he was taken in by the change of clothes.

The genuine Wally rolled out of the dormitory with a fat chuckle, leaving Bunter minor to interview his major under the belief that he was interviewing his cousin Wally.

"I say, Wally, old chap!" said Sammy Bunter, addressing William George, who grinned. "I've been looking for you all day nearly. What was my brother up to? Has he been borrowing money of you?"

The Owl frowned.

"Look here, Sammy—"

"He borrows money of everybody," said Sammy. "Regular sponger, you know."

Bunter major opened his lips for a wrathful reply, but closed them again, remembering that he was Wally now.

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"Keep clear of him, old chap," continued the unconscious Sammy. "I say, could you lend me half-a-crown, Wally?"

"No!" snapped Bunter.

"Do!" urged Sammy. "I'll send it to you at St. Jim's next week, honour bright! I'll get it out of young Sylvester—I mean, I'm expecting a remittance from home, and I'll settle up as safe as houses."

"Rats!"

The Owl of the Remove rolled out of the room, and Bunter minor blinked after him in great wrath.

"Yah! Office cad!" he hooted.

Billy Bunter only chuckled as Sammy hurled that Parthian shot after him. As he was not Wally he did not mind. Sammy followed him into the passage.

"Fat rotter!" he hooted along the passage.

"He, he, he!"

The Owl of the Remove went downstairs, heedless of his wrathful minor. He was feeling extremely satisfied. His own brother took him for Wally, in Wally's clothes, and had evidently taken Wally for him; and that was proof enough that the change of identity would be a success. And it was not only of the afternoon that Bunter was thinking; he had a scheme in his fertile brain which would have astonished Wally if he had known of it.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Quite a Success!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Here you are!"

Bob Cherry greeted Billy Bunter as he came out into the quadrangle in Wally's tweed clothes.

For a moment Bunter was astonished by Bob's cordial manner. Then he remembered that Bob, of course, was taking him for Wally. He grinned.

"Hallo?" he replied.

"Don't you want to see the St. Jim's chaps before they go?" said Bob.

"They'll be off in a few minutes now."

"Oh, really—"

"Come on, Wally!" called out Harry Wharton. "D'Arcy's been asking for you; he wants to say good-bye."

"I—I didn't know they were going!" stammered Bunter.

"The stationmaster's telephoned that there's a train," explained Wharton.

"The strike petered out this morning—good luck to it! They're going home by a train at two-thirty, so they've got to get off."

Tom Merry & Co., with their bags, were already making for the gates. As it was close on time for afternoon lessons, the chums of the Remove could not see them off at the station.

But a crowd of fellows went down to the gates with the St. Jim's footballers.

Wally Bunter, hearing that the St. Jim's fellows were departing, hurried along to see them off, momentarily forgetting that he was Billy for the nonce.

He was surprised to see his cousin Billy shaking hands with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy in the friendliest possible way; and then he remembered.

"Oh, blow!" he murmured, in dismay.

Having taken on Billy's identity, he could not very well step forward and explain; but he could have kicked himself as he looked on.

Arthur Augustus, under the impression that he was speaking to Wally, was very cordial to Billy Bunter. He had not the remotest suspicion that the fat youth in tweeds was not the fellow he had walked and talked with that morning in Friar-dale Lane.

"I shall neva' forget the good turn you did me this mornin', deah boy," said Arthur Augustus. "My clobber would have been ruined if those fearful

boundahs had dwopped me in the ditch, you know!"

"Oh! Ah! Yes—"

"You tackled them like a Twojan, or, wathah, like a Bwiton," said Arthur Augustus. "I twust I shall see you at St. Jim's befoah vewy long, old fellow."

"Yes—I—ah—"

"Next week, isn't it?"

"Yes!" gasped Bunter.

"Good! I shall be expectin' you. We are goin' to be gweat fwien'ds at St. Jim's."

"Certainly!" said Bunter, beaming.

"I—"

"Come on, Gussy!" roared Jack Blake. "Do you want to lose the train, and wait for another railway strike?"

"I am sayin' good-bye to Buntah, Blake."

"Well, buck up!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Come on!" said Tom Merry, laughing. "You'll be seeing Wally Bunter at St. Jim's next week, you know."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Well, good-bye, old fellow!" said Arthur Augustus, shaking Bunter's hand. "I shall be lookin' forward to seein' you. I shall neva' forget how you saved my clobber fwom sewious injahwy."

Tom Merry caught Arthur Augustus by the arm and dragged him off. The train had to be caught; it was not at all certain that there would be another that day. Tom Merry & Co. marched off up the road, and Arthur Augustus turned to wave his hand to the fat youth in the gateway—still in the belief that it was Wally.

Billy Bunter was grinning with glee.

He turned to go in, and bumped into Hurree Janset Ram Singh, who uttered an exclamation.

"Yow! Gerrout of the way, Wharton!" snapped Bunter.

"I am not the esteemed Wharton, my excellent Wally," said the astonished nabob. "What is the matterfulness?"

Bunter remembered again.

"Oh—ah—yes—sorry!" he said.

Without his glasses Bunter was a lost soul, except at very close range; but he could not venture to put them on under the circumstances. Wally was glaring at him over his second pair of specs, but Bunter did not see him. Avoiding another collision, he rolled on into the quadrangle.

Wally joined him there.

"You fat spoofer!" muttered Wally.

The Owl of the Remove blinked at him.

"Is that you, Wally? I say, it's rotten without my specs! I shall have to keep out of gates this afternoon, so that I can put them on," he said. "He, he, he! Did you see Gussy saying good-bye to me?"

"He took you for me!" grunted Wally.

"Oh, it's all right! We're great pals!" said Bunter coolly. "He was only taking notice of you out of kindness, Wally. My pal Gussy is rather soft-hearted. You naturally couldn't expect him to feel friendly towards you, as he does towards me—a nobody like you!"

Grunt from Wally.

"In fact, it happened quite luckily, didn't it?" grinned Bunter.

"Not that I see. I wanted to say good-bye to D'Arcy," said Wally, with a clouded brow. "I never thought of your spoofing him, or I wouldn't have changed clothes with you."

"No need for you to say good-bye to him," said Bunter calmly. "He's been civil to you; but, my dear chap, you mustn't think too much of that. You're nobody, you know—in fact, I mentioned to D'Arcy yesterday that you were my

poor relation. I felt bound to mention that."

Grunt!

"I shall get on no end with Cussy!" remarked Bunter.

"Seeing him again?" asked Wally.

Bunter chuckled.

"He, he! I think so! He, he, he! I haven't told you my great idea yet! He, he, he!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's the bell!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. And he came along and playfully took Wally by the ear, in the belief that it was Billy's fat ear. "Come on, my fat tulip!"

"Eh? What?" ejaculated Wally.

"Lessons, my son!"

Billy Bunter chuckled as his cousin was led away.

The Remove fellows went to their Form-room, and Wally went with them. He took his place—or, rather, Bunter's place—in the Remove-room, and quaked a little when Mr. Quelch came in. But the Remove-master did not take any special note of him. It was clear that he supposed the fat youth in Etons to be Billy Bunter. In a few minutes Wally was feeling quite reassured.

Harry Wharton called to the fat junior as he was going in.

"Like to come in, Wally? You can sit in the Form-room, if you like, and enjoy the lessons, you know."

Bunter grinned.

"No fear!" he answered.

"Oh! You did yesterday," said Wharton. "I thought—"

"I—I mean, I'm going for a walk," said Bunter hastily.

"All serene."

The captain of the Remove followed the rest into the Form-room, and Bunter made for the gates.

Once outside the gates of the school he clapped a pair of glasses on his nose in great relief. It was a comfort to be able to see clearly again. He rolled down the lane in a mood of great satisfaction, jingling several coins in his pocket.

The coins belonged to Wally, and had remained in the pocket when clothes were changed; but perhaps Bunter took it for granted that the money was lent along with the clothes; or perhaps he considered that findings were keepings. At all events, he was heading for Uncle Clegg's, in Friardale, to expend those coins to the last penny—which he duly did.

It was fortunate that Wally had not left his purse in his pocket, or assuredly his currency notes would have followed the small silver.

Billy Bunter was feeling very fat and contented as he rolled out of Uncle Clegg's little shop and sauntered down the lane. He did not want to get back to Greyfriars till after lessons, and he strolled through the fields thinking out the great scheme that was working in his fat brain—the tremendous scheme that had flashed into his mind the previous night, and almost dazzled him with the prospect it unfolded.

That scheme, so far, had not been imparted to a soul; but the more Bunter thought over it, whatever it was, the better he was pleased with it.

But the grin of satisfaction faded away from his fat face at the sight of a shifty-eyed man, with a bowler-hat on the side of his head, who was coming along the footpath towards him. Bunter halted, and blinked round as if in search of a way of escape, and the shifty gentleman hastened to intercept him. And Billy Bunter, with a groan, resigned himself to his fate.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Startling Suggestion!

BILLY BUNTER blinked at Mr. Jerry Hawke, and the sharper stared grimly at Billy Bunter.

"G-g-g-good - afternoon, Mr. Hawke!" stammered the Owl.

"Afternoon!" said Mr. Hawke grimly.

"N-n-nice weather, isn't it? Fuf-fuf-for the time of year, I mean."

"Never mind the weather!" answered Mr. Hawke. "You owe me money, Master Bunter, and I ain't received the ten bob on account what you promised me yesterday. I'm a man what pays when he loses, and I expects to be treated according."

"D-d-didn't you get my letter?" stuttered Bunter.

"I did not."

"It—it must have been lost in the post, then," said Bunter feebly. "War-time, you know."

"I didn't get no letter because you didn't send no letter," said Mr. Hawke. "Now, I ask you, Master Bunter, did you put money on a 'orse, or did you not?"

"Yes," gasped Bunter.

"Did you give me a bit of writing, or didn't you?"

"Ow! Yes," groaned the unhappy Owl, who knew that only too well.

"Did your 'orse win, or did he lose?" further demanded Mr. Hawke.

"He lost!" mumbled Bunter.

"Do you owe me the rhino, or don't you?"

"Ow! Yes! Oh dear!"

"That bein' as stated," said Mr. Hawke, "I'll drop in and see your 'ead-master about it, as you don't seem inclined to settle."

"I—I say— Oh dear! Oh, lor!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say, I'm expecting a postal-order, Mr. Hawke."

Sniff!

"I was led to believe," said Mr. Hawke, "that you 'ad money. Otherwise, I wouldn't 'ave trusted you. It's always been my weakness that I've got a trusting disposition. But I cuts up rusty when it's took advantage of, you mark my words!" added the sharper threateningly.

"I—I'm not rich, you know," groaned Bunter. "In—in fact, I'm short of money. But—but I'm going to pay up, Mr. Hawke, honest Injun! You wait till next week—"

"And then I can wait till the next arter, I s'pose?" suggested Mr. Hawke sarcastically.

"Nunno! Next week for certain—say Friday!" said Bunter eagerly. "If I don't settle on Friday, do anything you like."

Mr. Hawke scanned him closely. It was pretty clear that there was nothing to be got out of Bunter at that moment, and Jerry Hawke could see it. And he was not eager to carry out his threat, which would have placed it out of his power to get anything out of Bunter himself.

"I'll trust you once more!" said Mr. Hawke generously. "I'm too trusting a cove; but it's my natur', and I can't 'elp it! I'll give you another chance, Master Bunter. Friday next week, and if you don't square then I'm sorry for yer—very sorry for yer!" added Mr. Hawke, with a scowl.

"Rely on me!" stammered Bunter.

"I will!" said Mr. Hawke significantly; and he pursued his way without another look at the dismayed Owl of the Remove.

Billy Bunter trotted off towards Greyfriars, palpitating. It really seemed as if he was never to hear the end of his unfortunate flutter on the geese; but

really, he could not expect to hear the end of it until he had settled his debt. Certainly he would have taken the sharper's money if he had won—not that he had had the remotest chance of winning anything from Mr. Hawke, if he had only known it. The fact remained that he owed Jerry Hawke money, and that he could not pay a tenth part of it; and the sharper's threats filled him with dismay and apprehension.

