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A DOG WITH A BAD NAME!



BUNTER'S BUCKSHEE BATH!

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A Dog with

A Laughable, Long
Story of Harry
Wharton & Co. at
Greyfriars.



a Bad Name!

BY

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THE FIRST CHAPTER.

No Change for Bunter!

"HOOK it!" Three or four voices uttered that command at once, as a fat face looked into Study No. 1 in the Remove passage.

There was an important discussion going on in that famous study; and Harry Wharton & Co. did not seem desirous of Bunter's company.

"Cut!" said Wharton, pointing to the doorway. "We're busy, Bunter."

"Look here—"

"Don't you understand English?" asked Bob Cherry. "I'll put it in German if you like. Getten-sie out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry's meaning was clear; but his German would certainly have made a Hun smile—if any Hun is capable of a smile in these days.

"Look here, you fellows—" persisted the fat junior.

"Hook it!"

"You're fixing up for the Highcliffe match, I understand—" went on Bunter.

"You understand?" said Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, in a tone of great surprise.

"Yes. Isn't it so?"

"Oh, yes, it's so," agreed the Bounder. "But it's rather new for you to understand anything, Buntie."

"You silly ass—"

"Cut off, Bunter!" said Harry Wharton impatiently. "You know you mustn't interrupt the footer committee."

"But I want—"

"Never mind what you want. Get out!"

"But I want—"

"Buzz!"

"I tell you—"

"Scat!"

"Look here, you silly idiots—" roared the fat junior wrathfully.

"My hat! If he doesn't understand English, perhaps he will understand this cuss!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

He grasped a cushion and hurled it, and Bunter jumped out into the passage just in time.

The cushion bounced on the opposite wall, and fell to the floor.

"That's cleared him," grinned Bob.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What? Oh!"

Whiz!

The heavy cushion came back.

It caught Bob Cherry under the chin as he jumped up, and he sat down again in a hurry, just missing his chair.

There was a loud bump as Bob landed on the carpet, and a louder yell followed. Bunter grinned in at the doorway.

"Go it!" he said. "I'll keep it up as long as you do, fathead!"

Bob Cherry gasped.

"I—I—I'll slaughter him! I'll spifficate him! You wait a tick for me, Bunter, you Owl!"

Bob Cherry jumped up and rushed for

the door. But the fat junior did not wait. He melted away in the passage.

"Hold on, Bob!" called out Harry Wharton. "We've got to wind up before tea, you know."

Bob Cherry granted, and came back into the study.

"There'll be a dead Owl found lying about Greyfriars one of these days," he said darkly. "I'm getting fed up with Bunter."

"Well, about the Highcliffe match," said Vernon-Smith. "I really think Redwing ought to be put in the front line. Of course, it's for you to settle, Wharton. But Redwing is really good stuff, you know."

The captain of the Remove smiled.

Smithy was rather given to urging the claims of his chum, in season and out of season.

"He's good man," admitted Wharton. "But—"

"One of the best," urged the Bounder.

"Admitted; but the Highcliffe match is rather a corker," said Harry. "We can't afford to run risks with it. Courtenay's team is in tip-top form. We want to send our very best men over there on Saturday."

"That's what I'm getting at," remarked Smithy.

"H'm! But—"

"You haven't finally settled the front line yet?"

"No; but—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's that fat bounder again!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in tones of great exasperation.

The door of No. 1 had reopened, and the fat face and glimmering glasses looked in again. Bunter held up a fat hand.

"Hold on!" he said. "Can't you let a chap speak a word? It's really important, Wharton."

"Hook it!" roared Bob.

"I want to play on Saturday—"

"What?"

"Give me a chance in the Highcliffe match—"

"You—you silly Owl!"

"Fathead!"

"Ass!"

"Look here! You ought to give a chap a chance," urged the fat junior. "You've seen me at practice lately. You want a man in the front line. Well, I'm your man. What's the good of my sticking at footer if I never have a chance in a match?"

"You silly ass!" exclaimed Wharton impatiently. "You know you can't play footer. You play a sillier game than Coker of the Fifth—if possible. You hardly know a footer from a footer-boot! Buzz off!"

"You've seen me—"

"I know you've picked up at practice," said Harry, with a nod.

"That's surprising enough, in a fat slacker like you—"

"Who's a slacker?"

"You are, you lazy Owl! The fattest and laziest slacker at Greyfriars!"

"Look here—"

"Next time we're playing a home for idiots we'll put you in the team, if you like," said Wharton. "Until then, go and eat coke! Now buzz off!"

"I want you to understand—"

"Cut!"

"You see—"

"Nuff said!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "This is where the silly Owl gets it in the neck! Fed up!"

He made a rush at the Owl of the Remove as he spoke, and this time, Bunter did not dodge quickly enough. Bob Cherry's powerful grasp closed on him.

"Frog's march!" cried Wharton.

"Collar him!" exclaimed Squiff, the Australian member of the committee.

The juniors collared Bunter on all sides. His weight was considerable; but many hands made light work, and he was swept off the floor, roaring.

"Carry him home!" grinned Smithy.

"Yaroooh! Leggo!"

Bunter, yelling, was rushed into the passage, and along it to No. 7. He was tapped on the floor half a dozen times before No. 7 was reached; and at each tap he let out a terrific yell. Smithy kicked open the door of No. 7, and the fat junior was rushed in.

Bump!

Bunter landed on the study table with a concussion that made it dance.

"Now, you come back, and next time we'll shove your head in the coal-locker!" panted Bob Cherry.

"Yaroooh!"

Harry Wharton & Co. left No. 7 and returned to their quarters. The footer discussion was resumed, without any further interruption from Bunter. That plump youth sat up on the table in No. 7 gasping for breath.

"Ow-ow-ow! Grooogh!" he gasped. "Silly asses! Oh, dear! Yow-ow-ow! I'm jolly well going to get into the team somehow, all the same! Oh, dear! I wish I'd never changed places with Billy—I might have got some footer at St. Jim's at least! Ow!"

That reflection came rather late in the day to Wally Bunter, who had taken the place of his cousin Billy at Greyfriars, unknown to anyone else in the school.

Billy Bunter, who couldn't play footer for toffee, had gone to St. Jim's with Wally's footer reputation; and Wally, his cousin and double, was at Greyfriars, with Billy's happy reputation of being a duffer at everything in general, and football in particular.

And Wally Bunter had the exasperating consciousness of being as good a footballer as any fellow in the Remove—and the absolute certainty of never playing a match so long as he was supposed to be Billy Bunter!

It was really too thick for words, and the worst of it was that it couldn't be helped unless Wally owned up that he

wasn't Billy, in which case he couldn't have stayed at Greyfriars at all.

If Harry Wharton & Co. had only known—

But they didn't know!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Dog With a Bad Name!

"**H**A, ha, ha!" "Here comes the merry footballer!"

"Bunter's latest!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a general chortle in the junior Common-room that evening when Bunter of the Remove rolled in.

Bunter's demand for a place in the Remove Eleven had tickled the Remove no end, as they expressed it themselves.

There were good footballers in the Remove who had no chance of figuring in the Highcliffe match, which was one of the three toughest fixtures in the list, the other two being the matches with St. Jim's and Rookwood. For Bunter to demand a place in the team for that match, of all others, struck the Remove, as being the joke of the season.

Wally Bunter grunted as he found himself the centre of the general merriment.

It was really his own fault. He was playing the part of Billy Bunter of his own accord, that being the only way of gratifying his keen desire to belong to Greyfriars. But certainly he had not realised the estimation in which his cousin Billy was held at the school.

No wonder Billy had been anxious to change places, and get a fresh start at St. Jim's, where he was not quite so well known! Wally was beginning to wonder whether he could keep up that change of identity for a whole term, as he had arranged with Billy.

At every step he was up against Billy's unenviable reputation, and it seemed a hopeless task to attempt to live it down.

"Good old Bunter!" chuckled Johnny Bull. "He does these things to cheer us up, and make us forget the rations."

"The cheerfulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Singh. "Without the esteemed fatheaded Bunter there would be no smilefulness."

"Bunter a footballer!" roared Bolsover major. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'd undertake to play your head off, anyway!" grunted Wally.

"The playfulness would be terrific!"

"If Wharton had any sense he would put me in the team!" growled Wally.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I haven't that kind of sense, my fat infant," he replied. "Ask me something easier."

"Cheeky ass!" said Hazeldene. "You're not good enough for a match with the Second Form, let alone with Highcliffe."

"Oh, rats!"

"Don't be an ass, Bunt, old scout!" said Peter Todd good-naturedly. "You can't play footer or cricket; you can't do anything but guzzle, and borrow bobs, and tell whoppers! That's your line. Stick to it!"

"Who tells whoppers?" howled Wally.

"You do, my fat tulip; mountains of them!" said Peter, in surprise. "I suppose you're not going to claim to be a Georgie Washington as well as a footballer, are you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, you're a silly ass!" growled Wally resentfully. "I could prove to you that I'm a good man for the Form Eleven if I liked!"

"Ha ha! Go ahead and do it!"

"Only—only I can't—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wally's eyes sparkled over his cousin

Billy's spectacles. He was strongly tempted at that moment to speak out and announce that he was not Billy Bunter at all, but he checked himself in time. Even with Billy Bunter's unenviable reputation to struggle against he wanted to remain at Greyfriars, and he did not despair of yet making himself respected in the Remove, in spite of everything.

He sat down silently near the fire and took up a book. It was a Latin book, and some of the juniors who noticed that grinned. Billy Bunter was a slacker at work as well as at play, and the sight of the fat junior reading Latin for his own entertainment struck them as comic.

Billy Bunter was the last fellow in the world to set up as a swot, and the juniors concluded that the Latin book was some new stunt of the Owl of the Remove.

Bolsover major looked over his shoulder and grinned.

"I suppose you understand that, Bunter?" he asked.

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"Cicero."

"We don't have Cicero in the Remove," said Frank Nugent. "You've taken up Cicero on your own—what?"

"Why shouldn't I?" asked Wally.

"Ha, ha! No reason why you shouldn't if you want to, but don't expect fellows to swallow it, old top. What's the game?"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"Oh, I know the game!" grinned Skinner. "I've played that stunt myself! You pick out some awfully hard stuff and con over it when the cheery old Form-master is likely to come across you. Form-master spots it, and thinks to himself what a terrific hard worker you are, and goes easy with you ever afterwards. That's it, isn't it, Bunter?"

"No, it isn't!" snapped Wally.

"I fancy it is," said Bob Cherry.

"Why, you Owl, you can't construe Cæsar without tripping up all the time, and you want us to believe that you're reading Cicero!"

"The Cicerofulness is not terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a shake of his dusky head, "but the spooffulness is great!"

Wally's fat face flushed over his book.

He was really a hard worker, and he had a taste for study. He had worked for his bread before his good luck came along and he had a chance of going to St. Jim's—and had chosen Greyfriars instead under such peculiar circumstances. He was anxious to get on with his studies, and he really found an attraction in reading Cicero in the original. But again Bunter's reputation was up against him, and all the fellows took it for spoof.

"Let's make him construe!" grinned Snoop. "Make him stand up and construe Cicero, same as in class."

"Good egg!"

"Right-ho!" exclaimed Bolsover major. The bully of the Remove picked up a ruler, in imitation of Mr. Quelch's pointer, "Bunter!"

"Hallo?" grunted Wally.

"Stand up, Bunter!"

"Rats!"

"Stand up and construe!" roared Bolsover major.

"Go and eat coke!"

"He can't construe Cicero!" said Wharton. "What's the good of asking him? It's only spoof!"

"It's not spoof!" howled Wally. "I'll construe fast enough if you want to listen to it!"

"Ha, ha! Go ahead!"

"Pile in!" grinned Squiff. "What's the book?"

"In Verrom!" snapped Wally. "De signis."

"My hat! That sounds learned enough!" chuckled Tom Brown.

"What's it about, Bunt?"

The Removites chuckled. Fully convinced that the fat junior's study of Cicero's orations was merely a stunt, they did not expect him to be able to state what the book was about. But Wally answered cheerfully enough.

"It's old Cicero gassing about Verres, who played the goat in Sicily like the Huns in Belgium," he said. "You ought to know that. This is 'Liber Quartus.' I'll go on if you like."

"Go it!" came a chorus.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence for the swot!" roared Bolsover major. "Now, then, Bunter, get on with your 'Liber Quartus,' and if you don't construe right up to the mark you're going to get a licking, same as in class."

"That's only fair!" agreed Wharton.

"Begin, Bunter!"

"Oh, I don't mind," said Wally.

And he started from "Venio nunc ad istus . . ." and, to the amazement of the Removites and the Fourth-Formers in the Common-room, he went ahead without a fault. Wharton looked over his shoulder at the book, and he looked very puzzled. Bunter, who bungled Cæsar, seemed quite at home with Cicero.

"My only hat!" ejaculated the captain of the Remove at last. "He's really doing it!"

"He's got it by heart out of a crib!" sneered Skinner.

"I haven't!" roared Wally indignantly. "Wharton can see that I'm doing it from the book."

"It really seems like it," admitted Wharton. "It beats me. Of course, he may have got it up in advance, to spoof us."

"But fancy Bunter being able to mug up Cicero at all!" ejaculated Nugent. "Who'd have thought it?"

"I believe he's spoofing, all the same," said Bolsover major. "Go on from another part, Bunter."

"All right!"

Bolsover major turned the leaf himself, and pointed out a new place to begin. Wally went on cheerily from "Pro deum hominumque fidem." Bolsover major could only stare. He had selected that place for Wally to begin, and the fat junior could not be supposed to have mugged up the whole of the volume.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Bolsover.

"Well done, Bunter!" said a deep, quiet voice.

The juniors spun round.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, stood in the doorway, with a very approving smile on his somewhat severe face.

The Remove-master had been passing the junior Common-room, when he heard the very unusual sound of a fellow reading out Cicero within. Naturally, it had struck his ear, and he had stopped to give attention, unnoticed by the juniors, who were all watching Wally Bunter.

Wally started and coloured, and lowered the book hastily, as he heard the Form-master's voice.

Mr. Quelch gave him quite a benignant look.

"I congratulate you, Bunter!" he said. "You have made advances in your studies that I was certainly not aware of. You will be a credit to your Form, Bunter!"

"Oh, sir!" gasped Wally.

The Remove-master walked out into the passage, evidently well pleased. But the Removites did not look pleased.

They gave the fat junior accusing glances.

"You know Quelch was there!" said Skinner. "What did I tell you fellows! It's a stunt to curry favour with the masters!"

"I didn't know he was there!" shouted Wally angrily.

"Rats!"

"Rot!"

"Spoof!"

"How could I have known he was there?" shrieked Wally. "You silly asses, I hadn't the faintest idea—"

"Rats!"

"Spoof!"

"Dry up!"

