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Mr. HAWKE.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Other Bunter!

"GOOD!" Wally Bunter uttered that ejaculation in tones of the most heartfelt satisfaction.

He was first down from the Remove dormitory that morning.

He stood in the open doorway of the School House, looking out into the green old quad, bright and fresh in the morning sunlight.

It was a pleasant sight, and Wally Bunter was enjoying it.

He enjoyed it all the more because to come to Greyfriars had been a day-dream of his which he had never hoped to realise.

And now, here he was, a Greyfriars fellow—W. G. Bunter of the Remove!

It really seemed too good to be true.

In a sense it wasn't true, for Wally had been destined for St. Jim's, and he had only fixed himself at Greyfriars by changing places—and names—with his cousin Billy Bunter. But that was a secret between the two Bunters, and no one else at Greyfriars had a suspicion of it.

That the two Bunters were exactly alike the Remove fellows knew; but that Billy had gone off in Wally's place, and Wally had stayed in Billy's place, would have astonished them very much if they had known it.

Wally had had his doubts overnight. He had been uneasy, though he had yielded to Billy's persuasions and his own strong desire. But in the fresh, sunny morning he had no doubts. There was no real harm in the cousins' change of places. It suited them, and it interfered with nobody else. And Wally felt that he was going to enjoy himself at Greyfriars, and he charitably hoped that Billy was doing the same at St. Jim's.

His fat face was wreathed in smiles as he looked out into the quadrangle. The old trees, leafless now, the grey old stones, the red tiles of the porter's lodge, the playing-fields in the distance—all had a charm for his eyes.

"Good!" he repeated. "Jolly good! Ripping! I'm going to have a tiptop time here! Good!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

It was Bob Cherry's powerful voice behind him, and Bob Cherry's terrific clap that descended on his fat shoulder and made him jump.

Wally Bunter spun round,

Wally of the Remove

The Famous Five had come down, fresh and cheery, for a run before breakfast. And their looks showed how surprised they were that Bunter had come down first. As a rule, Billy Bunter snatched the latest possible moment in bed.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had quite a concerned expression on his dusky face.

"My esteemed Bunter," he murmured, "I hopefully trust that you are not ill—full?"

"Ill?" repeated the fat junior. "No fear! Fit as a fiddle!"

"Then why this thushness?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Eh?"

"Why did you get up before I came to roll you out of bed?" demanded Bob.

"Oh!"

"What do you mean by being down first instead of last?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Must be ill!" said Frank Nugent gravely. "This is a case for the sanatorium."

"Oh, come off!" said Wally Bunter. "Don't be funny, you know. You won't catch me slacking in bed on a ripping morning like this!"

"Wha-a-t?"

"Well, my hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "You fat blunder, do you ever do anything but slack?"

"My esteemed fat Bunter, the slackfulness is generally terrific!" remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Wally gave a grunt.

He had realised already that he had Billy Bunter's reputation to live down, and it looked like being an uphill task.

"The fact is, you fellows—" he began.

"Halt!" exclaimed Bob, holding up his hand.

"Eh? What do you mean?"

"Ring off, my fat tulip! We know what the fact is," chuckled Bob. "We know you're expecting a postal-order by the first post in the morning, and we know you want a fellow to cash it in advance, and we know that it won't come—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give us a rest, old scout!" implored Johnny Bull. "Give the postal-order a rest! It's worn nearly threadbare by this time, you know. Put on a new record."

"Look here—"

"Chuck it!"

"I tell you—" roared the fat junior wrathfully.

"We know—we know—" interrupted Bob. "We know it all! Haven't we heard it before?"

"Many a time and oft!" grinned Nugent.

"We know it's from one of your titled relations, Buntie," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "We know it hasn't come owing to the delay caused by the war. We know all about it. We've got it by heart."

"You silly chumps!" shouted Wally.

"I wasn't going to say I was expecting a postal-order."

"What?"

"You're not expecting a postal-order?" shouted Bob Cherry.

"No!"

"You don't want it cashed in advance?"

"No!"

"Great Julius Caesar! Fan me, somebody!"

Bob Cherry staggered back, apparently overcome. He leaned on the door, and looked quite faint.

"Fetch me a whisky-and-soda!" he moaned.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter. "I tell you—"

"Don't tell me anything more!" gasped Bob. "It will affect my heart if I hear anything more like that!"

"Break it gently, old chap!" said Nugent.

"Hallo, what's the row?" asked Peter Todd, coming along to the door with Squiff and Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing.

"Only Bob Cherry playing the goat!" growled Wally Bunter.

"Bunter's not expecting a postal-order!" gasped Bob. "He doesn't want to raise a loan on it in advance!"

"Gammon!"

"Spoof!"

"Draw it mild!"

"Fact!" said Wharton. "Some ass said the age of miracles was past! But that—"

"It isn't!" grinned Nugent.

"It's come back, anyway," chuckled Johnny Bull. "Sing it over again to us, Buntie! You're not expecting a postal-order?"

"No!" howled the fat junior.

"From one of your titled relations, you—"

"I haven't got any titled relations."

"What?"

The whole group of juniors howled in chorus. This was a clincher!

"You—you—you haven't got any titled relations?" said Wharton dazedly.

"No, you ass! Why should you suppose I had?"

"I didn't suppose you had, old top; but you always said you had."

"I didn't!"

"Wha-a-t?"

"I—I—I mean—" stammered Wally Bunter, remembering that he had Billy's sins to answer for. I—I—I mean—

"The poor chap is wandering in his mind," said Peter Todd seriously. "He was very strange in his manner last evening. I had a tin of sardines in the study. It's still there."

"And Bunter knew?"

"He knew!"

"And it's still there?"

"It's still there."

"Poor old Bunter!" said Bob Cherry feelingly. "Off his poor old rocker! We had better tell Quelch this, and get him to call in the doctor."

"Look here, you thumping asses—" exclaimed the fat junior, in great exasperation.

"Be calm, dear boy!" said Bob. "Calm yourself! Don't get excited. It's bad for a chap in your state of mind."

"You silly ass—"

"Shush! Shush!! Remember, you are off your rocker, old son!" urged Bob.

"If you want me to punch your nose, Bob Cherry—"

"Oh, my hat! Do!" grinned Bob. "Well, I will!"

A fat fist came up like lightning. Bob Cherry, laughing, made a careless parry, but to his surprise his hand was knocked aside, and the fat fist was planted on his nose.

Bump!

Bob Cherry sat down in the doorway.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bunter Causes Surprise ;

"YAROOOH!"

That was Bob's remark as he sat down.

He sat and blinked at Bunter in astonishment.

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at the fat junior as if he had mesmerised them. Bunter, the Owl of the Remove, had knocked Bob Cherry down, and Bob Cherry was the champion fighting-man of the Lower School; the fellow who could lick Bolsover major and anybody in the Fourth, and who was treated with some consideration even by Shell and Fifth Form fellows!

They stared at Bunter and they stared at Bob, and they looked at one another. Nugent rubbed his eyes as if to make sure that he was awake.

"Ow!" said Bob. "Wow! Oh! Ah!"

He dabbed his nose dazedly as he sat. He was more surprised than hurt, but he was rather hurt, too. The fat fist had had unexpected driving-power behind it.

Bunter's expression changed at once, however. He stooped over Bob to give him a hand up.

"Sorry!" he exclaimed. "I didn't mean to hit hard. I hope I haven't hurt you, old fellow!"

Bob blinked at him. Bunter caught hold of him and helped him up, Bob being still in quite a dazed state.

"Am I dreaming?" he asked. "Did I only fancy I heard the rising-bell, and got up?"

"You shouldn't rag a fellow so," said Bunter apologetically. "I was excited. I'm sorry I punched your nose!"

"It isn't a dream!" said Bob, dabbing his nose with his handkerchief, which came away red. "That fat worm has really punched my nose! I suppose you know I'm going to slaughter you, Bunter?"

Bunter backed away.

That was quite like the old Bunter, if his previous proceedings were not. But it was not a case of funk.

"I've said I'm sorry," he answered. "After all, you asked me to punch your nose, you know. I'm not going to fight you."

"Fight me!" exclaimed Bob. "You! Why, you fat idiot, if I hit you you'd bust!"

"The burstfulness would be terrific!" grinned Hurree Singh.

"Oh, rats!" answered Bunter.

Bob Cherry dabbed his nose again, and eyed Bunter doubtfully. He had, in a way, asked for it, and certainly it was no use to think of fighting Billy Bunter.

"Easy does it, Bob!" said Harry Wharton, taking his chum's arm. "Come out for a run before brekker."

"That fat worm——"

"Never mind the fat worm; let him wriggle off," said Nugent. And he took Bob's other arm.

Bob was rushed out into the quadrangle, and the other juniors followed. Bunter looked after them, with a rather wistful expression on his fat face.

As Wally Bunter, he had been friendly with the Co. on his visit to Greyfriars. But as Billy Bunter, he was—Billy Bun-

ter! He wondered whether he would ever be on a chummy footing with the fellows whom he liked and respected.

A tap on the arm interrupted his meditations. He glanced round, to see Sammy Bunter of the Second Form—Billy's minor.

Sammy eyed him curiously.

"Where's your specs?" he asked.

"My—my specs?"

"Yes. Lost them?"

"Nunno! I—I've got them in his pocket," stammered Bunter. And he jerked out the pair of glasses Billy had left him and jammed them on his nose, well below his eyes, however.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Sammy.

"Mum-mum-matter?"

"Yes. You can't see without your specs, can you? What's the good of putting them there?"

"I—I—— The fact is, these glasses don't suit me," stammered the fat junior. "I'm going to get a change."

Sammy blinked at him. He was conscious of some subtle difference in Bunter major, though the latter looked just the same as usual.

"How much did Wally shell out?" he asked, changing the subject.

"Eh?"

"You went to the station with him," said the fat fag. "I suppose you didn't take that trouble for nothing. What did you stick him for?"

Bunter major grinned. He was learning more and more about the cheery manners and customs of the other Bunter.

"Nothing!" he answered.

"Oh, come off it!" said Sammy incredulously. "I'd back you to screw a loan out of anybody, and you had Wally here a couple of days on a visit. You must have stuck him for something. How much?"

"Oh, rats!"

"Well, lend me a bob, Billy, till my allowance comes," said Sammy discontentedly.

"All right!"

Bunter major handed over the coin cheerfully enough, and Sammy pocketed it in great surprise. It was the easiest shilling he had ever extracted from his major.

"You ain't so jolly mean as usual!" he remarked.

"Thanks!"

"You can make it half-a-crown if you like!" said Sammy, with the idea of striking the iron while it was hot.

"Bow-wow!" was the reply to that. And Bunter of the Remove strolled out into the quad, leaving Sammy blinking after him curiously through his big glasses.

Two or three of the Fourth were punting a footer about in the quad as Bunter major came along.

"Hallo, here's Falstaff!" remarked Temple of the Fourth. "Watch me!"

Dabney and Fry and Scott stopped to watch him, grinning. Temple placed the ball carefully, intending to land it on Bunter's plump face as he came by, fully expecting that the short-sighted Owl of the Remove would not see the footer till it landed on his fat little nose.

But he had to deal with an unexpected Bunter that morning.

The fat junior was within a dozen feet when Temple kicked, and the footer flew with a whiz for his fat countenance.

Bunter promptly dodged the shot, and as the footer flew by he stopped it with his hand, and it dropped.

His eyes gleamed at Cecil Reginald Temple over his glasses.

As Temple, surprised, stared at him, Bunter major dribbled the ball a pace or two towards him, and kicked back.

The footer flew like a bullet, and

before Temple knew what was happening there was a crash on his nose.

Temple staggered back.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Fry of the Fourth, as the footer landed on Temple's astounded face. "Good shot!"

Temple, taken utterly by surprise, staggered back two or three paces, and sat down with a bump. Such deftness on the part of the clumsy Owl of the Remove was astounding.

Cecil Reginald's face was streaming with mud, for the footer had been through a number of puddles. He sat and blinked and coughed and snorted, while his comrades roared.

"Goal!" chuckled Scott.

"Oh, rather!" roared Dabney.

"Good shot, Bunter!"

Bunter major grinned.

"Try again, old top!" he called out.

"Groooooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you—you—you cheeky fag!" howled Temple, scrambling up. "I'll squash you! I'll burst you! I—I—I'll—I'll——"

"Oh, draw it mild!" exclaimed Bunter. "You were punting at me, you know!"

"Tit for tat, old sport!" chuckled Fry.

But Cecil Reginald Temple was not in a reasonable mood. To land a muddy footer on a Remove fag's face was one thing; to have it landed on his own aristocratic countenance was quite another. He rushed at the Owl of the Remove, breathing wrath and vengeance.

He expected Bunter to flee before the storm; but Bunter did not flee. He waited for Cecil Reginald to come up with perfect coolness.

"Hook it, you young ass!" called out Scott of the Fourth good-naturedly.

"Bow-wow!" was the reply.

Temple rushed on, and his grasp fell upon the fat Removeite.

Bunter ought to have been bumped down in the quad with a terrific bump.

But he wasn't. Two fat hands grasped Temple; and, to Cecil Reginald's amazement, his legs somehow swept from under him, and he sat down without knowing how he got there.

Bump!

"Oh!"

"My hat!" gasped Fry. "Oh, Christopher Columbus! Oh, Temple! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaroooh!"

Bunter walked away, with a fat smile. Temple, quite out of breath, sat and gasped till his grinning comrades picked him up. He was picked up in a dazed state.

"B-B-Bunter!" he stuttered. "B-Bunter! You saw that!"

"We saw it, old top!" grinned Fry.

"I—I—I'll smash him——"

"Better get a wash before brekker!" chuckled Dabney. "Only three minutes; and if Capper sees your chivvy like that he——"

Cecil Reginald Temple controlled his wrath, and ran in for a wash. He wanted one badly. Bunter sauntered in the quadrangle till breakfast, and a good many glances were turned upon him there. Bunter was surprising his school-fellows that morning.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Surprising Meeting !

DURING the new few days nearly everybody in the Remove was interested in Bunter of that Form.

They couldn't understand it.

Peter Todd and Tom Dutton, his study-

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mates in No. 7, were the most surprised and interested of all.

It was extraordinary to find Bunter not taking the lion's share at tea, and still more extraordinary to find him "standing his whack" in providing the supplies.

During these days nobody was put to the trouble of chasing him out of a study with a cricket-stump or a fire-shovel; Bunter seemed to have dropped completely his habit of raiding other fellows' rations.

He even turned up to footer practice.

Still more amazing, he showed proficiency at the game, and the fellows who saw him could only marvel.

Mr. Quelch, the Remove-master, often looked at him with keen interest in the Form-room.

From being the dunce of the Form, Bunter had become one of Mr. Quelch's brightest pupils.

Mr. Quelch was a conscientious gentleman, and laboured hard with backward boys; and Billy Bunter had been the kind of pupil to turn any master's hair grey. But now the Remove-master's task was considerably lightened, so far as Bunter was concerned. True, he showed a curious ignorance of some of the customs of the Remove, and his mind appeared a blank on some minor points; but in general knowledge he was quite surprising. Even his handwriting and spelling had marvellously improved.