He arrived at Greyfriars as the fellows were coming out after lessons.

Bob Cherry clapped him on the shoulder.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! You taken to glasses, Wally?" he asked.

Bunter started.

"Eh? No! Yes—oh—ah!" he replied lucidly.

He grabbed off his glasses, which he had forgotten, being so used to them on his nose.

"Your cousin's been getting on unusually well in the Form-room this afternoon," said Bob.

"My—my cousin!" stammered Bunter.

"Yes; Billy's the biggest dunce in the Remove, you know," said Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—I—I mean— Oh—"

"But he quite surprised Quelch this afternoon—and us, too," said Bob. "He must have been mugging up, or else he's a dark horse, and he's been taking us in. He surprised us."

"The surprisingness was terrific," concurred Hurree Singh. "The esteemed Bunter was not a dunce for oncefully."

"Oh, rats!" said the Owl; and he rolled away.

Bob Cherry stared after him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Wally seems to be picking up his cousin Billy's manners," he remarked.

Billy Bunter went in to look for Wally, feeling anxious to change back into his own proper person. The part he was playing was beginning to worry him. He found Wally in the Form-room passage, with several Remove fellows. Bolsover major had stopped the supposed Billy there, being in a humorous mood.

"Hold on, Bunter," he said, "I'm going to show you that wrestling trick. Catch hold!"

Wally stopped, grinning.

"I'm your man!" he said.

Bolsover major grasped him, and Wally returned his grasp. Skinner and Snoop and Stott looked on with grinning faces. The bully of the Remove intended to bump the fat junior hard on the floor, that being Bolsover's idea of a joke. Wally was quite aware of it; but, as he was not really Billy, as Bolsover supposed, he was not quite so easy to handle.

"Ready?" grinned Bolsover major.

"Quite!"

"You see—I collar you like that—I twist you like that—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came from Skinner & Co.

"And I sit you down like that—"

"Yaroooo!" roared Bolsover, in surprise. For it was Bolsover major who sat down.

He bumped on the floor with a heavy bump, astonished and breathless; and Skinner & Co. roared. This was funnier than Bolsover major had intended.

Wally turned away, chuckling, and saw his cousin.

Billy Bunter caught him by the arm and hurried him away, while Bolsover major was still sitting and gasping.

"Come up to the dorm!" whispered Billy.

"Want to change back?"

"Yes."

"Right you are!"

The two Bunters hurried to the

Remove dormitory, where they proceeded to change clothes once more. Wally Bunter relinquished Billy's Etons with a sigh.

"How did you like it in the Form-room?" asked the Owl.

"First-rate."

"No accounting for tastes," grunted Bunter. "I don't like it."

"Old Quelch isn't a bad sort," said Wally. "He took me for you, of course. He seemed rather surprised to find that I wasn't a dunce."

"Why, you cheeky ass!" exclaimed the Owl indignantly.

"You're a lucky bargee, Billy! I wish I could stay here," said Wally. "Of course, the St. Jim's fellows are all right; but—but I do wish I could stay at Greyfriars! I feel at home here."

"Like your cheek!" grunted Bunter.

"Oh!"

"But you really think you'd like to stay at Greyfriars instead of going to

"Suppose it could be worked, Wally?" asked Bunter, as he finished his tie.

"Eh? What?"

"For you to stay here, I mean, and me to go to St. Jim's?"

"It couldn't."

"But suppose it could?"

"I'd like it no end. But it's impossible," said Wally. "I jolly well wish it was possible. But—but I couldn't ask Mr. Penman to send me here instead of to St. Jim's; that's his old school, and he might be hurt—and—and it would seem like looking a gift horse in the mouth. I suppose you could ask your father to change your school, if you liked."

"What rot! My father would jaw me if I asked him such a thing; besides, the term's fees are paid."

"Well, then—"

"I've got an idea, Wally!" said Bunter, sinking his voice.

"Well?" said Wally, again.

"We've tried it on to-day—in my clobber and with my specs you've been taken for me. Even old Quelch didn't spot you, and he's got eyes like gimlets. And D'Arcy took me for you, didn't he?"

"Well?"

"Well, then," Bunter breathed the words in a whisper, "why shouldn't I go to St. Jim's as you, and you stay here as me?"

It was out at last!

Wally jumped.

"You—you—you go to St. Jim's?" he stuttered.

"Yes."

"As—as me?"

"Yes."

"And I"—Wally looked dazed—"I stay here—as you—"

"Exactly!"

"But I'm not you, am I?" stuttered Wally. And you're not me, are you?"

"Oh, you're dense! I mean, play the game like we did this afternoon. I'll use your name, and you can use mine—our initials are the same, anyway. And I can go to St. Jim's, and you can stay here. Nobody would know."

"Great Scott!"

"We could change back any time we liked, if it didn't work," said Bunter, his eyes gleaming behind his spectacles. "But it would work all right. I should get on at St. Jim's no end. You want to be here—you've said so. Easy as falling off a form. What do you think, Wally?"

Wally recovered his breath.

"Think?" he repeated. "I think you've got a screw loose, old scout! I think you'd better see a doctor!"

And Wally left the dormitory.

William George Bunter stared after him in angry surprise.

"Beast!" said Bunter.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

In Doubt!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were looking for Wally Bunter, and they met him as he came downstairs from the dormitory.

Bob Cherry tapped him on the shoulder.

"Walter, my plump infant—"

"Hallo!" said Wally.

"Study No. 1 have the honour to request your company at tea!" said Bob Cherry, with great solemnity. "There will be haddocks."

"Cooked by our own fair hands!" said Frank Nugent.

"Come along, kid!" said Harry Wharton. "That is, unless you're booked already."

"Not at all!" said Wally. "I'll come with pleasure! I shall have to clear off pretty soon after."

"Not staying longer?" asked John Bull, as they proceeded to Study No. 1.

"Well, my visit's up," said Wally. "I really shouldn't have planted myself on Billy so long, but—but I like being here, and I own up."

"What a pity you can't stay and come into the Remove!" said Bob. "We'd change your cousin Billy for you with pleasure."

"The pleasure would be terrific!" remarked Hurree Singh.

Wally started a little.

That was, in point of fact, the very thing Billy Bunter had been proposing in the dormitory; the chums of the Remove were unconsciously backing up Bunter's extraordinary suggestion.

"Honest Injun?" asked Wally, his face becoming serious. "Would you fellows really like me here better than Billy, supposing—supposing I could come, and Billy buzzed off, say, to St. Jim's?"

"Honest Injun!" said Wharton, with a smile.

"Yes, rather!"

Wally looked very thoughtful as he came into Study No. 1 with the Famous Five. Somehow or other, those cheery juniors had a way of making him feel quite at home; quite as if he was a Greyfriars fellow like themselves. True, he liked the St. Jim's juniors, from what he had seen of them; but he did not really know them as he knew the Co.

St. Jim's was a new and strange place to him; he would find himself in totally new and unaccustomed surroundings there, and the change would be great, after his previous life. But he had grown accustomed to Greyfriars already.

Even Mr. Quelch, the somewhat severe master of the Remove, had impressed Wally favourably. He liked Greyfriars, he liked all the fellows, and he would have given almost anything to stay on as a member of that cheery community. But it was impossible to tell his benefactor so; it seemed too much like picking and choosing, and, in fact, looking a gift horse in the mouth—especially as Mr. Penman was a St. Jim's man himself.

It was impossible, and yet—yet it was not impossible, if Billy Bunter's amazing idea was carried out.

After all, suppose it was carried out? Wally found himself supposing that already.

There was no harm in it, certainly. It was not a question of depriving anybody of anything; it was an exchange. He would not be passing under a name that was not his own, for his name was Bunter. Even his initials were the same as Billy's.

Billy wanted to go to St. Jim's, for some reasons that Wally knew, and for some reasons that Wally did not know. And Wally wanted very, very much to be at Greyfriars.

Where was the harm?

That the exchange was possible was proved by what had happened that afternoon. In Billy's clothes and glasses he had taken his place in the Remove Form-room and no one had been the wiser. Mr. Quelch had been surprised to find the supposed Owl a little less of a dunce than usual; that was all.

The supposed Owl's unusual aptitude had, in fact, attracted some attention to him; but no one had dreamed for a moment that he was not Billy.

The exchange was easy enough. It would please both parties; and there was no harm in it. Suppose—suppose—

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Are you falling asleep, old scout?"

Wally started out of a brown study, to find Bob Cherry regarding him with surprise.

"The Slacker!"



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BECOMING A CADET TO-DAY!

St. Jim's?" asked Bunter, blinking at his cousin with a curious expression.

"Yes, rather!"

"I'd rather go to St. Jim's!" said Bunter.

"Would you, really?" asked Wally.

"Yes, I would! I'm not understood here," said Bunter loftily. "I'm not appreciated at my just value."

"Oh!"

"At St. Jim's it would be different. My old pal D'Arcy, for instance—"

"Oh!"

"I should chum with him there. Tom Merry and the rest, too—they'd understand me; they'd know how to treat a fellow according to his real worth."

"Oh!"

"Really, Wally, can't you say anything but 'Oh!'?" exclaimed Bunter irritably.

Wally did not answer; really, he did not quite know what to say in answer to Billy Bunter's remarks. So much conceit and so much obtuseness together were a little too much for Wally.

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"Eh?" he ejaculated confusedly. "D-did you speak?"

"Twice!" grinned Bob.

"I—I was thinking," Wally crimsoned. In his deep thought he had quite forgotten where he was. "Sorry! Go ahead!"

"I only said you'd have been surprised to see your cousin Billy in class this afternoon," said Bob, with a smile.

"My—my cousin Billy?"

"Yes; he was so bright he fairly dazzled us!"

"D-did he?"

It was on the tip of Wally's tongue to explain, but he refrained. Bob's remark showed how far he was from dreaming of the spoof of that afternoon.

Billy Bunter's spectacles gleamed in at the door. It seemed that he had scented the haddocks.

"I say, you fellows——"

"What a nose for a bloodhound!" said Bob Cherry admiringly. "Where were you when you scented them, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I came to offer to cook them for you!" said Bunter. "If there's one thing I can cook it's haddocks!"

Frank Nugent turned a crimson face from the fire.

"Trot in!" he said. "You're welcome to the job."

"I'm your man, old chap!" said Bunter affably; and he trotted in. Under Billy Bunter's masterly hand the haddocks were done to a turn, and a cheery party sat down to tea.

"Lots of time to catch the seven train, Wally," said Bunter, as he saw his cousin glance at the clock. "I'm coming to the station with you. I've got a pass out to see you off."

"Oh!" said Wally.

He could guess why Bunter was taking that trouble—it was to renew the scheme he had proposed in the dormitory, and urge its acceptance. Wally did not quite know whether to feel pleased or troubled. The scheme appealed to him very keenly; and yet——

"I want a talk with you before you go, you know," said Bunter. "We'll have a chat on the way to the station."

That was a hint to the Co. not to offer their company.

"Sure there's a train?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Oh, yes! That blessed strike petered out, and the trains are running all right," said Bunter. "Wally will have to change at Lantham, that's all. I've asked all about it, and found it all out for him."

"You're growing quite thoughtful in your old age!" said Bob in surprise.

Bunter grinned.

"You're on holiday till you go to St. Jim's, Wally?" Harry Wharton asked.

"Yes; except for mugging with my tutor."

"If you're free next Wednesday, and could come along here, we could give you some footer," said Harry. "We're playing a match on Wednesday, and, if you'd care for it, I'd put you in our team."

"Would you really?" ejaculated Wally.

"Certainly!"

"I'm going to St. Jim's on Monday, though," said Wally, his face falling. "It's all fixed."

"Too bad! Never mind, we shall have to wait till we come over to St. Jim's to play the return match," said Harry. "I expect we shall find you in Tom Merry's eleven."