"Don't tell any more whoppers, Bunter! Can't you see you're bowled out, you spoofing worm?"

Wally Bunter gave it up. Once more Billy Bunter's reputation had risen up and smitten him, as it were; and it was useless for him to protest.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Six on the War-path!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Wherefore this thushness?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Hurree Jamset Singh came in at the gates of Greyfriars—or, to be more accurate, he hopped in.

The Nabob of Bhanipur presented an extraordinary sight.

His right leg was tied up, being bent at the knee, and his dusky wrists were fastened together with a length of ear-rope. On his olive visage were several large dabs of white paint. His cap had been put on backwards, and his jacket turned inside-out.

Bob Cherry stared at him blankly.

"Inky, you ass! What the thump have—"

"Hallo! What's the matter with Inky?"

Harry Wharton and Johnny Bull and Nugent came racing up. They all stared at the nabob.

"Inky, old scout—"

"What the merry dickens—"

"Oh, dear!" gasped the nabob. "Yow-ow! I am an unhappy victim, my esteemed chums!"

He hopped in, and leaned on the open gate, gasping for breath. Gosling came out of his lodge and blinked at him, with high scorn. Gosling evidently did not approve of proceedings of this sort.

"My heye!" said Gosling. "Pretty goings hen! Wot I says is this 'ere, I shall report this!"

"My esteemed chums, I begfully demand to be released!" gasped Hurree Singh. "I have fallen into the hands of the disgusting Philistines."

"The Highcliffe rotters?" asked Wharton.

"Ow! Yes! I have suffered a terrific ragging."

"The rotters!" exclaimed Bob wrathfully.

"What the dickens did you let them handle you like that for?" asked Wally Bunter, who had come up with a dozen other fellows by this time.

"The esteemed rotters were six to one!" groaned Hurree Singh. "I have punched Ponsonby's esteemed nose, and dotted the worthy Gadsby in his ridiculous eye. But the too-muchfulness was terrific."

Hurree Singh's chums were cutting him loose from the rope already. But it was not an easy task. The Highcliffians had done their work well.

Most of the juniors were grinning. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's misadventure had its comic side.

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"The cheeky rotters!" exclaimed Wharton. "Where are they, Inky?"

"I fell in with the disgusting bounders at the corner of Redclyffe Lane as I returnfully came from Friardale," gasped the nabob. "There were Ponsonby and Gadsby, and Monson and Vavasour, and Drury and another esteemed beast. And they seized me collarfully."

Wharton knitted his brows.

The footer-match with Frank Courtenay's team at Highcliffe was almost due, and Wharton would willingly have avoided rags with the Highcliffe fellows just then. But Ponsonby, Courtenay's rival at Highcliffe, kept up all his old enmity towards Greyfriars, and he had been glad of the chance of causing trouble just before the match.

"I suppose they've cleared off by this time," said Johnny Bull, "otherwise we'd go out and mop them up!"

"The esteemed Pon declarefully remarked that he would wait for us, if we cared to come out," said the nabob.

"Then we'll jolly well go!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Five of us will be enough," said Wharton. "Five of Greyfriars are good enough for six Highcliffe nuts."

"Hear, hear!"

"Better take another man," said Wally Bunter. "I'll come."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—"

"Don't be funny, Bunter. This isn't a time for your little jokes," said Wharton. "Come on, you chaps! You feel up to tackling them again, Inky?"

"The tacklefulness will be terrific, my esteemed Wharton," said the nabob, dabbing at the paint on his face with his handkerchief. "I will come with enormous pleasure."

"Come on, then!"

And the Famous Five started at once, the nabob still dabbing at his face, which had a queer, mottled appearance. Wally Bunter cheerfully rolled out of the gates after the Co.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's that fat slug crawling after us!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as he noticed Bunter coming on behind.

Wharton looked round.

"Cut off, Bunter!" he said.

"Rot!" answered Wally. "There's six of the Highcliffe bounders, and you'll want another man."

"Cut off, you duffer!" exclaimed Bob Cherry impatiently. "You'll cut off fast enough when you see the Highcliffe chaps."

"Rats!"

"Look here, what game are you playing?" demanded Johnny Bull. "You know you're funky even of the Highcliffe cads!"

"You'll see!" growled Wally.

And he kept pace with the Famous Five as they marched forward on the war-path.

Wally was determined. This seemed really a good opportunity to retrieve his reputation—or, rather, his cousin Billy's reputation. He was a handy fellow with his hands, fat as they were, and he had no end of courage; and he was quite ready for a scrap with any number of Highcliffians. After seeing him put up a really good fight the juniors would not be able to deny that Bunter was worthy of respect, or at least civility.

Harry Wharton & Co. did not heed him further. They did not quite understand Bunter of late; but they had no doubt whatever that he was simply spoofing, as usual, and that he would flee at the first sign of the enemy.

The chums of the Remove walked quickly, and were not long in reaching the corner where Redclyffe Lane turned off from the Friardale Road.

There was a high bank beside the lane, with a fence at the top, and on top of the fence Ponsonby & Co. were seated in a row.

The nuts of Highcliffe grinned down at the new arrivals.

It was a half-holiday that afternoon, and Ponsonby & Co. were out looking for trouble, as they frequently were. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had fallen a victim to heavy odds, and the nuts had enjoyed ragging him; but Pon's offer to wait there till his friends came along had rather surprised his comrades. They were not looking for a battle royal on fair terms.

But Ponsonby was in a wilful humour, and he had his way. There was a good deal more of the fighting-man in Pon than in his comrades. And he had taken some precautions. On top of the steep bank the Highcliffians were in a strong position, and they had cut sticks from the hedge for use if required. So they felt a rather unusual confidence.

The Famous Five and Wally Bunter halted, and looked up at them.

"Here they are!" said Frank Nugent.

"And here we are!" said Bob. "We're looking for you, Ponsonby."

"You've found me!" remarked Pon agreeably.

"Blessed if I thought you'd really stay!" said Johnny Bull. "I thought you'd have bunked for safety."

"Oh, we're ready to lick you, if you're yearning for a dashed lickin'," said Pon carelessly. "Bounders have to be kept in their place; and the best way is by lickin' 'em, I suppose."

"Oh, rather!" agreed Gadsby.

"Absolutely!" grinned Vavasour.

"Well, we're ready for the licking," remarked Harry Wharton. "Chuck those sticks away, and come down here, and begin."

"Come and fetch us, dear boy!"

"We'll soon do that, if you don't come down!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Well, we're waitin'."

"Screw up your merry courage to the stickin' point, old beans!" grinned Monson. "Have a little pluck!"

The Co. gave them a grim look. They either had to begin the combat under very disadvantageous terms, or clear off and leave the Highcliffians to crow. And the latter alternative was not to be thought of.

Harry Wharton glanced at his comrades.

"Ready?" he asked.

"You bet!"

"Yes, rather!" said Bunter.

"You keep off the grass, you fat duffer! Come on, kids!"

And Harry Wharton led the way up the steep bank with a rush, his comrades close after him. And after them scrambled Wally Bunter, though, as the Remove did not look back, they were not aware that the fat junior was at their heels.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Hors de Combat!

"GO for 'em!"

"Give 'em socks!"

"The sockfulness will be terrific!"

Ponsonby & Co. slid off the fence and grasped their sticks.

The bank was steep, and the rush upward was rather breathless. As the attacking party came within reach the Highcliffians lashed and lunged with the sticks, and there were loud gasps and yells.

"Yarook!"

"You rotters, use your fists!"

"Ha, ha!" roared Ponsonby. "Give them jip!"

The Famous Five came on valiantly; but the Highcliffe nuts were hitting hard, and the lashing of the sticks was no joke. The rush stopped, and the Removites receded a little.

"Come on!" grinned Ponsonby.

"Absolutely! Come and have some more!" yelled Vavasour, brandishing his stick. "Yah! Funks!"

"Use your fists, you rotters!" panted Bob Cherry.

"Shift them!" exclaimed Ponsonby. "Charge!"

The Highcliffians came rushing down the steep bank, lashing out reckless blows.

The Removites were driven down the slope.

Nugent lost his footing and rolled down, narrowly escaping pitching into the ditch at the bottom. Bob Cherry closed with Monson, and rolled down the bank with him.

Johnny Bull crashed into Bunter, who was close behind him, and sent the fat junior rolling.

"Yoop!" roared Wally. "You clumsy ass! Oh!"

Squash!

The ditch along the lane was narrow but it was rather deep; and though there was little water in it, there was plenty of mud. Bunter sat fairly in the middle of it, and his fat legs disappeared, the mud squashing up round his waist.

He struggled frantically to extricate himself.

"Lend me a hand, you fellows!" he yelled.

But the Co. were too busy to heed Bunter.

Bob Cherry had Monson down, and had wrested his stick from him. He jumped up, and gave Monson the benefit of his weapon with such effect that the Highcliffian howled with anguish.

The other four of the Co. had been driven back to the lane, their fists proving futile against Ponsonby & Co.'s weapons. Pon and his friends crowded round Bob Cherry as he thrashed Monson.

"Down him!" shouted Pon.

Bob turned on the Highcliffians like an enraged lion.

He had a stick in each hand now, and though he was one against five, he did not hesitate. He rushed at them, lashing out as recklessly as Pon & Co. themselves had done.

Ponsonby uttered a wild yell as he received a crack on the head, and Gadsby roared as he caught a lunge with his chin. In a second the Highcliffians were backing away. Reckless lashes of a stick were not to their taste when directed against themselves.

Vavasour clambered over the fence, and started at a run across the field behind, evidently having had enough, though Bob had not reached him yet.

"Come on!" roared Bob.

Harry Wharton & Co. were already returning to the charge.

Bob's reckless attack scattered the Highcliffians; Pelham got over the fence and bolted after Vavasour.

But Pon and the rest, were too hard pressed to be able to get away, and they dodged and scrambled on the bank in dire apprehension.

Meanwhile, Wally Bunter, deeply embedded in the mud, and completely winded, gasped out appeals for help that were not heeded, as he strove to drag himself out.

But his efforts were in vain; the thick, deep mud held him in its grip, his own weight adding to its tenacity. There was nothing to catch hold of, and he squashed and wriggled in vain in the clinging mud.

He was completely out of the fight; not that his companions had expected

for a moment that Bunter would be in it.

But the fight was nearly over now.

Drury got across the fence and fled, and Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Monson were surrounded. They still had their sticks; but Bob Cherry's lashing blows were too much for them.

"Hold on!" gasped Ponsonby. "We give you best!"

"Pax!" quavered Gadsby.

"Put down those sticks, then, you cowardly rotters!" exclaimed Harry Wharton savagely. "You're going into the ditch!"

"That's the terms of the giddy armistice!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Look here——"

"That's enough! You can give in or fight it out, and you've got one second to decide in!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove roughly.

Bob Cherry took a tighter grip on his stick, ready for a charge; and the Highcliffians did not risk it. They threw down their weapons.

"I—I say, let us off, you know,"

was against him. He was still struggling in vain.

"Poor old Bunt!" grinned Bob Cherry. "What a giddy conquering hero!"

"Help, you fathead!"

"Blessed if I know how we're to get him out!" chuckled Nugent. "Anybody got a steam crane in his pocket?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Catch hold, and pull me out!" raved Wally. "I'm sinking deeper. I'm in a deep place. Yow-ow-ow!"

The Removites roared. Ponsonby & Co. even grinned as they looked at the fat junior. They were muddy enough themselves, but their state was quite natty in comparison with Bunter's.

The three Highcliffians beat a retreat, squelching out mud as they went, while Wally Bunter yelled for aid.

The grinning Removites gathered round him, and a branch, broken off a tree near at hand, was extended to him. Wally grasped it, and by the combined efforts of the Famous Five he was extracted from the ditch, a good deal like a cork from a bottle.



Bunter in a new light! (See Chapter 2.)

pleaded Monson. "We—we've given in!"

"My dear chap," said Bob Cherry, "we're up against Highcliffe militarism, and you're going to get the knock-out. Into the ditch—that's the terms of the armistice!"

And the three remaining Highcliffians were collared and rolled bodily down the bank.

"Look out!" yelled Wally Bunter. "Don't pitch the beasts on me!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter's sticking in the mud!" roared Bob Cherry. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lend a fellow a hand, you cackling dummy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you silly clumps——"

Squash!

Ponsonby landed in the ditch, and after him went Monson and Gadsby. The splashes of mud spattered Bunter as he sat within a few feet of them, and he roared again.

Ponsonby & Co. scrambled out actively on the other side, but Bunter's weight

"Yow-ow-ow-woooooop! I'm muddy! Ow!"

"The mudfulness is terrific," grinned Hurree Jamset Singh. "The esteemed Bunter should have stayed at home. The new stuntfulness was not the proper caper."

"Grooogh!"

"Ow!" said Bob Cherry. "I've got nineteen bumps on my napper, more or less. Those funky rotters——"

"Never mind; we've licked the Huns," said Wharton. "Let's get off. You'd better dive into the river before you come home, Bunter. You're a bit smelly with that mud."

"Grooh! Ow-ow-ow!" mumbled the unhappy Bunter. "All Bull's fault, the silly ass, for bumping into me!"

"What were you behind me for, you thumping ass?" answered Johnny Bull.

"Yow-ow! I was trying to get at the Highcliffe cads, wasn't I?"

"Rot!"

"Why, you silly ass, what do you think I was doing?" roared Bunter.

Johnny Bull shrugged his shoulders.

"What's the good of telling us you're not a funk when we know you are?" he demanded. "I dare say you sat in the ditch on purpose to keep out of the scrap. Just one of your tricks."

"Why, you—you—you—" spluttered Wally.

Words failed him.

He sat in the grass by the road and gasped.

Harry Wharton & Co. walked away towards Greyfriars, leaving the fat junior still spluttering. Wally scrambled up, and scraped himself down, and rubbed off as much mud as he could with bunches of grass. But he was still in a parlous state when he followed in the footsteps of the Co. to Greyfriars.

And, worst of all, he had quite failed to convince the chums of the Remove that he had meant business in taking part in the scrap. The tumble into the ditch had kept him out of it, and it was too like one of Billy Bunter's tricks not to be supposed one. Wally Bunter's reflections were dismal as he tramped home to Greyfriars.

It really seemed that there was no hope for it, and that he was destined to remain a dog with a bad name.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Major and Minor!

"O H, dear! Ow-ow-yow!"

Those dismal ejaculations proceeded from Sammy Bunter of the Second Form at Greyfriars.

Wally Bunter heard them as he came slowly up the lane towards the school, after cleaning all the mud he could off his person. Harry Wharton & Co. were long out of sight.

The fat junior paused.

Bunter minor was his cousin, and the fat fag looked as if he had been in the wars. He was gasping and groaning, and making frantic efforts to extract his cap from down his back.

"Hallo, tubby!" said Wally, halting.