All the Remove simply stared when Bunter stood up to construe; they simply couldn't get used to it. It was Billy Bunter who had become famous for rendering "*Arma virumque cano*" into "The armed man to the dog." But now his construe compared quite favourably with anybody's but Wharton's or Tom Redwing's or Mark Linley's.

"He's reforming!" Peter Todd told the Famous Five. "It was bound to come in the long run. That is what comes of my keeping a cricket-stump in the study specially for Bunter! This is my reward at last—though I admit I expected to use up two or three stumps before it came to this!"

It really looked as if the Owl of the Remove was reforming.

Certainly, Billy Bunter had reformed before; and at that time he had assumed a lofty self-righteousness that made his Form-fellows wish that he would "chuck it." This time there was no trace of self-righteousness.

But Billy Bunter was a little too well known for his reform to be swallowed whole, so to speak. Most of the fellows decided that he was playing some very deep game, and they wondered what it was.

He had given up raising loans in the Remove. He never mentioned his celebrated postal-order; and no reference to his titled relations dropped from his fat lips.

He did not expend all his pocket-money in the tuckshop, though he was a good customer there. That was one point in which he had not changed—his appetite was as good as ever. But he seemed to have learned that it was not the thing to go up and down the Remove passage like a lion seeking what he might devour.

On Saturday afternoon Harry Wharton & Co. were going over to Cliff House to tea with Marjorie & Co.; and when they went round to the bike-shed for their machines they found Bunter there. He was in his shirt-sleeves, seated among what looked like the wreckage of a bike, very oily and dusty. The Famous Five regarded him with surprise.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Mending your bike at last?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?"

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"Well, it's time you did!" remarked Bob. "You've got a long row to hoe. You've left it long enough!"

"Better late than never."

"The betterfulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I say, this jigger was in an awful state!" remarked Bunter.

"It was!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Why don't you keep your bike in order, like any other fellow, Bunter?"

"I'm going to, in future."

"Well, as you're growing so jolly industrious, I'll lend you a hand," said Bob Cherry. "We needn't start just yet, you fellows!"

"Right-ho!" said Johnny Bull. "Let's all help! Bunter ought to be encouraged, when he begins doing things for himself instead of worrying other chaps to do them for him."

"Well, you can help if you like!" said Bunter. "I'm up to my ears in it, and no mistake!"

The Famous Five took off their jackets, rolled up their sleeves, and piled in. Punctures galore had to be mended, the pedals had to be straightened out, the chain repaired, and several other things, as well as a staggering amount of cleaning to be done. But many hands made light work, and in half an hour Bunter's bike was looking quite a handsome jacket.

Then the bike-repairers had to clean themselves.

"We shall have to scorch a bit now, or we shall be late," Frank Nugent remarked, as he wheeled out his machine.

"You fellows going for a spin?" asked Bunter.

"Yes; to Cliff House."

"Oh! Like a fellow to come?"

"Rats!" said Bob Cherry.

Bunter blinked at him over his glasses. The fat junior had already been to the optician's in Courtfield for new glasses, and he had plain glass now in the spectacles, which did not trouble his sight so much. But he had a habit of sticking the glasses on his fat little nose well below the level of his eyes.

"Do you call that civil, Bob Cherry?" he asked.

Bob laughed.

"My dear porpoise, we can't plant you on Marjorie & Co., and you know it!" he said. "They can't stand you. It's your own fault."

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Come on!" said Harry Wharton. And the chums of the Remove wheeled their machines away to the gates.

Wally Bunter's expression was very thoughtful as he moved out more slowly with his bike. He knew Marjorie & Co., of Cliff House—as Wally. But he was playing Billy Bunter now, and Billy Bunter was not persona grata at Cliff House, or anywhere else, for that matter. The task of living down Billy Bunter's reputation was bigger than Wally had imagined.

Nobody was anxious for Bunter's company. He wheeled his machine out by himself, and pedalled away towards Friar-dale. In the road he came upon Fisher T. Fish, also on a bike, and Fishy grinned at him.

"Race you up the hill, Bunter?" he called out.

Bunter glanced at him.

"Got ahead!" said Fish. "If I catch you, I'm going to roll you off that bike, I guess! See?"

He pedalled towards Bunter, who grinned, and rode on. There was a rise in the lane towards Friardale, and Fisher T. Fish anticipated with great amusement that Bunter would crack up hopelessly. But the fat junior rode up the rise with perfect ease.

He glanced back and grinned at Fishy, who was labouring breathlessly behind.

"Get a move on!" he called. "Do you call this a race, Fishy?"

"I swear!" gasped Fish. "I guess I don't care for bike-racing; it's a mug's game! Go and chop chips!"

And Fisher T. Fish gave it up.

Wally Bunter grinned, and pedalled on cheerfully. He came over the rise, and free-wheeled down the other slope towards the village.

As he sailed down the lane a man, leaning on a fence by the roadside, stepped out, and raised his hand as a sign to stop.

The fat junior looked at him. He was a squat-looking man, with a bowler-hat on one side of his head, and a black cigar in the corner of his mouth.

He had a very horsy appearance, and the general look of a man who kept late hours, and did not wash or brush very carefully in the morning.

"Stop!" he called out.

Bunter slackened a little.

"Want anything?" he asked, without stopping.

"Yes, you young rascal!"

"Wha-a-at?" ejaculated Wally, in astonishment.

"Get off that bicycle!" said the horsy man authoritatively.

Bunter simply blinked at him. He concluded that the stranger was under the influence of liquor; there was no other way of accounting for his extraordinary behaviour.

The fat junior did not stop.

"Will you stop?" shouted the horsy-looking man angrily.

"No, I won't!"

"Mind, I ain't standing any more nonsense from you, Master Bunter!"

"Oh, you know my name, do you?" said Wally, pedalling on, while the horsy man strode along to keep pace.

The man stared at him.

"Know your name!" he repeated.

"Of course I know your name, as well as you know mine!"

"I'm afraid I don't!" said Bunter.

"What's your name?"

"Eh?"

"You look as if it might be Bill Sikes!" said Wally cheerily. "Is that it?"

"You cheeky young 'ound!" roared the horsy gentleman. "I'll 'ave you off that bike fast enough!"

He closed in on Wally, who swerved away at once, and eluded him. As the man hunched forward the fat junior released one hand, and reached out and knocked the bowler-hat off the greasy head. Then he drove hard at his pedals, and rode on, chuckling.

Fifty yards farther on he looked back. The horsy man was standing in the road, the dusty hat gripped in one hand, and the other clenched and waving threateningly in the air.

"Squiffy or potty!" murmured Wally Bunter. "Can't be a man who knows Billy, I suppose—even Billy would draw the line at an acquaintance like that!"

And he rode on cheerily into Friar-dale.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Highlife Rag!

UNCLE CLEGG came out of his dusty little parlour as the shop-bell tinkled. He grunted as he saw his customer.

Uncle Clegg was not glad to see him. Billy Bunter's visits to the village tuckshop were, as often as not, for the purpose of seeking to obtain tick, or to induce Uncle Clegg to sell rationed goods without coupons. Hence the expressive grunt of Mr. Clegg.

Wally Bunter, quite unaware of Mr. Clegg's thoughts, rapped out an order cheerily.

Uncle Clegg gave him a grim look, and made no motion whatever to carry out his instructions.

"Well?" said Wally, in surprise. "Haven't you got any ginger-pop?"

"I 'ave!" said Uncle Clegg stolidly.

"And tarts?"

"I 'ave!"

"Well, why don't you hand them over, then?" demanded Wally.

"Which you knows puffedly well, Master Bunter, that I makes it a rule to see your money first!" said Mr. Clegg. "You don't need telling that at this time o' day!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Wally.

He understood then; and he clinked a half-crown on the counter. Then Mr. Clegg, with another grunt, proceeded to serve him.

Wally Bunter sat on a high stool at the counter and piled in. He had his cousin's gift of enjoying a snack at any time of the day. Uncle Clegg's tarts were war tarts—decidedly war—but the fat junior seemed to enjoy them, and he beamed genially upon the crusty old gentleman behind the counter.

He had almost finished when three rather elegant youths came into the village tuckshop.

Wally did not look at them, but he recognised two of them, with the tail of his eye, as it were.

Those two were Ponsonby and Gadsby of Highcliffe School, whom he had seen before. The third was Monson, also of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe.

Wally's previous encounter with Ponsonby had been a hostile one, while he was visiting Billy Bunter at Greyfriars. But now he was in Billy's Etons and Billy's glasses, and Ponsonby & Co., who knew Billy well, were not likely to know that he was the fellow who had once mopped them up.

Wally Bunter was not anxious for a row with three fellows at once, and he knew the Highcliffian standard of fair play, so he finished his ginger-beer very sedately, affecting not to see the newcomers.

Ponsonby looked at him, with a sneering grin.

"Hallo, here's Fat Jack of the Bone-house!" he remarked.

"Falstaff minor!" grinned Monson.

"Major, I should say!" said Gadsby brightly. "Bigger than Falstaff, anyhow, sideways!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wally Bunter did not heed. It was manifest that the nuts of Highcliffe took him for Billy Bunter, and were bent on a little ragging. Billy Bunter was generally a safe subject to rag.

"Your treat, Bunter!" said Ponsonby, winking at his chums.

"Good egg!" exclaimed Monson.

"You hear, fatty? You're standing the ginger-pop all round!"

Wally shook his head.

"Wrong!" he remarked. "I'm not!"

"Have him off that stool!" murmured Gadsby. "Don't waste time on the fat rotter!"

Ponsonby nodded.

"It was a relation of his punched us the other day," he said. "A cousin, or something—some office cad! We'll take it out of this fat beast!"

"Young gentlemen—" murmured Uncle Clegg anxiously.

He was very civil to the wealthy nuts of Highcliffe; but he did not want a shindy in his little shop.

Ponsonby & Co. did not heed him. They intended to have a little rag with the supposed Owl of the Remove, who looked a fat and helpless victim.

Gadsby hooked his feet into the high stool upon which Bunter sat, to jerk it over and land the Owl on the floor, to begin with. Wally Bunter spun off the

stool as it flew, and threw his arms round Gaddy's neck.

They went to the floor together, the playful Gadsby underneath, and the still more playful Wally on top. And the yell of anguish that Gadsby gave rang quite a distance down the street.

"Yahooooop!"

"Oh, my heye!" gasped Uncle Clegg.

Gadsby wriggled feebly under Bunter's terrific weight. He was pinned down and helpless. Ponsonby and Monson seemed at a loss for the moment. The activity with which the fat junior had turned the tables on Gadsby took them by surprise.

"Help me, you silly chumps!" howled the unhappy Gaddy. "Yaroooh! He's a squook-squook-squashing me! Ow! Help! Draggimoff!"

"Smash the fat rotter!" said Ponsonby between his teeth. And he sprang towards Bunter.

With an agility that was really remarkable, considering the weight he carried, Wally Bunter leaped up.

He dodged the rush of Ponsonby and Monson, and they nearly stumbled over the helpless Gaddy. Wally backed to the

He kept a sharp eye on Ponsonby & Co. They were wiping soda from their faces, and almost weeping with rage. Wally Bunter picked up his change and walked to the door. As he reached it the three juniors from Highcliffe made in the doorway.

His fat fists were up, and his eyes gleamed at them over his glasses.

"Come on, old beans!" he grinned.

They came on together with a rush, and Ponsonby, the leader, reeled back from a powerful drive on the chin. Gadsby and Monson sprang back as Ponsonby went down. To see Bunter of Greyfriars deliver a drive like that took their breath away, and they did not want to sample it for themselves. Ponsonby sat on the floor, stuttering.

"Ta-ta, my infants!" said Wally; and he walked out, leaving the Highcliffians staring and gasping.

He jumped on his machine and pedalled away. That was only prudent, for less than a minute later Ponsonby came dashing out with a barrel-stave in his hand. But Wally was turning out



Biff! "Groogh!" (See Chapter 2.)

counter, where he had spotted a soda-siphon—being a good deal sharper-sighted than the Owl, whom the Highcliffe nuts supposed him to be.

"Keep off, you rotters," he exclaimed "or—There you are, then!"

Sizz! Squish!

"Grooooooch!" spluttered Ponsonby, as he caught the stream full in the face, and went staggering.

Monson jumped away.

"Stop it!" he howled. "Don't turn it on me—d-d-don't—Yooooch!"

He caught it with his left ear as he dodged.

There was still a little soda left, and Wally cheerfully gave it to Gadsby as he staggered up. Gadsby collected it mostly in his hair and neck, and his remarks were sulphurous.

"Master Bunter"—Uncle Clegg was howling with wrath—"you'll pay for that there soda! You 'ear me? My larst siphon! You'll pay for it!"

"Certainly, old top!" said Wally cheerfully, throwing a ten-shilling note on the counter. "Change, my dear old infant!"

of the village street into the lane, and he pedalled away cheerily, leaving Ponsonby brandishing the stave, and Gadsby and Monson their fists—in vain!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Called Over the Coals!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Trouble for somebody!" murmured Bob Cherry softly.

It was Monday afternoon in the Remove Form-room.

The Remove had taken their places as usual; but Mr. Quelch—not as usual—was a couple of minutes late.

When he rustled in the Remove fellows noted at once the thunderous cloud on his brow, and they all made up their minds at once to be very careful indeed that afternoon. When Mr. Quelch looked like that he was not to be trifled with.

"Bunter!"

Mr. Quelch rapped out the name like a bullet.

Wally Bunter rose to his feet, wonder-

ing what was the matter. So far as he was aware, he had done nothing to incur his Form-master's wrath.

"Bunter! Come here!"

Bunter came there.

Mr. Quelch held up a letter in his hand, and Wally blinked at it. All eyes in the Remove were fixed upon them.

"Bunter!" Mr. Quelch's voice was like the growl of thunder. "This letter has arrived for you!"

"Yes, sir," said the fat junior in wonder.

"You are doubtless aware, Bunter, that a general supervision is exercised over the correspondence of junior boys here," rumbled Mr. Quelch. "Although it is not often interfered with, there are occasions when it is necessary. In the present instance it appears to be very necessary indeed."

Wally started, and his heart sank.

He could only see the outside of the letter in Mr. Quelch's hand, and he concluded at once that it was from Billy at St. Jim's, giving the whole scheme away.

"Oh, sir!" he gasped.

"This letter came by post to-day!" rapped out Mr. Quelch. "It is addressed to you, Bunter!"

"F-f-from my cousin, sir?" stammered Wally.

"Your cousin? Certainly not!"

"Oh!" Wally gasped with relief.

"Then, sir—"

"It is from a man of the name of Hawke!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

There was a slight buzz in the Remove. A good many fellows there knew the name of Jerry Hawke, the billiard-sharper, and knew the shiftless, rascally man by sight. Some of them—such as Skinner and Snoop—knew him better than that.

But Wally Bunter's fat face expressed only blank surprise. He knew nothing whatever about Jerry Hawke.

Billy Bunter could have enlightened him, certainly; but Billy Bunter had very carefully refrained from doing so before his departure from Greyfriars.

"You know that name, I presume?" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"No, sir!"

"What?"

"No, sir!" repeated Wally cheerfully.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry under his breath.

"Of all the terrific fabricators!" murmured Johnny Bull. "How can he stand there and look Quelch in the face and say it? It beats me!"

"The beatfulness is terrific!"