"I—I hope so. I—I say, I should like to play for you on Wednesday," said Wally wistfully. "I—I wish it could be fixed."

"Perhaps it could be fixed!" grinned Billy Bunter.

"How?" asked Wharton at once.

"Ahem!" Bunter was not prepared to answer that question, only Wally

understanding the inner meaning of his remark. "I—I mean——"

"Well, what do you mean?"

"I—I mean, I'll play for you, if you like!" said Bunter brightly. "I'm a better footballer than Wally, you know."

"Ass!"

Wally looked at his watch when tea was over, and rose to his feet.

"I shall have to buzz to get that train," he said. "I say, thank you fellows no end! You've given me a splendid time here! If you're coming with me, Billy——"

"I haven't finished the cake."

"I dare say Wingate would give us a pass to see you to the station, old scout," said Wharton.

Bunter jumped up.

"I'm seeing Wally to the station!" he said. "I've got some things to say to him—something rather important—family matters, in fact. Come on, Wally! I can put this cake in my pocket."

And he did.

down to the gates through the winter dusk bag in hand.

At the gates Wally said good-bye to his Greyfriars friends. He shook hands all round with the Famous Five, and with two or three other juniors who came down to see him off, and started up the dusky road to the village with Billy Bunter.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Come on!" muttered Wally.

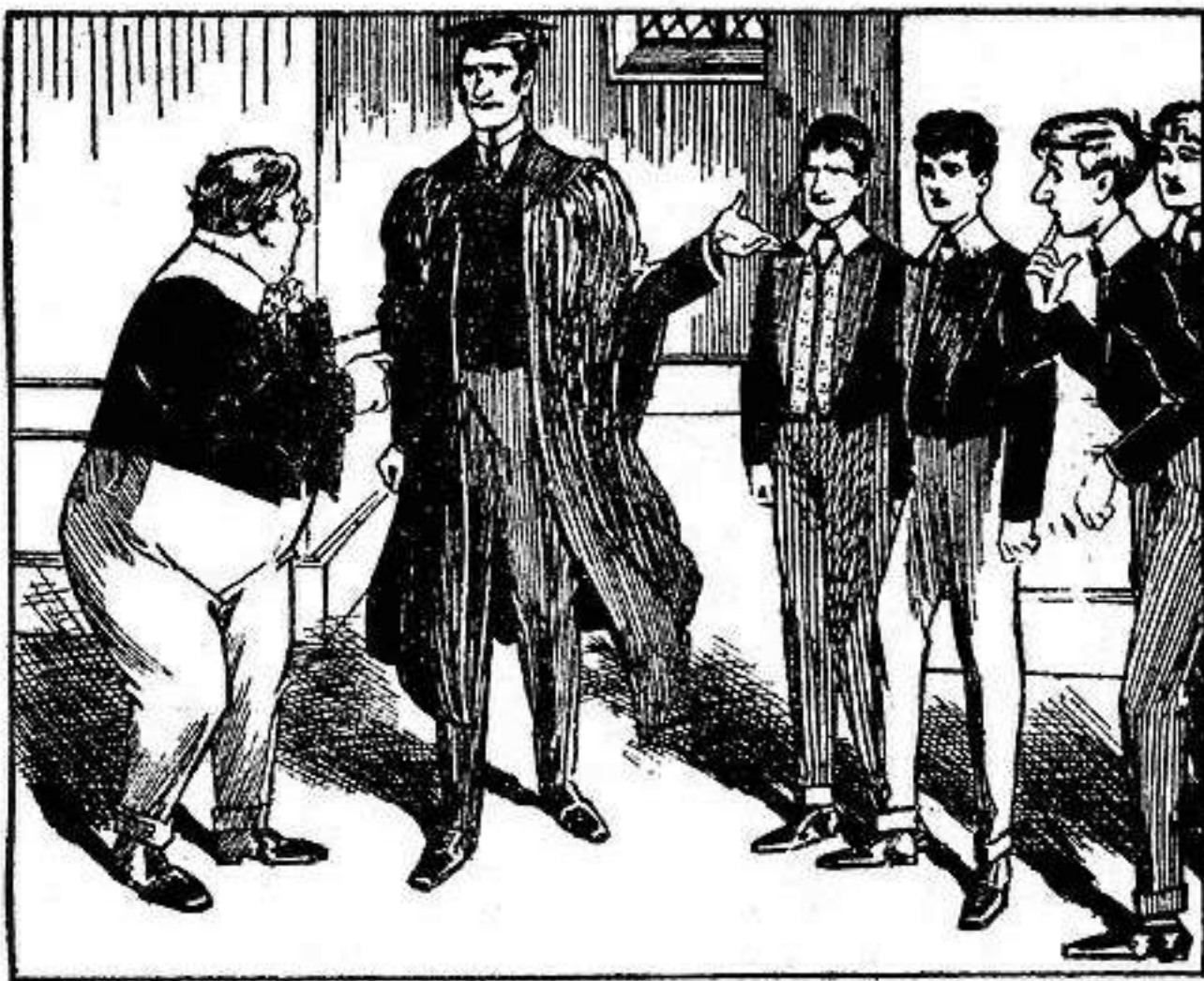
"Hold on a minute! I say, you fellows, I've got something to say to you!" said Bunter, keeping at a safe distance while he said it. "I've had it in my mind for a long time, and I feel that I'd better get it out, now—under the circumstances. You're a swanking ass, Wharton!"

"What?"

"Bob Cherry, you're a fatheaded chump!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"You're a namby-pamby, baby-faced idiot, Nugent!"



Is Bunter ill? (See Chapter 10.)

"We'll come down to the gates," said Harry.

And the Famous Five and the two Bunters left Study No. 1 together.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Quite Settled!

"BUNTER!"

It was Wingate's voice, as the juniors came downstairs. Billy Bunter blinked at the captain of Greyfriars.

"Yes, Wingate?"

"You haven't brought in your lines."

"I—I——"

"Don't be later than seven with them," said Wingate, frowning.

"I—I say, Wingate, I—I'm just going to see my cousin off at the station."

"Oh, in that case you can leave them till to-morrow!" said Wingate, with a good-natured nod to Wally. "Cut off!"

Billy Bunter took a bag from under the hall-stand as he went out with the juniors. Wally was carrying his bag; but what Billy wanted with one was a mystery.

He gave no explanation, but trotted

"I—I—I——" Nugent stuttered.

"You're a clumsy, cheeky, bad-mannered hippopotamus, Johnny Bull!"

"Am I?" roared Johnny Bull.

"You're a cheeky nigger, Inky!"

The Famous Five simply glared at Bunter, and Wally stared at him blankly. If that was Bunter's candid opinion of the Famous Five, it was not a flattering one. And he seemed to enjoy telling them.

"Are you potty?" exclaimed Wharton, in utter amazement. "Do you want to be scragged, you fat chump?"

"Yah! I've a jolly good mind to lick you before I go!"

"He's potty!" said Peter Todd, in blank amazement.

"You're a rotten, skinny, mean, bony boulder, Peter Todd!" continued the Owl of the Remove.

"Oh, my hat! Anything else?" asked Vernon-Smith, who had joined the juniors at the gates.

"Yes. You, Smithy, you're a purse-proud, swanky, no-class son of a dashed company promoter!" said Bunter.

With that Billy Bunter scudded up the road, followed by the amazed Wally.

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and just in time to escape a rush from Vernon-Smith.

There was a chorus of amazement in the gateway. That sudden outbreak from Billy Bunter astonished the Removites.

"Why, I—I'll skin him when he comes back!" gasped Bob Cherry. "The cheeky ass!"

"I'll skin him now!" exclaimed the Bounder.

But Wharton caught him by the arm.

"Not while Wally's here, Smithy," he said. "You can interview the fat idiot when he comes in."

The Bounder growled, but he assented. The chums could only conclude that Billy Bunter had depended upon Wally's presence to protect him, in stating his candid opinion of them; naturally, they did not want Wally's latest recollection of Greyfriars to be a ragging bestowed on his cousin. But their wrath was great; and they waited for Bunter to come back from the station, with intentions that were perfectly Hunnish.

Billy Bunter chuckled a fat chuckle as he rolled away down the misty lane with the astonished Wally.

"Rather a surprise for those bounders—what?" he chortled.

"I think you must be potty!" said Wally. "You can't expect fellows to be talked to like that. You'll get licked when you go in!"

Bunter chortled again, apparently not alarmed by the prospect.

"I've been wanting to tell them what I think of them for a long time," he said. "This was a chance too good to be lost."

"Blessed if I see it!"

They walked on in silence for a time, only an occasional fat chuckle escaping from Billy Bunter. The Owl of the Remove was not hurrying himself, and Wally hinted at last that it was getting near seven.

"That's all right," said the Owl cheerfully. "Your train doesn't go till seven-forty, old top!"

Wally stared at him.

"Twenty to eight!" he exclaimed.

"That's it!"

"Then, what have you marched me off like this for?" demanded Wally warmly. "I don't want to hang about at the station for three-quarters of an hour."

"You won't; that's all right. We needed time, you see."

"Time for what?"

"Time to change clobber, of course."

"Wha-a-at?"

"There's an old barn near the road, a bit farther on," said Bunter. "Nobody goes there after dark. We can change there all right. I've got a candle in my pocket."

"But—"

"This way, Wally!"

"But we're not going to change!" roared Wally.

"We must, you ass, if you're going back to Greyfriars as me!" said Bunter peevishly.

"But we're—I—You—I'm not!"

"I hope you're not going to begin arguing now, Wally," said Bunter, with asperity. "After I've arranged it all for your benefit, I should think even you might show a little gratitude!"

"Gug-gug-gratitude!"

"Yes," said Bunter warmly. "Gratitude! I'm not thinking of myself at all—I never do—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I've planned the whole thing for your benefit, because you want to stay at Greyfriars. I'm taking all the risk. You've seen that you can do it all right at Greyfriars, and I've got to chance it at St. Jim's," said Bunter. "Of course,

a fellow of my resource and—and ability will do it easily enough. Still, I'm taking all the risk, such as it is. I really hope, Wally, that you're not going to begin raising difficulties at the last moment."

Wally could only gasp.

In spite of his refusal, Billy Bunter had evidently taken the thing for granted. That was the explanation of his startling defiance hurled at the Co.; he was not expecting to return to Greyfriars that night. That was why he had brought a bag with him. It contained the few valuables he possessed. Evidently the Owl had laid his plans carefully.

Wally, feeling quite dazed, followed Bunter into the barn, hardly knowing what to say or do. Bunter lighted the candle.

"Ready?" he said.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Exchange!

BILLY BUNTER took off his coat. His cousin Wally mechanically followed his example. But he paused, with the coat half off.

"Billy—" he began

"Better not jaw now; I've got to catch the seven-forty," said Bunter.

"You—you've got to kuh-kuh-catch the—"

"Of course, as I'm you now!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

Wally seemed at a loss for breath. He finished taking off his coat, his mind was in a whirl. Bunter had taken the affair into his hands, and, between Billy's persistence on the one hand, and his own keen desire to become a Greyfriars fellow on the other, Wally was wavering.

"Why, it's ripping for you!" went on Bunter indignantly. "You'll be playing footer for the Remove on Wednesday, too."

"Yes, there's that!" said Wally, brightening.

"You're friendly with all the fellows—blessed if I can see how or why, but there it is—"

"Yes, there it is," said Wally, with a smile.

"And you'd be like a fish out of water at St. Jim's," said Bunter. "I shall be all right there."

"I suppose you would, but—"

"Ain't I taking all the risk?"

"I suppose so; but—"

"For goodness' sake, Wally, don't keep on butting like a billy-goat!" exclaimed Bunter irritably. "Anybody would think that I wasn't doing all this for your sake!"

"If you are, I'm grateful," said Wally.