Sammy Bunter blinked round through his big spectacles.

"Oh! You!" he said. "Why, couldn't you come along before, and lend me a hand, Billy, you fat idiot?"

Wally grinned at that brotherly greeting. He did not mind Sammy's lack of Chesterfieldian polish, so long as Sammy continued to believe that he was his brother Billy.

"Help me get this cap out, Billy, you grinning Owl!" howled the fag. "What are you standing sniggering for, you image?"

Wally obligingly extracted the cap.

"No need to suffocate me!" gasped Sammy. "You always were a clumsy Owl, Billy!"

"All serene now?" asked Wally.

"No!" growled the fat fag. "I'm not all serene! I'm winded and I'm hurt. Any other fellow's major wouldn't see him ragged by a Fourth Form cad, Yah!"

"Fourth Form chap been ragging you?" asked Wally.

"Yow-ow! Yes."

"Angel, perhaps? He's a bit of a bully," said Wally, his eyes gleaming over Billy Bunter's spectacles.

Wally had been far from pleased by some glances and words from Aubrey Angel, the dandy of the Fourth, and he was feeling inclined for a row with somebody. He was prepared at that moment to call on Angel of the Fourth, and bestow upon him what was really due to Ponsonby & Co.—on good cause being shown, of course.

But Sammy shook his head.

"Twasn't Angel," he said. "Angel's

down on me owing to your swindling him—"

"What?"

"I suppose you haven't forgotten swindling Angel of the Fourth?" asked Sammy sarcastically. "Why, lots of the fellows know about it. I heard Tubb and Paget of the Third chin-wagging about it. You betted with him on a footer-match—"

"I didn't!" shouted Wally indignantly. "I've never betted on a footer-match in my life."

"Gammon!" said Sammy. "Why, you mentioned that to me yourself."

"Eh?"

"And you lost, and tossed Angel double or quits, and never paid up," continued the fag. "You owe him the money now."

"Oh, my only aunt!" groaned the unhappy Wally.

He wondered how many more of his cousin's sins he was to be called upon to answer for.

"Angel's down on me whenever he sees me, and it's all your fault," said the fat fag. "But it wasn't Angel this time."

"Well, who was it?" asked Wally. "As your—your major, I'll take it up for you, if the chap's too big for you. Who is he, and what's he done?"

"Oh, come off!" said Sammy, with incredulous contempt. "You're afraid to look Temple in the face, let alone punch him!"

"Temple of the Fourth?" asked Wally.

"Yes, the swanking cad! I wasn't doing anything, really," groaned Sammy.

"He came along with Fry and Dabney, and they sat me down, and stuffed my cap down my back, and Fry said it was because I belonged to the Second, and the Second ought to be suppressed."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, what are you cackling at, you image?" roared Sammy, in great wrath. "Nothing funny in Fry's silly cheek, I suppose?"

"Well, on general principles, the Second ought to be suppressed," said Wally, with all the lofty pride of a Remove. "Still, I'm not going to have my cousin—I—I—I mean—"

"What are you talking about?"

"I'm not going to have my minor ragged by the Fourth. I'll make Temple apologise!"

"He, he, he!" It seemed to be Sammy's turn to cackle. "Don't be such a funny idiot, Billy! Swank doesn't suit you."

"I'll make him apologise, or lick him," said Wally firmly. "There's too much swank about Temple, and he ought to be sat on a bit."

"Catch you sitting on him. You'd run like a Hun if he made a face at you!" grunted Sammy.

"You'll see."

"Oh, come off!" said the fat fag impatiently. "You can't spoof me, if you can other chaps. Don't I know you, Billy?"

"Not so well as you think, perhaps," said Wally, with a grin.

"You look as if you've been ragged yourself," said Sammy, blinking at him. "You're muddier all over."

"That was a scrap with the Highcliffe rotters."

"Lots of scrapping you did, I don't think!" scoffed Sammy Bunter.

"I got stuck in a ditch, and couldn't help—"

"He, he, he!"

"Oh, dry up your cackling!" growled Wally. "Which way was Temple going? I'll go after him."

"He was going back to Greyfriars."

"Well, you come with me, and you'll

see me beard the giddy lion in his den," said the fat Remove.

"I'll see you climb down, and swallow all your dashed swank!" grunted Sammy; "and I'll come along specially to see you do it, you gassing duffer!"

And the fat fag rolled along towards Greyfriars with his major. Evidently Sammy had no faith in the fat Remove's warlike intentions.

"I had a letter from Bessie this morning," said Sammy, blinking up at Wally as they came towards the school gates.

"Bessie?" repeated Wally.

"Yes. She says you haven't sent her the half-crown you borrowed from her when you were home last time on the holidays!"

"D-d-does she?"

"Yes. She's written to you four times for it already."

"Has she?" groaned Wally.

"Yes. And she says you're a fat beast not to pay up!"

"Oh!"

"And she says if you don't send her the half-crown she'll come and see you at school, and make you square up!" continued Sammy, with a grin.

Wally jumped.

"C-c-come and s-s-see me!" he ejaculated.

"So she says. I don't believe she would spend the money on the railway-ticket, though!" said Sammy. "She's mean. She's as mean as you are, Billy, in money matters. Nugent minor, of my Form, gets tips from his sister when he goes home; but Bessie's never stood me anything. Didn't even pay for my ticket at the cinema!"

"Did you want her to?" grunted Wally.

"Of course I did, and so did you!" said Sammy warmly. "You know jolly well you whispered to me to let Bessie go in first and take the tickets, and she was too fly!"

"D-d-did I?"

"You know you did!"

Wally was silent. He knew his cousin Bessie only slightly, but he was aware that that young lady was very like her brothers Sammy and Billy. If Billy owed her half-a-crown, the matter was never likely to come to a finish till the half-crown was paid; but it would be Wally who would receive the next dunning letter from Miss Bunter. And it was worth half-a-crown to avoid the danger of Bessie Bunter looking in at Greyfriars. Wally had a well-founded fear of feminine sharpness, and he thought that Miss Bessie's eyes might detect what was invisible to Sammy's.

Already a considerable amount of Wally's pocket-money had gone in settling small debts left behind by Billy Bunter. This was another to put on the list. Wally was beginning to feel that one of the greatest pleasures in life would be to get within hitting distance of his absent cousin's nose.

The two Bunters came in at the gates, and Sammy blinked towards the School House, and grinned at Wally.

"There's Temple!" he said.

Temple, Dabney, and Fry were chatting in the quadrangle, and they grinned as they looked towards the Bunters. Wally walked on towards them.

"Now's your chance!" giggled Sammy.

"I'm taking it!" answered Wally Bunter.

"Oh, cheese it! You're not going to row with Temple, I know that!"

"Come and see!"

"He, he, he!" chortled the sceptical Sammy.

He rolled on after Wally, who marched straight up to the group of Fourth-Formers.

"Hello, here's Fat Jack of the Bone-house!" remarked Fry. "What do you want, Bunter?"

"I want a word with Temple!" said Wally. "You've been ragging my minor, Temple!"

Cecil Reginald Temple glanced at him loftily.

"Yes, I believe I did bump the fat little beast!" he yawned. "He looked so jolly sticky I thought it would do him good. I'm goin' to bump him every day till he washes his neck!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chorussed Temple's chums.

"I don't allow my minor to be ragged by Fourth Form bounders!" said Wally.

"Dear me! Here's Bunter beginnin' as a humorist!" said Temple. "The dear man doesn't allow! How are you goin' to prevent it, fatty?"

"I'm going to lick you!" explained Wally.

"Eh?"

"Lick you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Temple in great merriment. And Dabney and Fry burst into a yell.

Sammy Bunter blinked at his major in great amazement. Really, it looked as if Bunter of the Remove meant business.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Challenge!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"Bunter on the war-path again!"

"The warfulness of the ludicrous Bunter is terrific!"

Harry Wharton & Co. came along from the tuckshop, where they had been refreshing their elves with ginger-beer after the scrap with Highelife. They were greatly entertained by Bunter's belligerent looks, all the five being quite convinced that the fat junior had sat in the ditch in order to avoid conflict with Ponsonby & Co.

And here he was defying Temple of the Fourth, who was more than a head taller than himself, and who was rather a good fighting-man, in spite of his dandified ways. The chums of the Remove did not believe for a moment that he intended to tackle Cecil Reginald; but they were rather interested to see how he would manage to squirm out of it after delivering his defiance.

"Go it, Bunter!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Go for his nose!"

"He's been ragging Sammy!" said Wally.

"Well, the fat little beast can do with a ragging!" remarked Johnny Bull. "But let's see you wallop Temple, Billy!"

"I'm going to——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you ready, Temple?" demanded Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Temple. "Don't be so funny, Bunt! You're givin' me a pain in the ribs. You are, really!"

"I'm going to give you a pain in the eye if you don't put your paws up!" grunted Wally.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Isn't Bunter a corker?" chuckled Skinner. "He knows that Capper's at his study window, and there can't be a fight here, so he's as brave as a lion. This is as good as his working off cheery old Cicero when he knew Quelch was at the door!"

"I didn't see Capper, you rotter!" howled Wally.

"Gammon!"

"Cheese it, Bunt!"

Wally breathed hard through his fat little nose. True it was that Mr. Capper, the master of the Fourth, was at his study window reading, and that the group were

within full view of that window. Fighting was certainly out of the question under a Form-master's eyes.

"I knew you were spoofing, Billy!" said Sammy Bunter. "Dash it all, everybody knows you're spoofing! Chuck it!"

"I'm going to fight Temple!" said Wally.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I can't fight him here——"

"Of course you can't!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "That's why you're asking him to fight, you fat Owl!"

"It isn't!" shrieked Wally. "I'll jolly well lick you, too, Wharton, if I have much more of your cheek!"

There was a roar of laughter.

Wally stared round angrily at the merry juniors. Temple was almost doubled up with merriment.

"Look here, Temple, what time and place will suit you?" demanded the fat junior. "I mean business!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you be behind the wood-shed in a quarter of an hour?" asked Wally. "I've got to get this mud off, and then I'll be there! Gloves or not, just as you like!"

"Oh, don't be such a funny ass!" implored Temple.

"Will you be there?"

"Of course I won't! What's the good of my waitin' behind the wood-shed while you're hidin' in a corner somewhere?" grinned Temple.

"I tell you I'll be there!" said Wally.

"And if you don't come, Temple, I'll give you the coward's blow!"

"Draw it mild, fatty, or I shall squash you here and now!" said Cecil Reginald, frowning.

"I mean business!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"Funk!" said Wally.

"Wha-a-at?"

"Rotten funk!"

Temple's face flushed. He did not like being called a funk, even by so egregious a person as the Owl of the Remove.

"If you want me to wring your fat neck——" he began.

"You'll meet me behind the wood-shed, or else I'll start on you now!" said Wally.

Temple clenched his hands, but Edward Fry tapped him warningly on the arm.

"Look out! Capper's got his eye on you!" he murmured.

"That's why that fat cad is cheekin' me!" said Temple, frowning.

"Look here, Bunter, I've had enough of your foolin'. I'll be at the wood-shed in a quarter of an hour, and if you're not there I'll look for you with a cricket-stump, and give you the lickin' of your life! Savvy?"

"Done!" said Wally.

"And if you are there, I'll roll you over and nearly burst you!" said Temple.

"You're welcome, if you can do it!" said Wally cheerfully.

And he walked on to the House, leaving Temple looking very angry, and most of the fellows grinning.

That Bunter would turn up at the rendezvous nobody believed for a moment. Temple did not expect to find him there; and he was grimly determined that, if he failed to keep the appointment, the Owl of the Remove should have a record stumping for his impudence.

But at the appointed time Temple, Dabney & Co. sauntered round to the wood-shed, and some of the Remove went with them. They wondered whether Bunter might possibly carry his bluff to the length of turning up there.

Meanwhile, Wally was in the Remove dormitory, cleaning off the mud from his clothes and his person, and looking forward quite cheerfully to the encounter with the captain of the Fourth.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Stumped!

"BUNTER!" Wally Bunter was coming downstairs at a great rate, to keep his appointment with Temple of the Fourth, when Mr. Quelch called to him.

Mr. Quelch was standing in the hall, in company with Mr. Capper. The latter wore a portentous frown.

"Yes, sir?" said Wally, meekly approaching the two Form-masters.

"Mr. Capper informs me that you have been quarrelling with a boy in his form——"

"Oh, sir!"

"With Temple," said Mr. Capper. "I was surprised, and shocked, to see Bunter actually threatening Temple, almost under my study windows, without the slightest provocation. Temple kept his temper admirably—quite admirably! He is a well-behaved boy."

And Mr. Capper frowned very severely at Wally.

"You have been quarrelling with Temple, Bunter?"

"In—in a way, sir."

"Don't prevaricate, Bunter!"

Wally flushed crimson. He had not meant to prevaricate; but Mr. Quelch had been accustomed to prevarication from the Owl of the Remove.

"Oh, no, sir!" he stammered. "I didn't mean——"

"Have you quarrelled with Temple?" snapped the Remove-master.

"Well, ye-es, sir!"

"And where were you rushing in such a hurry when I called to you?"

"I—I was going out, sir."

"To meet Temple probably?" remarked Mr. Quelch drily.

"I—I was going to see him, sir."

"You need tell me no more, Bunter. This means, of course, that a fight has been arranged."

Wally was silent.

"You are a ridiculous boy, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch severely. "I had not observed before that you were quarrelsome. You must be very quarrelsome, however, to pick a dispute with a boy in another Form, and a boy with whom you certainly have no chance of success in an encounter. I forbid you to carry this foolish dispute further!"

"Oh, sir!" gasped Wally.

Mr. Quelch raised his forefinger in severe admonition.

"You are not to fight with Temple, Bunter! Doubtless you would be very severely treated if you did; but I shall not allow it. If I hear, Bunter, that you have fought with Temple, I shall send you to Dr. Locke, with a request that you shall be flogged!"

"Oh, sir!"

"I require your promise, Bunter."

"I—I——"

"I am waiting, Bunter!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Give me your word at once not to fight with Temple!"

There was no help for it.

"Very well, sir," said Wally. "I—I give it, sir."

"That will do. I advise you, Bunter, not to be quarrelsome, and not to be ridiculous," said Mr. Quelch.

And the Remove-master turned away with Mr. Capper, leaving the fat junior to his own devices.

Wally Bunter left the School House very slowly.

It was cruel luck!

He was on his way to meet Temple of the Fourth at the appointed place; and he had had to promise not to fight Temple.

He could guess that Mr. Quelch, apart from his disapproval of such methods of settling a dispute, regarded it as

ridiculous of him to have challenged the captain of the Fourth, and probably desired to save him from the severe handling he had provoked by his challenge.

If Mr. Quelch's motive had been that, Wally was not at all grateful for his kindness. He was exasperated.

