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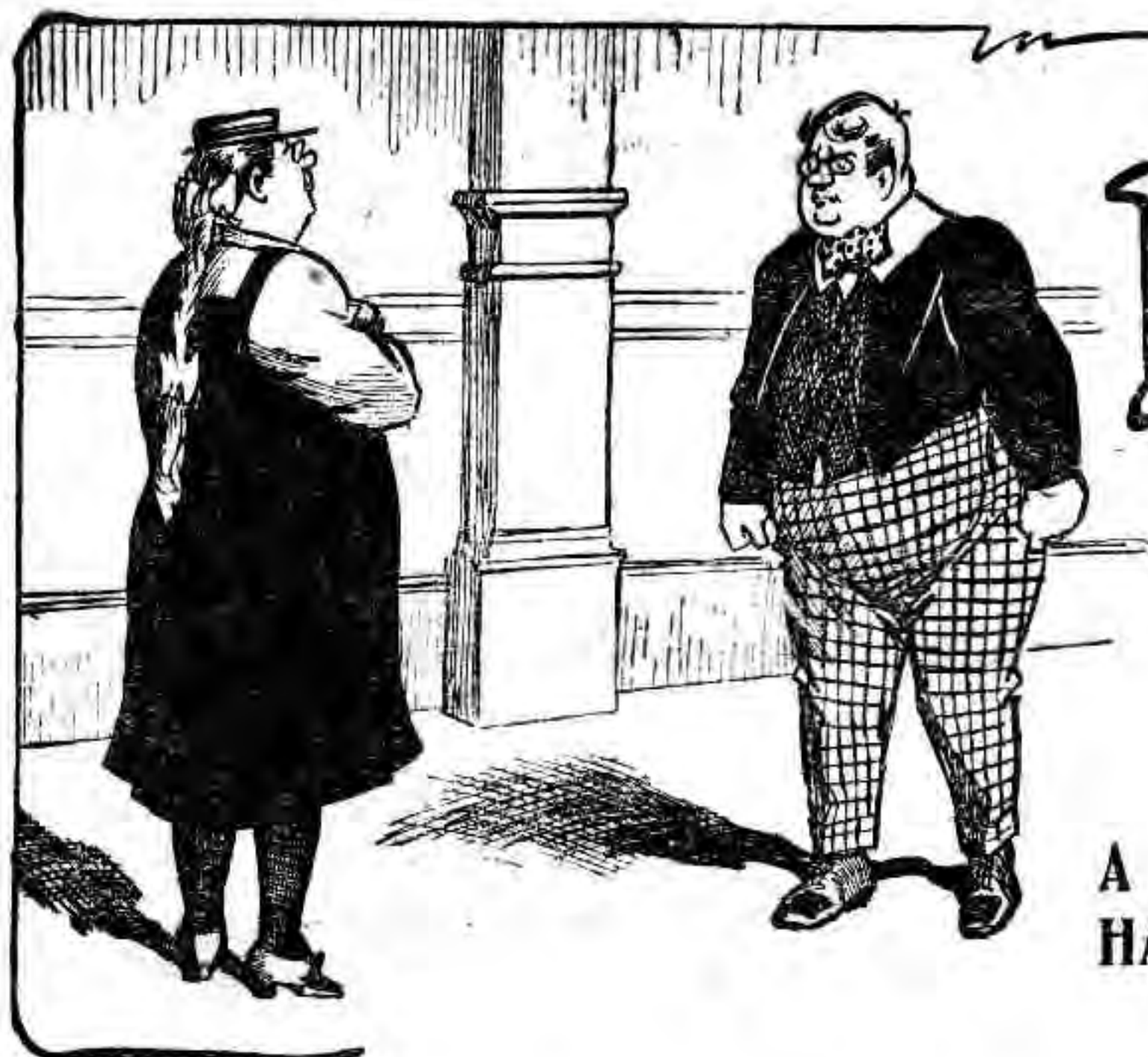
BESSIE *versus* **BILLY!**



BESSIE BUNTER SCARES THE SCORERS!

(An Amusing Scene in the Magnificent Long Complete School Tale in this Number.)

5-7-19



Bessie

VERSUS

Billy!

A Magnificent Long Complete School Story of
HARRY WHARTON & CO. AT GREYFRIARS.

BY FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Pay Up!

"SISTER ANNE—Sister Anne, do you see anyone coming?"

Bob Cherry asked that question as he gazed across the Close from the window of Study No. 1.

The other members of the Famous Five left off preparing the tea and looked over Bob's shoulder.

A good-looking youth was pushing his bicycle through the old gateway of Greyfriars.

"It's Tom Merry!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"My hat!"

"What's in the wind, I wonder?" said Johnny Bull.

"Must be something jolly important for Merry to fag all the way from St. Jim's," said Nugent.

"He has probably come over to chew the ragfulness regarding the esteemed cricketful game," remarked Hurree Singh.

Bob Cherry waved his hand from the window, and Tom Merry glanced up and smiled.

A moment later the St. Jim's junior came into Study No. 1.