"If!" exclaimed the Owl of the Remove indignantly. "I like that! I'm giving up Greyfriars for your sake, ain't I? Of course, I shall be with my pal D'Arcy. He's rich and soft—"

"What?"

"I—I mean, he's greatly attached to me. And, of course, I shall get out of Hawke's way—"

"What? Who's Hawke?"

Bunter stammered. He had not meant to let that out.

"D-d-d-id I say Hawke?" he mumbled.

"I—I meant—"

"Well, what did you mean?" asked Wally, with a touch of suspicion.

"Nothing! I really meant to say we've got no time to lose. You're not getting your things off. Don't keep me waiting in the cold."

"But—"

"If you want me to catch cold, Wally, you'd better say so! If I get influenza, I'll jolly well give it to you. I warn you!"

"Look here, Billy—"

"You're like a sheep's head, Wally;

nearly all jaw! Blessed if I ever knew such a fellow for chinwag! Do what you've agreed to do, and dry up!"

"I haven't agreed!" roared Wally.

"Are you going to begin all that over again?" exclaimed Bunter, in great exasperation. "Of all the annoying fat-heads—"

"It's impossible!" exclaimed Wally.

"I'd like it no end; but— Look here! How can you pretend to be me—"

"Easy enough. Nobody knows me at St. Jim's, excepting the fellows I've seen—and they took me for you this afternoon, didn't they?"

"Yes; but—"

"Butting again!" snorted Bunter.

"But—I was going back to my new tutor's in London!" gasped Wally. "I'm staying with him in his house till Monday, and he's taking me to St. Jim's. I've told you so. You asked me—"

"Of course I asked you, fathead; as I had to know what I've got to do. I'm going to your tutor's; you've given me the address and the name, and that's enough."

"But—but he's expecting me—"

"He will get me, and he won't know it; but if he did, he ought to be jolly glad," grunted Bunter.

"You—you're going to spoof Mr. Slimson—"

"Do you think I can't?"

"I—I suppose you can. But—"

"For goodness' sake, Wally, get your clobber off, and let me get them on!" said Bunter. "I'm waiting and shivering!"

"You—you really want me to, Billy?" asked Wally, wavering again.

The thought of Greyfriars, and the fellows he knew there, attracted him strongly. St. Jim's was distant and strange, but— After all, why should he not do as Bunter wanted?

"Of course I do. Mind, it's for your sake—entirely for your sake," said Bunter. "It's simply my generosity, that's all."

"I'm not having it on that footing," said Wally resolutely. "If you're doing it for my sake, Billy, I call it off. I won't have it!"

"Is that what you call gratitude?" sneered Bunter.

"I mean what I say," answered Wally steadily. "The fact is, I can't help thinking you've got some motive for this, Billy; some motive I can't understand, and that you haven't told me."

"That's suspicious, Wally! It's low to be suspicious."

"Well, that's what I think; and I'll tell you what I'll do," said Wally, making up his mind at last. "If you tell me plainly that you really want me to do this, and that it will be a service to you, I'll do it. Not otherwise."

Bunter blinked at him angrily. He would have preferred greatly to carry through the scheme on the footing of a tremendous favour to Wally. But his cousin was evidently determined; and Bunter's principal object, after all, was to carry through the scheme on whatever footing. The thought of the impending interview with Jerry Hawke checked the angry reply on his lips.

Jerry Hawke was to be left for Wally to deal with; and Bunter charitably hoped that Wally would be able to manage him somehow.

"Well, I do want you to do it," he said ungraciously, at last. "I'm keen on going to St. Jim's, and—and there's other reasons, too. I'm fed up with Greyfriars. I—I ask you to do it, Wally, as—as a favour."

"Well, if you put it like that—" said Wally, hesitating.

"I do!" snapped Bunter.

"It's a go!" said Wally, at last.

"We'll try it. If it turns out too difficult, we can meet somewhere and change. Try it for a month, and see how it works."

"Make it a month, if you like," said Bunter, who never thought half so much as a month ahead of the passing moment. "Mind, you don't give it away without my permission; and I'll undertake the same."

"Done!"

Wally peeled off his clothes at a great rate after the decision was come to. He still had some lingering doubts in his mind; but he was feeling elated. He was going to be a Greyfriars fellow, for a time at least; and that was the darling dream of his life; a happy dream he had often thought over, before the chance had come his way of going to a public school at all.

He put on Bunter's Etons, and his coat over them; and the Owl rapidly dressed himself in Wally's outfit.

"I'll give you my extra pair of specs, Wally. You can have plain glass put in them at the optician's to-morrow, and then they won't bother your eyes. You'll have to wear them, or you'll get spotted."

"What about you?" asked Wally. "You can't wear specs at St. Jim's, as Tim Merry and the rest have seen me without them."

"I shall manage somehow. Weakening of sight, or some yarn like that," said Bunter, with a grin. "Leave that to me. Now, I'll take your bag. Shove your things into mine. Better leave the pyjamas, as they might be recognised. You'll find pyjamas in my box in the dorm. By the way, I shall want some money for my railway-ticket."

"All right!"

"Better give me something over; in fact, give me the lot," said Bunter brightly. "Fellows would notice if you had any money. I was stony to-day, you know, and you've got to keep up appearances—as me."

"I'll keep up appearances without giving you all my money," grunted Wally.

"Don't be unreasonable, old chap!" urged Bunter. "Besides, you can have my postal-order when it comes."

"When!" grunted Wally.

"You'll get my allowance, anyway," said Bunter warmly.

"Well, you'll get mine; and mine's bigger than yours."

"Just like you to think of a trifle like that!" snorted Bunter. "Well, if you're only going to give me this quid, I may as well be off. I think you're mean!"

The two Bunters left the barn, after blowing out the candle. They came back into the road.

There Wally hesitated once more. But Billy Bunter did not hesitate.

"Good-bye, kid!" he said briskly, and started off for Friardale.

Wally, with a thoughtful brow, took the road back to Greyfriars. He could hardly decide whether he had done a very foolish thing or not; but he knew that he was glad that he was going back to Greyfriars. But his heart was beating as he came up to the gates of the school and rang.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for the Co.!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Here he is!"

"Bunter, you cheeky worm, what—"

"Collar him!"

"You terrific cheeky rotter!"

Wally Bunter jumped. He was entering the School House, in a strange and uncertain mood, but unsuspecting of danger. He had passed Gosling at the

gate successfully; he knew that he would pass successfully in the School House. There was no doubt that in Billy's clothes and Billy's glasses he would be taken for Billy. But a feeling of sudden alarm came over him as the Famous Five and Peter Todd and Vernon-Smith closed in on him inside the House. Evidently the Removites had been waiting for him.

They grasped his arms and his neck—after a hurried look round to ascertain that no masters were nigh—and marched him into the Common-room before the new Bunter quite realised what was happening.

There they surrounded him, with wrathful and indignant looks.

"Now, you cheeky fat worm!" exclaimed Wharton. "What have you got to say for yourself?"

"Eh?" stammered Wally.

"What do you mean by it?" demanded Nugent.

Wally looked as he felt, utterly dismayed. He could only conclude that his imposture was already detected, and that it was a sudden and early end to his stay at Greyfriars as a Greyfriars fellow. He stared at the juniors, over Billy's spectacles, blankly.

"Swanking ass, am I?" continued Wharton wrathfully.

"Nanby-pamby, am I?" hooted Nugent.

"And I'm a fatheaded chump—what?" roared Bob Cherry.

"And a bony boulder—that's me!" said Peter Todd.

"Oh!" gasped Wally.

He understood now.

He was taken for Billy, after all; and the indignant juniors were calling him to account for Billy's parting words. He had forgotten that; but he realised now that, as Billy Bunter, he would have all Billy's sins to answer for—and they were many!

His alarm evaporated as he realised the truth, and he grinned. He wondered what the juniors would have thought if they had known that they were talking to him, and not to Billy. But they had not the remotest suspicion of it; indeed, Wally himself, looking in the glass, would almost have fancied that it was Billy's reflection he saw.

"Blessed if he isn't laughing at us now!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What do you mean by it, you fat gnome?"

"I—I—I—"

"I suppose you know you're going to be licked?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"I—I—I—"

"You don't think you can slang us, before a visitor, too, without being walloped?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha! I—I mean—I—I—I—"

"What was it you called my father?" asked Vernon-Smith, who was a good deal angrier than the other juniors. The Bouncer keenly resented any aspersion upon his father.

"I—I—I didn't call him anything!" gasped Wally.

"What? You said—"

"I didn't! I—I mean—"

"What's the good of telling whoppers, when we all heard you?" exclaimed Wharton. "You picked out a moment when you knew we shouldn't want to thrash you before a visitor who was your relation, and insulted us all. If you were anything but a fat, funky frog, I'd make you put the gloves on!"

"Oh dear! I—I—"

"Kick him round the Common-room!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Good! Bunter, you know you've asked for it! Will you have the gloves on, or he kicked round the Common-room?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I—I—I—I—" stammered Wally in dismay.

"You can pick your man," grinned Bob. "You said you'd a jolly good mind to lick Wharton. Lick him now!"

"I—I didn't!"

"What?"

"I—I mean— It was Bi—I—I mean— Ahem!"

"Lick me!" said Frank Nugent. "I'm nanby-pamby, you know, so you ought to find it easy. Try!"

"You—you see—" stammered the unhappy Wally.

"Kick him round, and have done with him!" said the Bouncer.

"Good egg!"

Wally stared at the juniors in great dismay. He had not had time to think out every aspect of his new character at Greyfriars, but he realised now what had not been at all clear to him earlier.

As Wally he had left on friendly terms with the Co., almost chummy terms. But as Billy he was the Owl of the Remove, the greedy, cheeky, assuming, selfish Owl in their eyes. He had Bunter's character to live down. It was likely to take some time.

He was jerked into the middle of the room, and Vernon-Smith drew back his boot for the first kick. Wally jumped away so energetically that Bob Cherry's grasp was thrown off quite easily, much to Bob's surprise.

Smithy kicked, and there was a roar from Bob. Wally was out of the way of the coming boot, but Bob Cherry's leg was in the way, and he got the kick.

"Yaroooooh!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Smithy.

Bob Cherry hopped on one leg, with anguish in his face.

"Ow-wow-wow! You silly ass! Yow-ow! Wharrer kicking me for? Ow!"

"I was kicking Bunter—"

"Ow-wow-woop! You kicked me!"

"Why didn't you hold him? If you shoved yourself in the way—"

"I didn't! He shoved me—ow-ow!—you silly chump!" Bob clasped one leg, and hopped on the other. "Yah! You fathead! Ow!"

"Never mind—" began Peter Todd.

"But I do mind!" roared Bob. "I'm hurt!"

"The hurtfulness must be great, for the roarfulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Singh.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Bunter, you fat villain! Collar him!"

Wally Bunter made a rush for the door, and the juniors made a rush after him, Bob hopping. Billy Bunter would have been collared half-way to the door, but Wally was a good deal more active. He reached the doorway, and darted into the passage.

"After him!"

"Chase him!"

There was a whoop as the juniors rushed down the corridor in pursuit. Wally dashed on, and rounded a corner, and almost ran into Mr. Quelch, who was sedately walking to his study from the library. The fat youth halted just in time.

Mr. Quelch turned a severe glance upon him.

"Really, Bunter, you should not race about the passages. You nearly collided with me!" he exclaimed. "Why, what—what—"

With a terrific whoop the crowd of juniors came tearing round the corner.

"Here he is!"

"Nail him!"

"Look out!" gasped Wally, in warning.

"Boys!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!"

Harry Wharton & Co. halted suddenly as they grasped Wally. They released

him again as quickly as if they had found him red-hot as they saw the Form-master.

Mr. Quelch regarded them with a thunderous frown.

"Wharton, what does this mean? Is this what you call a rag, with Bunter as the victim?" he exclaimed sternly.

"Oh! Ah-ah-ahem!" stammered Wharton.