"Silence in class!" snapped Mr. Quelch, his gimlet eye roving over the Remove for a moment. And there was a silence that could almost be felt. "Bunter! You say you do not know this name?"

"I do not, sir!"

The man has written to you."

"Has he really, sir?"

"I will read this letter aloud, Bunter, and then I will ask you again whether you know anything of this man."

"Yes, sir."

There was a breathless hush as the Form-master read the letter out. It ran:

"Dear Master Bunter,—You wouldn't stop and speak to a man on Saturday, so I'm writing. I got to 'ave my money! Unless you 'op along to-morrow with it look out for trouble, that's all,—JERRY HAWKE."

Having read out the letter, Mr. Quelch fixed his eyes upon the fat Removee.

"Well, Bunter?" he rumbled.

But Wally only looked astounded.

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It did not occur to him for the moment that the letter was addressed to Billy Bunter, and that he was getting this as a sort of legacy from William George. Billy Bunter had given him no hint of his disastrous sporting speculations with Mr. Hawke.

That the Owl was mixed up in such an affair, and that that had been one of his reasons for wanting to get away from Greyfriars, Wally was naturally slow to suspect.

"Bunter! Do you still deny that you know this man?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Certainly, sir!"

"Did you speak to him on Saturday?"

"A man tried to stop me in the lane and speak to me, sir, as I was going down to Friardale," said Wally, recollecting. "A beery, horsey-looking rotter. I knocked his hat off and biked on."

"You had not known him previously?"

"No, sir."

"You did not owe him money?"

"Nothing of the kind!"

"Why should this man Hawke write to you, Bunter, if you do not know him? And how comes it that he demands payment if you do not owe him money?"

Wally shook his head.

"I can't explain that, sir," he answered. "I should think the man was mad, or drunk! He looked like a boozier—"

"A—a what?"

"A—a man who drinks, sir."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch, evidently perplexed. He crumpled the letter in his hand and stared at Wally Bunter.

He was at a loss.

That peculiar letter having been intercepted, the Remove-master had naturally supposed that Bunter was caught out, and he was prepared to pour the vials of his wrath upon the fat junior's head. Knowing Bunter, too, he had expected clumsy denials. But Wally's denials were not clumsy; they were frank and straightforward, and the junior looked as if he were telling the truth, and nothing but the truth—as indeed he was.

"This is very extraordinary, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch at last. "I am bound to accept your word against that of a man of such character. But it is very extraordinary indeed."

Wally was silent. He also thought it extraordinary.

"I shall destroy this letter, Bunter," continued Mr. Quelch. "It is possible that the whole incident is due to some drunken freak, or is an attempt to extort money. If anything further is heard from this man, I shall communicate with the police. In case of any communication from him reaching you, I command you to bring it to me at once!"

"Certainly, sir!"

"You may go to your place, Bunter."

Wally went to his place.

He was puzzled, and a little worried; and he was aware that his Form-master was still suspicious. He passed Harry Wharton as he returned to his desk, and was startled by the glance the captain of the Remove gave him. Harry did not expect Bunter to own up to the Remove-master; but the barefaced falsehoods—as he supposed—that he had listened to disgusted him, and his look showed his feeling plainly enough.

Wally started, and paused. But he could not speak to Wharton then, and he went on to his place. A little later, when lessons were in progress, Skinner leaned over and whispered to him:

"Well done, Bunt! You beat the Kaiser at his own game, and no mistake!"

"What do you mean?" growled Wally.

"How such a liar came to be born outside Berlin beats me!" went on Skinner admiringly. "How do you do it?"

"You cheeky rotter!" muttered Wally angrily.

Skinner closed one eye at him.

Wally Bunter sat with a flushed face. There was a sort of atmosphere of scorn and contempt about him that he felt keenly enough, without understanding why it was so. He had told his Form-master the truth; but to the fellows who knew of Bunter's essays as a sporting punter, naturally, he appeared to be a liar of the first magnitude. Skinner admired his nerve; but nobody else had any admiration for such an Ananias.

That was not a happy afternoon for Billy Bunter's double.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Sins of Another!

"YOU awful rotter!"

That was Bob Cherry's remark in the quad after lessons. He addressed Bunter.

Wally blinked at him over his glasses.

"What are you calling me names for?" he demanded.

"You take the cake!" said Bob in utter disgust. "How can you do it?"

"What have I done?"

"Told rotten lies as fast as you could pour them out!" said Bob scornfully. "Blessed if I understand how they didn't stick in your neck! You always were a beastly fibber; but this is really over the limit!"

Wally's eyes gleamed.

"I punched your nose the other day, Bob Cherry!" he said. "Do you want me to punch it again?"

"Oh, dry up, and don't talk like a silly ass!" growled Bob. "I've a jolly good mind to mop up the quad with you for lying to Quelch as you did! You make me sick!"

"I haven't lied to Quelch!"

"What? Didn't we all hear you?" demanded Johnny Bull. "Are you going to tell us that we dreamed it?"

"Bunter," said Harry Wharton quietly, "don't play the goat! You'd better be thinking how to get out of your scrape. Lying won't be of much use in the long run!"

"The liefulness is terrific, but the uselessness is also great!" remarked Hurree Singh.

"Why not own up to Quelch, Bunter?" asked Frank Nugent. "It'll have to come, if that man kicks up a shindy—and it looks as if he will. Better take the bull by the horns!"

"Own up!" repeated Wally. "Are you potty? What am I to own up to?"

"Your bizney with Hawke, of course!"

"I haven't any business with him. I've never seen the man till the day before yesterday."

"Oh, if you're going to stick to that, no good us saying anything!" said Frank. And he walked away with the rest of the Co.

Wally Bunter stared at them angrily.

He had hoped to be on the friendliest terms with the Famous Five when he came to Greyfriars; but he was certainly not getting on in that direction.

"What the thump does it all mean?" muttered the fat junior. "What are they all driving at? It beats me!"

He rolled away across the quadrangle, and stopped to speak to Ogilvy and Russell, who were chatting near the gates.

"Buzz off!" said Ogilvy curtly. "No liars wanted!"

Wally's eyes blazed.

"You cheeky cad!" he shouted. "What do you mean?"

"Sit him down!" said Russell.

"You silly chumps, what— Oh!"

The two juniors took him by the shoulders and sat him down hard, and walked away, leaving him there.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Wally.

He jumped up in a fury, and started in pursuit; but he paused. He did not want to fight Ogilvy or Russell, both of whom he liked. There was a misunderstanding somewhere which he could not yet grasp.

With a rather glum face Wally tramped out of gates in a glum mood. He was not desirous of coming into contact with any more of the Remove just then. He wanted to think out the strange affair.

"Hallo, my pippin! 'Ere you are!"

Wally stopped, his eyes ablaze, as Jerry Hawke came into view, not a hundred yards from the school gates. The man had been hanging about in sight of the school.

He grinned at the angry junior.

"I reckoned my letter would do the trick!" remarked Mr. Hawke. "Bit risky for a young gent getting letters at the school from me—what? But you would 'ave it! You own fault, Master Bunter!"

"So you're Jerry Hawke, are you?" said Wally, setting his teeth.

"You know my name well enough, you young rascal!"

"You wrote to me to-day?"

"I reckon that's why you came 'ere!" sneered the sharper. "If you 'ad not come out I'd 'ave wrote again, and if that wasn't enough I'd 'ave come up to the school, you bet! Square up, can't you?"

"You make out that I owe you money?"

"I make out that you owe me ten quid, and I make out that you're going to step up and settle!" grinned Mr. Hawke.

"I don't know you!" said Wally. "I don't know you, and don't want to! But you're not going to write to me, Mr. Jerry Hawke, and hang around the school to speak to me!"

"You'd like me to go to the 'Ead, p'r'aps?"

"You can go to the Head, or you can go to Jericho; but you're not going to bother me!" said Wally.

He took the glasses from his fat nose, slipped them into his pocket, and pushed back his cuffs.

Those warlike preparations surprised Mr. Hawke, and he stepped back a pace or two, staring at the fat junior.

"Wot's this 'ere game?" he demanded.

"I'm going to lick you!" said Wally determinedly. "I think I can do it! You're too full of smoke and whisky to be much good, you ruffian! Put up your hands!"

"Well, blow me tight!" exclaimed the astonished Mr. Hawke, and he burst into a roar of laughter. "Haw, haw, haw!"

His laughter was cut suddenly short by a smart rap on his red, inflamed nose, which made it redder, and made Mr. Hawke utter a sudden howl.

"That's to begin!" said Wally. "Now, come on!"

"My heye! I'll—I'll——"

The sharper backed away, almost dazed, as the fat junior attacked him.

Jerry Hawke was head and shoulders taller than Bunter, and certainly he ought to have been a good match for any two fellows in the Lower Fourth Form at Greyfriars.

But he wasn't! Wally had judged accurately the effects of smoke and whisky upon the unhealthy, unfit lounge. Mr. Hawke was in no condition for a scrap even with a boy, and he backed away from Wally's attack, which was fast and furious.

Billy Bunter, certainly, he could have

disposed of with ease; but Wally was quite another proposition.

Rap, rap, rap! came the fat fists on his beery face, and Jerry Hawke yelled and dodged. But as the fat junior followed him up he put up his hands and fought.

There was a shout of surprise on the road, and Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing of the Remove came running up. Wally did not heed them; he was giving all his attention to Jerry Hawke.

Crash!

A fat fist landed on Mr. Hawke's stubbly, flabby chin, and the sharper went fairly over, landing on his back. There was a splash as his shoulders squashed into a puddle.

"My hat!" yelled Vernon-Smith. "Bunter! Oh, crumbs!"

"Well hit!" grinned Redwing.

Wally glanced round at them. The Bouncer eyed him in great astonishment. Bunter of the Remove had never shown up as a fighting-man before.

"The rotter was pestering me," said Wally. "I had to stop him somehow!"

"Ye gods!" murmured the Bouncer.

Jerry Hawke sat up, muddy and breathless, feeling his stubbly chin as if to make sure that it was still there.

"Groogh! Hoooh! Yoooop!" were Mr. Hawke's first remarks. "Ow! Yow! Wow! I'll make you pay for this, you young 'ound! Ow-ow!"

Wally gave him a scornful look.

"Keep clear of me, and let me alone!" he answered. "That's all I want."

"Yes, I'll keep clear of you, I don't think!" gasped Mr. Hawke. "I'll come up to the school, you young rascal! I'll show you up afore all Greyfriars, I will! I'll 'ave my money, or I'll see you kicked out, on my davy! Ow-ow-ow!"

"Oh, rats!"

"I've got a bit of writing to show!" howled Jerry Hawke. "You know that! Forgotten that, p'r'aps, Master Bunter!"

"You've got no writing of mine," said Wally. "I've certainly never written to you, or to any oad of your sort!"

"You wait till I come up and see the 'Ead!" gasped Jerry Hawke. "You wait till then, young feller-me-lad!"

He picked himself up painfully, and limped away towards Friardale.

The Bouncer whistled.

"Serve the brute jolly well right, Bunter!" he remarked. "But what the thump are you going to do now?"

"Eh? I'm going in to tea," answered Wally.

"I mean, when that fellow comes up to see the Head."

"Why should he?"

"Why!" exclaimed Redwing, in amazement. "Can't you see he's full of malice now you've punched him instead of paying him?"

"I don't owe him anything!"

"Oh!" said Tom.

"What's the good of piffle like that, Bunter?" asked the Bouncer. "You know you owe him money, and that he's got your paper to prove it!"

"I—I don't, I tell you! What do you mean? What makes you think so?" exclaimed Wally, in great exasperation.

"You fat idiot, I think so because you told me so!"

"I told you?"

"Yes; when you tried to squeeze ten pounds out of me to pay him," said the Bouncer, with a grin.

Wally stared at him.

"Ten pounds!" he repeated.

"Yes."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Remember now?" asked the Bouncer sarcastically.

Wally Bunter did not reply.

He understood at last!

He understood, only too well, why Billy Bunter had been so feverishly

anxious to change places with him, and go to St. Jim's in his stead!

Wally had let him have his way—and he had had his own desire—to become a Greyfriars fellow! And it had landed him in—this!

"Oh, my hat!" he repeated dazedly.

He went back to the school gates, and Redwing and the Bouncer stared after him, puzzled.

"Blessed if I catch on!" said Smithy.

"He knows it well enough—he hasn't lost his memory, I suppose? He was a silly ass to pitch into Hawke under the cires! The man will come up to Greyfriars now."

"That may mean the sack for Bunter," said Tom Redwing, very gravely.

"Well, as he's so well known to be a born idiot, he may get off with a flogging," said Vernon-Smith. "Dashed if I know what he expected! One thing's jolly certain—Jerry Hawke will give him all the trouble he can, after being knocked about! And where did Bunter get all that pluck from—and the strength, too? It beats me!"

"It's a corker!" agreed Redwing.

And all the Remove fellows, when they heard the news, agreed that it was a corker. And there was considerable speculation as to what the Owl of the Remove would do when Mr. Jerry Hawke came up to Greyfriars, with the "bit of writing" in his possession, to see the Head!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Visitor for Billy Bunter!

PETER TODD eyed his fat study-mate with a peculiar look. Wally Bunter was unusually silent, and he seemed worried. Peter understood well enough what he was worried about. Apparently it had dawned upon Bunter at last that Jerry Hawke was going to cut up rusty, and that it was a serious matter.

Bunter ate his meal in glum silence, apparently not observing the peculiar looks of Peter Todd.

"What are you going to do, Bunter?" asked Peter at last.

Bunter started, and looked up.

"Eh? What?" he asked.

"About Jerry Hawke?"

"Hang Jerry Hawke!" exclaimed the fat junior irritably.

"But you can't hang him, old bean!" said Peter Todd. "And he's bound to turn up here, after what I've heard from Smithy. It was bound to come sooner or later, anyhow, as you couldn't pay him. What are you going to do?"

"Blessed if I know!" said Bunter.

"It's not much good saying, 'I told you so!'" remarked Peter ruminatingly. "But, as a matter of fact, Bunter, I did tell you so!"

"Did you?"

"Why, you know I did!" exclaimed Peter warmly. "When you started your silly-fool scheme of punting, as you called it, didn't I jaw you?"

"P-p-punting!"

"Playing the goat is the right name for it!" growled Peter. "Didn't I stump you for laying bets on a footer-match? What could I do more than that?"

"No, you didn't——"

"What?"

"I—I—I mean—— Oh, blow!" exclaimed Wally. "Never mind all that! The worry is, what am I going to do if that man comes along with a bit of writing, as the beast calls it?"

"You must have been potty to give him any in your fist!" said Peter. "Even you ought to have had more sense than that!"

"I didn't!"

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"You didn't!" howled Peter. "But you told me you had!"

"Well, I didn't!" said Wally desperately. "He thinks he's got a bit of writing in my hand; but, as a matter of fact, he hasn't!"

"He's got something," said Peter quietly. "He thinks he's got your written acknowledgment of a debt, Bunter."

"I can see that now."

"Well, then, what is it that he's got, if it's not that?"

"Something else," said Bunter. "It's a fact that he's got nothing at all written by me."

He could not add that what Mr. Hawke held was a "bit of writing" in the hand of Billy Bunter!

There were unlooked-for difficulties in the role Wally Bunter was playing at Greyfriars!

Peter Todd eyed him very curiously.