"Welcome, little stranger!" said Bob Cherry. "You've just turned up in time for tea. We were about to cook the fatted kipper!"

Tom Merry smiled, and dropped into the chair which Nugent provided for him.

"I've got a proposition to make to you fellows," said the St. Jim's junior. "It's really a challenge."

The Famous Five were interested at once.

Anything in the nature of a challenge always appealed to their sporting instincts.

"You're going to offer to meet Bob Cherry in the gym?" inquired Johnny Bull.

Tom Merry shook his head.

"I'm not such a giddy war-horse as all that," he said. "I'm going to suggest a cricket-match—"

"But we've already played St. Jim's!" said Wharton.

"And licked them!" grinned Nugent.

"Ahem! I don't mean a match between Friars and Saints exactly."

"Then what on earth—"

"I was thinking of raising a junior eleven composed of fellows from St. Jim's, Rookwood, Highcliffe, and possibly Courtfield—"

"My hat!"

"This eleven would challenge the Remove to a match—a two-day match, if you like—to be played here on Friday and Saturday."

The Famous Five exchanged smiling glances.

"You're paying us a jolly big compliment," said Harry Wharton, "if you think the Remove could lick an eleven containing the pick of the cricketing talent from four schools."

Tom Merry chuckled.

"I don't think anything of the sort!" he said. "In fact, I'm pretty certain you'd come a cropper. But it's an experiment—and it will be interesting to see how it works. Are you game?"

"Oh, quite!" said Wharton.

"The gamefulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Singh.

"Look here, Tommy," said Bob Cherry, "you must be exhausted after thinking out such a brilliant scheme! Pile in and devour this kipper, there's a good chap! It's a bit prehistoric, but I think you'll survive!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Merry commenced tea.

The Famous Five buzzed around him like bees, supplying him with the things he wanted—and a good many things that he didn't want.

Harry Wharton & Co. were always polite—sometimes excessively so—to the stranger within the gates.

"Who would be included in this team of yours?" asked Harry Wharton, at length.

"There would be five fellows from St. Jim's," said Tom Merry—"Jack Blake, Talbot, Figgins, the one and only Gussy, and myself."

"Oh crumbs!"

"What hopes!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Then there would be Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd, of Rookwood—"

"Pile it on!"

"And Frank Courtenay, the Caterpillar, and Flip Derwent, from Highcliffe—"

"My only aunt!"

"No; I'm afraid I couldn't play my only aunt," said Tom Merry. "She's a dear old lady, but she's too advanced in years to slog boundaries!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who would be the eleventh man?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Dick Trumper, of Courtfield."

"And you're seriously thinking of put-

ting a team like that up against the Remove?"

Tom Merry nodded.

"You'd be licked, of course," he said. "But that would be no disgrace. After all, the Remove has had a big run of successes this season; and you've got to be licked some time!"

"And what about bagging the two days' holiday?" asked Nugent.

"Only one day," corrected Tom Merry. "Saturday's a holiday in the usual way, and as for Friday, that can soon be arranged. There's a big boom in sport just lately, and the various Heads would raise no objection. Anyway, you can leave that part of the bizney to me. I'll put it to Kildare, our skipper, and he'll put it to Railton, our Housemaster, and Railton will put it to the Head, and the Head will put it to your Head—"

"And the green grass grew all round!" chanted Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's quite a good wheeze," said Harry Wharton. "Nothing of the sort has ever happened before. But if the match turns out to be tame, and you lick us by an innings and a few hundred runs, it will be your own funeral!"

"I don't mind in the least," said Tom Merry.

"All serene, then! We'll leave you to go ahead with the arrangements!"

"I biked over at once," said Tom Merry, "because there's no time to lose. Friday will be here before we know where we are."

A fat face, adorned by a pair of spectacles, intruded itself in the doorway of Study No. 1.

Johnny Bull's hand wandered instinctively to a loaf.

"Buzz off, Bunter!" he growled.

"Oh, really, Bull! You might speak civilly to a chap in front of a stranger!"

"I'm not a stranger, if that's what you mean," said Tom Merry. "I've met you before, Bunter—and it's just my luck to meet you again!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter blinked reproachfully through his glasses at Tom Merry.

There had been a time when the fat junior had inflicted his undesirable presence upon the fellows at St. Jim's.

Tom Merry had not forgotten that time—and neither had Bunter!

The Owl of the Remove had been only too glad, in the long run, to get back to his native heath.



"What is the meaning of this outrage?" thundered Mr. Quelch. "It's a booby-trap!" spluttered Bessie Bunter. "This horrid boy has ruined my clothes, and he'll have to pay for them!" (See Chapter 4.)

"Look here, you fellows, I—I'm expecting a postal-order——"

The Famous Five groaned in unison.

"Can't you think of something more original?" said Frank Nugent. "Why not say, 'I'm expecting a thick ear?' You'll be much nearer the mark!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's nothing to cackle at, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter clutched a letter in his fat hand.

He looked the picture of misery. So much so that Harry Wharton jerked back Johnny Bull's arm just as the sturdy Removeite was about to hurl the loaf.