Luck seemed to be against him all along the line. He could imagine the chuckle with which he would be greeted when he stated that he was forbidden to fight Temple.

He had given his word; and, unlike Billy Bunter, with Wally his word was his bond. And a flogging by the Head in case of disobedience was rather too serious a punishment to be lightly faced.

Wally was not feeling happy as he made his way to the wood-shed.

Owing to the talk with his Form-master he was a few minutes late, and the juniors on the spot had already given him up.

"I knew he wouldn't come!" said Cecil Reginald Temple. "I said so! And I said I'd stump him if he didn't—ah! I jolly well will, too!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Give him five minutes," said Harry Wharton.

"What's the good?"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he comes!" shouted Bob Cherry, as a fat figure came round the wood-shed.

"Ha, ha! Here's Bunter!"

"See the conquering hero comes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Bunter!"

"Now, I wonder what yarn he's goin' to spin to keep out of fightin' me?" remarked Cecil Reginald.

Wally Bunter came up with a troubled face. The juniors all regarded him with curious inquiry.

"Off with your jacket, Bunt!" grinned Bob Cherry. "I've got the gloves here."

"The—the fact is—" began Wally haltingly.

There was a roar of laughter. Everybody had expected the fat junior to begin with some excuse; and here he was beginning.

"Well, what's the yarn?" roared Bob.

"Got a pain somewhere?"

"Suddenly remembered an appointment with the Prime Minister?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Or is your postal-order coming, and are you going to maffick?" inquired the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The—the fact is, I—I can't!" stammered Wally.

"Oh, we know you can't!" chortled Fry. "We never expected you would! But what whopper are you going to tell?"

"Spin the yarn, Bunt! Let's hear the facts!"

"The facts!" roared Bob. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"The fact is, I can't fight Temple to-day!" said Wally, with a scarlet face. "It seems that old Capper was watching us from his window—"

"You knew he was when you started jawin' me," said Temple.

"I didn't!" yelled Wally.

"Rats!"

"That's why you did it!" grinned Fry.

"Own up, fatty!"

"Old Capper saw us, and he's spoken to Quelch," said Wally Bunter. "And—"

"And Quelch—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't cackle! Quelch's jawed me, and made me promise not to fight Temple!" panted Wally.

"And you didn't want to promise?" chuckled Bob Cherry. "You did it quite against your will, of course?"

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"Of course!" said Wally.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors roared.

"And Bunter's a slave to his word!" said Johnny Bull gravely. "We all know that! He wouldn't break a promise for a ton of toffee!"

"Of course I wouldn't!" yelled Wally indignantly.

"Not when it keeps you out of a scrap!" grinned Bob.

"I tell you I want to fight Temple, but—"

"Go ahead, then!" chortled Temple.

"But I've promised Mr. Quelch—"

"There was bound to be a 'but,'" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"The butfulness is terrific!"

"This is rather bright of Bunter," remarked Vernon-Smith. "He picks a quarrel with a chap who could mop him up with one hand, where a Form-master can see him—and manages to promise not to fight the chap—and is

"The Slacker!"



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BECOMING A CADET TO-DAY!

bound by a promise for the first time in his life—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So he reaps plenty of glory, and all Greyfriars can see what a hero he is—or would be if he hadn't promised!"

"I tell you—" shrieked Wally, as the juniors roared.

"Well, it may be bright of him," said Cecil Reginald Temple, with a nod. "Rather clever, I've no doubt! But I've made a promise, too, and I'm quite as much a slave of my word as Bunter is. I've promised him a stumping if he brought me here for nothin'. Are you ready, Bunter?"

"Look here—"

"You brought the stump, Dab?"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney. "Here you are, old top!"

Temple took the cricket-stump in his hand, and advanced towards the fat junior. Wally Bunter backed away in alarm.

"Look here, Temple—" he exclaimed.

"I'm going to stump you, dear boy. You can fight if you like, of course."

"I've promised—"

"That may be true, or it may not, but you never intended business in any case, an' you know it! What's the good of lyin'?"

"I tell you—"

"You needn't tell me anythin', old scout. You can get ready for a stumping," said Temple. "You're not goin' to waste my time for nothin'!"

Wally jumped back.

"Keep off, you rotter! I say, Wharton—"

"It's your look-out, Bunt," said the captain of the Remove, with a shake of the head. "You shouldn't go in for heroics, you know, when you haven't the pluck of a bunny-rabbit!"

"You cheeky rotter— Yaroooooh!" roared Wally, as Cecil Reginald got in a starter with the stump.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wally jumped and dodged. He could not fight Temple, that was certain, with both a flogging and a promise in the way. It looked as if he would have to take the stumping. Nobody was inclined to interfere. The general opinion was that the fat junior had asked for it, and they did not see any reason why he should not get it.

Temple was larruping the fat Remove heartily now, and Wally bounded to and fro in frantic efforts to dodge the stump, amid shrieks of laughter.

He fairly fled at last. It was not much use to stay there and be stumped.

"After him!" roared Dabney.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"By gad! I'm after him!" grinned Temple. "Don't you worry!"

The dandy of the Fourth was after Bunter like a shot. The fat junior put on an unexpected speed, but Temple kept close behind, lunging with the stump, and at every lunge there was a terrific yell.

Wally vanished round the wood-shed and fled for the quadrangle, and Temple stopped as they came in sight of the School House windows. The unhappy Bunter disappeared from sight, unpursued further.

Temple panted for breath as he halted at last. There was a roar of merriment from the following crowd.

"See the conquering hero goes!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"By gad! I fancy it will be a long time before that cheeky fag starts challengin' the Fourth again!" chuckled Temple. And he walked away with Dabney and Fry in great good humour.

The crowd broke up, chortling. The affair had ended just as they expected it to end, and they had found it entertaining. And in Study No. 7 in the Remove Wally Bunter dolefully rubbed the places where the stump had smitten, and bemoaned his bad luck.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Up Against It!

PETER TODD indulged in a chuckle when he came into Study No. 7 to tea with Tom Dutton. Wally Bunter was there, and he was not looking happy.

Temple had smitten with the stump—perhaps not wisely, but certainly too well.

Wally blinked dolefully at his study-mates over Billy Bunter's glasses. But it was evident that they had no sympathy to waste on him.

"Feeling bad, Fatty?" asked Peter.

"Ow! Yes."

"Serves you right, doesn't it, my fat tulip?"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"You shouldn't do these humorous turns, you know," said Peter. "You're too funny, Bunter! You'll be challenging Coker of the Fifth next, and promising somebody not to fight him!"

"Don't, you believe I promised Quelch, you rotter?"

"You may have, or you may not. Your statement on the subject, my fat pippin, doesn't affect the matter one way or the other."

"Oh!" stuttered Wally.

It was not much use being angry with Peter Todd. Peter supposed that he was talking to Billy Bunter, and Billy Bunter had a reputation for untruthfulness that would have made Ananias green with envy.

"You're a young ass, Bunter!" said Tom Dutton. "You've made this study look silly with your rot!"

"Can't look much sillier than it is!" retorted Wally.

"Eh?" said Dutton, putting his hand to his ear.

"Oh, rats!" grunted Wally. His temper was rather morose just then. "Get an ear-trumpet, or get me a megaphone, or don't talk."

"Pork?" said Tom Dutton, in astonishment.

"Br-r-r-r!"

"Do you mean for tea?" asked the deaf junior. "Where did you get it from? Can you get pork without a coupon now?"

"Fathead! Who's talking about pork?" roared Wally.

"Why, you are!"

"I'm not!"

"Hot?" said Dutton. "Certainly I like pork hot; but the question is, have you got any pork? You're such a spoofer—"

"Oh, help!" gasped Wally.

"If we're going to have pork for tea, well and good," said Dutton. "I'm hungry after footer practice. What are you opening the sardines for, Peter?"

"Tea!" yelled Peter.

"But Bunter says we're going to have pork."

"There isn't any pork!"

"All right. Where's the corkscrew?" asked Dutton.

"Corkscrew!" howled Peter. "What do you want a corkscrew for?"

"Didn't you ask me to draw a cork?"

"Oh, my hat! No!" roared Peter.

"You needn't roar at me, Peter Todd! I'm not deaf! Blessed if this study doesn't seem to me like a lunatic asylum sometimes!" grunted Dutton. "You and Bunter talk the most awful rot sometimes. If you don't want me to draw a cork, what do you want me to do, then?"

"Only hold your jaw, old chap, for mercy's sake!"

"All right," said Dutton.

He turned to the study cupboard, and then looked round at Peter.

"I can't see it here, Toddy."

"Can't see what?"

"The cake."

"Cake?" repeated Peter dazedly.

"Yes. Where is it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wally.

"I don't see anything to cackle at, Bunter! If you are pulling my leg, Todd, talking about a cake—"

Peter did not answer. He was apparently deaf. Conversation with Tom Dutton sometimes became too strenuous even for the energetic Peter.

"I don't believe there's a cake at all!" said Dutton warmly. "And as for the pork, I can't see any pork!"

And as he received no reply, Tom Dutton sniffed, and settled down to sardines.

Wally Bunter ate his tea in silence. He was still feeling sore, both in body and mind, and he could not see how he

was to set himself right with his Form. Even in his own study he was an object of derision. That might suit Billy Bunter, but it did not suit Wally in the least. But how he was to alter it was a puzzle to the fat Removeite.

He succeeded in surprising his study-mates by producing a bag of biscuits to wind up the meal.

"Whose are they?" asked Peter.

"Mine!" snorted Wally.

"Whose were they before they became yours, then?"

"I bought them from Mrs. Mimble."

"My hat! Has Mrs. Mimble started you on tick?"

"I've paid for them."

"My only Aunt Selina Jane!" said Peter Todd. "And you're going to whack them out in the study?"



Can it be Bunter? (See Chapter 11.)

"Of course!"

"I suppose I'm dreaming!" remarked Peter Todd. "I may as well dream that I'm eating biscuits, though!" He helped himself, and started. "Quite good, Bunter! Doesn't it give you a pain to be whacking them out?"

"No, you rotter!"

"And some ass said the age of miracles was past!" said Peter Todd. "You're not ill, Bunter?"

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"Well, you beat me!" said Peter Todd. "You've been paying your footing in the study for some days now—"

"Ever since I've been here!" howled Wally indignantly.

"Oh, come off! You started paying your footing the day after your cousin left—that was the first time!"

"Oh! Ah! Yes! Of—of course! That—that's what I meant!"

"And do you know, we haven't heard anything since then of your postal-order or your titled relations!" said Peter.

"Oh, bother!" said Wally. "You know I haven't any titled relations!"

"Quite so! But you always spoofed that you had!"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"But the question arises," said Peter, "what little stunt are you on now? What have you started telling the truth for? Is it a game, or are you ill, or what is it? I'd really like to know!"

"Oh, rats!" said Wally crossly. And he left the study, closing the door after him with a slam.

Peter Todd shook his head seriously. He really could not understand Bunter of late. There were very marked signs of improvement in the fat junior, but—there was a big but!

The Remove fellows knew Billy Bunter too well. It was a case of once bitten and twice shy.

Peter's belief was that Bunter was on some new stunt which was intended to turn out to his personal profit in some way; but he had to confess that he did not quite understand.

"Give a dog a bad name, and hang him," is an old saying; and it certainly fitted the case of the unfortunate Wally.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Coker Asks For It!

"CHERRY!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Where's Bunter?" asked Coker of the Fifth. "Now, then, sharp's the word! I've no time to waste!"

Bob Cherry grinned.

Coker of the Fifth not only had no time to waste, but apparently he had no manners to waste on the Remove. Which was not the best method of getting his questions answered promptly.

"Do you hear me?" snapped Coker.

"My dear man, I could hear you if I were in Friardale!" answered Bob. "Only I shouldn't be sure whether it was you talking, Coker, or the town bull roaring!"

Coker made a threatening movement towards Bob Cherry. But Bob was on the Remove landing, and there were reinforcements within call; and Coker thought better of it. It was not safe for even the Fifth to rag the Remove in their own stronghold.

"I asked you where Bunter was!" said Coker sulphurously. "I want to see Billy Bunter!"

"What a peculiar taste!" yawned Bob. "You're about the only fellow in Greyfriars who does!"

"Where is he?" roared Coker.

"You really want to know?"

"Yes, you young ass!"

"Then you'd better inquire!" said Bob cheerily. And he strolled away up the Remove passage. But he kindly remarked over his shoulder as he went: "And inquire civilly, old nut! You may get an answer then!"

Bob strolled into his study, leaving Coker breathing hard through his nose. There was no one else visible in the Remove passage, and Coker went along to investigate on his own. He looked into Study No. 6, and found four juniors at home there—Racke and Morgan and Wibley and Micky Desmond. They looked at Coker inquiringly, and rather warily.

"Is this Bunter's study?" growled Coker.

"Does it look as if it was?" asked Wibley.

"Answer me, you little idiot!"

"Go and eat coke, you big idiot!"

"If you want a licking all round—" roared Coker.

"We do!" chuckled Dick Racke.

"We does!" grinned Micky Desmond.

Again Coker of the Fifth nearly committed assault and battery; and again he remembered that he was in the enemy's country, and restrained his just wrath. He went out and slammed the door, and looked into the next study. He found Tom Dutton there.

"Is this Bunter's study?" he demanded, frowning.

"Eh?"

"Is this Billy Bunter's study?"

"Oh! Has he tumbled off his bike?" asked Dutton.

"What? Who?"

"Bunter."

"How the thump should I know?" roared Coker in surprise.

"Well, you said Bunter was muddy! How did he get muddy, then?"

"Oh, my hat! I asked you if this was Bunter's study!" roared Coker. "Can't you hear, you deaf ass?"

"Eh?"

"Where's Bunter—Billy Bunter?"

"It's no good mumbling at me, Coker! If you want an answer, you'd better speak clearly, not mumble!"

"I'm looking for Billy Bunter!" shrieked Coker. "Isn't this his study?"

"Oh! Yes. This is his study. You needn't yell! I can hear you when you don't mumble!"

"Well, where is he?"

"You'd better ask him, if you want him to tea—"

"Oh, crikey!"

"Still, I'll give him a message from you, if you like, when he comes down from the box-room!" said Dutton. "Shall I tell him you want him to come to tea?"

"Is he in the box-room?"

"Eh?"

Coker snorted and strode out of No. 7. He fancied it would be less trouble to look into the box-room than to elicit further information from Tom Dutton. Tom looked after him in surprise.

"Bad-tempered beast!" he commented. "I've a jolly good mind not to give Bunter his message! Still, I think I will—it will clear Bunter off for tea, anyway!"

Horace Coker strode up to the end of the Remove passage, where there was a little stair that led up to the box-room. Coker stamped up that stair, and looked into the room above. Wally Bunter was there, and there was a sound of cracking wood. The fat junior was dislocating an old packing-case for firewood in the study.