"Well, in that case, you needn't be afraid of his coming to see the Head," he remarked.

"I'm not afraid. But—"

"But what?"

"Oh, nothing!"

Wally relapsed into silence. He was endgelling his brains for a way out of this unexpected scrape.

What was he to say if Mr. Hawke persisted in his intention of betraying him to the Head, as was certain to happen? He could deny that the "bit of writing" was his; certainly it was not his, though Jerry Hawke believed that it was. But it was in Billy Bunter's hand, which was very like his own.

In Billy Bunter's name and place, could he deny Billy Bunter's handwriting?

It was an extraordinary position; and his chief feeling was a desire to be within hitting distance of Billy Bunter's nose for planting this on him.

No wonder the Owl of the Remove had been keen to change places with him; no wonder the fat, cunning young rascal had been eager to get off to St. Jim's, and leave Wally to face this outcome of his punting.

Wally had fallen unsuspectingly into the trap, and now how was he to get out of it?

"Do you want any advice from me?" asked Peter Todd at last, surprised at Bunter's silence. It was the Owl's usual game to land his troubles on somebody else's shoulders; or at least to seek to do so.

"Oh, yes, if you've got any offer!" said Wally. "Go ahead!"

"Why not go to the Head and make a clean breast of the whole bizney? You may get off with a flogging then."

Wally grinned involuntarily. The "whole bizney" had more in it than even Toddy, keen as he was, suspected.

"Well, what are you grinning at, like a Cheshire cat?" demanded Peter.

"Ahem! Nothing!"

"It's the best thing you can do," said Todd. "Dr. Locke may let you off lightly, knowing you to be a born fool!"

"Thanks!"

The study door opened, and Bolsover major put his head in, with a very startled expression on his face.

"Bunter here? You're landed now, Bunter!"

Wally looked round.

"What the thump is it now?" he snapped.

"There's a man at the gates asking after you," said Bolsover major grimly. "A man named Hawke."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Gosling doesn't want to let him in, but I fancy he's coming in all the same. He's after you, Bunter."

"Oh, dear!" groaned Bunter.

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"Cut off and hide in the box-room," grinned Bolsover major.

"Fathead!"

"Are you going down to see him, Bunter?" asked Peter Todd, looking a little scared himself. He was really concerned for his fat study-mate.

"What's the good?" said Bunter. "Besides, I haven't finished the jam."

"The jam?" said Bolsover major. "You're thinking of jam now, you fat idiot, when you're just going to be called before the Head, and very likely kicked neck and crop out of the school!"

"All the more reason why I should finish the jam while I've got a chance," remarked Wally philosophically.

"Bunter!" exclaimed Peter Todd. "What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to have another cup of tea."

And Wally took up the teapot.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Peter Todd. And he rushed out of the study, to consult with Harry Wharton & Co. as to

"The Slacker!"



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what was to be done. Bolsover major stared at Bunter, and then followed him. In Study No. 7 Wally went on with his tea.

Tom Dutton stared at him across the table. Tom was deaf, and had not heard a word that was said.

"Anything up?" he asked.

"Yes, rather! I'm in a scrape," answered Wally.

"Jape? Who's japing?" asked Dutton.

"Not jape! Scrape!" shouted Wally. "I'm booked for a thundering row, that's all."

"In Hall, do you mean?"

"Oh, dear!"

"Awful nerve to start a jape in Hall," said Dutton, shaking his head. "Likely to get the prefects down on them. Who are they?"

"Mercy!" said Wally.

"Eh?"

"Help!"

"Well, I can't hear them yelp," said Tom Dutton. "But I'm sorry for them

if Wingate or Gwynne catches them japing in Hall, I must say."

And Tom Dutton went down to see who was japing in Hall; while Wally Bunter grinned, and went on with his tea as cheerfully as he could.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Hawke Drops In—And Out!

"THE game's up now!"

"The upfulness is terrific!"

"What on earth's going to be done?"

"Bunter!" said Johnny Bull. "Bunter's going to be done, and done brown! And it jolly well serves him right!"

And Johnny Bull followed that opinion with an emphatic grunt. Johnny disapproved of Billy Bunter more than ever since the Owl of the Remove had displayed his remarkable gifts as a punter.

Perhaps Johnny forgot sometimes to temper justice with mercy. The other members of the Co. were feeling concerned and alarmed for the hapless Bunter.

The dusk of evening was thick in the old quadrangle. From the direction of the gates, which Gosling had been about to lock, came the sound of voices in dispute. The old porter was barring the entrance of a horsey-looking man with a cigar in his mouth and a bowler-hat on the side of his head. Gosling was quite shocked at the attempt of Mr. Jerry Hawke to introduce his disreputable person within the precincts of Greyfriars School.

"Wot I says is this 'ere!" came Gosling's voice. "You ain't coming in 'ere! Sieh ain't allowed!"

"You let a man in!" roared Mr. Hawke's bull voice. "Ain't I told you a dozen times that I got business with the 'Ead?"

"You can tell me till you're black in the face, my man, and then I won't believe you," said Gosling with lofty scorn. "The 'Ead don't 'ave business with a low-down card-sharper, and that's what you are, my man, and that's the blooming long and the blooming short of it! Houtside!"

"Which I tell you—"

"Houtside!"

"Good old Gossy!" murmured Harry Wharton. "Suppose—suppose we go and lend him a hand and pitch the rotter into the road?"

"Good egg!" said Nugent.

"He'll only come back," said Peter Todd, with a shake of the head. "Still, it might do him good. Let's!"

The juniors moved on towards the gate, in which direction several other fellows were moving. Most of the fellows were indoors, but those who were in the quad had been attracted, like the Famous Five, by Mr. Hawke's truculent voice at the gate.

"Will you let a man pass?" roared Mr. Hawke.

"No, I won't! Wot I says is this 'ere—"

"Then take that, you old fool!"

"Oh, crikey! Yooooop!"

Gosling had been standing erect, with a lofty hand pointing out to the road; but as Mr. Hawke's angry fist jabbed at his nose Gosling's position became suddenly horizontal instead of perpendicular.

Over him Mr. Hawke came stepping, while Gosling blinked up, wondering if it was an earthquake or a belated air-raid.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! You're not wanted here!" sang out Bob Cherry. "Collar the cad!"

There was a rush.

Mr. Hawke, grasped by unexpected hands, was rushed back through the gateway, to an accompaniment of fiendish yells from Gosling, who was rather severely trampled over in the process.

Bump!
"Whoop!"

Jerry Hawke was strewn in the road outside. He rolled in the dust, yelling.

"Shut the gate!" panted Wharton.

Clang!

Goslings staggered to his feet.

"Where is he? Call the police! I'll have him prosecuted! Wet I says is this ere— Yow-ow-ow-wow!"

"Lock the gates, Gossy!" said Bob Cherry, giving the porter a dig in the ribs. "Get a move on, old bird!"

"Yooop! Wharrer shoving a man for?" roared Gosling. "I'll report yer!"

"Lock the gates, or he'll be in again, and we'll leave you to him!" said Wharton.

The key turned in the big lock.

Jerry Hawke scrambled up in the road. His red, beery face glimmered outside the bars of the gate, inflamed with rage.

He shook a knuckly fist at the grinning juniors inside.

"I'll smash yer!" he roared. "I'll out yer! I'll 'ave the law on yer! I'll spifficate yer! Ow-ow! I'll inab yer!"

"Nice man!" murmured Bob Cherry. "I hope a prefect won't come along and hear him."

Hawke shook savagely at the gates. He was too furious now to care what he did.

"Lemme in!" he yelled. "You 'ear me? I come 'ere to see your 'ead-master! I come 'ere to see Master Bunter, who 'ave borrowed money of me to back a 'orse! Let me in! I ain't going!"

"Turn the hose on him, Gosling!" called Peter Todd.

"You wait jest a minute, my beauty!" said Gosling. "I'll give you sich a wash as you've never 'ad in your natural!"

There was a sudden disappearance of Jerry Hawke from the gate. Apparently he dreaded a wash. Doubtless he was not used to such things.

"Gone, thank goodness!" said Peter Todd, with a deep breath of relief. "Let's hope he'll keep away."

"Look out! Here's Wingate!"

The juniors melted into the mist as Wingate of the Sixth came striding up.

"What the dickens is this thumping row, Gosling?" exclaimed the captain of Greyfriars.

"A bloomin' 'ooligan kicking up a row," said Gosling. "Intoxicated, I s'pose. Asking to see the 'Ead. A 'orrid character the worse for drink, sir."

"That's jolly queer," said Wingate. "Has he gone?"

"Oh, yes; he's gone, sir," said Gosling. "I was going bout to deal with 'im stringent, and he thought he'd better take hisself off!"

Wingate looked out through the bars, but nobody was to be seen in the road, and the prefect walked away to the School House very much puzzled.

A group of juniors in the mist under the old elms were very glad to see him disappear.

"All serene so far," said Nugent. "But is the man really gone?"

"Well, he knows that he can't come in now," said Harry Wharton. "Gosling isn't likely to let in such a coughdrop to see the Head. The Head would be

rather surprised by a visit from Jerry Hawke."

The juniors chuckled at the idea of that sportive character stopping into the Head's study to interview the white-haired, scholarly old gentleman who governed Greyfriars.

Certainly the Head would have been very much surprised by a visit from the ornament of the Cross Keys bar-room and billiard-room.

"May as well go in," remarked Johnny Bull. "I haven't had my tea yet, and it's late."

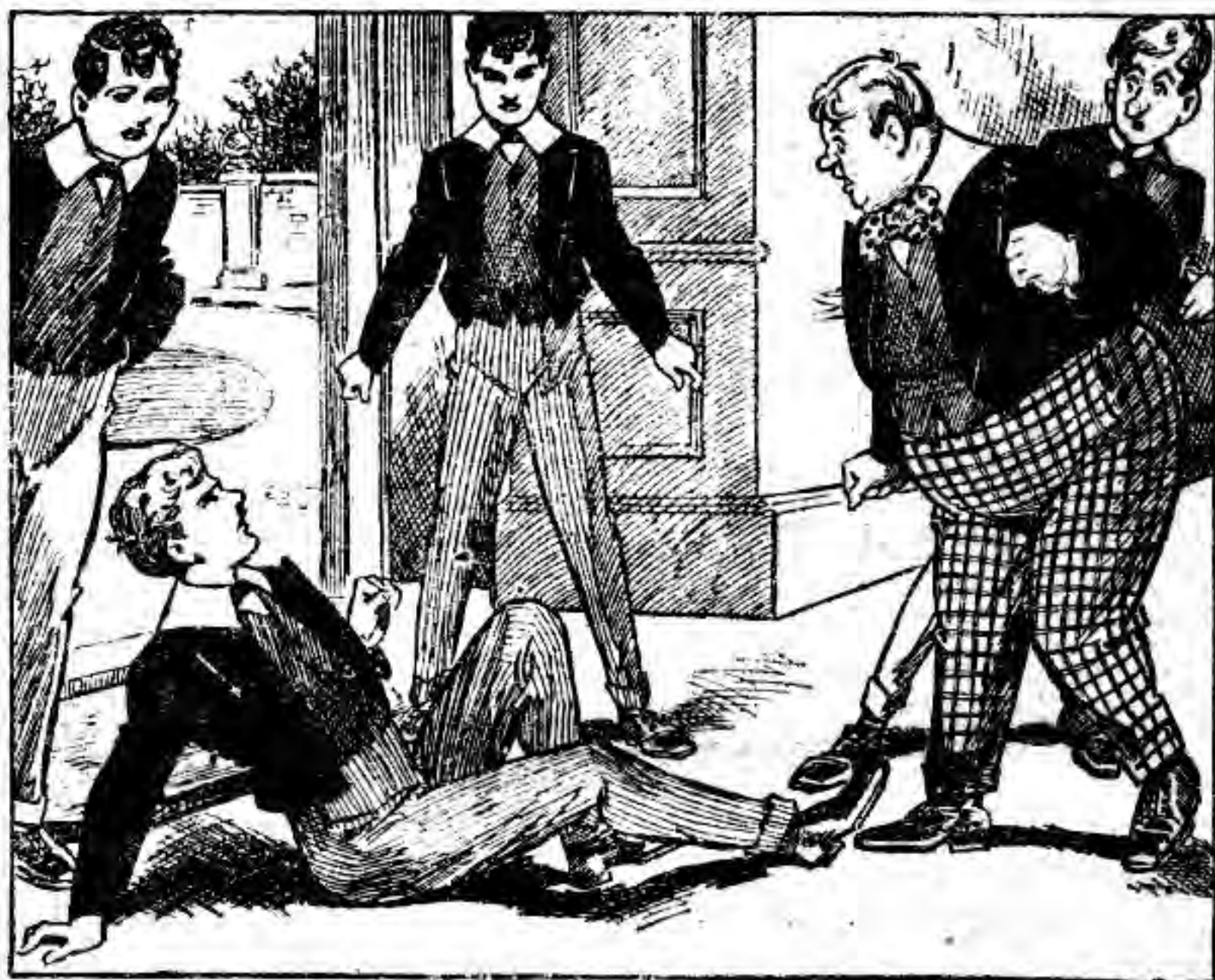
Harry Wharton hesitated.

"I'd rather make sure that that Han has really cleared off," he said. "He had been drinking, I believe, and he was in earnest. Being chucked out can't have improved his temper, either."

"Ha, ha! No."

"Bunter's landed himself in an awful scrape," went on the captain of the Remove. "Goodness knows what's going to happen to him—"

"Not our business," remarked Johnny



Did he fall, or was he pushed? (See Chapter 1.)

Bull, with a grunt. "Bunter had his eyes open, I suppose, when he made bets with that blackguard."

"Ye-es, but—"

"But it's up to the virtuous to be kind to the wicked," said Bob Cherry, with great gravity. "The virtuous—that's us—ought to look after the wicked—that's Bunter—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The virtuousness of our esteemed selves is terrific, my worthy chums, and the temperfulness of the wind to the shorn lamb is also a wheezy good idea!" remarked Hurree Singh.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's that?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"That" was the sound of a bump a short distance from the juniors, and close to the school wall. It was evidently made by someone dropping within, after climbing over the wall from the road. And the bump was followed by a well-known beery voice:

"Ow! Blow it! Blow my buttons! Ow!"

Jerry Hawke was inside the walls of Greyfriars, after all!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

In Defence of Bunter!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. ran quickly to the spot.

Mr. Jerry Hawke had just picked himself up, after dropping inside and rolling over.

He put himself into a defensive attitude as the juniors loomed up in the mist.

"'Ands off!" he exclaimed. "I come 'ere quiet and peaceful to see the 'Ead. 'Ands off!"

"You've no right in here!" said Wharton.

"Ain't a man a right to call on a hold gent when he's got business with 'im?" demanded Mr. Hawke in an injured tone. "Master Bunter owes me money—a matter of ten quid. I got his 'and-writing to prove it."

He blinked at them sourly in the mist. The juniors were round him, barring his further progress, but they were puzzled what to do.

The gates were locked now, and Gos-

ling had gone back to his lodge. Jerry Hawke could not be run out. Neither could he be lifted over the wall and dropped outside—not, at all events, without a hullabaloo that would have brought half Greyfriars on the scene.

How to deal with him was a perplexity. But the Co. were anxious to keep the chopper from coming down on the reckless Owl of the Remove. How was it to be done?