"Bunter, if you have been ill-used by—"

"Not at all, sir!" said the fat junior. "Only a lark, sir. It was my fault, really!"

The juniors gasped.

Such an opportunity of landing the Co. in hot water would not have been lost by the Owl of the Remove. But Wally's reply disarmed the gathering wrath of the Form-master.

"Oh, very well!" said Mr. Quelch. "I certainly supposed, Bunter, from your hurried flight, that this was what boys, I believe, call a rag."

"Oh, sir!"

"But you must not rush about the passages in that way!" said Mr. Quelch. "Kindly do not let it occur again."

And Mr. Quelch walked away.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at Wally Bunter, who looked at them. They did not know what to make of it. For once Bunter had played the game.

"Well, my only hat!" said Bob Cherry at last. "What's the matter with him? I thought it was a licking all round."

"Bunter's growing decent!" said Peter Todd, in wonder. "I thought he was going to howl out to Quelch, and get us all licked."

"Same here!" said Wharton, in wonder.

"The sameness is terrific!"

"Oh, draw it mild!" exclaimed Wally warmly. "I suppose you know I'm not a sneak?"

"What? We know that you jolly well are a sneak!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"Why, you cheeky rotter—"

"Eh?"

"I—I—I mean—" stammered Wally, remembering again that he was Billy.

"I—I mean— Ahem!"

"I think we'll let him off the ragging he asked for," said Harry Wharton. "You can take that as a tip, Bunter, that it pays better to be decent."

The Famous Five and Vernon-Smith went their way, feeling that Bunter had earned his pardon. Peter Todd tapped the fat junior on the shoulder.

"You're improving, Bunter," he said.

"Think so?" grinned Wally.

"You are. You're not such a fat sneak as you've seemed. Come along and do your prep."

"P-p-prep!"

"Yes, ass! You haven't done your prep, have you?"

"Nunno!"

"Then come and get on with it; you're late already."

"I—I—I'm coming."

Wally realised that he was Peter's study-mate now, and was expected to do Billy Bunter's prep in Study No. 7. He followed Peter Todd up the staircase in some trepidation, wondering what luck he would have with Bunter's prep.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

An Improvement in Bunter!

"I GUESS I've been looking for you."

It was Fisher T. Fish who addressed Bunter the Second as he came along the Remove passage with Peter Todd.

Wally paused, and Peter went on to THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 570.

the study. Wally knew Fishy. It was fortunate for him, under the circumstances, that he had learned to know all the Remove at least by name and sight.

"Hallo, Fishy!" he said cheerily.

Fishy looked at him.

"Anything up with you?" he asked.

"Eh? No. Why?"

"You look cleaner than usual," said Fishy. "Your voice seems a bit different—not so much like the gurgle of a fat frog. Are you ill?"

"Oh, rats!" answered Wally.

"Waal, I've been looking for you," resumed Fisher T. Fish, "about that quarter."

"That what?" exclaimed Wally, in surprise.

"I guess I mean that shilling."

"What shilling?"

"Oh, come off!" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish impatiently. "I guess you savvy what shilling, you fat scallawag! Don't you try any gum-game; it cuts no ice with me, and don't you forget it! I lent you a shilling!"

"You didn't!"

"What!" roared Fishy. "I didn't lend you a quarter?"

"No, you didn't!"

"Why, you—you—you mugwump!" gasped Fisher T. Fish, in fury. "I've been tracking you down for over a week for that shilling, and now you say I didn't lend it to you! You scallawag! You jay! You hobo! You—you—you fat—"

"A week!" repeated Wally. "Oh, I—I see! You lent it to—to—ahem! I—I see."

"I lent it to you!" roared Fisher T. Fish. "Skinner saw me! He's a witness! Snoop was there, too! Skinner! I say, Skinner! Didn't I lend Bunter a shilling in your study?"

"You did!" grinned Skinner. "You thought he was getting remittances from home, and you lent him a bob. Serve you right to lose it!"

"I calculate I'm not losing that shilling, sir! I guess Bunter is going to pony up! Haven't I asked him for it every day? Haven't I—"

"Here you are!" said Wally.

He extended a shilling to the enraged Fish.

It was a dismaying prospect, that of being called to account for Billy Bunter's debts; but Fisher T. Fish's claim, at all events, was not overwhelming. Wally had no objection to settling his cousin's debts to the extent of twelve pence.

Fisher T. Fish grabbed the shilling.

"I guess it ought to be eighteenpence, after waiting all this time!" he said. "I've lost the use of that shilling for a fortnight. And only this morning you told me you were stony, you fat jay!"

"I didn't—I mean—"

"You did!" snorted Fisher T. Fish. "I guess it'll be a dog's age before you see a loan from me again, you owl!"

And Fisher T. Fish bit the shilling to make sure that it was a good one, and slipped it into his pocket and made off. He had never really expected to see that shilling again; and probably his expectations would have proved well founded if he had had to deal with Billy, instead of Billy's cousin.

"Well, my word!" said Skinner. "Here's Bunter settling his debts! This ought to be put in the papers, by gum!"

Wally went on to Study No. 7, where he found Peter Todd and Tom Dutton at prep. Peter wagged a warning finger at him.

"You've got none too much time, fatty," he said. "You'll get scalped by Quelch in the morning if you haven't got your construe ready."

"I—I say, what are we preparing?" stammered Wally.

Peter stared.

"You know as well as I do. You can't have forgotten!"

"Nunno! Of—of course not! Let's see what you're doing, will you?" asked Wally nervously.

"You can if you like. Don't ask me to do your work for you, you slacker! And I advise you to let your crib alone. I believe Quelch is beginning to smell a rat."

"My—my crib!" murmured Wally.

"Yes. Why don't you do your work like any other fellow, and try to learn something?"

"I—I mean to," said Wally. "I—I say, suppose you help me this evening, Toddy. I'll be awfully obliged. And—and I'll promise never to use a crib again, if you like."

"Well, I suppose that's a sign of grace," said Peter. "I'll help you, if you like. We can work together; but mind, I shall hold you to it. If I catch you using a crib I'll skin you!"

"Done!" said Wally.

Wally got through prep successfully, with Peter's kind assistance—though Peter had not the remotest idea whom he was really helping.

"Is your sight improving, Bunter?" asked Todd suddenly, when prep was finished.

"My—my sight?"

"Yes; you're not using your glasses at all."

"Oh dear!" Wally pushed his glasses further up his nose. Then, as the lenses came before his eyes, he blinked, and pushed them down again. As his sight was normal he could not see through strong glasses. "Oh dear! I—I think I want a change of glasses, Peter."

"Then you'd better see to it at once; it's dangerous to monkey with the eyes," said Peter. "And mind you go to a good man—not some advertising quack. Go to the school optician at Courtfield to-morrow."

"I—I will, Toddy."

"I'll lend you the tin, if you want any," added Peter generously.

"That's all right, old chap; I've got some tin."

"What?" ejaculated Peter.

"I've got some tin!" answered Wally. "Nothing surprising in my having some tin, is there?"

"Something jolly surprising in your refusing a loan," answered Peter. "Your usual game is to bag all you can get your paws on, whether you want it or not."

"Oh!"

"You seem to be improving since your cousin was here," said Peter. "You couldn't do better than take him for a model, Bunter. If you were half as decent as he is, you'd do."

"My—my cousin?"

"Yes; your cousin Wally."

"Oh! I—I see! I—I'll try to do as you say, Peter."

"Do!" said Toddy. "If you succeed, it may save you a lot of lickings. It may save me the trouble of keeping a stump in the study for you, too."

"Oh!" murmured Wally.

He was learning more about his cousin Billy than he had known before.

Prep being finished, Billy Bunter's double made his way down to the Common-room. Successful as he had been so far, it was with some trepidation that he entered the lighted, crowded room. It seemed to him that some eye, among so many, must detect that he was Wally, and not Billy. But no one took an especial note of him. It was clear that he was regarded as the Owl of the Remove, and no one else.

It was a relief, but it was not wholly pleasing. Harry Wharton & Co. were

talking football, and Wally joined the group. He was not quite used to being Billy yet, and it gave him a little shock not to receive the friendly looks he had grown accustomed to in his own person.

"Let Bunter give his opinion," said Bob Cherry, alluding to some matter under discussion. "Bunter knows all about footer."

"The knowfulness is terrific," grinned Hurree Singh. "Let us ask Bunter."

"Go ahead!" said Wally. "What's the argument?"

"Bob thinks that Hazel ought to have saved the last St. Jim's goal yesterday," said Wharton, with a smile. "The one your cousin Wally kicked for St. Jim's—or, rather, headed. What's the verdict, umpire?"

"He ought to have saved it," said Wally at once. "That fat chap who keeps goal for St. Jim's would have saved it. Still, it was a jolly good goal!"

"Why, Bunter isn't such an ass, after all!" exclaimed Bob. "He agrees with me."

"Ha, ha, ha!" Hazel, who was in the group, sniffed.

"I suppose you could have saved that goal, Bunter?" he said sarcastically.

"I think so," said Wally. "I should have expected the man to head it in, from his position; but you didn't."

"Rot!" said Hazel, and he walked away.

Harry Wharton glanced very curiously at the fat junior. As a matter of fact, the opinion he had delivered was sound, and, as a rule, Bunter's opinions on footer were absurd.

"My hat!" said Nugent. "We shall have Bunter playing footer some day!"

"You'll have me playing to-morrow, and every day," answered Wally. "And if Wharton wants me in the match on Wednesday—"

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

"Oh, don't be too funny, Bunter!" implored Wharton.

"Why, you asked me—I—I mean—you—you asked—ahem! I mean, I'm asking you—"

"You can ask, old scout!" said Wharton, laughing. "I'll play you when I want to make the other side a present of a match. That's a go!"

"Oh!" said Wally.

Wingate looked into the room.

"Bad-time!"

Wally Bunter went up to the dormitory with the Remove. There he turned into Billy Bunter's bed, in Billy Bunter's ample pyjamas. He laid his head on Billy Bunter's pillow, wondering where Billy was at that moment, and what he was doing.

It was some time before he slept. He lay thinking over his new and queer position. But, on the whole, he was conscious that he was very satisfied.

So far all was well, and the morrow could be dealt with when the morrow came. Billy had left difficulties for him—more than he was at present aware of—but he did not allow that to worry him.

When he closed his eyes he slept like a top, and dreamed that he was kicking goals galore for Greyfriars, amid cheers from the Remove, and there was a fat smile on his face as he slumbered.

(Don't miss "WALLY OF THE REMOVE!"—next Monday's Grand Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co., by FRANK RICHARDS.)

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 101. JOHNNY GOGGS.

I AM not clear that Goggs has any real claim to a place in the Greyfriars Gallery at all. Those who only read the *MAGNET* know him as a Franklingham fellow in "The Fourth Form at Franklingham," for it was in the "Gem" that his visit to St. Jim's and his brief sojourn at Highcliffe were recounted.

But other Highcliffe celebrities have been given places in the Greyfriars Gallery, and I have had many requests for the inclusion of Goggs. Moreover, it is likely that before long *MAGNET* readers will have a chance of getting to know him quite well.

There can be no mistake about his immense popularity. Yet he has characteristics which have helped to make other well-drawn figures in the stories less popular than they should be on their merits. Thus—Goggs has a habit of speech only less pedantic than that of Herbert Skimpole. But while it is rare to find a reader who properly appreciates the excellent Skimmy, while most of those who mention him pour contempt on his long windedness, yet scarcely anyone objects to the manner of speech affected by Goggs. Johnny is essentially as obliging, and seems essentially as simple, as Alonzo Todd. Here the comparison is less close, for Goggs is not really simple at all; with all his straightforwardness, he is subtle in some ways. But he shares the willingness of Alonzo, and has a hundred times that good fellow's popularity.

I can explain it, I think. Goggs is efficient, and youth worships at the shrine of him who can—not him who only tries. It takes more knowledge of the world, wider sympathy, to perceive the greatness of a fine failure. Success is not everything. It matters far more that one should have done one's best than that one should succeed. But it is at least nothing against a man—or a boy—that he should succeed; and it is success that shows—that seems to prove the doing of one's best.