"Oh, here you are, Bunter!" growled Coker.

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"Here I am, as large as life and twice as natural!" answered Wally cheerfully.

"Have you come to help me break up this wood? That's kind of you, Coker!"

"No, I haven't, you cheeky fag!"

"Then take your face away, old sport; it's a bit of a worry!"

Coker's eyes gleamed. But he had his temper under unusual restraint that day.

"I want you to come to my study presently, Bunter!" he said.

"Tea?" asked Wally.

"After tea."

"Oh! Afraid I sha'n't have time!"

"You're a bit of a ventriloquist," went on Coker, unheeding. "Now, old Prout is coming to my study to jaw me—my Form-master, you know! I've heard you play your tricks with your silly voice, and I want you to spring it on old Prout! Make a dog growl under his chair, and all that, you know!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Wally.

"You can do it," said Coker. "I've heard you play such tricks. You've played them on me, like a cheeky young sweep. Prout says he is going to talk to me seriously—he's not satisfied with me in class."

"No wonder!" commented Wally.

"None of your cheek, Bunter! Prout's an old donkey—he doesn't know when he's got a really good pupil under him. He makes no end of mistakes, especially in spelling! He actually put two g's in 'agglomerate' to-day! It was no good my objecting—he had to have his way!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I didn't come here to be cackled at, Bunter!" said Coker darkly. "Now, I want you to be in my study when he comes and worry him with ventriloquism—then he'll cut it short, and give a chap a rest! I thought this rather a good idea!"

Wally grinned.

It really was rather a good idea, for Coker. And Billy Bunter would certainly have jumped at it—on condition that Coker handed him certain coin of the realm by way of reward for his trouble.

But it was not in the power of Billy Bunter's double to oblige, for he did not share Billy's weird gift of ventriloquism.

"Of course, I don't want you to do it for nothing!" snapped Coker. "I know what a mercenary little beast you are!"

"Look here—"

"I'll stand you half-a-crown."

"Nothing doing!" said Wally.

"If you think you're going to stick me for more than half-a-crown you're mistaken!" roared Coker.

"Sorry I can't oblige," answered Wally.

"If you clear Prout off in five minutes I'll make it three bob," said Coker generously.

"I'm afraid I can't undertake to clear Prout off at all, old bean," answered Wally.

"You greedy young Shylock, how much do you want?"

"Nix!"

"Do you mean to say you won't ventriloquise at all for me when I ask you?" demanded Coker.

"Can't be did. Sorry!"

"Why not?"

"I don't think I could do it to-day if I tried," said Wally, very truthfully. "Couldn't do it to save my life."

"Utter rot!"

"Well, there it is, old top!"

And Wally went on cracking up the packing-case, while Coker regarded him wrathfully.

"I suppose you mean that you want five bob?" growled Coker at last. "It's not worth it, and you know it."

"I don't mean that."

"What do you mean, then?"

"Can't be did!"

Coker pushed back his cuffs.

"I'm not used to being cheeked by fags," he said. "I've made you a fair offer, Billy Bunter, and I expect you to do as I want."

Wally whistled. He would willingly have obliged Coker if he had been able to do so; but he wasn't, and that settled it. And he certainly did not intend to explain the reason to Coker.

"Do you hear me?" roared Coker.

"Good-bye, old scout!" said Wally. "Take your voice away with you, and mind the step!"

"Otherwise," said Coker, "I shall lick you. I suppose you understand that?"

"Nice afternoon, isn't it?" said Wally.

"What?"

"But it will be wet if it rains," went on Wally, with owl-like gravity, while Coker stared at him, perplexed.

Coker's mighty brain worked slowly, and it always took him some time to realise that his leg was being pulled.

"I suppose you think that's funny?" he said at last.

"On the other hand, it will be fine if the rain holds off," said Wally. "Don't you think so, Coker?"

Coker's reply was not in words. He jumped at Wally Bunter. The unusual self-control he had been displaying deserted him. It was pretty clear that the fat junior was not going to oblige him in the matter of the ventriloquism, and Horace Coker decided to take it out of his hide, as he would have expressed it.

Wally dodged round the packing-cases, catching up a broken stave as he did so.

"Hands off!" he exclaimed warmly.

"Now, then—Yaroooh!"

"Yoop!" roared Coker.

They yelled simultaneously, as Coker's grasp fastened on Wally's neck, and Wally's stave smote Coker on the head.

"Now, you cheeky little beast—"

"Leggo!"

"I'll give you the licking of your life, you—Yaroooh!"

Somehow—Coker never knew how—a fat leg was twined with his own, and he stumbled and went down with a crash. And before he knew what was happening next two fat hands had seized his ankles and lifted them into the air, and Coker was helpless.

The astounded Coker lay on his back, gasping, and catching at the floor with his hands, while Bunter held his ankles in a grip that seemed like iron. It was amazing that the podgy hands had so much strength in them.

"Leggo!" howled Coker, in his turn.

Instead of letting go, Wally whisked him doorward. Coker's back and the back of his head slid along the box-room floor.

"Oh, crumbs! Oh, my hat! Yoooh!"

Coker went sliding out on the landing, drawn by his ankles, and he gave a terrific yell as he was swept off the edge and down on the little staircase that led into the Remove passage. His head bumped on the second step, and then on the next, and he clutched wildly round for a hold.

"Now, are you going to make it pax?" gasped Wally.

"Yaroooh! I'll smash you!"

"Then down you go!"

And with a powerful shove Wally sent Coker of the Fifth rolling down. With a bump and a clump Coker rolled into the Remove passage, and he lay there roaring.

Wally went back rather breathlessly into the box-room, and took the precaution of turning the key in the lock.

In the Remove passage Horace Coker roared and spluttered, and spluttered and roared, and a crowd of Removites came racing to the spot.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Doubting Thomases!

"H ALLO, hallo, hallo!"
 "Coker!"
 "The Cokerfulness is terrific!"

Coker of the Fifth sat up. He was dusty and dishevelled, and crimson with wrath. He had more bumps than he could have counted.

"Ow! Oh! Ow! I'll smash him!" he panted.

"Coker—"
 "I'll pulverise the cheeky fag!" howled Coker.

"My dear man, we do all the pulverising in this passage!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Collar him!"

"Leggo! I—I—"
 "Frog's march!" shouted Bob Cherry.
 "Ha, ha! Bump him!"
 "Down with the Fifth!"

Coker found himself struggling in about a dozen pairs of hands. He had succeeded in awakening a hornets'-nest—as he often did. The Removeites did not care in the least whom it was that Coker was disputing with, or what the dispute was about. That did not matter at all. It was a matter of principle, and the principle was that Fifth-Formers couldn't kick up a shindy in the Remove passage without being frog-marched out of that delectable quarter.

It was useless for the unfortunate Horace to struggle, though he did struggle strenuously.

He went down the Remove passage in the clutch of many hands, and various parts of him smote the floor, a dozen times at least, before the big staircase was reached.

Then he went down the stairs.

On each stair Coker rapped hard, and at each rap he let out a terrific yell.

On the next landing he was left, gasping. That was out of the Remove precincts, and Coker was at liberty to crawl away if he liked. As he sat up, breathless and furious, the Remove stairway above him was crammed with laughing juniors.

"Come up again, Coker!" called out Bob Cherry invitingly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come and have some more, Coker!"

"The morefulness will be terrific, my esteemed, fatheaded Coker!"

"Yaroooooh!"

"Oh, listen to the band!" sang Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker staggered up. Coker was a fighting-man, but he was not feeling inclined to try conclusions with half the Remove at once. He shook his fist at the yelling juniors, and limped away down the lower staircase, followed by howls of derision.

"Dear old Horace!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Always shoving his foot into it, and always getting it stamped on!"

"What was he up to here, though?" asked Wharton. "He seems to have been rowing with somebody in the box-room."

"Somebody pitched him down," said Rake. "He came up here inquiring after Bunter; but it can't have been Bunter."

"Ha, ha! Not likely!"

The Removeites ran back along the passage, and up the box-room stairs, to ascertain who it was that had pitched Coker out of that apartment. It was rather a hefty job, pitching out Coker of the Fifth anywhere, and they were rather curious.

The box-room door was locked, and Bob Cherry thumped on it.

"Oh, get off!" came a fat voice from within.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is that you, Bunter?"

"Yes, ass!"

"Let us in, you Owl!"

"All serene! I thought it was Coker coming back."

Wally Bunter unlocked the door, and the Removeites crowded into the box-room. They looked round the room—but only Wally was there.

"Where is he?" asked Wharton.

"Who—Coker?"

"No; the fellow who pitched Coker out!"

"Here!"

"Where? There's nobody here but you, that I can see," said the captain of the Remove, puzzled.

"I'm the chap."

"What?" roared the juniors.

"You pitched Coker out of the room and down into the Remove passage?" yelled Peter Todd.

"Yes."

"Well, my hat! Of all the thumping liars—"

"Draw it mild, Bunter!"

"Give us an easier one, Bunter!" implored Bob Cherry. "That one's too steep! Do give us something easier."

Wally Bunter blinked at the Removeites in great exasperation. Not one of them thought for a moment of believing his statement.

"I tell you I pitched Coker out!" he shouted.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Picked him up with one hand and tossed him out like a cricket-ball, I suppose?" said Squiff humorously.

"I yanked him out by the ankles—"

"I don't think!"

"You didn't sling him out with one hand?" grinned Tom Brown.

"No; I couldn't—could I, you ass?"

"Of course you couldn't; but that's no reason why you shouldn't say you did, is it?"

"Look here—"

"But who was the chap who did do it?" said Bob Cherry, coming back to the subject. "Coker's rather a hefty chap to handle. Who was here with you, Bunter?"

"Nobody."

"But there must have been somebody, as Coker was chucked out!"

"I chucked him out."

"Oh, don't sing that over again to us!" said Bob impatiently. "What's the good? Tell us who was here with you? Was it Bolsover major?"

"There was nobody—"

"Look here, give the chap a name!" exclaimed Squiff. "Why should you want to keep it dark? Hobson of the Shell, perhaps—"

"It wasn't!"

"Then, who was it?"

"Me!"

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows," said Bob Cherry, "the chap who pitched Coker out on his neck deserves well of his country. We want to know who it was, and this fat Owl persists in telling us whoppers. I vote bumping him till he yaps out the name!"

"Hear, hear!"

"I've told you!" hooted Wally. "I—I—"

Hands off, you chumps! I'll jolly well— Oh, my hat! Leggo!"

But half a dozen of the grinning juniors collared the unfortunate double of Billy Bunter, and he was swept off the floor.

"Now, this is your last chance!" said Bob. "Who slang Coker out?"

"I did!"

"Go it!" said Bob.

Bump!

"Yoooooop!"

"Second time of asking," said Bob Cherry. "Who was it slang Coker out on his neck, Bunter?"

"I did!"

Bump!

"Third time of asking—who was it, you spoofing fat Owl?"

"Yow-ow-woop!"

"That isn't a name!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why won't you tell us, Bunter?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Yow-ow! I've told you! Ow!"

Bump!

"Oh, crumbs!"

The juniors gave it up at that; and they streamed out of the box-room, leaving Wally Bunter sitting on the floor gasping for breath. He gasped and panted, and wondered whether the time would ever come when he would not have to answer for Billy Bunter's sins.

When Wally limped into Study No. 7 half an hour later Tom Dutton had a message for him.

"Coker's been here, Bunter. He wants you to go to tea with him."

Wally grinned faintly. Whether Coker had left that message or not, he was not likely to go to tea with Horace.

"Aren't you going?" asked Dutton, as the fat junior sat down.

Wally shook his head.

"Better go, you know."

"Rats!"

And Wally stayed.

Bump!

"Third time of asking—who was it, you spoofing fat Owl?"

"Yow-ow-woop!"

"That isn't a name!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why won't you tell us, Bunter?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Yow-ow! I've told you! Ow!"

Bump!

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Wally shook his head.

"Better go, you know."

"Rats!"

And Wally stayed.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Amazing!

"THE coast's clear!" remarked Aubrey Angel of the Fourth.

It was Wednesday afternoon,

and Harry Wharton & Co. were

hard at work on Little Side, keeping in

form for the approaching football match

with Highcliffe School. Most of the

Remove fellows were out of doors; and

when Angel and Kenney of the Fourth

Form came up the Remove staircase

they found it and the passage beyond

deserted.

"Sure Bunter's at home, though?"

asked Kenney.

"Yes; I've made inquiries. The fat

young beast's got lines, and he's staying

in to do them."

"He will get done, as well as the lines

—or instead of them!" grinned Kenney.

"Unless he squares!" said Angel.

The two black sheep of the Fourth

walked on to Study No. 7. Angel had a

dog-whip under his arm, and a grim ex-

pression on his handsome face.

Ever since Bunter had spoofed him in

a bet on a footer-match Angel had been

very much down on the Owl of the

Remove. He wanted Bunter to square

up, and that was the last thing in the

world Billy Bunter was ever likely to do.

Naturally, Wally Bunter did not con-

sider himself liable; he was using his

cousin's name, but he had not under-

taken to pay his gambling debts.

Wally was alone in Study No. 7. He

had lines that afternoon from Loder of

the Sixth, and he had been warned to

bring them in by tea-time. He was keen

enough on footer, but Little Side had

few attractions for him under the cir-

cumstances; there was no chance of

Bunter practising with the eleven.

The fat junior was scribbling away

industriously when the study door

opened and the two Fourth-Formers

came in.

Wally Bunter jumped up at once. He

did not need telling that the visit was a

hostile one. The whip under Angel's

arm was proof enough of that.

"Shut the door, Kenney!" said Angel.

Slam!

Kenney set his back to the door, and

grinned at Bunter.

The Fourth-Formers expected the fat

junior to look alarmed; but he did not.

Billy Bunter would certainly have been

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alarmed; but Wally was made of sterner stuff.

"You're making rather free in my study, aren't you?" Wally remarked cheerfully.

"We've called on business," explained Angel.

"Thanks; I don't want any tips for the races, or to back any team on a footer-match!" answered Wally sarcastically.

"I suppose you fellows will be spreading yourselves, now there's peace and plenty of racing. But it's not in my line."

"You owe me money."

"Rats!"

"You laid a bet on a footer-match with me, an' lost," said Angel. "You tossed me double or quits, an' lost again. Then it came out that you hadn't any money!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Wally.

"I was an ass to be taken in—but you were spoofing about havin' a tenner, and I swallowed it," said Angel. "You'd have touched my money fast enough if you'd won, by gad!"

Wally was silent. There was nothing for him to say, excepting that he was not Billy; and that he must not say!

"Of course, I know you can't pay whole quids in a lump!" continued Angel. "I thought you could—but I find you can't! But you can square up in time—on the merry instalment plan, you know. You've been spending money lately—I've seen you. How much can you stand this afternoon?"