"P'r'aps you'll let a man pass now?" sneered Jerry Hawke. "Don't you lay a 'and on me. I'll soon 'ave your 'ead-master hout if you do. I dessay I could be 'eard from 'ere."

The juniors were afraid that the ruffian had been heard already. If a master or a prefect came on the spot it was all over with their lingering hope of shielding Bunter.

"Look here," said Wharton at last, "what do you want here? What have you come for?"

"I've come to collect a debt, my lad," said Jerry Hawke evilly. "A matter of ten quid from Master Billy Bunter of THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 571.

this 'ere school, and if he don't pay on the nail I'm goin' to tell 'is 'eadmaster what I thinks of young gents what don't pay their just debts."

"You know you can't collect gambling debts from a schoolboy," said Peter Todd.

"This 'ere ain't a gambling debt," said Jerry Hawke coolly. "It's money lent to Master Bunter, fair and square."

"I don't believe it!"

"I've got his list to prove it!"

"You lent Bunter money? exclaimed Wharton. "Money to gamble with?"

"The young gent may 'ave 'ad a fancy for backing a 'orse," said Jerry Hawke. "That ain't my business. He's written out a paper acknowledging a debt to me of ten quids."

"I think I understand," said Wharton contemptuously. "Bunter let most of it out to us at the time. You took his bet on a race on condition that he signed a paper admitting owing you the money in case the horse lost. You knew it had no chance of winning, of course."

"S'pose it had won, wouldn't Master Bunter have asked me for my money?" sneered Jerry Hawke. "And took it, too, for that matter!"

"You wouldn't have squared," said Johnny Bull.

Mr. Hawke raised his head loftily.

"Ask any gentleman what has done business with me whether Jerry Hawke pays on the nail or not!" he said, with a great deal of dignity. "There's young gents at this 'ere school know me for a feller of my word. I could name 'em if I liked. If I'd lost I'd have paid, honest. 'Course I would!"

"What you would have done isn't evidence, as the thing was impossible," remarked Peter Todd. "You only booked Bunter's bet because you knew the horse he selected couldn't win; and you'll get into trouble with the law for making bets with a schoolboy in a public place."

"Good old Toddy!" said Bob Cherry. "You've got him there. What he did was illegal."

"Who's talking about making bets?" said Jerry Hawke. "I ain't made bets with nobody, and I stands to that. I lent Master Bunter ten pounds, like a good-natured cove."

"That's not true."

"I've got it in his bit of writing!" grinned the sharper. "That there paper don't mention nothing about a 'orse."

Wharton bit his lip. He could guess easily enough that the sharper had fooled Billy Bunter at his own sweet will, and that there was nothing in the written paper to prove that Jerry Hawke had done anything worse than lend money to a schoolboy. He had lent no money, but Bunter had signed the paper, as he would have signed anything in his stupidity for the sake of getting his bet booked.

"And now, if you'll 'ave the goodness to let a cove pass, I'll trot along to the 'ouse!" said Mr. Hawke sarcastically.

"Bunter can't pay you, and you know it," said Wharton. "You'll only get him in a row with the Head."

"P'raps the Head will pay up rather than 'ave a row," suggested Mr. Hawke. "I'm going to try. I know that Master Bunter 'andled me to-day, and that I ain't letting him off, not if I know it!"

Wharton looked helplessly at his chums.

It really looked as if the Owl of the Remove was in for it beyond help.

"Suppose we call Bunter here?" suggested Nugent.

"I'm coming up to the 'ouse," said Jerry Hawke doggedly. "Master Bunter 'ad the chance of seeing me out of doors, and he pitched into me instead."

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Now I ain't giving him any more chances."

"Look here, you're not going to the House!" exclaimed Wharton savagely.

"Who's going to stop me?"

"We are!"

"We'll soon see about that!" said Mr. Hawke, and he shoved himself forward to break through the ring of juniors.

"Collar him!" muttered Wharton.

Jerry Hawke was collared fast enough. He struggled in the grasp of six pairs of hands. Against the six he had no chance, so far as fighting went; but, at the same time, his mouth was opened to yell, and he yelled with all the strength of his lungs:

"Elp! 'Elp! I'm being assaulted! 'Elp! Yaroooh! 'Ands off! 'Elp!"

The bull-voice rang across the quadrangle as the sharper struggled in the grasp of the Famous Five and Peter Todd.

"Quieten the brute somehow!" gasped Bob Cherry. "We shall have all the school here!"

"Elp! 'Elp! 'Elp!" roared Mr. Hawke vociferously.

There were voices and footsteps in the misty quadrangle already. From the distance Vernon-Smith's voice was heard:

"Hallo! What's the row there?"

"Elp! 'Elp!"

"Great Scott!" The Bounder ran up through the mist. "What the thump — You fellows committing a murder? Oh, my hat! Jerry Hawke!"

"Elp!"

"Queelch's just come out!" gasped the Bounder. "Look out!"

"Elp!" roared Mr. Hawke. "'Elp!"

"Drag the brute along!" gasped Wharton. "Queelch mustn't see him! Get him along to the wood-shed."

"Right-ho!"

"Elp! 'Elp! Grooooooogh!" wound up Mr. Hawke, as a handkerchief was stuffed into his mouth at last.

His voice died away in gurglings. The juniors were getting quite desperate now; they could hear Mr. Queelch's voice from the direction of the House.

"What is it? Who is calling? What is the matter?"

Fortunately, the mist from the sea hid the scene from the Remove-master, who was peering about him as he came along.

"Shush!" whispered Wharton. "Get him away, quick!"

"Gug-gug-gug!" came from Jerry Hawke.

"Quiet, you rotter!" muttered Bob Cherry fiercely, and he drove the stuffed handkerchief deeper into Mr. Hawke's mouth with his knuckles. Then Mr. Hawke was silent, though his feelings were deep.

The juniors lifted the sharper bodily, and rushed him away under the trees, and vanished into the mist about half a minute before Mr. Queelch arrived on the spot.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Remove-master. "What is it? Here is a—a cap, and—and a hat—a bowler hat! Bless my soul! Someone has been here."

Mr. Queelch blinked round him in utter amazement, with Jerry Hawke's greasy bowler-hat in his hand. But though it was clear that someone had been there, that someone was gone; and the Remove-master peered about him in vain.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Disappearance of Jerry Hawke!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. stumbled into the wood-shed in the dark, and there was a heavy bump. Bob Cherry had caught his foot in something in the gloom, and he stumbled over and went down, and

Jerry Hawke went with him, gurgling. Two or three of the juniors rolled over the unfortunate Mr. Hawke.

"Oh, my hat! Gerroff!"

"Keep your boot out of my eye, idiot!" came in sulphurous tones from Johnny Bull. "What thumping idiot is that?"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Get a light!" gasped Nugent.

"Fathead! It'll be seen!"

"Ow! Oh! Gerroff!"

The juniors sorted themselves out in the darkness. On the floor Mr. Hawke lay wriggling, making strenuous efforts to expel the handkerchief from his mouth. But some of the juniors still had hold of him, and he could not use his hands; and the gag had been well driven in. Jerry Hawke could only gurgle.

"Oh, dear!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"What a life! Keep that beast safe!"

"We've got him!"

"I'm sitting on his tummy!" said Johnny Bull. "He's all right!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shush! Let's see if Queelch has spotted us!"

Harry Wharton looked cautiously out of the wood-shed.

There was little to be seen in the mist, which was thickening with the advance of evening. A confused sound of voices could be heard in the distance, and that was all.

"Nobody's coming!" said Harry. "Keep that brute quiet! We can get him out by the back gate later if Queelch doesn't spot him here."

"He'll come back!" said the Bounder.

"Bless him!" growled Bob.

"Perhaps we could make it worth his while not to come back," suggested Vernon-Smith. "We've got him by the short hairs now. Suppose we cut his hair and shave his eyebrows, and make him a regular guy. That will be a lesson to him to keep clear of Greyfriars after this."

There was a chuckle from the juniors, and a horrified wriggle from the unhappy Mr. Hawke.

"Not a bad idea!" said Peter Todd.

"But—"

"The butfulness is terrific!" murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" muttered Bob Cherry. "I can hear footsteps, you fellows! Somebody's coming this way!"

"Shut the door!" breathed Peter Todd.

Wharton silently closed the wood-shed door. But outside there was the gleam of a lantern and the sound of footsteps.

They were approaching the wood-shed. Naturally, Mr. Queelch had not let the matter drop after discovering a disreputable bowler-hat within the precincts of Greyfriars. It was proof positive that some intruder was within the walls, and the matter had to be investigated. The Remove-master had called out some of the Sixth to help him search for the intruder.

Wingate, Gwyne, and Loder had come along, one of them with a bike-lantern. The Remove-master and the three prefects searched right and left for the missing owner of the hat.

"The man, whoever he is, must be still here," said Mr. Queelch. "He would not, presumably, depart without his hat. I certainly think that I heard the sounds of a struggle and someone calling for help—someone who did not pronounce the aspirate."

"We'll find him if he's here, sir," said Wingate. "There was a rough character trying to get in at the gates a while ago, and Gosling had some trouble with him. It may be the same man."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Queelch. "It is very extraordinary! The man must certainly be found, if he is here!"

"Hullo, here's something!" exclaimed Loder.

He picked up a cap.

"Some junior has been here," said Mr. Quelch, glancing at the cap. "And, bless my soul! What is this?"

"This" was a greasy necktie, yellow in colour, with red spots—a very striking necktie, which certainly had never been worn by anyone belonging to Greyfriars. Mr. Quelch blinked at it. Jerry Hawke's necktie had come off in the struggle, and remained on the ground half-way to the wood-shed.

"Extraordinary!" exclaimed the Form-master in amazement. "The man has, apparently, dropped his necktie as well as his hat! Evidently he is still within the precincts of the school."

"Hiding among some of the out-buildings, most likely, sir!" said Gwynne. "We'll soon rout him out."

"Try the wood-shed!" said Wingate.

And the party moved on.

Footsteps and voices and the glimmer of the lantern approached the wood-shed, to the utter dismay of the juniors hidden there with their prize.

"They're coming here, right enough!" muttered Wharton. "What—what the thump are we going to do with that brute?"

"Hide him!" said Bob.

"How? Where?"

"Under the logs!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Mr. Hawke gurgled in protest. But the juniors did not mind Mr. Hawke's objections. It was necessary to keep the ruffian out of sight, and there was only one way.

In the wood-shed were great stacks of logs cut from the wood belonging to the school, to eke out the winter supply of coal. Jerry Hawke was rolled to the wall, and the juniors, with hot haste, began piling the logs round him. Bob Cherry hunted out a rope and wound it round Mr. Hawke and his legs and arms, and knotted it with a terrific number of knots. By the time he had finished Mr. Hawke was a great deal like an Egyptian mummy, swathed in rope instead of bandages.

While Bob was thus engaged the others were piling logs round the sharper, and as soon as the roping was completed they piled logs on top of him as well.

Jerry Hawke disappeared from sight. The last that was seen of him was his face, with his jaws working frantically in a furious effort to chew away the gag.

Nugent had been striking matches to afford light. Now the last match went out, and left the juniors in darkness. Wharton muttered a warning as a gleam came through the little window from the lantern outside. Mr. Quelch and the prefects were very close at hand now.

The Remove-master's voice could be heard.

"I—I say, they're coming in right enough!" muttered the Bounder. "How are we going to account for being here—in the dark, too?"

"Goodness knows!" granted Johnny Bull.

"Rehearsal!" said Wharton quickly. "We've rehearsed in the wood-shed before. Get on with Mark Antony's oration, Bob!"

There was a chuckle in the dark.

As it was still barely possible that the searchers would not enter the wood-shed the juniors did not care to show a light; and Bob listened for a hand on the door as a signal to begin Mark Antony's celebrated oration.

It was a flimsy camouflage, perhaps, but it was the best the juniors could think of in the peculiar circumstances. They were not aware that Jerry Hawke's hat

and necktie had been found; and the sharper was quite out of sight under the logs.

The Removites listened breathlessly. The sharp, incisive tones of the Remove-master came to their ears more audibly.

"Pray search this shed, Wingate. It is very probable that the man has concealed himself there, as he is plainly trying to keep out of sight."

"Certainly, sir!"

That settled it! There was no further doubt that the wood-shed would be entered; and before Wingate could touch the door, Bob Cherry's powerful tones boomed out:

"Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;

I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.

The evil that men do lives after them; The good is oft interred with their bones;

So let it be with Caesar! The noble Brutus—"

"Great Scott!" It was Wingate's voice. "There's somebody there—that's some fag."

He threw the door open, and the lantern streamed light into the wood-shed, full upon the group of Removites.

Headless of the astonished stares of the Sixth-Formers, Bob Cherry boomed on with his declamation:

"The noble Brutus

Hath told you, Caesar was ambitious; If it were so, it was a grievous fault; And grievously hath Caesar answered it."

"Shut up, you young ass!" exclaimed Wingate.

Bob Cherry gave a dramatic start.

"Hullo, hallo, hallo! That you, Wingate?"

And the "rehearsal" ceased, as Mr. Quelch strode into the wood-shed with the prefects at his heels.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

All Up!

MR. QUELCH stared grimly at the heroes of the Remove, who regarded him with respectful attention.

"Wharton! Cherry! You are here!"

"Yes, sir."

"What are you doing here?"

"I was reciting Shakespeare, sir," said Bob Cherry meekly. "We often use the wood-shed for rehearsals, sir."

Which was strictly true.

"You came here to rehearse Shakespeare?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

This was rather a poser, as the juniors had certainly not come there with the intention of rehearsing Shakespeare. But Hurree Jamset Singh came to the rescue.

"The quietfulness of the esteemed wood-shed is favourable for the excellent rehearsal, honoured sahib," he explained. "There is less danger of the unruly interruption by jokeful bounders."

"There is no harm in your using the shed for rehearsals," said Mr. Quelch. "No harm at all."

"Thank you, sir!"

"But surely you were not rehearsing in the dark?"

"We don't need light for spouting Shakespeare, sir," said Wharton. "After what you've told us, sir, about—about saving candles—"

"Quite so, Wharton. I am glad to see that you have learned the lesson of economy," said the Remove-master. "I am sorry to interrupt your rehearsal!"

"Not at all, sir," murmured Wharton. "Can we go on now, sir?" asked the Bounder meekly.

"One moment, please! There is some unknown person within the walls of the

school," said Mr. Quelch. "He appears to have been engaged in a struggle, of which I heard the sounds, and was calling for help. Have you boys seen anything of him?"

"What was he like, sir?"

"I really do not know. I have not seen him. I have found his hat and his necktie."

"Oh!"

"Where is your cap, Cherry?" asked Wingate grimly.

"Mum—mum—my cap?" stammered Bob.

"Yes. Is this it?"

"Eh? Oh! Ah! Yes."

Bob mechanically took his cap. His face was the hue of a beetroot. He guessed that his cap had been found with the hat or the necktie.

"It's pretty clear, sir, that these juniors know something about the matter," said the Greyfriars captain.

Mr. Quelch's brow became very grim. The fact that Bob Cherry's cap had been picked up along with the unknown person's necktie was pretty clear evidence of that, and the Remove-master did not need telling much more.

"Cherry—" he began.