There is another reason for the popularity of Goggs. His ability was more or less an open secret to the reader from the first. The reader knew that Johnny was not the fool he looked. And to see one person after another being taken in by his seeming simplicity was delightful. Like Bunter's greed, and Bunter's search for someone to cash a mythical P.O., and Bunter's tying his boot lace outside doors, like Mauly's laziness, like Lowther's jokes, like Glyn's inventions, like Fishy's commercial enterprises, like Cardew's whims, Grundy's conviction that he is IT, Coker's blundering, Squiff's japing, Wibley's impersonations, it was not a matter to be told of once and then left alone—it can occur again and again without boring.

They took Johnny for a very soft article at Franklingham at first. But that was not for long. His chums, Blount, Trickett, and Waters—otherwise Bags, Tricks, and Wagtail



—found out earliest how capable and shrewd he was; others discovered it later. The goggles helped, of course; they will help again. For to keep Goggs' bright blue eyes—which really have no need for glasses at all—from being seen is to go half-way towards creating the deception of his extreme softness. He is not a beauty, and he cultivates a look of simplicity. But when one meets his eyes the show is rather given away.

He can do lots of things. He is a ventriloquist as able as Bunter; he is an expert at ju-jitsu; he is a sprinter out of the common, and a first-rate distance runner as well; he can play cricket and footer as few fellows of his age can, so well, indeed, that he can more than hold his own among seniors. He can do other things as well, no doubt—dance, play hockey, tennis, golf—though we do not happen to have come upon him doing them as yet. He can make a speech—that is beyond all question—he is always making them! He has read a good deal and thought a good deal, and no doubt could write. He can talk with grown-ups like a grown-up; but there is no fag keener than he on a jape.

That he has pluck and tenacity there can be no doubt. He is a very loyal and unselfish friend—none better in time of trouble. There is in him a depth of feeling that is possibly unusual in a fellow of his age; his devotion

to Flip Derwent's sister Philippa is more like the love of a strong man than the passing fancy which some boys take for love. It will last—one feels certain of that.

It was really for the girl's sake, rather than that of her brother, that Goggs came to Highcliffe and set himself to solve the mystery of the conspiracy which had resulted in Flip's making a bolt from the school. Through it all it was of her he thought most. Goggs does not often let his temper get out of hand; but when he thrashed Cecil Ponsonby there was something like sheer ferocity in him. For Pon had been guilty of the unpardonable sin in the eyes of Johnny Goggs; he had persecuted and insulted Philippa Derwent. So Goggs fairly let himself go for once. It is almost, if not quite, the only fight of his recorded. But he boxes as well as he does other things; and we may yet hear of more of his battles.

It is not necessary to tell here the story of "The Fourth Form at Franklingham"—of how Goggs surprised the school in many ways, and won high honour at the House sports, and defeated the rascally plot of Cardener against his kinsman and enemy, the skipper of Franklingham. Nor does one need to tell at any length of "Johnny Goggs at St. Jim's," the short serial which appeared in the "Greyfriars Herald and Tom Merry's Weekly" section of the "Gem" eighteen months or so ago. But there was one point in the latter story which should be mentioned. The St. Jim's fellows generally could not make out how it was that Goggs quite took to Grundy, pulling his leg playfully, it is true, but obviously liking him and not despising him. I think it was because Goggs saw more deeply into Grundy than most people do. Of course, George Alfred is an ass; but what a straight, plucky, generous, indomitable, dear old ass he is! Of course, he is mostly wrong, while thinking himself always right. But does he deserve no credit for the way he sticks to it? I fancy that from behind those big specs Goggs saw Grundy with clearer eyes than most people see him.

But don't make the mistake of thinking of Goggs as too deadly serious, because he can fall in love man fashion, and talk like a Member of Parliament, and play the detective, and show insight into human nature, and prove himself good at everything he takes up. There is in him a perpetual fountain of fun, as Franklingham knows—masters as well as boys—and he does not relish a jape the less because he can see it through without once grinning. Do you remember the myth of his dear grandmother, which so long took in the Franklingham Juniors, and his favourite apologetic phrase: "My silly mistake—I'm always making them"? Do you recall his dealings with Jarker and the bobby and the cook, and the mirth he made at St. Jim's by his schemes? They talk of him still in School House and New House alike.

Perhaps St. Jim's will renew acquaintance with him before long. For there is quite a chance that he, with his chums, Bags, Tricks, and Wagtail, may come to Rylcombe Grammar School.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 570.

Extracts from "THE GREYFRIARS HERALD" and "TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY."

DUPING THE DUFFER!

By FRANK NUGENT.

WHEW!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as he kicked open the door of Squiff's study in the Remove passage. "What an unearthly whiff!"

"It smells like a glue factory in mid-summer!" said Harry Wharton. "I say, Squiff, you duffer, what's the game?"

Sampson Quincey Ifley Field, generally called Squiff for brevity and comfort, looked up with a rather red and by no means stainless countenance, and greeted us with a grin. "I'm mixing chemicals," he said.

We stared at Squiff in surprise.

"You're whatting?"

"Mixing chemicals," said Squiff, stirring an evil-smelling, nasty-looking concoction in a jam-jar. "That's my home-made developer."

"But what the dickens for?" inquired Bob Cherry. "Do you mean to say you're going to swallow that merry-looking muck just to develop your muscles?"

Squiff burst into a roar of laughter, and wiped his face. This had the effect of making it rather more dirty and gruesome than ever.

"No, you ass!" he said. "That's a photographic developer. You see, I've taken up photography."

We whistled.

"And it's a jolly interesting game, too," said Squiff enthusiastically. "A bit expensive now the war's made the prices high and the chemmies scarce, but—"

"But, you silly idiot," we roared, "you've got no time for photography this afternoon!"

"Why not?" inquired Squiff.

"You've got to come down to footer."

Squiff made a gesture of impatience.

"Oh, that can slide for this afternoon!" he said. "I'm busy—otherwise engaged, dear boys!"

That was about the limit of cool cheek, we thought. Here were we, with a stiff match with Highcliffe looming ahead, not very far distant, and Squiff calmly informing us that footer-practice could slide!

We all glared at Squiff, intending that conglomeration of stares to be impressive and awe-inspiring; but Squiff's awful-smelling chemicals got up our noses, and made us cough and sneeze, and the effect was somewhat spoilt in consequence.

"Look here, Squiff, don't be a mad-brained idiot!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You can't chuck footer practice!"

"Oh, but I can!" replied Squiff. "See here, you chaps, I must get this developer mixed and my dark slides oiled ready for to-morrow. You know, I am taking a photograph of the First Eleven to-morrow, and I can't disappoint old Wingate. Just you leave me alone for half an hour or so, and I'll come down to the ground as soon as ever I can."

Well, if Squiff put it like that, what could we do? We gave in, with very bad grace, however, and left the study, promising him all manner of dire punishments if he didn't buck up and come down to footer quick.

Left to himself, Squiff went on with the mixing of his developer. The study was just about full of fumes when a tap sounded at the door, and Skinner poked his head in.

Skinner blinked at Squiff and coughed.

"Groogh!" spluttered Skinner. "What the thunder are you up to, Squiff?"

"Oh, get out!" said Squiff.

Skinner did not get out—he got in, but was careful not to shut the door.

Squiff glared at Skinner far from hospitably.

"Don't worry me, Skinner!" he said. "I'm busy!"

"What's that stuff in the jam-jar?" inquired Skinner calmly. "A new explosive?"

"No!" snapped Squiff. "It's my developer."

Skinner whistled in surprise, and, looking

round the study, his eye caught Squiff's camera lying on the sideboard.

"Geel!" he exclaimed. "That's a dandy little camera you've got, Squiff! So you've taken up photography—eh?"

"Yes," said Squiff gruffly.

"But what are you doing for a dark-room?" asked Skinner. "I suppose you don't do it in this study?"

"No," replied Squiff, stirring industriously away at his home-made developer. "I go into the vaults under the old tower after dark."

"Hum! Not a bad idea!" said Skinner.

He picked up a bottle, and, pulling out the cork, sniffed. He jumped back with a yell as he did so, and almost dropped the bottle.

"Groooooogn!" he gasped. "What the merry thunder is that horrid muck?"

Squiff grinned.

"Serves you right for butting in!" he said. "Can't you see I'm busy, Skinner? I want to get down to footer as quick as I can, so why don't you get out?"

"Oh, steady, Squiff!" said Skinner. "I'm rather interested in photography, you know. Let's help you mix your developer."

"No, thanks!" said Squiff shortly. "Clear out, Skinner!"

Skinner sauntered to the door, and then paused. He picked up another bottle, and looked at it curiously. Squiff was too busy stirring the weird mixture in the jam-jar to notice the curious gleam that came into Skinner's eye.

Skinner opened the bottle, and, getting nearer the table, leaned over Squiff.

"Look here, Squiff," he said. "I know that formula, and you ain't mixing it right. You want a drop more of this."

He tilted the bottle he held in his hand, and a stream of red liquid came out and went into the jam-jar. There was a sizzling noise in the jam-jar, and a cloud of dense, brown fumes arose.

Squiff caught the fumes full in the face, and staggered back.

"Yaroooooh!" roared Squiff. "You maniac, Skinner! What the—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner.

"You—you—you've ruined my developer, you—!" howled Squiff.

"Never mind! Chuck footer for this afternoon and make some more!" grinned Skinner.

"So-long, Squiff!"

He bolted for the door, but Squiff was too quick for him. He grabbed Skinner by the scruff of his neck just as that humorous youth was about to disappear through the door.

Squiff swung Skinner back into the study, and eyed him grimly. The jam-jar was still sizzling, and the study was full of the dense, choking fumes.

"Not so fast, Skinner!" said Squiff. "Now, you rotter, what did you do that for?"

"I—I—I—" stuttered Skinner, struggling desperately. "Lemme go!"

"I'll let you go soon enough!" said Squiff. "You cad! You did that purposely! Take that!"

He landed out at Skinner, and Skinner took a hefty one on the nose. He staggered against the table, and shot the sizzling contents of the jam-jar out upon the table and the study carpet. Squiff gave a bellow of wrath as he saw the ruinous mess on his carpet.

"You rotter!" he roared. "I—I'll half-kill you for that!"

And, setting his teeth grimly, Squiff went for Skinner hammer and tongs.

Skinner stood not the ghost of a chance against Squiff, and, moreover, Squiff was now justly enraged. He smote Skinner hip and thigh, and not until he was quite exhausted with hitting him did he hurl him from the study.

"There, you cad!" panted Squiff, as he kicked Skinner out of the doorway. "That'll

teach you not to act the rotter—for a time, at any rate!"

"Ow-ow-ow-ow!" wailed Skinner.

He staggered to his feet and limped away as the door of Squiff's study slammed upon him.

Skinner was not feeling happy.

Snoop and Stott, his two cronies, met him on the landing, and gazed at Skinner in surprise.

"Been scrapping with a steam-roller, Skinner?" inquired Stott.

"Crikey, but you do look awful!" said Snoop, not very sympathetically, however.

"That cad Squiff's been walloping me!" groaned Skinner. "I had a lot of chemical fumes down my throat and in my eyes, so that hindered my fighting. But I'll get even with him!"

"Hard cheese, old man!" said Stott, winking slyly at Snoop. "I should get my own back on him, if I were you!"

"Trust me!" said Skinner bitterly. "I'll make the rotter sit up—see if I don't!"

And he limped away towards the bathroom to bathe his wounds, whilst his chums grinned hugely at each other and went their way rejoicing. Although they were pals of Skinner's, they were not exactly overflowing with sympathy for him.

II.

BENEATH the shade of the old cime in the cloisters a figure was strolling in solitude and quiet.