"Nix!"

"Make it half a quid, and I'll be satisfied till you're in funds again!" said Angel, with the air of a fellow being very generous.

"My dear man, I owe you nothing, and I'm going to pay you exactly that amount and no more!" said Wally.

"You lost the money to me——"

"I didn't—ahem!—I mean——"

"Wouldn't you have taken my tin if I'd lost?"

"No!"

"What?" exclaimed Angel.

Wally shook his head.

"I certainly shouldn't have touched your money!" he said, quite truthfully. Billy Bunter would have touched it, certainly; but that was quite a different matter, which it was not convenient for Wally to mention.

"That's a dashed lie!" said Angel.

"Go and eat coke, dear boy!"

"Are you goin' to pay up?"

"No!"

"Then I'm goin' to take it out of your hide, you fat swindler!"

"Hold on!" said Wally quietly, though his eyes glittered. "I don't choose to explain to you how the matter stands, but I'm not responsible for the money. Besides, you're a gambling cad, Angel, and if you make bets with a chap in the Lower Fourth you deserve to be dished. You oughtn't to be paid in any case—and you won't be! Now, get out of my study!"

"I rather expected this!" remarked Angel. "And, as I said, if you don't pay up I'm goin' to take it out of your podgy hide, Bunter!"

"You can try, if you like!" grinned Wally.

"No good yellin', my fat beauty!" sneered Kenney. "The Remove are all out of doors, as we happen to know!"

"What difference does that make?"

"Only that you're goin' to have a thumpin' lickin', with nobody to interfere!"

"Bless your innocent little heart, I don't want anybody to interfere!" said Wally Bunter coolly. "If I can't handle two sneaking, smoking, gambling cads—"

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like you fellows, you can dog-whip me as much as you like!"

Angel and Kenney stared at him.

That was not exactly the language they expected from the Owl of the Remove, and it surprised them.

"The fat Owl thinks there's somebody to help him, I suppose!" said Angel, after a pause. "Look out in the passage, Kenney."

Kenney glanced out of the study.

"Only Mauleverer!" he said. "He's amblin' along—he can't do anythin'!"

"Never mind him! Now, Bunter——"

Angel started round the table, and Kenney stood ready to head Bunter off when he dodged.

But Wally Bunter did not dodge. He stood cheerfully facing Angel, who lashed out with the dog-whip as soon as he was close.

The fat junior jumped quickly back, just escaping the slash. Before Aubrey Angel could lift the whip again Wally darted forward like an arrow from a bow.

His plump arms were thrown round Angel, and they closed.

Angel grinned as he gripped the fat junior, intending to pitch him on the carpet, and there lash him at his ease.

But the grin died off his face immediately. For the fat arms were closing on him like a vice, with a grip that took his breath away, and in a moment more his leg was hooked from under him, and he went to the floor with a crash.

"My hat!" exclaimed Kenney, in astonishment.

Angel lay gasping on the carpet, while the astounded Kenney blinked at Wally Bunter.

"Ow!" gasped Angel. "Oh! Ah! Oooooooooop!"

Wally came round the table at great speed, making for Kenney. Kenney faced him, and they closed. In spite of what he had just seen, Kenney could not believe that the Owl of the Remove was a dangerous adversary.

But he was soon undeceived. He found himself spun off his feet and tossed on the carpet like a sack of potatoes.

Crash!

"Yooop!"

"Oh, begad!" came a voice from the passage, and the door opened and Lord Mauleverer glanced in. "Anythin' wrong here, dear boys? Somebody committin' a murder? Oh, gad!"

Mauleverer stared blankly at the astounding scene in the study—Angel and Kenney gasping on their backs, and Wally grinning down at them over his glasses.

"Oh, gad! I'm dreamin'!" ejaculated his lordship.

Angel scrambled up furiously.

"Collar him, Kenney!" he yelled.

He rushed fiercely at Bunter. Kenney sprang up and followed him. They attacked the fat junior together.

"Here, hold on!" exclaimed Lord Mauleverer. "Fair play's a jewel! Back up, Bunter! I'm comin' to help you!"

But Lord Mauleverer's help was not wanted.

Wally stood up coolly to the two Fourth-Formers. Angel caught his right with his chin, and went down with a crash; and Kenney, after a moment or two of sparring, captured Wally's left with his eye, and was strewn across Angel, yelling.

Wally picked up the dog-whip.

"There's the door, my pippins!" he said cheerily. "I'm going to thrash you till you travel——"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yaroooh!"

"Stoppit!"

"Yow-ow-ow-wooop!"

Angel and Kenney squirmed wildly to escape the vigorous lashes. They were—

not thinking of fisticuffs any longer—they only wanted to escape. The lashing of the dog-whip followed them to the door, where the astounded Mauleverer jumped aside to give them room to pass.

Yelling wildly, Angel and Kenney fled into the passage. They sped for the stairs, with Wally behind, lashing away merrily. Down the Remove staircase went the two Fourth-Formers, and Wally, stopping on the landing, threw the dog-whip after them.

He returned rather breathlessly to his study, grinning. He thought it probable that he had heard the last of Aubrey Angel's claim against Billy Bunter.

Lord Mauleverer tapped him on the shoulder.

"Bunter, dear man——"

"Hallo, fathead!"

"Am I dreamin' this?" asked Mauleverer dazedly.

"See if you wake up when I pinch you!" answered Wally.

"Yaroooh!"

Lord Mauleverer was satisfied that he was awake.

Harry Wharton & Co. blinked when they heard the news.

Had they heard it from Bunter they would have chuckled. But it was from Mauleverer that they heard it.

There was no doubt about it. The Owl of the Remove had licked Angel and Kenney together in combat, and had chased them down the Remove passage in full flight. Curious youths who looked into Angel's study that evening found him nursing his chin and Kenney nursing his eye.

It was astounding, but it was true!

"Bunter a fighting-man!" said Bob Cherry blankly. "Bunter standing up to two fellows at once—Bunter! And beating them, too! My hat! As the poet remarks, 'Are things what they seem, or is visions about?'"

"It beats me!" confessed Wharton.

And Hurree Janset Ram Singh declared that the beatfulness was terrific!

"If this is so—and it seems so—it may have been the truth about Coker, and Temple, and—and even in the scrap with the Highcliffe fellows!" said Frank Nugent. "Bunter's changed—the giddy leopard has changed his spots, and the Ethiopian his skin! I wouldn't have believed it without an eye-witness!"

"Bunter was a dog with a bad name!" said Wharton, laughing. "But—but—well, I can't make it out!"

Nobody in the Remove could make it out; but there it was. Even Peter Todd showed a new respect for his fat study-mate. Wally Bunter wore a cheerful grin that evening. He had shown his mettle at last; and he was no longer A Dog With a Bad Name.

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

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THE LUCK OF THE BRAVE!

By TOM REDWING.

Foes at Midnight!

THE shades of night had fallen over the forest.

Except for the occasional cry of some prowling wild beast, no sound disturbed the silence. Yet in that region of perpetual gloom and solitude human life was stirring, as any traveller might have surmised from the dancing light of a camp-fire that burned in a natural clearing amongst the trees.

Facing each other across the fire were two white men, one a youth of about eighteen, and the other nearly twice that age. They both looked hard and fit, and their sun-burned faces, even in repose, expressed the keen watchfulness and instant readiness for danger that came from a life of constant peril and hardship.

"I'll turn in for an hour or two, Dan," said the elder of the two, yawning as he knocked the ashes from his pipe. "I'm sleepy. Wake me up when you're tired, and don't let the fire go out, or we'll have a jaguar or two sniffing around, and I never fancied the near company of those creatures."

Dan Morgan laughed, and then looked a trifle serious.

"There are worse things than jaguars to be feared, Steve," he said. "The stuff in our packs wouldn't tempt all the jaguars in this country, but it would be a mighty fine draw for some of the natives."

The other shrugged his broad shoulders.

"Shucks!" he exclaimed. "Those johnnies haven't got the pluck to try and rob us. The very sight of our rifles would scare 'em."

"Not the real Indians," said Morgan. "They don't know what fear is."

"So I've heard before," was the reply; "but that isn't any reason why I should believe it."

Having delivered himself of this opinion, Stephen Roach, wrapping himself in his blanket and oilskin covering sheet, stretched his long limbs and was quickly plunged into a deep slumber.

Left entirely to the company of his own thoughts, Dan Morgan stared reflectively into the glowing embers of the fire. He and Roach, comrades now for many months, had braved innumerable dangers in the pursuit of a quest as remarkable as any ever undertaken by mortal man.

Two of a shipwrecked crew landed at a small port far up the South American western coast, they had starved and suffered for weeks while vainly endeavouring to get into touch with the British Consul at the nearest town, which was over a thousand miles away. At last, despairing, utterly at the end of their slender resources, they set out on foot to reach civilisation again.

One night, a week later, they stopped at the first house they had seen in the course of their lonely and perilous journey. The owner of the place, an old Spanish settler, was lying at the point of death. His last hours on earth were comforted by the two comrades, who were the first white men he had seen for years, and before he died he imparted to them information of immense value.

This related to buried treasure whose resting-place was known to him alone. His knowledge he passed on to the comrades, who, fired by his story, determined to go and search for the hidden treasure. To do this was rendered easier by the circumstance that their benefactor placed his resources at their command, so that, after his death and burial, they were able to set out fully equipped for the venture.

It was a hazardous journey that they made through wild and inhospitable country; but fortune favoured them. They found the treasure concealed beneath a rock at the foot of a high cliff. It had been there for over a century, and it consisted of gold and precious stones of every description. By their discovery the comrades jumped from poverty to wealth in a single bound.

Since then they had travelled a considerable distance on the return journey to the coast, but many days had still to pass before they could hope to reach their objective. Here, in the mighty forest that stretched away for endless leagues on every side of them, they were apparently the only white men.

The howling cry of some forest wild-cat aroused Dan Morgan from the reverie into which he had fallen. Picking up some loose sticks, he flung them on the fire, which blazed up again with a flaming crackle of dry wood. The lad resumed his seat, only to leap amazedly to his feet the next moment, while his lips parted in a sharp exclamation of surprise.

Near to him stood the motionless figure of an Indian chief. Proud, warlike in dress and appearance, the new-comer regarded the British youth with a calm yet fiercely threatening stare that was hard to meet. He wore the costume of a Mexican hunter, and the silver buckled belt round his waist held a couple of revolvers and a long-bladed knife that glittered like frosted glass in the firelight.

"The dickens!" said Morgan. "Who are you?"

The Indian pointed proudly to the curling white eagle's feather that rose like a plume above his head.

"White Eagle," he said, in a harsh tone. "And you?"

"Well," Morgan answered, "if you really want to know it, Dan Morgan's my name."

White Eagle gravely bent his head.

"Ha!" he said. "Then you and the other paleface"—glancing at Roach's recumbent form, "are those who took the buried treasure from its hiding-place in the shadows of Black Mountain. It were better for you had you never found it."

"How's that?" came Morgan's quick inquiry.

"Because all your time and labour have been wasted," White Eagle rejoined. "The young men of my tribe know that you have the gold, and they claim it."

There was a sudden rustle. At the sound the Indian spun round, to find himself looking down the barrel of a rifle pointed at him by Roach, whose bronzed, weather-beaten face was crimson with rage.

"Claim it, do they?" cried the incensed Britisher, his eyes, closed in peaceful sleep but a few moments before, now sparkling with fiery anger. "Then they'll have to fight for it, the thieving coyotes! Hands up, you ugly son of a gun, or I'll drill a hole through your carcase!"

White Eagle did not move a muscle. With unshakable intrepidity, his lips parted in a haughty smile, he stared at the white man.

"Hands up!" Roach cried again, his finger tightening on the trigger. "D'you hear me?"

A mocking laugh came from the Indian chief. At the same moment he bounded high into the air. Then Roach fired, once, twice, the double report echoing far and wide. He stared in front of him with a puzzled frown on his brow. There was no sign of White Eagle anywhere.

"Where is the bound?" he asked.

"Gone back to his warriors," answered Morgan. "He was too quick for you. And now, I guess, we're up against it with a vengeance."

Silent and grim, Roach slipped another two cartridges into the magazine of his rifle.

Fighting for Life!

THERE was an ominous stillness in the forest that, to Dan Morgan and his comrade, was more nerve-straining than any visible danger. Beyond the flickering light cast by the fire was an impenetrable gloom, where peril lurked in readiness to spring out upon them.

The Indian chief had gone; but they knew

that he would return with his savage followers. What chance would they have then? They were armed with a magazine rifle and a bandolier of cartridges apiece, but such defensive power would avail them little against the tactics of men accustomed all their lives to forest warfare.

The foes they had to contend against were the descendants of the formidable Red Indian tribes who, rather than submit to the domination of the white man in the northern territories of the great American continent, had made the long trek southwards to the mountains and forests of Mexico and Brazil. Often though Dan Morgan and his companion had heard of these fierce, proud outlaws, they had never before come into actual contact with them.

"I'm thinking," said Roach at last, breaking the silence, "that you were right, Dan, in saying that there were worse things than jaguars to be feared. We're in a queer fix, and I don't see how we are to get out of it. Of course, we could give up the treasure, but that's not to be thought of, for it's our own."

"You bet!" agreed Morgan. "I'd sooner die than hand it over to a lot of Redskins! Say, old chap," he continued, "I've thought of a plan. No doubt we're being watched like a cat watches a mouse, but we ought to be smart enough to slip away and throw the Redskins off our track for several minutes."

"What would be the good?"

"Why this," Morgan answered. "In that time we could double back to the river we crossed this afternoon and reach the island, where we'd be able to beat off any attack made against us."

Roach cogitated in silence for a moment or two. Then he gave a nod of assent to the suggestion.

"It's a sporting chance, anyhow, and something good may come of it," he said. "We'll take it."

The camp-fire had died down, and its waning light threw but a feeble glimmer on the massed black shadows in the background. Cautiously but swiftly the comrades slung the packbags over their shoulders, and made every preparation for departure. Now all was ready for the fateful move.

"You go first!" whispered Roach, his rifle ready for instant use in case the Redskins should become aware of what was happening and rush them. "Keep as near as you can to the track we made. I'll follow you close."

Fortune favoured them. Threading an intricate way through the vast stretch of tangled undergrowth, they reached the banks of a broad and swiftly-flowing river. The island, long and narrow, was in mid-stream, and the dark, irregular mass of it was but faintly discernible in the night-gloom.

With rifles firmly strapped to their packs the comrades lowered themselves into the water and struck out for the island. The strength of the current made it impossible for them to swim a straight course, and before reaching land they were carried two hundred yards down the stream. Exhausted but triumphant, they scrambled ashore.