He was interrupted at that point by what looked like a miniature earthquake.

A huge pile of logs close to the wall of the shed became endued with sudden volition.

Of their own accord, apparently, they rocked and rolled, and there was a crash as a dozen or more of them tumbled over.

Mr. Quelch jumped.

"What—what—what—" he stuttered, blinking at the logs, which had so oddly come to sudden life.

The earthquake continued. Logs rocked and rolled, and all eyes in the wood-shed were fixed upon them. From under the rolling pile came a weird and mysterious sound.

"Mmmmmmmmmmm!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "What—what is it? Some animal appears to be under the logs! Bless my soul!"

Wingate grinned.

"I fancy the man's hidden there, and these young rascals know it!" he said.

"Investigate at once, Wingate!" exclaimed the Remove-master, with a terrific glance at the dismayed juniors.

The prefects proceeded to investigate at once.

Harry Wharton & Co. stood rooted to the floor with dismay. Wingate and Gwynne and Loder threw aside the logs rapidly, and a peculiar figure came to light—a beery-looking man, swathed in knotted rope, with a handkerchief stuffed into his capacious mouth.

"By Jove!" yelled Wingate. "Look!" Jerry Hawke was dragged out into the light.

"It's Hawke!" exclaimed Loder.

"Jerry Hawke!" murmured Wingate.

"Oh, by Jove!"

"The—the man is bound and—and gagged!" stuttered Mr. Quelch. "What can this mean? Release him, Wingate—pray release him at once!"

Wingate opened his pocket-knife, and cut the ropes, while Gwynne jerked the half-gnawed handkerchief from Jerry Hawke's mouth.

Harry Wharton & Co. stood quite silent. The game was up with a vengeance. They had not succeeded in saving Bunter; and it looked as if they had landed themselves into the soup.

Jerry Hawke sat up, gasping. His first remark was:

"Grooooooch!"

Mr. Quelch fixed a glittering eye upon him.

"Who are you?" he thundered.

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"Groooogh!"

"Who is this man, Wharton?"

"I—I think he's named Hawke, sir," murmured Wharton.

"Did you tie him up in this manner?"

"Ye-es, sir."

"And why?"

"He's an awful rotter, sir, and he's no right here! We helped Gosling turn him out half an hour ago, and he came back, by getting over the wall from the road. So—so—so we collared him."

"Extraordinary!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "The man can scarcely be a burglar! He must be intoxicated! Is this the man I heard calling for help?"

"I—I suppose so, sir."

"Wharton! You were concealing this man here. Explain to me at once why you were trying to keep his presence here from my knowledge!"

The captain of the Remove was dumb. But Jerry Hawke had recovered his voice by this time, and it was not necessary for Wharton to speak.

"I'll 'ave the lor of yer!" howled Mr. Hawke, staggering to his feet. "I come 'ere to collect a debt, and I've been treated like this 'ere! I'm going to see the 'Ead! P'raps you'll try and stop me now, you young 'ounds!"

"Have you prevented this man from calling on Dr. Locke, Wharton?"

"Yes, sir," said Harry desperately. "Gosling turned him out once, and he came in like a burglar, so we collared him!"

"That does not explain your concealing him here, Wharton! The man should be handed over to the police if he has forced an entrance into the school. Hawke, if that is your name, what is your object in intruding here?"

"Master Bunter owes me money!" roared the angry sharper. "These coves were trying to keep me from speaking to the 'Ead, because they knew young Bunter came to see me at the Cross Keys, and borrowed money of me."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

He understood now.

Harry Wharton & Co. were silent. They had done all they could, but they had failed, and the Owl of the Remove had to face the music now.

There was a brief silence. Then Mr. Quelch said quietly:

"So you were trying to shield your Form-fellow, Wharton?"

"Yes, sir," said Harry. "That awful rascal induced Bunter somehow to play the fool. He's more to blame than Bunter. I—I hope, sir, you'll remember that Bunter is a silly idiot—ahem!"

"I shall deal with you boys later," said Mr. Quelch. "As for you, Mr. Hawke, you deserve the rough treatment you have received for forcing your way into this school. You will now follow me to Dr. Locke, to whom you will make your statement. Wingate, kindly bring Bunter to Dr. Locke's study."

Mr. Quelch whisked out of the shed, and Jerry Hawke, with a vaunting leer at the juniors, followed him. Harry Wharton & Co. left the wood-shed more slowly.

"Nothing doing!" said Bob Cherry. "Bunter's in for it now. I—I suppose it was bound to come."

"We've done our best," said Harry.

And that was the only consolation of the heroes of the Remove.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Facing the Music!

"BUNTER!"

Wingate rapped out the name in the doorway of Study No. 7. Wally Bunter rose to his feet with a resigned expression.

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"Yes, Wingate?"

"You're wanted in the Head's study!"

"All right."

"Come along, you young ass!"

The fat junior followed Wingate downstairs. At the foot of the staircase he met the Co. coming in.

"We tried to keep the man away, Bunter," said Wharton in a low voice.

"It was no go, though."

"Thanks, all the same!" said Wally.

"Bunter, old man, you're in for it. Do take my advice, and tell the Head the truth!" said Wharton earnestly.

"You're clean bowled out, and it's no good lying. Do tell the truth, kid!"

Wally gave him rather a peculiar look.

"I will!" he said.

"That's good advice, Bunter," said Wingate. "Tell the truth and stick to it. Come on!"

The captain of Greyfriars led Bunter to the Head's study, pushed him in, and retired. Wally Bunter advanced towards the writing-table where Dr. Locke sat with a severely frowning countenance. Mr. Quelch was standing with his hand resting on the table, and Jerry Hawke was facing the two masters, with an impudent leer on his face.

On the table lay the "bit of writing."

That paper, with Billy Bunter's scrawled signature upon it, was Jerry Hawke's trump card. His hopes of fingering the money it represented were very slight, but he flattered himself that it was sufficient to ruin the junior he had failed to bully and blackmail.

"Bunter!" said the Head in a deep voice.

"Yes, sir?"

Wally Bunter pulled himself together. What Billy Bunter would have done in such a position he could not guess. But the matter was, in fact, much easier for Wally than for Billy, for he had not signed that paper, and he could say so with perfect truth.

The Head pointed to the incriminating document.

"Look at that paper, Bunter!"

Wally looked at it.

"Is that your signature?" asked the Head in a terrifying voice.

"No, sir!"

"What?"

"No, sir!" repeated Wally firmly.

He had never seen the paper before, though he knew now that Billy must have signed it. But he was not Billy, though he was supposed to be Billy.

Jerry Hawke started, and his yellow teeth came together. Rogue as the man was himself, it had not occurred to him that Bunter would be rogue enough to deny his own signature. He blinked at the fat junior.

"He's lying!" he roared savagely. "He signed the paper. Let 'im write 'is name 'ere, and compare the two!"

"Bunter, do you mean to say that that paper is a forgery?" exclaimed the Head.

"I can't say anything about it, sir, excepting that I never signed it, and I've never seen it before," said Wally.

Jerry Hawke spluttered with wrath.

"Have you ever had any dealings with this man, Bunter?"

"Never, sir, except that I knocked his hat off on Saturday when he tried to speak to me in the lane, and pitched into him this afternoon because he bothered me," answered Wally.

"Ahem! You have never—ahem!—visited the place he comes from—a very disreputable public-house in Friardale?"

"Certainly not, sir!"

"You have not borrowed money from this man?"

"No, sir!"

Splutter from Jerry Hawke.

"Take that pen, Bunter, and write your usual signature," said the Head.

Wally obeyed. He wrote "W. G. Bunter," which, if the Head had only known it, stood for Walter Gilbert Bunter. But the Head did not know that.

Dr. Locke picked up the paper, and compared it with the "bit of writing." The handwriting was very similar, but there was a difference. Wally's hand was not exactly like Billy's.

"Look at these papers, Mr. Quelch. Is that Bunter's usual signature?"

Mr. Quelch pursed his lips.

"In point of fact, sir, this signature is more like Bunter's usual style than the one he has just written, but they are very similar," he said. "The writing, of course, is easy to imitate—a childish, round hand. But—"

Mr. Quelch paused quite at a loss. Both masters searched Wally's face, but his fat face was calm and sedate.

"There is only one conclusion I can come to," said the Head at last. "You, Mr. Hawke, are a self-confessed sharper and swindler! On your own statement, you have induced a foolish schoolboy to enter into money transactions with you. Whether you have done worse than that, whether you have imitated his signature to extort money from him under threats, I cannot say for certain. But in this case of doubt I am bound to accept the word of a Greyfriars boy against that of a man of your utterly base character. If Bunter were speaking falsely, I have little doubt that I should detect him; but he appears to be speaking the truth. You, on the other hand, are evidently false to the very core, and actuated by spite and malice!"

Mr. Hawke spluttered.

"The matter therefore drops here," said the Head. "I shall destroy this paper. If you retain it I shall communicate with the police at once, and prosecute you as a blackmailer. Will you leave it here?"

Jerry Hawke gasped. He was equal to nothing else. All the wind had been taken out of his sails. The trump card he had counted on had failed him owing to circumstances of which he was ignorant.

As he did not reply, the Head pointed to the door.

"Go!" he said. "Let me learn on any future occasion that you have approached any boy belonging to this school, and I will pursue you with the utmost rigour of the law! Go!"

Still gasping, Mr. Hawke limped out of the study.

A couple of minutes later there was a sound of scuffling and hurrying in the misty quad. Some of the Remove were escorting Mr. Hawke to the gate—not gently.

"Bunter, I have accepted your word," said the Head quietly. "I think you have spoken the truth. I hope so. You may go."

"Thank you, sir!" said Wally.

And he went.

Harry Wharton & Co. came in rather breathlessly from the quad, and met the fat junior at the foot of the staircase.

"Sacked?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Not a bit!" answered Wally cheerfully.

"Going to be flogged?" asked Wharton.

"Oh, no!"

"Then what's happened?"

Wally grinned.

"I took your advice, old top, and told the truth," he answered. "All serene—right as rain. Time I got on with my prep."

(Don't miss "A DOG WITH A BAD NAME!"—next Monday's grand complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., by Frank Richards.)

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

THE GHOSTLY REVELLERS.

A Story of Holiday-time.

By ROBERT DONALD OGILVY.

"O H, yes, I'm game!" I said.
"I don't know whether you'll really care about it, Don," said Dick Russell, with what seemed to me rather unnecessary anxiety.

For why should any fellow doubt that any other fellow whom he knows to be keen on footer would care about a game, even with a village team that very likely did not know a heap about it?

I was staying for a week or two with Dick, before going home to the Highlands, where he was to go with me. We had had no end of a jolly Christmas, with snow and skating to provide amusement. But, with the festive season fairly over, a change had come in the weather, and the outlook was chiefly mud.

But who minds mud when there's footer to be had?

"Well, they're rather a rough lot," Dick explained, when I asked him the reason for his doubts.

"I can be rough myself, come to that. I don't mind a barging game, as long as it's clean and fair."

"Can't give any guarantee that it will be that."

"Anyway, it's the other side we shall be playing, not your local ruffians."

"Yes. But we shall be playing for the ruffians, old top!"

"Don't you want to play, Dick?"

"I do. I'd be as keen as anything on it if it wasn't that—well, see here, Don; you've got a pretty bad impression of this place, and I don't want it made worse."

"Rats!" I answered. "It isn't the village that matters to me; it's your folks. And if you say that I've anything but the highest opinion of them—why, I'll punch your silly head!"

But I knew just what Dick meant.

The village in which the Russells live is an out-of-the-way place, separated by miles of muddy roads from everywhere; and most of the people in it were not exactly nice.

The parson was an old man, feeble in body and mind; the schoolmaster was a kind of bad-tempered hermit; and Mr. Russell was the only other person in the place who had any influence. And he had lost most of his through losing most of his money—which shows in itself what sort of people he had to deal with. For he had never grudged anything he could do for them when he was well-to-do; and now that he had less cash he tried to do even more in other ways. But they preferred the cash.

Dick came to the conclusion that we might as well chance it. He would not have minded so much if the match had been at home; but it was at another village ten miles or so away. And the Russells had no car, not even a pony-trap, these days.

We should have to travel with the rest of the team in a big char-a-banc affair which some local merchant had on hire. And Dick seemed to think I shouldn't like it.

I laughed at him. I am not exactly a young lady, you know.

But Dick was right.

I did not like it. Neither did he.

Those village chaps really were the limit. It did not matter much that they should smoke, though most of them were under eighteen, and, anyway, smoking isn't good for the wind. I could have stood their swearing, though they might just as well have cut it out; but swearing was not the worst of their language, by long odds. And when they brought out great jars of beer and proceeded to prepare for the game by soaking themselves, I began to wonder whether all the Huns were in Germany.

"Have a drop, young Russell?" said the captain, a big brute who worked at a brick-field.

"No, thanks!" replied Dick curtly.

"Tote?"

"Yes, I suppose so. Anyway, beer isn't in my line."

"E'd rather 'ave clareick an' all that sort of thin muck! That's what they tipples at the Warren 'Ouse!" sneered the goalkeeper, a fellow with a club foot, a squint, and ever so many worse characteristics.

"Not now they don't," said a third. "Them wines costs money, Bart; an' there ain't a fat lot of that at the Warren House these times."

"Oh, shut up!" I snapped, for I had seen good old Dick flush. He is very sensitive.

They glared at me.

"Wants a drop 'iself," said Bart, the goalkeeper.

"He's welcome," said the skipper.

He tried to force the great jar on to me. But, of course, I wasn't having any of that.

"D'ye s'pose as his lordship could drink arter chaps like us?" sneered Bart.

"They say he's one of them Highland chiefs when he's at home—goes about in kilts an' bagpipes an'—an' wigwams an' things," remarked another, with a leer at me.

I grinned. At home I may wear the tartan—well, then, I do wear it, and what is there against it? But I certainly don't go about in bagpipes and wigwams, though I plead guilty to "things."

But Dick did not grin. He was angry.

"Stop!" he said sharply to the driver.

The man pulled up.

"Ere, what's the bloomin' row?" inquired Bart.

"I don't like your sneers at me," said Dick. "But I won't have your sneers at my guest—that's flat! You ought to be dashed well ashamed of yourselves! We'll get out and go back!"

"What, an' leave us two men short, after promis' to play, an' us lookin' to your clever college footer tricks to pull us through?" roared the brickmaker.

"Yes—that!" snapped Dick.

"Call that playin' of the game?"

"Is it only Ogilvy and I who ought to play the game, Waites?" asked Dick.

"I don't see what we've done to make a song an' dance about."

"I do. I suppose you don't know how to be decently polite and friendly, but you might be civil!"

"Sit on Bart's head, some of you!" shouted Waites. "He's the chap who ain't civil. Drive on, Bill! The young gent don't mean it!"

Bill drove on. Dick did not object to that. But I saw that his mouth was set hard; and during all the rest of that muddy drive he never spoke another word. I didn't, either. And no one said anything to us, though some of them whispered things about us.

They wanted us. Neither Dick nor myself can claim a regular place in the Remove footer team; but Harry Wharton & Co. would have made rings round Wistham village, and I suppose we were well above the average of Waites and his crowd.

I wondered whether they would be able to play at all after the beer they lowered on the journey. But I suppose the brewers have got started making it strong again yet; and I am not sure that it's a bad thing they have not. Anyway, the chaps tumbled out of the char-a-banc apparently not much the worse for it.