It was Alonzo Todd, generally known as the Duffer of Greyfriars, and Alonzo was deeply engrossed in the pages of "A Treatise on Bacteria."

This treatise was Uncle Benjamin's latest present, and Alonzo, having rescued it from the wastepaper-basket and the study grate on many an occasion when his Cousin Peter had consigned it there, Alonzo was still endeavouring to glean knowledge and wisdom therefrom in his spare moments.

The cloisters was Alonzo's favourite spot for quietude and meditation; and, when he got the chance, he always carted his "Treatise on Bacteria" there, and spent a few quiet moments deeply absorbed its pages.

He had got to about the middle of Chapter Ninety-Five, when something on the ground attracted his notice, and he stopped in his walk.

"Dear me!" murmured Alonzo.

A piece of folded paper lay in his path, and to it was tied a hard dog-biscuit.

Alonzo Todd blinked at this strange sign.

"Dear me!" murmured Alonzo Todd again, bending down and peering at the paper and the dog-biscuit. "How curious!"

He stooped and picked it up. The paper was folded in quarters, and to the string that was tied round it was attached an extremely ancient and formidable looking dog-biscuit.

"I—I wonder what it is?" murmured the Duffer, blinking at the paper uncertainly.

"I—I suppose I had better open it."

Alonzo undid the string, and opened out the paper. His eyes opened wider and wider as he read, and he dropped the "Treatise on Bacteria" in his astonishment. For this is what he read:

"HELP! I AM A PRISONER IN THE VAULTS. I AM BEING TORTURED AND FED ON DOG-BISCUITS! I AM IN HOURLY PERIL OF MY LIFE! FOR HAVEN'S SAKE RESCUE ME! DO NOT ENTER THE VAULTS IN DAYLIGHT, BUT NINE O'CLOCK AT NIGHT IS THE ONLY TIME TO RESCUE ME. TO WHOMSOEVER MAY FIND THIS PAPER, I BESECH YOUR HELP!"

"G-g-ood heavens!" gasped Alonzo Todd, as he read this startling epistle.

The "Treatise on Bacteria" remained un-

noticed upon the gravel, whilst the Duffer of Greyfriars gazed in horror at the paper in his hand, the ancient dog-biscuit dangling upon the string in the air.

Whilst Alonzo was still in the throes of astonishment and horror a figure emerged from the shadows of the cloisters and approached him.

Harold Skinner grinned as he saw Alonzo Todd contemplating the paper and the dog-biscuit.

"Hallo, Alonzo!" he exclaimed suddenly. "What have you got there?"

Alonzo gave a jump, and blinked at Skinner with startled eyes.

"My dear Skinner—"

Skinner gazed at the dog-biscuit in pretended astonishment.

"My word!" he exclaimed. "Surely you're not making up for the rations by chewing dog-biscuits, Lonzy?"

"No, my dear Skinner," responded Alonzo, still blinking. "I—I discovered this whilst walking beneath these cloisters. Really, Skinner, this is most extraordinary!"

"Let me have a look at it," said Skinner. And he took the paper from Alonzo.

He gave a low whistle when he finished reading it.

"Crumbs!" he ejaculated. "What a go, Alonzo!"

Alonzo blinked at the dog-biscuit distressfully.

"And to think that the poor man is being led upon these horrible things!" murmured he. "Dud-dear me, Skinner!"

"Dear us!" said Skinner, seeming to have some difficulty in keeping back a laugh.

"Do you really think we ought to—"

"We must rescue the poor man!" said Skinner decisively.

"Bub-but—" said Alonzo, in a very distressed and anxious tone of voice. "Don't you think we had better acquaint Dr. Locke with the matter, my dear Skinner?"

Skinner shook his head.

"No, Alonzo," he said. "You see what it says, he is in hourly peril of his life. If we go yarning about the school the poor man's captor may get to know of it. We don't know who is responsible for keeping the man prisoner. It may be Herr Gans, for all we know!"

"G-good gracious!" gasped Alonzo. "Dud-do you really think it is as serious as all that, Skinner?"

"Certainly I do!" replied Skinner. "We shall have to keep this a dead secret, Lonzy, else all may be lost. You and I will make an effort to rescue the prisoner to-night, at nine."

Alonzo Todd gasped.

"It's up to you, Lonzy," urged Skinner. "You found the paper, you know, and, therefore, the man's appeal is to you. It is a matter of life or death, Alonzo!"

Alonzo Todd picked up the "Treatise on Bacteria."

"Very well, my dear Skinner!" he said. "I must certainly do all within my power to effect a rescue of this unfortunate individual."

"That's it!" said Skinner. "We must act quickly, Alonzo, else all may be in vain! If we don't get into the vaults to-night, the man may be dead to-morrow!"

"G-good heavens!" gasped Alonzo.

"I'll see you here at nine to-night, then, Lonzy," said Skinner. "You'll be ready, won't you?"

"Yes," said Alonzo.

"I'll bring along a light," said Skinner. "It'll be pitch-dark down there, and we must see where we are going."

"D-do you think it will be safe, Skinner?" asked Alonzo, blinking at him in uncertainty.

"Well, I tell you what, Alonzo," said Skinner. "To make sure of it, I'll get Bolsover major and Stott and Snoop and one or two others—"

"Oh, thank you, Skinner!" said Alonzo. "I should be so pleased!"

"And, mind," said Skinner warningly, "not a word to anyone else! Don't let your cousin Peter know, else he might tell all the others; and the cat would be let out of the bag, and the poor man might be murdered in consequence! We'll do it on our own, Alonzo."

"Very well, my dear Skinner," said Alonzo Todd. "I shall not say anything to the others."

"Good man, Lonzy!" said Skinner heartily. "We'll do somebody a good turn to-night, at any rate!"

And, comforted by that parting thought, the Duffer of Greyfriars went his way, the treatise tucked under his arm and the dog-biscuit in his pocket.

As for Harold Skinner, as soon as Alonzo

Todd was out of sight he whistled, and a moment later he was joined by Stott and Snoop. They were grinning hugely.

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled Stott. "It worked like a charm, Skinner!"

"The Duffer took the bait like winking!" grinned Skinner. "So Alonzo is going exploring the vaults to-night—with a light!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And old Squiff will be there, developing his photographs, and Lonzy and his giddy light will muck the whole lot up! Ha, ha, ha!"

"He, he, he!" cackled Snoop.

And, chuckling in high glee, the three young rascals made their way into the tuck-shop. Alonzo Todd was standing outside, meditatively examining the dog-biscuit, and Skinner & Co. kicked up their heels in ecstasies of merriment.

III.

JUST off to the vaults to develop my photos of the First Eleven," said Squiff, tucking his camera under his arm.

"Do you think they'll come out all right, Squiff?" inquired Bob Cherry.

"Top-hole, I should think," said Squiff. "I reckon I'll have some record negatives when the plates are developed."

"Well," said Bob Cherry, "I think I'll come along and see the show. Shall us, Harry?"

"Let's!" replied Harry Wharton.

"Well, you can come if you like," said Squiff. "But there'll be a row if you muck up the business, I can tell you!"

"Oh, that's all right!" said Bob Cherry. "Lead on, Macduff!"

And the Famous Five trooped away across the quadrangle, and entered the vaults by the stone in the old tower.

All was pitch-black and eerie down in the ancient arches, and we could not repress a shudder as we looked around us.

Squiff soon had his dishes filled, ready for developing his plates, also the slides prepared and the ruby lamp lighted. Then we blew out our bicycle-lamps, and watched Squiff in the mystic red light as he started his photographic operations.

Meanwhile, in the old tower above, four stealthy figures met.

Alonzo Todd, true to his trust, was there, though looking far from heroic. Skinner and Snoop and Stott came up, bearing with them a huge old oil-lamp.

"Hallo, here you are, Alonzo!" said Skinner. "You see, old chap, here are four of us, so it will be all safe!"

"Y-y-yes, my dear Skinner," said the Duffer, eyeing the large lamp that Skinner held out to him.

"Take that, Lonzy," said Skinner. "We'll let you through the trap, and then, if it's all clear, we'll come along afterwards."

"I—I—I—" murmured Alonzo, blinking at the lighted lamp and the strange darkness of the old tower.

"Come along, Alonzo!" said Skinner. "Remember there's a poor man down in those vaults being fed on dog-biscuits, and tortured, and in hourly peril of his life!"

"Y-ye-es," stuttered Alonzo.

"Buck up, Lonzy!" said Stott, patting him reassuringly on the back. "We're here to look after you you know."

"It's up to you, Alonzo!" said Skinner, pushing him forward.

Alonzo went. Grasping the lighted lamp, which, despite its age, shed out a truly magnificent glare of light, Alonzo allowed himself to be shoved into the old tower, and down through the trapdoor into the vaults.

The poor Duffer's teeth were chattering as he stood alone in the cold darkness, but Skinner and Stott and Snoop looked down at him from above, and whispered him encouragement.

"Carry on, Alonzo!" called Skinner softly. "We're coming!"

Alonzo walked very gingerly into the depths of the vaults, the lamp lighting up the old place very brilliantly. Skinner had seen to that.

Meanwhile, Squiff had got his dark slides open, and was busy developing the first plate. We waited patiently as he rocked the developing-dish to and fro, and gathered round eagerly to examine the negative in the red light.

"My word!" said Bob Cherry. "They look like niggers!"

"Ass!" snapped Squiff. "That's a rattling good negative! Now— Mum-mum-my hat!"

He dropped the negative upon the stone flags as a figure walked into view round

one of the arches. A glare of light was shed over the group round the developing-table, and we all blinked at each other in the unwelcome illumination.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What the merry dickens—"

Squiff seemed on the verge of apoplexy, and he choked queerly in his throat.

"I—I—I—" stuttered Squiff.

"What the deuce is the game?" gasped Harry Wharton. "Who is—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Johnny Bull. "It's Alonzo!"

"Alonzo!"

The Duffer of Greyfriars approached and surveyed us in horror in the glare of his lamp.

"My dear fellows—"

We stood there and gaped at Alonzo, the wind utterly taken out of our sails, so to speak, for the moment. As for Alonzo, he set down his lamp and wagged his forefinger at us.

Wharton, Nugent, Cherry, Field!" said Alonzo Todd, in tones of horror and consternation. "I am extremely sorry to have found you here on such terrible work. Little did I dream, when I entered this place, that I should find my own schoolfellows—boys of my own Form—carrying on such abominable practices as you are!"

We gasped and gasped again, unable to utter words.

"It grieves me deeply," went on the Duffer, blinking at us sorrowfully. "It fills me with sorrow that I should be the one to have discovered you at your nefarious practices. Wharton, I am astounded! My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked—nay, disgusted!"

"Mum-my word!" gasped Bob Cherry.

Alonzo Todd looked at us in deep distress.

"I trust you are truly sorry for your wicked ways, my dear fellows," he said. "I must ask you to deliver into my safe keeping the unhappy person who is the victim of your crime. I—"

"You—you—you howling ass!" shrieked Squiff, thrusting his clenched fist underneath the Duffer's nose. "You thundering booby! You've messed up all my photographs! You've ruined my plates! You've mucked up all my work! You—you— Oh, lemme get at you!"

He darted at Alonzo Todd, who had stood as one thunderstruck. Squiff's fist crashed upon the hapless Duffer's nose, and the water ran from Alonzo's eyes in streams.

"Ow!" ejaculated Alonzo, staggering back.

"I'll wring your neck, you thumping booby!" screeched Squiff. "I—"

But Alonzo had scented danger. He saw that Squiff was excited, and unreasonable in his wrath. That thump on his nose had hurt, and Alonzo, duffer though he might be, was not so green as to overlook the decided probability that there would be plenty more—and in greater variety—to follow.

With a startled blink at us, and a glare of terror at Squiff, Alonzo Todd skipped back, gave one yell of anguish, and fled into the darkness of the vaults.

With a bellow of fury Squiff dashed off in pursuit, and the footsteps of the hurrying pair re-echoed to the tune of their voices among the old stone arches.