"That's one more point in the game to us," said Roach, vigorously shaking the water from his head and shoulders, "and I reckon that White Eagle and his friends won't tumble to it until the morning. They'll find we're missing soon enough, no doubt, but they aren't at all likely to track us here before daylight."

"In that case," Morgan replied, "we'll both have a good sleep. We shall want to be wide awake when they do find us here."

Undeterred by thought of poisonous reptile or savage beast, they made the swampy, reed-grown ground their couch, and were quickly oblivious to the perils that beset them. Dawn came, and found them still soundly sleeping.

The sun shone out, and the life of the

forest made itself heard in a thousand different voices. Wakened up by the bright light, Dan Morgan opened his eyes, rubbed them hard, and, yawning lazily, sat up and looked round at his companion.

Instantly his whole body stiffened, and into his eyes crept a look of unutterable horror and alarm. Lying easily on his back, with both hands clasped at the back of his head, Roach was asleep, in blissful unconsciousness of the fact that a huge swamp-adder was coiled up on his chest.

The reptile had snuggled down there for warmth. Its flat, ugly head was pointed straight at Roach's throat. The slightest movement on the part of the sleeping man would inevitably arouse and irritate the adder, with tragic consequences.

Irresolute, undecided how to act for the best, Morgan stared fixedly at the hideous thing. Suddenly Roach moved, and the closely-knit coils of the reptile's body loosened and stirred with quivering activity. Again the man shifted his position, raising his knees and moving one hand from the back of his head. He was awake.

With inconceivable rapidity the adder uncoiled itself and drew back its head to strike a venomous blow at the doomed man. There was no help for Roach. He saw what threatened him, and the fearsome reptile paralysed his every nerve.

Not so Morgan. Galvanised into feverish action by the frightful peril threatening his comrade, he snatched up his rifle and fired. Speeding true to its mark, the bullet smashed the adder's head to a pulp, and the writhing, twisting body rolled and floundered to the ground, and disappeared with noisy rustling amongst the reeds.

Roach, shaken and pale of face, rose to his feet.

"Thankee, Dan!" he said, a trifle unsteadily. "That shot saved my life."

The other gave a grim little laugh.

"'Twas mighty unfortunate I had to fire, though," he said, "for the report has betrayed our whereabouts to the Redskins. Look yonder!"

The river-bank was dotted with savages. More came running each moment from amongst the trees and bushes. A conspicuous figure was White Eagle, who, with one hand shading his eyes from the sun, looked long and intently at the island.

"Sure enough, they've spotted us!" said Roach. "We'll get back a little under cover."

As they moved away a flight of arrows whistled all about them, piercing the bark of trees and tearing bunches of leaves from the bushes. Picking one up, Roach examined it.

"These barbs are dipped in poison," he said. "The slightest scratch from one would be fatal."

They took shelter behind the broad trunk of an enormous banyan, which, a veritable monarch of the forest, towered high above great masses of tropical undergrowth of every kind. The arrows shot across the river continued searching for them. Suddenly a long, blood-curdling yell rang out, and a score of Redskins plunged into the stream and headed for the island.

"It's the real show beginning now," said Roach. "Don't waste a single shot, Dan. Hit your man every time."

The bobbing heads of the swimmers were easily distinguishable. They were not close together, but spread widely out. Looking out from behind the banyan, Roach fired at one of the leading savages. Instantly two or three arrows, shot by Redskins keeping watch on the far bank, came perilously near to him, and he darted back into safety.

"Here they come!" cried Dan.

The first men to reach the island climbed lithely up the bank, the water running from their oiled bodies, and dived amongst the reeds and long grass. After the first rustle of the disturbed verdure had subsided there was no sound or movement. But the comrades knew that their foes were creeping stealthily towards them, and that they would speedily be fighting for their very lives.

In a rift of the foliage a fierce, painted face and a gleaming pair of eyes appeared for a moment, and Roach fired. A dreadful cry followed. Then on every side the Redskins sprang to their feet, and advanced with a furious rush, yelling, and whirling knives, and tomahawks in a frenzy of hate and excitement.

The comrades poured in a rapid fire from

their rifles. Every bullet found its mark. The attack weakened and recoiled. With startling abruptness the sounds of conflict ceased. The Redskins who had survived fell back and scuttled deep amongst the undergrowth with the quickness of hunted wolves.

"Hurrah!" cried Dan. "They've had enough of it!"

"For the present," said Roach; "but they'll come back again. Now they know what we can do they'll alter their tactics. We must do the same, and be beforehand with them."

He glanced upward at the far-spreading branches of the banyan-tree.

"That's where we'll stand to," he said. "There's room enough there for a whole regiment to hide. Up you get!"

One after the other they climbed the tree. It was not a difficult task, for there was a multitude of branches to cling to, and in a few minutes they were fifty or sixty feet above the ground. So thick and strong were the interlacing boughs that they were able to walk about as on a platform, and the density of the foliage, which was added to by the leaves of innumerable parasitic creepers, concealed them like an enveloping cloud.

Recharging their empty magazines with fresh cartridges, they listened silently for some sound betokening a fresh advance by their foes. But no warning signal came to their ears. The suspense threatened to become unbearable.

"I'll take a peep down below," said Dan Morgan. "Hold on to my rifle for a moment."

Scarcely moving the leaves, so slow and cautious was he, the lad lowered himself to a branch from which he was able to command a clear view of the ground below. No sign of human life was to be seen. But, stay! What was that object which moved ever so lightly as to escape the notice of any but the keenest eye? It looked like a green bush.

Yet Dan Morgan knew that bushes were stationary things. This particular one advanced into the little open space where he and Roach had camped during the night.

"Gee-whizz!" muttered the lad. "It's a disguised Redskin!"

At the same moment something caught hold of his hair and gave it a vicious pull. Startled and furious, he glanced up, to see on the branch above him a large monkey, who, stretching down its paw, had seized hold of his head. He tried to free himself, and the ape, chattering excitedly, snatched so hard at his scalp that he could not refrain from uttering a shout and striking a wild blow with his fist at his mischievous opponent.

The monkey, jabbering and grinning, skipped away. Immediately afterwards Morgan remembered the walking bush, and, with a feeling of mingled apprehension and dismay, looked for it again. It had vanished.

"Of course!" he said ruefully. "The fellow spotted me, and has gone to tell his mates about it!"

Returning quickly to Roach, he told the other of what had taken place.

"Don't blame yourself," said his companion, not without a laugh of amused interest. "You couldn't help the monkey collar-hold of you. I should have halloed just the same if I had been in your place. All the same," he added, "it's made things more serious for us. They know where we are now."

Even as Roach finished speaking an arrow hissed past his head, and stuck quivering in an upright branch a foot or two away. Impulsively he fired in the direction whence the deadly missile had come, and the sound of a heavy body was heard as it crashed through the foliage and then fell to the ground with a dull thud.

"That was a lucky shot," said Roach, as he peered down and caught sight of the lifeless body of the Redskin who had fallen a victim to his rifle. "He was close on us, the varmint, when he strung that arrow!"

"Yes," rejoined Morgan, "and he didn't climb our tree, but the next one. The branches of all these trees meet and intermingle, and the beggars can reach us from all sides at once."

The other's grim face looked grimmer than ever.

"It's bad," he said. "But they sha'n't catch us napping, anyhow."

Lying flat on his chest along the bough, he

rested the barrel of his rifle in a wide fork that allowed him a free-and-easy movement of the weapon. His bandolier he laid flat by his side, so that he could reload the magazine with cartridges in the quickest possible time.

"This is where they're most likely to try and get at us," he said. "You stand nearer the trunk and keep a general look-out. I'll give you a shout if I want you."

Going to the post indicated, Morgan kept vigilant watch and guard. Twenty minutes passed, and he saw nothing to arrest his attention, although the occasional crack of Roach's rifle told him that his comrade was busily engaged elsewhere.

Then a tiny piece of bark-peeling fell silently, and brushed his cheek in its descent. He looked up, and his heart gave a mad leap of excitement. About fifteen feet above him a dark-brown hand was holding back a foliaged bough, and through the opening thus made two burning eyes, set in a cruel, proud face, stared down at the British lad.

"Snakes alive!" said Morgan aloud. "It's White Eagle!"

Acting on an instant's swift, unbidden warning, he pressed close against the tree-trunk.

Just in time! Even as he did so a heavy, broad-bladed stabbing-knife hurled downwards through the empty space where he had been exposing himself a moment before.

To the River!

QUICK as lightning Morgan held up his rifle, and fired twice. He heard the bullets slashing through the leaves, but no sound to indicate that White Eagle was struck. Once more he fired, with the same result as before.

"Guess the cunning rascal has saved his skin!" he muttered. "How I'd like to have one shot at him out in the open! He'd never wear head-feathers again!"

In tense expectancy of another attack, he stood stiff and motionless where he was. But his unseen foe gave no sign. He began to fidget with growing impatience. At last, unable to control himself any longer, he moved forward a step, and glanced up in search of the Indian chief.

A quick look round satisfied him that White Eagle was not there. Had the other moved to a place of safety, or was he still watching the young Britisher from some near coign of vantage? In either case he was still to be reckoned with—a fierce, vindictive foe, who would show the comrades no mercy should they fall into his clutches.

Hearing Roach calling to him, he quickly joined his comrade.

"D'you see that smoke?" said the elder man. "Well, what do you make of it?"

Thin, curling wisps of smoke were rising from the ground. There was also a strong smell of burning grass and bush-growth in the air. Startled and alarmed, Morgan stared at his companion, the expression of whose face was very stern and grave.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed the lad. "They've started a fire!"

Roach nodded his head.

"They have!" he replied. "The beggars mean to smoke us out!"

The smoke rapidly increased in volume and density. It came from all sides. Soon the comrades could hear the crackle of dry wood as the fire seized upon it, and the spluttering hiss of scorched leaves. Sparks ascended, and were blown hither and thither by the breeze, setting alight to the topmost foliage of the trees, and starting conflagrations in a hundred different places.

"We must get down out of this," said Roach, coughing back the smoke that filled his throat. "It's better to die fighting than to stay here and be roasted alive."

"Then we'll strike back towards the river," Morgan declared. "We may stand a better chance."

Roach shook his head.

"We must make for the stream on the far side of the island," he said. "The Redskins won't be looking for us there. They'll be mostly watching the way we came."

Having made the packs containing the treasure firm and secure, the comrades descended the giant banyan where they had taken their precarious refuge. They were almost blinded and suffocated by the hot, swirling smoke that rose to meet them. But terrible though it was to endure, it at any rate screened them from the notice of the savages.

More by luck than through any sense of

direction they struck the course they were seeking. It was not a great distance across the island, and, after a journey that left them more dead than alive, they reached the river-side. Here a great crowd of monkeys, driven from their haunts by the flames and smoke, had assembled, and the babel of sounds made by this strange host was deafening.

"Look!" shouted Morgan, seizing his companion by the arm. "We're saved!"

What he saw was a native boat, a light but strongly-built craft, capable of seating four persons, floating on the still waters of a small creek that formed an irregular inlet of the river.

Almost wild with joy, he and Roach raced towards it. The boat, which had evidently been abandoned and left there a long while since, was in serviceable condition.

Losing no time, the comrades stowed away their packs, and then, jumping in, pushed off into the main stream with a long pole that Roach had found lying in the grass.

Caught by the rapid current, the little vessel was quickly carried away from the island, which was now almost blotted from sight by a huge pall of smoke rising slowly to the sky. The red glare of leaping flames grew brighter and brighter. The island and

everything on it was doomed to destruction.

"Those Redskins were a bit too reckless, I'm thinking," said Roach. "In seeking to make cinders of us they'll make cinders of themselves, unless they get a quick move on."

"Expect they've done a bunk already," Morgan answered, "and swum back to the mainland."

"Not all of them," said Roach, an eager note in his voice. "See that party there?"

He pointed towards the island. Running along the bank were three of the savages—White Eagle and two of his followers. Catching sight of the boat, they knelt down, and, fixing arrows to their bows, shot at it.

The feathered barbs fell short, and Roach, standing upright and waving his hand, uttered a loud, mocking laugh. Instantly Morgan pulled him down, for White Eagle, throwing aside his useless bow, picked up a rifle and fired it. The bullet hummed over the boat, and Roach had again to bless the promptitude of his young companion in saving his life.

"The ugly snake!" he gritted out between his clenched teeth. "I'll do better than him, anyway!"

Levelling his own rifle, he returned the fire. But haste made his aim uncertain, and the Indian chief was untouched by the bullet.

Before he could fire a second shot a rolling cloud of smoke hid White Eagle from his sight.

"Ah, well," he remarked, "I guess the fire will do for him, and it'll only be justice! He set it going for our special benefit. Now he'll feel what it's like himself!"

Dan Morgan gave a merry laugh.

"It doesn't matter what happens to him and his fighting-men now!" he said. "They can't do us any more harm. And we've still got the treasure, old man. That's the main point."

Roach chuckled, and blinked his smoke-redened eyes.

"Yes," he agreed; "I guess that's the main point right enough, Dan. All we've got to hope for now is that our luck will hold to the end."

Their luck did hold to the end. Late in the day they were picked up by a river steamer, and a fortnight afterwards they reached Valparaiso. There they were able to dispose of the treasure they had gone through so many dangers and hardships to secure, and returned home to England with the inspiring knowledge that they would be rich for the remainder of their lives.

THE END.

GUSSY'S LATEST LOVE-AFFAIR!

By ROBERT ARTHUR DIGBY.

I.
"WOULD you chaps care to come over to Topham with us to-morrow afternoon?" Cardew asked us after lessons on Tuesday afternoon.

"What's the wheeze?" Herries growled.

"Skating, old top," said Clive. "Just you four and us three. We are seven, you know."

"That would be whipping!" D'Arcy exclaimed. "I have ten shillin's left from the last fivah my patah sent me. We could get a scumptions tea at Topham."

"Good old Gussy!" laughed Blake. "He never forgets the deserving poor."

"I don't wegard my friends as objects of charity," said Arthur Augustus solemnly. "It's so easy to pull Gussy's leg that it's hardly worth doing."

"Well, if Gussy provides the grub I don't mind going," Herries said. "It will do Towser good to have a run."

"That beast coming, too?" Levison gasped in dismay. "He will be under our feet all the blessed time!"

"Shut up, you ass!" Herries growled politely. "He's as much right on the ice as you have, and he's a jolly sight more ornamental!"

"Pax, my brothers!" Blake put in gently. "There's no reason why Towser shouldn't go, if Herries particularly wants to take him. I suppose you chaps don't object?" he added, turning to Clive, Cardew, D'Arcy, and myself.

"Not at all," Clive said politely.

"Yaas, do take the brute," Cardew drawled. "Herries can buy us some new togs if Towser should happen to get hungry an' mistake our hags for dog-biscuits."