II

THE ground we had to play on turned out to be a regular Dismal Swamp, up to one's ankles in mud in some places. But the team against us was a heap more decent than the team we were playing for.

If you have ever played footer under such conditions you may be able to understand how sick it makes you feel after a bit.

It is all very well to argue that the foulness and brutality of your side is not your fault—that it is only an accident that you are on it—but you can't really feel like that about it.

Waites put Dick and me on the right wing together, and we were glad of that. He played at centre. I can't say we were glad of that.

I never saw a rougher player. But I saw several fouler players that day, and they were all on our side!

You would say that a goalkeeper does not get much chance to foul. But Bart fouled like blazes. I suppose he made his chances when they didn't come to him ready-made.

The two backs were as bad as Bart. The centre-half was the worst of the crew. He wore boots that were absolutely illegal, and he rapped opponents' ankles with the beastly things as if that was what he lived for. And the referee never seemed to see anything!

There was precious little enjoyment in that game for us, I can tell you. A quarter of an hour before half-time we did do a kind of wade down our wing, and finished up by scoring a goal, Dick putting to me a sodden ball with about half a stone of mud on it, which I drove somehow between the posts. But after that we only saw the ball at a distance.

It might have been different if the other side had been on top. Our help would have been wanted then.

But our hooligans were having the best of the game all through the first hour, at the end of which they were three goals up.

Then something went wrong with Bart. I think it was the beer in him.

Anyway, he began to fumble and mis-kick. In ten minutes he had let three through.

Then our hooligans got frightfully wild. All that they had done in the way of fouling and barging before was eclipsed now. Dick was sick, and I felt ratty.

At last the skipper of the Wistham team, a very decent, quiet chap, who played the kind of game we had been used to at Greyfriars, though he was a brickmaker, like our cad Waites, spoke to Dick.

"Mr. Russell," he said, "couldn't you speak to them?"

Dick went as red as a tomato.

"I can, Brown," he said, "and I will! But it won't be a scrap of use. If I hadn't been sure of that I'd have spoken long ago. What's the matter with your ref?"

"Oh, he's scared of them! See here, sir, don't you speak if you'd rather not. But I should just like to say that all of us know that you an' the other young gent don't cotton to their dirty tricks, an' that we've nothing against you."

Pretty decent of him, wasn't it? We should have been glad enough to play for Wistham, I can tell you. Perhaps we may next Christmas.

Dick spoke to Waites. Waites guffawed at him, and Bart and the cad at centre-half jeered.

"There's only one thing to do, Don," said Dick quietly. "When we see the next foul we go off the field!"

Waites and Bart and most of the rest heard that. But it made no difference.

We went off within a minute and a half. Our own team hissed us. The Wistham chaps cheered. The referee snuffed and looked at his toes.

Wistham won by the odd goal in seven. Serve our cads right!

"D'ye think you're goin' back with us, young Russell?" sneered the villainous Bart.

"We wouldn't!" snapped Dick.

But we were in rather a tight place. Dick wouldn't let me pay for the hire of a trap. The dear old chap is so proud that I had to give in to him. And he couldn't afford to pay for the hire of one himself. I am not at all sure that it would have been easy to get one, anyway.

That decent chap Brown helped us out. He lent Dick his own bike, and he borrowed one for me.

We shook hands with him and started off. The rest of our team had gone to the Cat

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and Fiddle. It sounded like a thousand cats and a hundred or so fiddles—all played by people who couldn't—as we went past.

"Gay lot!" said Dick. "My hat, Don, I wish I lived somewhere else—anywhere else!"

III.

I CAN'T say that bike-ride was enjoyable even at the start.

There was not half a mile of really decent road between the two villages. But there were ten miles in all to be covered; and, some way or another, it had to be done.

We plugged on, with the wind right in our teeth, and black clouds blowing up. We did not talk much; but we weren't feeling morose with one another, and neither of us grumbled when the other chap had to stop for prising mud from between the wheels and the guards, or tightening a loose pedal, or some little amusement of that sort. It was about once in every four hundred yards or so that we had to do that. But it never seemed the right time for both of us at once.

Then the snow began.

It did not just drift down. It swirled and eddied and beat upon us till we lost almost all sense of direction, and kept getting off the road and not finding it out until we were in the ditch. And it was so confusing that we barged into one another through not being able to see the other chap, you know. But we did not get snapping at one another. If it had been anybody but Dick with me, or anybody but me with Dick, I guess the fur would have flown a bit, though.

"If only we could get shelter somewhere for a time this might stop," I said. "Any-way, we want a rest."

"There's nowhere near," declared Dick.

But even as he spoke a building loomed up darkly through the snow on our right.

"What's that?" I asked.

"I'd forgotten it," Dick answered. "But it's no go—nobody's lived there for ages. Not a single giddy light, you see. And it's haunted!"

"Haunted be hanged!" I said. "You don't believe in such rot, I'm sure!"

"Well, no," Dick said. "There's nothing in it, I suppose; but pretty nearly everyone round here believes it, all the same. Care to try it if we can find a way in?"

"Oh, rather! It's shelter, anyway," I told him.

We were both about fagged out, and the snow and wind were worse than ever.

It wasn't at all difficult to get in. A door round at the side was half off its hinges. We left our borrowed bikes under the shelter of a lee wall, and took the lamps with us.

Beastly place inside—ugh! Cobwebs and dirt and creeping things and mildew—all sorts of unearthly noises—but no ghosts on show.

"Let's go upstairs," said Dick. "It may be a trifle less damp there."

The stairs were rotting in places, and we picked our way up with care. It was drier on the first floor, though not much more cheerful. We found a seat in the bay of a window not far from the head of the stairs.

"What's the giddy yarn about this show?" I asked.

"Oh, it's rot, of course! But they say that on a certain night in the dead of winter the sounds of some awful sort of revelry come from here, and that if anyone had the nerve to look—but no one has in my time—they would find a whole crowd of ghosts carousing in the big hall below. This place used to belong to a squire who was known as 'Hell-fire Harke,' and the yarn about the ghostly revelry has three murders in it—quite enough for one evening party, eh? But don't let's talk any more about it—don't! I'm not a funk, but—"

Dick stopped short, with a shrug of his shoulders and a kind of shudder. I am not a funk, either; but I must own that I was not very keen to hear any more of that horrible old story. I heard it all afterwards; but I am not going to tell it here. All I can say is that I don't wonder folks thought the place must be haunted, or that no one wanted to live in it!

IV.

THEN both our lamps went out, and it was no good trying to relight them, for we knew that the oil was gone.

The wind howled round that awful old house like a thousand demons shrieking,

and the snow lashed against the window-panes as I have never known snow to do before. Dick thrust his arm through mine, and I was glad to feel something warm and alive close at hand.

Not too warm, for that matter. It was fairly parky there. But at least it was shelter.

We had about half a dozen matches; but we were saving those for the descent of the staircase, which was not the kind of thing it would be safe to try in the dark.

"Wonder what the pater and the mater and the girls will be thinking has become of us?" said Dick, after a long silence.

My mind had been busy with the same thing. Mrs. Russell and the girls would be worrying, I knew. I did not think Dick's father would. He is the sort of man who leaves the worrying until there is nothing practical to be done. What I feared was that he would start out to look for us; and I knew that he was not in a fit state of health to be out on a wild night like this.

Now the wind roared!

Suddenly we heard a great crash, and Dick clutched me hard.

"W-w-what was that?" I muttered.

It was no use muttering. You had to shout to make yourself heard in that storm.

Dick did not hear; but I felt him dragging at my arm.

"Want to go down and see?" I yelled.

"Nunno!"

Well, I didn't, either.

We sat there holding on to each other like a couple of kids.

That crash had sounded frightfully eerie, because, somehow, the house seemed silent in a curious way in the midst of all the shrieking and noise outside.

I don't know how long we sat there without another word. Noises were in the house now—wild noises—muttering voices and foot-steps. They did not make us feel any more comfortable. Dick and I had cold feet—there's no denying that!

Then there came another noise—a voice lifted in song.

"It's true, Don!" gasped Dick. The wind had died down for a moment, and I heard every word he said. "Those awful brutes—Hell-fire Harke—the ghostly revellers! Oh!"

Upon my word, I believed it! Perhaps I was likelier to believe than Dick. We don't take much stock in spooks and things at Greyfriars, but at my home up in the Highlands it's different. I could tell you some weird tales about the family ghosts of the Ogilvies, and second-sight, and all that.

But that made it a bit easier for me than it was for Dick Russell. I never heard that his family had any ghosts of their own.

The wind seemed to be lulling; but the snow fell as fast as ever. It had drifted through a broken window, and there was a great pile of it on the floor a few yards from us. And we sat in that queer, glimmering half-light that snow gives and listened to that beastly singing, and fairly shivered.

We could not make out the words a bit; but the voice was a beast—the sort of voice you might expect a chap like Hell-fire Harke to have. And now other voices were lifted; the revels were in full swing, and we had a nasty feeling that the murdering was going to begin all over again soon.

"I can't sit here any longer!" said Dick suddenly. And he dragged me towards the stairhead.

I don't think either of us remembered the danger of going through those rotten old stairs. I don't believe we realised that we were going down. There wasn't any good reason for going down, for neither of us thought of bolting.

We stood at the bottom of the staircase holding on to one another, and yet, somehow, less funk'd than we had been.

The noises came from the great hall to our left, and through its open door we caught a gleam of light. It was not an illumination by any means; there was not much more than our two cheap bike lamps had made before they chucked up making any.

I don't know which of us it was that made the first start towards that open door. If it was this child, I don't know why he did it; and if it was Dick, I don't know a bit more why. The way we were feeling you might have expected us to move in the other direction—and to move middling quickly.

But we went.

And then, all in a moment, our fright was over, and we knew the truth.

For we looked in at that open door and saw that the light was that of the lamps from the char-a-banc, and that the ghostly revellers were Waites and Bart and the rest of that crew.

Was it Dick or I that let out the wild yell that sent them all scattering, bolting as if for their lives? I don't know; but I am sure that neither of us had any notion at the moment of trying to give them a fright.

They rushed past us in the dark passage without seeing us—or, if they did see us, they took us for spooks. They were gone inside ten seconds—out of the haunted house into the snow and the wind—howling with fear as they went. A door crashed to behind them, and Dick leaned up against the wall and laughed hysterically.

Behind them they left their lamps, their beer, their pipes, even one or two of their greatcoats.

But they left more behind than that. When, a few minutes later, we reconnected, we found that the char-a-banc, with its two horses, had also been deserted. They were bolting for the village on foot, forgetting all about that. Even Bill, the driver, had forgotten.

Of course, they had sheltered from the storm like us, probably—not quite like us—not minding if they made a night of it.

"Shelby will expect to see that brake back," said Dick, half an hour or so later, when the storm had slackened.

"Right-ho!" I replied. "No reason why he shouldn't have it."

And we stowed the borrowed bikes in, and drove the shivering horses home.

That's all!

THE END.

REAPPEARANCE

of the

PENNY POPULAR!

OUR GREAT BUNTER PLATE.

I want to urge upon every reader of the MAGNET the necessity of ordering his copy of the "Penny Popular" in advance. As I told you last week, the "Penny Pop" will reappear on January 24th. Don't think you will be able to go to your newsagent's on this day and obtain a copy of the paper without difficulty. Newsagents are still prevented from returning unsold copies of papers, and therefore they only order those copies for which they know they have a sale. If you order your copy in advance, then you are sure of getting it; if you fail to take this necessary precaution, then there is every possibility of your meeting with disappointment.

This particular issue of the "Penny Popular" should be of special interest to readers of the MAGNET, for with it will be

GIVEN FREE

a magnificent plate of Billy Bunter, the size of which will be 10in. by 6in. A reproduction of this plate appears on this week's cover. In the centre of the plate you will observe a head-and-shoulders picture of Billy Bunter. Round this are eight other pictures of the Owl of the Remove, as follows:

Bunter the Boxer,
Bunter the Dandy,
Bunter the Footballer,
The Happy Bunter,
The Thoughtful Bunter,
Bunter Blubs,
Poor Old Bunter!
Bunter Smiles.

Such a plate as this has never before been given away with a boys' paper, and therefore I would urge upon every reader of the MAGNET not to fail to obtain a copy.

Don't forget that one of the stories in this number of the "Penny Popular" will be entitled "Billy Bunter's Postal-Order," by Frank Richards.

The other two stories are "D'Arcy's Delusion," by Martin Clifford; and "The Rivals of Rookwood," by Owen Conquest.

Remember! You can avoid disappointment by ordering in advance.

THE EDITOR OF THE "P. P."

THE RAID ON THE UPPER FOURTH DORMITORY.

By W. H. O. KNOZOO.

It was bold Harry Wharton who spoke unto his men:

"We'll beard the Temple in his lair, the lion in his den!

Take each your deadly bolster, and let each man fight like ten!"

And every staunch Removite was keen to try a fall—

Bob Cherry, Nugent, Johnny Bull, he whom we Inky call,

The Bounder, Squiff, and Peter Todd—they were ready, one and all!

Dick Russell and his Highland chum, Don Ogilvy, the wary,

And Morgan from the hills of Wales, and one who's never chary

Of running risks when mischief calls—Desmond from Tipperary.

Piet Delarey, from Afric's shores, and Tara-naki Brown,

And burly Percy Bolsover, with his most ferocious frown,

Tom Redwing and Mark Linley, Kipps, of conjuring renown;

And Hazeldene and Penfold, and Newland and Dick Rake,

With Hilary and Bulstrode, the giddy war-path take.

E'en deaf Tom Dutton hears the call; e'en Mauly is awake!

Wibley, Treluce, and Trevor, Smith (Robert Fortescue),

Wun Lung and Jimmy Vician, they're to the colours true;

And in the rear come gingerly the craven-hearted few—

Sly Fish and crafty Skinner, and Sidney Snoop and Stott,

And that stout porpoise, Bunter, least war-like of the lot,

If aught had hung on Bunter's pluck, our chance had gone to pot!

Like a tiger on its hapless prey, like Britons on the Hun,

We burst into the Fourth Form dorm, and took each mother's son

Therein completely by surprise. Like a shot out of a gun

One Wharton dashed at Temple and smote him on the head—

A mighty blow!—ere he could guess who stood beside his bed;

But quick jumped Temple to his feet, with angry face and red.

And they rallied to him gamely, Dabney and Fry and Scott,

And Murphy and MacDougall, and all the giddy lot;

And a most tremendous battle was waged around the spot

Where Cecil Reginald and our bold Harry Wharton whacked

Hard at each other's craniums. No doughty champion slackened.

(Though Bunter crawled beneath a bed, that statement's still a fact!)

And in the midst of all someone came in, and on his napper

Bob Cherry brought his bolster down—then saw 'twas Mr. Capper!

And Bob, dismayed, could only stammer: "It was—er—a mishap—er!"

(And the rest cannot be told in rhyme. It wasn't a bit poetical. Capper has no soul for poetry or for war. Let's put it in one line—Swish, swish, swish!—and more swish!)

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 102—THE REST OF THEM.

THIS is the final article of a series which has proved amazingly popular. Of course, I expected it to be popular, or I should not have started it. But I never guessed how enthusiastic my readers would be about it.