We surveyed each other in amazement. It had all happened so swiftly and surprisingly that we were absolutely thunderstruck. Whilst we were still silently wondering the sound of other voices assailed our ears.

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled the voice of Skinner. "The Duffer's done it! Old Squiff's chasing him around the vaults! Hark at 'em!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chortled Snoop and Stott.

"Quick, chaps!" chuckled Skinner. "We'll just have time to wreck old Squiff's photographic traps while he's walloping old Alonzo. Kim on!"

Their footsteps were heard approaching.

"Quiet!" muttered Harry Wharton. "We'll catch the cad on the hop! Get into hiding behind the arches, quick!"

We darted into the shadow of the arches just as Skinner & Co. arrived. They grinned hugely as they saw Squiff's photographic stuff lying unattended on the stones.

"Good!" chuckled Skinner. "Now we'll get a bit of our own back on Squiff—eh, what?"

"Oh, rather!" cackled Stott.

"Oh, will you?" cried Harry Wharton, stepping from the shadow of the arches. "Collar the cads, you chaps!"

Upon the word we sprang out, and soon had Skinner and his two sweet pals helpless on the cold, hard stones.

Skinner & Co. glared up at us in terror.

"W-what the—" gasped Skinner.

"Got you, my beauties!" said Harry

Wharton. "So you're at the bottom of this game—eh, Skinner?"

"Yes, Wharton, it was Skinner!" howled Snoop. "It wasn't me! Lemme go!"

Harry Wharton looked at him scornfully. Skinner ground his teeth.

"Well, you've got us, Wharton," groaned Skinner. "What're you going to do with us?"

"Wait till Squiff comes back, and we'll ask him," retorted Harry Wharton.

Just then there came a howl from the darkness, and a wild figure dashed up. It was Alonzo Todd, looking like a scared rabbit, and hot on his track came Squiff. He grabbed the fleeing Duffer, and bore him to the ground just on top of Skinner & Co.

"Yarooogh!" roared Skinner, as Alonzo's boot caught him a beauty in the eye.

"Wow-ow-ow! Ow-ow!" wailed Snoop, as Squiff flopped down heavily on his face.

A roaring, kicking mass of humanity struggled together on the floor. Squiff and Alonzo Todd were on top, and evidently Skinner & Co. were getting the worst of it, to judge by the howls that arose.

"Here, steady on, Squiff!" gasped Harry Wharton, laughing. "I say, you fellows, call the idiot off before he does poor old Alonzo in!"

Almost sobbing with laughter, we rescued Alonzo Todd from his enemy.

Squiff glared at us, and panted and struggled to get at Alonzo again.

"Whoa, there, Squiffy!" said Bob Cherry. "Give it a breeze, old man!"

"Lemme get at him!" roared Squiff. "I'll—I'll—"

"Protect me, I beseech you, Wharton!" wailed Alonzo, blinking through one eye very pitifully at us.

The poor old Duffer looked a sorry spectacle indeed. His prominent proboscis was red and assuming a startling size. One eye was black and closed up, his nose was bleeding, and his hair looked as if a lawn-mower had been over it. Squiff himself was not much better.

"Half-time, Squiff!" said Harry Wharton. "It's all a mistake, I think you'll find. That ass Alonzo has been the victim of one of Skinner's rotten hoaxes. Hero, Snoop, tell us what you've been up to, or we'll scrag you alive!"

Then Snoop let it all out. He told the story of how they had planted the bogus letter and the dog-biscuit on Alonzo, and got him to enter the vaults with a light. Squiff almost exploded as he heard.

"I'll laughter that cad Skinner!" roared Squiff. "Wharton, you ass, lemme go!"

"Well, Skinner deserved it, so we let Squiff go. And he did so—some! In five minutes it was impossible to see Skinner for Squiff."

As for Snoop and Stott, we subjected them to a severe bumping on the hard paving-stones of the vaults, and then kicked them out, howling, into the quadrangle.

Then we rescued what was left of Skinner from Squiff, and we left the vaults for the night. Poor old Alonzo was a case to be pitied and consoled. We bathed his wounds for him, and then stood him as good as spread as rations and restrictions would allow, in Study No. 1.

"Never mind, Alonzo!" said Bob Cherry, as he stuffed some more pineapple into the Duffer's mouth. "We'll take the will for the deed, and your action showed a good spirit, anyway. Alonzo, old man, you're a giddy hero!"

And, accordingly, we toasted Alonzo Todd a hero, and accorded him three hefty cheers.

THE END.

OUR COMIC COLUMN.

By Monty Lowther.

It seems that our airmen's extensive raids exasperated the Germans. They certainly disaspirated the Hun rest-camps, and turned them into 'Un-rest camps.

Germany's efforts to win the war were said to be untiring. Ours were evidently Hunte-ting.

Why would a railway strike be more serious than a coal-miners' strike?

Because the latter at most would only be a "miner" strike, while the railway-men would have more sub-porters.

Why would it be difficult to steam a Dreadnought down the Styx?

Because the ship could never get "coaled!"

The Hun made war because war made the Hun.

What I'd like to know is, what the Hun maid wore? Someone said the "close" of a rotten Empire.

The mountain sighed! The cavern yawned! The torrent roared! The wind shrieked! But none could make the moon beam!

Shopkeepers are fond of queues. There have been sugar, potato, fish, whisky, and tea queues. There is one kind of queue that we shall never get, that's a "thank you." At least, not from Rylcombe tradesmen.

We may get better butter. But a better thing would be to have a better butter supply. I walked into a grocer's in Wayland, and "the girl behind the counter stood, whence all butter (but her) had fled." Remarg-able!

What's the difference between a battleship and Percy M-----? One's the former, the other's the Informer.

What is the difference between a Zeppelin commander and B. T-----? One studies raids; the other raids studies.

NOTICES.

Football Matches, Etc., Wanted by—

PARK WANDERERS—14-16—also players.—C. H. c/o Room 58, 83, Pall Mall, S.W. 1.

IVY ATHLETIC CLUB—17 and over.—F. Wickes, 78, Vestry Road, Camberwell, S.E. 5.

BRONDESBURY ATHLETIC—15-16—2 miles—away only.—Martin B. Assan, 60, Brondesbury Road, Kilburn, N.W. 6.

VICTORIA ATHLETIC—16-17-7 miles.—Percy Marns, 48, Joseph Street, Burdett Road, E. 3. Also five players, any position bar goal. Colours, green and white.

CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD MISSION F.C.—players wanted, age about 10.—W. Haynes, 1, Faraday Road, North Kensington, W. 10.

AIRLESS ATHLETIC—16-17—away only; any reasonable distance.—Wm. Rowley, 102, Landcroft Road, East Dulwich, S.E. 22.

NORTH ROAD OLD BOYS—14-15—5 miles—medium—all dates.—E. Hudson, 7, Alexandra Avenue, Southall, Middlesex.

WINDSOR ATHLETIC—16-17-5 miles—also wanted goalkeeper.—E. Robb, 122, Queen's Road, Everton, Liverpool.

GRANVILLE—18—home or away; end of year and beginning of next.—L. F. Turner, 52, Lea Bridge Road, Clapton, N.E.

OTTERSPOOL—15-16—4 miles radius of Aigburth Vale.—A. Jones, 37, Milner Road, Aigburth, Liverpool.

WOODLAND ROVERS—any dates—also two backs.—T. Bond, 221, Union Square, Union Road, Borough, S.E. 1.

57TH S. L. JUNIOR, B.P. SCOUTS—13, weak—3 miles Kennington Gate.—H. Smith, 58, St. Paul's Road, Kennington, S.E. 17.

POLLARDS UNITED—newly formed—16-17—any dates.—C. A. Turner, 89, Clacton Road, Walthamstow, E.

CUSTOM HOUSE ROVERS—16-17—3 miles.—J. Lang, 312, Victoria Dock Road, Custom House, E. 16.

Thos. Kelly, 56, Casebourne Road, Belle Vue, West Hartlepool, wants to hear from lads willing to join a team.

RICHMOND JUNIORS—15-16.—H. C. Maddock, 105, Whitefield Road, Everton, Liverpool.

LODGE ROAD Y.M.C.A.—11, friendly—all dates.—Reginald Lane, 6/361, Lodge Road, Hockley, Birmingham.

VICTORIA UNITED—players wanted: right-back, left-half, and goalkeeper.—L. Rich, 70, Victoria Avenue, East Ham, E. 6.

ALEXANDRA JUNIORS—14-15; strength, medium—5 miles.—E. Hudson, 17, Alexandra Avenue, Southall, Middlesex.

ALBION—10.—A. Godbold, 106, Percy Road, Canning Town, London, E. 16.

L. Marks, 13, Edwards Road, Burdett Road, Mile End, E. 3, wants place in football team—age 18—three miles.

ROY—15—wants to join team 5 miles radius of Southfields if possible.—C. K. Watts, 128, Havelock Road, South Wimbledon, S.W. 19. Postage paid for.

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Monday:

"WALLY OF THE REMOVE!"

By Frank Richards.

Wally Hunter has let himself in for a good deal more than he bargained for!

His cousin Billy has rather rushed him, of course. Wally's desire to stay at Greyfriars, among the fellows he likes, the fellows who like him, is a very natural one. But—oh, it's a big, big BUT!

Wally at Greyfriars will be Billy! That's the big, big BUT!

He succeeds to Billy's tarnished character, to Billy's debts and troubles, to Billy's reputation as being the biggest duffer at games that Greyfriars ever had.

It is some load to stagger under—what?

You will be interested to learn how Wally, who is a fine, resolute, straightforward fellow, meets his troubles. In fact, I think you will find this series of stories as enthralling as anything we have ever published in the MAGNET.

And, while Wally Bunter is at Greyfriars, we have—

"BILLY BUNTER AT ST. JIM'S!"

If you miss next week's "Gem" you will be missing one of the biggest treats ever offered you.

Perhaps it takes more to make me laugh than it does most of you—I don't know. There are things in the stories which seem to you very funny indeed, and don't strike me as quite so funny. But I have been fairly roaring, cackling, chortling over the yarns about Bunter at St. Jim's. They would tickle anybody with any sense of humour at all.

Bunter and Gussy—Bunter and Figgins & Co.—Bunter and Tom Merry & Co.—Bunter and Baggy Trimble—they are all coming.

Charlie Chaplin? Poof! He isn't in it! Bunter leaves him gasping in the rear.

NEXT WEEK'S "GEM" CANNOT BE DONE WITHOUT—YOU WON'T BE HAPPY UNLESS YOU GET IT

JANUARY 24th.

I want every reader of the MAGNET to make a special note of the above date, for on this day the "PENNY POPULAR" will make its reappearance. I know, from the numerous letters which I have received from time to time, that the suspension of the "Penny Pop" came as a great blow to all my readers. You will have to wait but a very little time now before you will have the unbounded pleasure of visiting your newsagent's and asking for the "Penny Popular."

You will, I feel sure, be anxious to learn what stories will appear in the paper on January 24th. Firstly, there will be a splendid, long complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled "BILLY BUNTER'S POSTAL ORDER!" Then there will be a grand tale of Tom Merry & Co., entitled "D'ARCY'S DELUSION!" And the number will be completed by a story dealing with Jimmy Silver's arrival at Rookwood, and entitled "THE RIVALS OF ROOKWOOD!"

There is another special attraction in this splendid issue, and that is

A MAGNIFICENT PLATE

of Billy Bunter, which will be given entirely free of charge. This plate will not be like the ordinary run of plates, but—Well, you have only to wait until next Monday to see what this plate will be like. A reproduction appears on the front page of next Monday's MAGNET.

In view of the fact that newsagents are still only ordering those copies of papers for which they have a certain sale, you would be well advised to order your copy of the "Penny Popular" in advance. Tell all your chums about this great news, and pass on my hint to

ORDER IN ADVANCE.

YOUR EDITOR

11-1-19