D'Arcy wasn't very enthusiastic at the suggestion, but was too polite to say so, as he would, in a sense, be the host. Towser has such an unfortunate predilection for Gussy's "twousahs."

Of course, I made no objection. We of Study No. 6 are used to having Towser about with us, but some of the chaps get quite nerry if he gives a friendly little growl or playfully snaps at their legs.

After prep was finished for the evening we hunted up our skates and cleaned and adjusted them, so that there would be nothing to prevent our starting immediately after dinner on the following day.

"I wish I had some skates for Towser," sighed Herries, as he gave a final oiling to his own. "I'm sure he knows he's going. Have you noticed how playful and excited he is getting?" he added, as Towser gave a friendly little snap at Gussy's nether garments.

"I do wish you would keep Towser undah control!" Arthur Augustus complained. "He vewy neahly spoilt my new twousahs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" we yelled. D'Arcy is one of the best, but he's worse than a girl where clothes are concerned.

"Rats to your old trousers!" Herries snapped. "You shouldn't wear clothes that attract the dog's notice. It's your own fault if you insist on irritating Towser's artistic sense."

"Weally, Hewwies," D'Arcy started, "I wegard your wemarks about my clothes—"

"Chuck it, you fatheads!" said Blake, in an exasperated voice. "It's like living in the monkey-house at the Zoo to share a study with you!"

II.
"WHAT luck!" exclaimed Cardew. "There's practically nobody on the lee!"

We had just come in sight of the flooded fields at Topham, where we had decided to spend the afternoon.

Three or four village boys were sliding along one side of the field, and in the far corner a young lady was skating alone. Otherwise, we had the whole stretch of ice to ourselves.

"It's absolutely ripping!" Blake called, as he took a trial run while we were fixing our skates. "It's as smooth as glass and very thick! Hurry up, you chaps, and don't waste the daylight!"

In another minute we were all on the lee, accompanied by Towser, who, in his excitement, was in everybody's way.

"Keep Towser over your side, there's a good fellow," Clive said, as he narrowly escaped coming a cropper over Towser's head. "I'm afraid he'll get trodden on."

Herries looked at him coldly.

"Here, Towser!" he called, and skated over to the other side of the ice with the bulldog at his heels. Herries hates anyone to suggest that Towser could ever be in the way.

For some time peace reigned over the scene, broken occasionally by yells from the village boys as one or other of them toppled over on the slide.

The air was keenly exhilarating, and life seemed to all of us very well worth living, especially with the prospect of Gussy's spread when it became too dark for skating.

"Hallo! What was that?" Cardew exclaimed, as a sudden, sharp cry rang across the ice.

"Look! Towser has knocked that girl over!" said Blake excitedly.

At some distance from us we could see a muddled heap of dog and girl. Towser appeared to think that the young lady had some designs upon his person, and was growling in a menacing manner.

"Herries should never have brought the dog," Levison said. "I pointed out what a nuisance he would be, but Herries wouldn't listen, and you all backed him up."

"Well, how were we to know the dog would get into trouble?" Blake asked, with some heat.

D'Arcy, meanwhile, wasted no time in words, but skated over to the scene of the accident as quickly as his legs could carry him.

Herries was engaged with Towser, and he left it to D'Arcy to help the young lady to her feet. It was just as well, for Herries is no lady's man, whereas Arthur Augustus was born to rescue distressed damsels. He has

the chivalrous soul of a twelfth century knight.

"What a chance for Gussy!" Blake laughed. "Behold him once again falling in love!"

D'Arcy certainly seemed to be getting along exceedingly well, considering that he had never seen the young lady before. Presently he and the girl came skating towards us hand-in-hand.

"By Jove!" ejaculated Cardew, as they drew near. "I'm blessed if it isn't Norah Anketell, Clive! What a lark! Don't tell Gussy I know her."

With that he went to meet them.

"May I introduce my friend Cardew, Miss Anketell?" Gussy asked.

Cardew favoured Miss Anketell with a sly wink, and was duly introduced.

"That boundah Towser wan into Miss Anketell," Gussy explained. "I am afraid she is wathah badly shaken up; I pwopose we go stwaight away and have some tea. You will come and have some, too, won't you, Miss Anketell?"

Norah Anketell looked at Cardew before replying. He gave a scarcely perceptible nod.

"Yaas, do come, Miss Anketell," he urged aloud. "We owe you a tea, you know, because it was our dog, or, anyway, old Hewwies—same thing, y'know—that knocked you over."

Norah Anketell smiled upon Gussy.

"I think I would like to come if you are sure I shall not be in the way," she said sweetly.

"If you will excuse me I will just let the other fellows know we are goin' on," D'Arcy said, and skated off, leaving Cardew and Miss Anketell together.

Cardew seized the opportunity of D'Arcy's absence to explain the joke to Norah, and she entered into it with a great deal of zest.

When Gussy returned she was talking with great animation to Cardew, and scarcely deigned to notice the presence of the Honourable Augustus.

"Er—Miss Anketell, do you feel well enough to start yet?" D'Arcy inquired. "I am afraid you will feel howwibly shaken after your fall."

"I am quite all right, thank you," Norah Anketell replied. "Mr. Cardew has offered to help me to the village. I think my ankle is slightly sprained."

And without another word she tucked her arm in Cardew's, and the two started towards the village.

D'Arcy stood petrified with surprise and chagrin that Cardew should cut in like that and carry off the girl under his very nose!

"Hallo, Gussy! What's up? Lost a shilling and found a threepenny-bit?"

Blake broke in upon his meditations.

The rest of the party had come up, hugely delighted at the success of their little plot.

"I would pwefer not to discuss the mat-tah!" D'Arcy replied with dignity. "I am vewy supwised at Cardew, and vewy disap-pointed in Miss Anketell!"

"Why, what's the matter? What have they done?" Blake inquired in mock surprise.

"I refuse to say anything further about it," Arthur Augustus repeated. "If you fellows are quite ready we will go to the village and order tea."
 "Right-ho, old bean!" Herries said. "Towser is famished, and I feel that I could do with a crumb or so myself."

III.

THE tea was a huge success, from everybody's point of view but D'Arcy's. As host he, of course, fulfilled his duties punctiliously, but his whole joy of life had gone since Norah had so basely deserted him for Cardew.

"Cardew, dear boy, forgive my intawwuptin' you, but will you ask Miss Anketell if she will have some more tea?" he asked, with laboured politeness.

A ripple of laughter came from Norah Anketell.

"Thanks awfully, Mr. D'Arcy!" she said cheerfully. "Mr. Cardew makes me laugh so much that I am as dry as a fish!"

In stony silence Gussy passed the refilled cup to her. She acknowledged it with a smile, but the next moment turned again to Cardew, and continued an animated conversation with him.

"If evewybody has finished, I pwopose we see about getting back to the station," D'Arcy said after tea.

"Yaas, dear boy!" Cardew replied. "I think you ought to be making a move. Miss Anketell is allowing me to drive her to the station, as her ankle is still rather painful."

D'Arcy bit his lip to stifle an exclamation of vexation, and looked unutterable things at Cardew. Clive and Levison looked rather anxiously at Cardew. They knew from experience what a reckless driver Ralph Reckness Cardew was.

"Cardew, I should be glad if you would see me this evening in my study!" Gussy said pompously.

"Well, dear boy, I expect I shall see you before the evening's over, anyway," Cardew replied casually. "Nothin' in that. Why this thushness?"

"There is something vewy important I must say to you," D'Arcy continued. "And I should pwefer to see you alone."

"Right-ho, old top!" Cardew said breezily. "Swords or pistols? All the same to you, y'know. Are you ready yet?" he added, turning to Norah.

"As it would take us longer to walk to the station than it would for the others to drive, we started straight away, Cardew and Miss Anketell leaving at the same time for the livery stables to arrange for the trap.

"Done! in the eye this time, old top!" Blake said laughingly.

"I fail to undahstand what you mean, Blake!" D'Arcy replied, with icy hauteur.

"I can't imagine how any girl could resist Gussy's new waistcoat!" I remarked.

"Dig, you uttah ass!"

"Or that gorgeous tie," Clive put in.

"And you've had so much practice, too!" Blake jeered. "We shouldn't be surprised if Cardew did cut us out. But you!"

"You wottabs! Pway do not weler to the subject again!" gasped Arthur Augustus, walking rapidly ahead.

"Come back, you silly fathead!" Blake called.

But D'Arcy, like "The Cat Who Walked by Himself," walked on in dignified silence alone.

About half-way to the station Cardew drove past us with pretty little Norah Anketell beside him.

"She favoured us with a smile, and Cardew was passing with a 'Cheerio!' when he suddenly noticed that Gussy was not with us."

"He's going at a pretty fine rate!" Clive remarked. "He should be more careful when he is driving a lady."

At that moment Cardew turned round in the trap and shouted back to us.

"What have you done with Gussy?"

"He's walking on ahead," Levison answered.

"He has just turned the bend in the road," Blake added.

"Look out, Cardew!" howled Herries.

But the warning was too late. With a hoot of the horn a car turned the bend of the road which Cardew was approaching.

The horse shied, reared, and plunged ahead. Cardew tugged at the reins for all he was worth, but it had no effect at all upon the horse.

We all raced down the road at top speed, and a second later the car passed us. The occupants were evidently quite unaware of

the effect their car had had upon Cardew's horse.

"By Jove! Somebody has stopped the horse!" Herries panted.

"Yes! It's Gussy!" Clive gasped.

We quickly reached the spot. Cardew had got down from the trap, and was vigorously engaged in brushing Gussy's clothes.

"Any damage, old man?" I inquired.

"No, dear boy," Gussy said politely, endeavouring to screw half an eyeglass into his eye. "But I've broken my beasty eyeglass, an' can't keep it in my eye!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

We yelled with delight. It certainly looked as though he had been rather badly handled.

Gussy, the immaculate, presented a somewhat unusual sight. His collar was broken, and half of it flapped out in the breeze. His clothes were dusty and dishevelled, whilst a gaping hole appeared at the knee of his trousers.

Miss Anketell, however, was quite blind to any imperfections. She clambered down the trap, and, seizing both of Gussy's hands, tried to thank him.

"But for your courage we might both have been killed, Mr. D'Arcy!" she said, with tears of gratitude in her eyes.

"D'Arcy, old man, I'm sorry I played the giddy goat with you," Cardew said contritely. "As a matter of fact, we were only pulling your leg. I have known Miss Anketell for years. Clive has met her before, too. Haven't you, Clive?"

"I had that pleasure some time ago," Clive replied.

"But—but I don't undahstand!" Gussy said in a tone of bewilderment. "Did you weally know Cardew before to-day, Miss Anketell?"

"Yes; I've known him for ages!" Norah laughed. "They told me you were rather well-keen on girls, and I offered to cure you by making you hate me."

"Oh, weally!" Gussy objected. "You could nevah make me do that, you know!"

"I think we had better take Mr. D'Arcy along with us the rest of the way, Ralph," Norah Anketell suggested. "I am afraid he is scarcely up to walking after being dragged along the road for about a dozen yards."

"Yaas, do hop in, old top!" Cardew urged. "There's loads of room!"

We seized our hero and barged him up into the trap. We gave three cheers for Gussy. Cardew drove off, and we continued our journey soberly to the station.

Gussy makes you think jolly hard sometimes. He's a bit of an ass, and an awful dandy, and he's as soft as soft can be about girls; but he's all there when pluck is wanted, and—well, there's only one Gussy, and we wouldn't spare him to anybody!

THE END.

ON SALE
 FRIDAY, JANUARY 24th!
 IN THIS ISSUE: FREE PLATE OF BILLY BUNTER!



BILLY BUNTER'S POSTAL-ORDER ARRIVES—AT LAST!

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Monday :

"THE AMAZING BUNTER!"

By Frank Richards.

The Bunter now at Greyfriars is, of course, Walter Gilbert, not William George.

And the two, alike as they are in person, are as unlike in most of their characteristics as any two fellows well could be.

Billy is—well, you all know what Billy is! Wally, despite his fat, is essentially the same sort of fellow as any of the Famous Five, as Squiff, or Ogilvy. All of these differ in some ways from one another, of course; but they are all alike in more ways.

They are all capable and straight and decent. They can do the things worth doing; and they don't care about the things one should not do. I do not mean that they are perfect; but they are emphatically decent. And Wally is like that.

So it is that he finds his cousin Billy's legacy of trouble very hard to bear. For the things Billy has done are the kind of things honest Wally hates—mean and dishonest things, right off the rails. And Wally is supposed to have done them; and the fact that he is now behaving like a decent fellow is looked upon as amazing.

Next week's story finds him in contact with the Courtfield Council School crowd, of whom we have heard little lately. They know Bunter well, of course; but it is Billy Bunter whom they know. Nice for Wally, again!

Skinner, Stott, and Snoop also come into the story. The Famous Five play rather smaller parts than usual. Some readers may regret this fact; others will not. It is a bit of a change, anyway.

BILLY BUNTER AT ST. JIM'S!

If you are not getting the "Gem" you are making a big mistake.

And it is not my fault. I have been telling you to get it, you know. The yarns of Billy Bunter in his new quarters are the funniest I have ever read.

"Bunter of the New House" is this week's story, and it shows us W. G. B. in close association with Figgins & Co., who are most completely fed up with him before the story ends.

They think he is Wally, you know; and they have seen Wally play footer. Now they see Billy play—no, that's wrong. He can't! But they see him doing what he fancies to be playing footer.

Nuff said!

GET THE "GEM"!

NOTICES.

Correspondence Wanted By :

Herbert Foondhere, Ashfield House, Thornton, Bradford, Yorks—with readers anywhere—17-18. *Stamped addressed envelope.

The Misses Mary and Helen Harkins, Sinclair Street, Milngavie, Scotland—with girl readers between 18 and 19.

J. Robinson, Maise Street, Longstone, near Bakewell, Derbyshire—with readers anywhere.

Davis Zartz, 198, Queen Street, Port Elizabeth, South Africa—with readers overseas.

D. McGrath, c/o P.O., Box 231, Port Elizabeth, South Africa—with readers overseas.

Miss Doreen Cohen, 32, Queen Street, Port Elizabeth, South Africa—with girl readers anywhere—14-17.

Frank McGrath, P.O., Box 169, Port Elizabeth, South Africa—with readers anywhere.

Gideon Smit, 117, Sir Lowry Road, Cape Town, South Africa—with readers in Ireland, India, Hong Kong, Egypt, U.S.A., or New Zealand.

Edward MacPherson, c/o Mangold Bros., P.O., Box 311, Port Elizabeth, South Africa—with readers overseas.

Miss Eileen Quinn, 15, Dollery Street, Port Elizabeth, South Africa—with readers anywhere.

Claude Whitehead, 51, Market Square, Pocklington, Yorks, wants more members for MAGNET and "Gem" Correspondence Club; magazine printed regularly.

YOUR EDITOR.