Some of them would like it to go on for a long time yet. But I think the time has come to close it up.

Of the characters who really matter to the stories scarcely any remain undealt with, and the few who could be classed as of any importance have figured for so short a time that they do not offer much chance of interesting treatment.

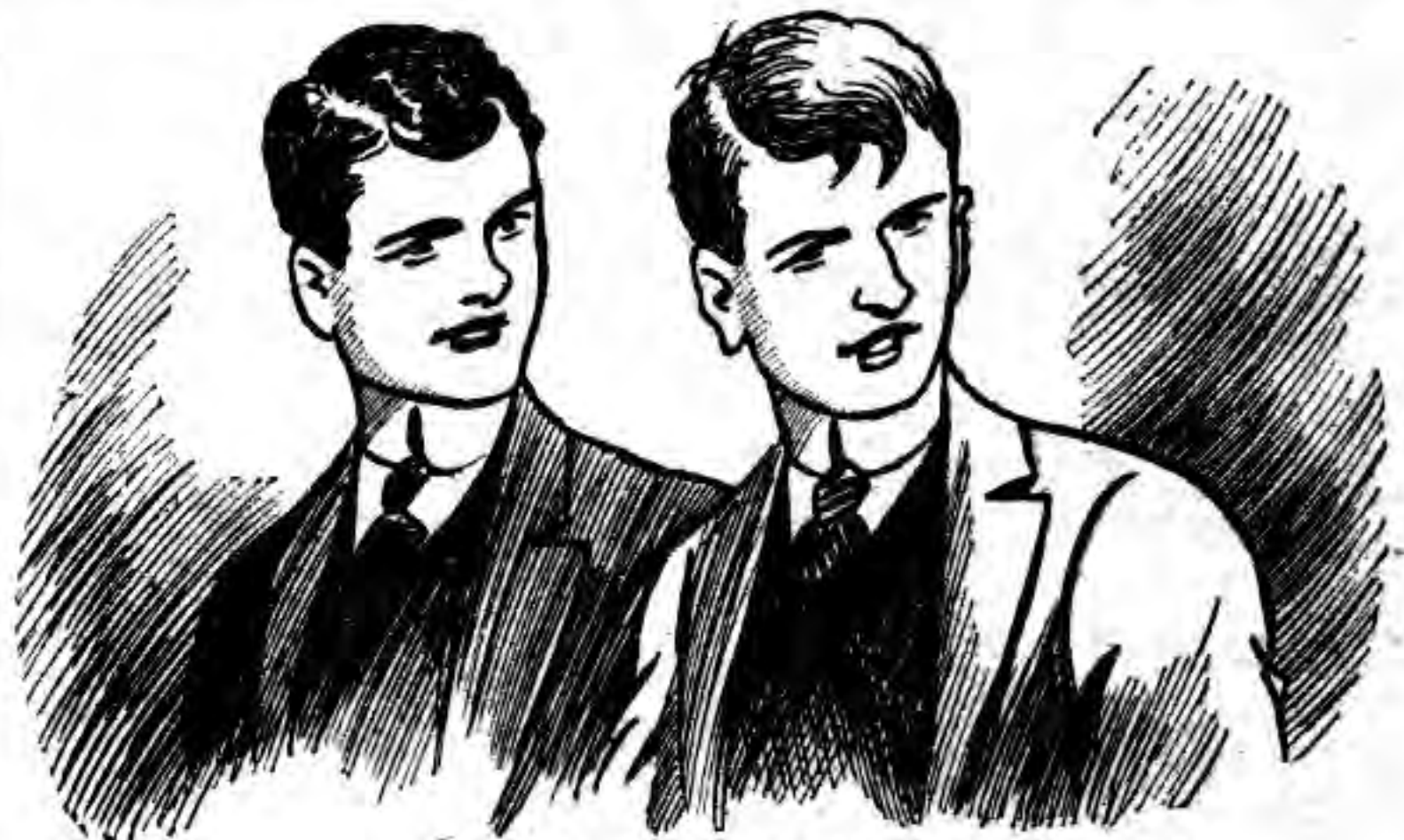
Perhaps the most outstanding figure among them is that of Aubrey Angel. But it is only a few months ago that we first read about Angel, and we all know what he is—a wrong 'un through and through, possibly the worst fellow at Greyfriars. There is his pal Kenney. But Paul Kenney is another Stott—vicious enough, but with little go in him.

There is little Napoleon Dupont, Bolsover major's stable companion, of whom we may hear more yet. And there is Dick Hilary, the son of the erstwhile Conchy. Very good fellow, Hilary—fellow with a conscience and courage. But we know all about him, don't we?

Then there are quite a lot of fellows who have never figured at all prominently, such as Trevor and Treluce, Smith minor and Glenn in the Remove; Faulkner and Hammersley and North in the Sixth; Bland and Fitzgerald and Hilton and Smith major and Price and Tomlinson major in the Fifth; Scott and Tomlinson minor and others in the Upper Fourth; Castle and Pettifer and Marsden in the Second; some in the Shell and the Third also.

But what is there one can say of any of them, beyond a line or two? For the most part they are merely members of the chorus, so to speak.

Bland is Blundell's special chum, and stood by him loyally when Hilton made a bid for the captaincy of the Fifth. That is about the only thing ever recorded of Hilton, whose own chum is Tomlinson major. Terence Fitzgerald is a genial Irishman. Scott, of the Upper Fourth, is a level-headed North Briton, who would probably make a better skipper for the Form than Temple, who is really a bit of an ass in many ways. Trevor and Treluce don't amount to much; they



TREVOR AND TRELUCE.

are never found cutting a dash. On the whole, they are inclined to lean to the wrong side when the Form divides itself on any question. But they only lean; they don't push hard. Glenn—who has gone now—and Smith minor may be set down as quiet fellows with no harm in them. Marsden aspires to be the humorist of the Second; but the fags have no craving for a verbal humorist—the kind of humour that appeals to those young gentlemen is of the practical joking type.

There are people at Highelife who might have been dealt with. The Head, Dr. Voysey, for instance; but when one has said of him that he is a weak, irresolute man, with a tendency to snobbishness, one has said all that matters. Arthur de Bohun Langley, the Highelife skipper, is a very likeable sort indeed, but slack and easy-going, and with some tastes that are no good either to himself or to the school. The other Sixth-Formers there, as far as we know them, are all rather slack and rather doggish. Monson major of the Fifth is a hulking

bully; his younger brother of the Fourth—he might have been given an article to himself, but really he has never done anything much but follow Ponsonby's lead—is one of the nuts, rather sulky, but with something better in him than either Gadsby or Vavasour. Drury is another nut, but less decidedly of the Pen faction than Monson minor. Pelham and Blades also follow Pon's lead at times. But Smithson and Yates and Jones minor and Benson are all Courtenay-ites, and very decent fellows.

Except for Dick Trumper and Bolly Lazarus the Courtfield boys do not matter a great deal. But Dicky Brown and Walter Grahame may be mentioned here—both all right, you know.

At Cliff House there is only little Molly Gray, the red-headed junior with the lisp, who is a good chum of Merton's, and a favourite with Marjorie & Co. But about Cliff House it is more than likely that you will have the chance to learn a great deal more within a few months. There is a surprise in store in that connection.



The Rev. Mr. LAMBE.

There are relatives of the boys of Greyfriars who might have been dealt with, as Johnny Bull's aunt and uncle, and dear Horace's Aunt Judy, and Colonel Wharton, and Major Cherry, and Uncle Benjamin Todd, and Sir Reginald Brooke, and Josiah Snoop, have all been. But there is not much to tell you about Frank Nugent's father and mother except that he is quick-tempered and she is wrong-headed and intemperate; nor much about Harry Wharton's gentle Anne Mary, except that she is the sort of aunt any fellow would be proud to have; nor much about Mr. Miram K. Fish, except that he is very much Fishy's father; nor much about Mr. Abraham Sylvester, except that he seems a good sort, although a millionaire. There are Mark Linley's father, a fine specimen of the best kind of British working-man, and Mark's sister, Mabel, a nice girl, and his wayward younger brother, Gerald, who does not amount to much. There are also Mrs. Locke, the Head's wife; nothing but good to be said about her, and not much to be said anyway. Percy Locke, nephew of the Head, would offer more scope; but he only appeared in one story, and the chief thing one remembers about him is that Godling, who is not a very affectionate person, seemed fond of him. I had nearly forgotten Dick Penfold's good old father—a cobbler and a gentleman! Mr. Joseph Banks and Captain Punter are other characters outside the school walls; but these two have closer connection with St. Jim's, and may be dealt with in the "Gem" later.

The Rev. Orlando Beale Lambie, Vicar of Friarcliffe, of whom we have a portrait, remains. It was Mr. Lambie who got the jumping crackers which the Famous Five, taken in by the bonfire, meant for Godling, reported to be coming along in the dusk. And it was Mr. Lambie who, at the Friarcliffe Bazaar, dropped hard on to innocent Harry Wharton for what was really the sinful Bunter, practising his ventriloquism at Mr. Lambie's expense.

Of course, there have been quite a number of boys who have figured in a story or two, and then disappeared from the scene. At every school boys come and go. Greyfriars is no exception to that rule.

Let us recall some of them—I cannot pretend to remember quite all.

There was Arthur Brandreth, whose father came so near to suffering for the crime of Josiah Snoop. A good sort, Brandreth, older than his years in some ways, loyal and plucky, and most forgiving. Then do any of you remember Theophilus Phipps, who talked a bit like Skimpole of St. Jim's, and was great on hygiene—"The Young Health-Seeker," and all that—and did the weirdest things? Theophilus was not the kind of boy any Form-master would want to keep; but I should not mind seeing him back for a while. Then there was Arthur Jolly, who changed places with Peter Potts, the new page young dog, Jolly, but amusing. Poor Potts in the Form-room! Olive Cholmondeley never came to the school; his place was taken by Tom Handley, the ship's boy who wanted an education. Gen Fitzpatrick came only to run away to sea; the sea called Gen, and he could not be dealt to that call. Jack Jersey, the efficient and avaricious, took the place for a brief time, by the help of making-up, of Archie Drake, the would-be Admirable Crichton. Herbert Spring, a young scoundrel, came in the name of his young

brothers; but Conrad Spring turned up, and Herbert went. We may hear more of them.

Do you remember Cecil Leigh, whose real name was Henry Hopkins, and who was assumed of his father, the worthy old publican who had saved to make a gentleman of him? And Cyril Vane, Bob Cherry's cousin, rather a young pup, though he improved before he left? And Algy Darrell, whose secret gave trouble during his short stay? He had been sacked from his former school because he had shielded a guilty chum. And Jack Holt, the boy from the farm, supposed to be Sir Harry Beauchere, but really a very much better fellow than that atrocious young bounder and cad, who did not misplace his aspirates, but had hardly any other redeeming quality? And Paul Sidney, the protégé of Farrants Locke, who had been a talent, but had put his past behind him, only to find it rise up against him? And Rupprecht von Rattenstein, that naughty Hun, a lovely specimen of the German race, rotten to the core? And Heath, cruel and treacherous?

Dalton Hawke was scarcely a genuine boy. Farrants Locke sent him along to play detective, and he went when his task was accomplished. But in another sense he was quite a genuine boy, for the vicars suited him and the Greyfriars.

This is not all, I know. There were the fellows known as "the Terrible Two"; but they also were not genuine boys. There was Gadsby—no relation to him of Highcliffe, I believe—who was sacked for the theft of a valuable postage stamp. No doubt there were others; but I cannot pretend to give an exhaustive list. It is quite a little world, this of the Greyfriars stories, and I have forgotten the very names of some of its many inhabitants.

Something must be said about the members of the school staff, tutorial and domestic, who have not been dealt with. But the only thing I can recall about Mr. Kelly, lately away in the Army, is that he sent Sammy Bunter, as a new boy, to wash his nasty, grubby paws, and that Sammy did not like it a little bit. And what can be said about Mr. Eusebius Twigg and his brother, Mr. Bernard Morrison Twigg, save that they are there, and no doubt doing their duty as per catechism?

Mrs. Keble is an efficient matron—at least, I know nothing to the contrary. We don't see much of her; the Second may see more. Joseph Minble is the husband of Jessie, the dame of the tuckshop; Joseph tends the Head's garden, and is not fond of boys. And that's all.



DALTON HAWKE.

DON'T FORGET TO GET
THIS WEEK'S

GEM!

You MUST Read

"Billy Bunter at St. Jim's."

THE EDITOR'S CHAT.

For Next Monday :

"A DOG WITH A BAD NAME!"

By Frank Richards.

Wally Hunter is the dog with the bad name, of course.

It really is rough on Wally. Apart from his looks and his big appetite, he has no more in common with his cousin Billy than Harry Wharton or Bob Cherry has.

But to Greyfriars he is Billy, and the burden of Billy's sins is heavy upon his shoulders.

He fancied that staying on at Greyfriars would mean playing for the junior football team. But he had forgotten that his form on the field did not count. It was Billy's want of form—Billy's exact ineptitude, rather, that counted.

He thought, too—poor old Wally!—that the friendly terms he had established with Harry Wharton and his circle would continue. But when Wally became Billy, well, you can see how it altered everything!

W.G.B. AT ST. JIM'S!

Meanwhile, if you don't read the "Gem," you are losing your Billy Bunter—and missing some of the finest school stories ever written!

No good writing to me to complain about the transfer of the egregious Billy to the "Gem"! I shall not show the least sympathy. I am enjoying both sets of stories too much for that. Wally, burdened with Billy's sin, is a fine substitute for Billy at Greyfriars; and Billy at St. Jim's is too funny for words!

ABUSE!

I have received two abusive letters from a reader whose initials are M. G.—he gives his name, but I have no great confidence in its being his right one—and whose address is "London." I don't know whether he expects an answer. I don't know why he reads the papers, which plainly don't satisfy him now. He pours unmeasured abuse on the long stories, the short stories, and the Chat. I can always find room, he says, for the piffle I call short sermons. He is wrong. It may or may not be piffle; I fear that to a fellow of his type anything about playing the game and being decent would seem piffle. But I don't write for fellows of his type; and it very often happens that I cannot find room for what I want to say.

He is sure that the circulation of the papers are decreasing; and he is very far wrong again there. The circulation figures bear out what I gather from the general tone of my correspondence—that the very great majority of readers are absolutely satisfied.

It is so very easy to drop a paper if it does not suit you. It is never worth while to abuse an editor on that account, for the chances are that he has never set out to please the kind of person you unhappily are.

M. G. is under the foolish delusion that Messrs. Clifford and Richards "control" the papers. This in itself is a fairly clear proof of his general ignorance. In spite of that ignorance, I should not mind civil criticism from him. But abuse is not criticism; and hopes that the two papers are going all to pot come very badly from one who assumes a right to say what should or should not be in them. Perhaps M. G. would like to come along and edit them?

But on the whole I cannot offer him the job. I have no confidence in his judgment, not so much because it differs from mine as because it differs from that of nearly all his fellow-readers.

He says he knows that both papers are doing badly—that is why I ask for more readers, he is sure. It does not occur to him, I suppose, that every editor always wants more readers. As a matter of fact, the MAGNET and "Gem" alike are going great guns. Our circulation is very well indeed, thank you!

YOUR EDITOR.