"Steady on, Johnny!" said Wharton. "What's the trouble, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter seemed on the verge of tears.

"I—I'm stony!" he said, with unusual frankness. "And I want you fellows to have a whip-round and help me out of an awkward hole. I'll pay you back when my postal-order comes!"

"In other words, never!" growled Johnny Bull. "It's not good enough, porpoise!"

"I've got to raise the wind by Friday," said Billy Bunter. "If I don't——"

"Well?"

"I shall get it in the neck!"

Harry Wharton surveyed the fat junior sternly.

"Have you been backing gee-gees, you ass?"

"Nunno!"

"Been playing nap with Skinner?" asked Nugent.

Billy Bunter shook his head.

"The fact is," he said, "I owe my sister ten bob!"

"Your sister!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Yes—Bessie, you know. She swears I borrowed ten bob off her once, though I'm blessed if I remember it!"

"And she wants you to pay up?" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Yes. If—if I don't let her have the ten bob by Friday, she's coming over to Greyfriars to slaughter me!"

"My hat!"

"You're not afraid of your own sister, surely?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

Billy Bunter groaned.

"You don't know Bessie when she's roused!" he said morosely. "She fights like a wild cat. Suffragettes aren't in it when Bessie gets busy with her hat-pins!"

"Great Scott!"

"I simply must have the tin!" Bunter went on. "I don't want it to buy grub with—honest Injun! I want to get out of Bessie's debt."

"Oh!"

"If you don't believe me, look at this letter," said the Owl of the Remove.

Harry Wharton hesitated.

"We don't want to interfere with your private correspondence, Bunter."

"Rats! There won't be anything private about it when Bessie turns up on Friday! She'll rag me in front of all the fellows!"

Billy Bunter spread the letter out on the study table, and the juniors scanned it—not without smiles.

Bessie Bunter's handwriting was very similar to her brother Billy's, and so was the spelling.

The letter ran as follows:

"Dear Billy,—This is to let you no that unless you pay up that ten bob you owe me by Friday, I shall come over to yore skool and skratsh you!"

"It is over six munths ago since I lent you the munney, and I want it pade back at wunce. If not, look out for skwalls!"

"Hoping you are kwite well as it leeves me at pressant."

"I remane,

"Yore luvving sister,

"BESSIE."

The smiles of the juniors expanded. They began to chuckle.

Billy Bunter did not chuckle.

The fat junior was in a state of nervous apprehension.

He had a wholesome dread of his sister Bessie, and he fully intended, by hook or crook, to keep her away from Greyfriars, and the only way he could do this was by squaring his debt.

"You see how it is, you fellows," said Bunter. "I've got to settle up somehow, and my postal-order isn't due to arrive till next week."

"Oh, give the postal-order a rest!" growled Johnny Bull. "You know jolly well you're not expecting one. And if you think we're going to have a whip-round on your behalf you're quite off-side!"

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"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry. "This isn't the Charity Organisation Society, Bunt!"

"Mean beast!" sniffed Bunter, glaring at Bob. "But I'm sure you'll turn up trumps, Wharton."

"Nothing doing!" said the captain of the Remove. "You got into this mess, and it's up to you to find a way out."

"Yes, rather!" said Nugent. "You can choose your own exit. Which is it to be—door or window?"

"Beast! You'll come to the rescue, won't you, Tom Merry?"

"No, I won't!" said the St. Jim's junior, with delightful candour.

"Look here," said Bunter wrathfully, "how am I going to raise this tin?"

"Is that a conundrum?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter glared.

"You're a mean set of rotters—" he began.

Johnny Bull let fly with the loaf, and Wharton's hand did not restrain him this time.

Biff!

The loaf caught Billy Bunter full in the chest, and the fat junior vanished through the open doorway with a yell that awakened the echoes.

"Good-bye, Bluebell!" sang out Bob Cherry.

"Ow! You bullying beasts—"

Slam!

The door banged in Billy Bunter's face, and he realised that neither the Famous Five nor Tom Merry were willing to turn themselves into a horn of plenty.

Shaking a fat fist at the closed door of Study No. 1, the Owl of the Remove retreated down the passage, to take his tale of woe to more sympathetic ears.

Meanwhile, Tom Merry bade farewell to the Famous Five, and cycled back to St. Jim's in high spirits, resolved to put his cherished plan into operation.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Skinner's Little Joke!

"I SAY, old bootface!"

Coker of the Fifth spun round on hearing himself thus addressed.

It was Friday morning, and the great Horace was standing in the old gateway of Greyfriars waiting for the arrival of the postman.

As he turned, Coker's gaze rested upon a plump—a very plump—school-girl.

"Dud-dud-did you speak to me, miss?" stammered Coker.

"Of course I did! Seen anything of Billy?"

"Eh?"

"Are you stone-deaf, as well as having a face like a boot?" demanded the girl.

Coker coloured to the roots of his hair.

Had one of the juniors addressed him in that way, Coker would promptly have landed out with his left.

In the case of a girl, however, he could not very well do that.

But he was annoyed, and he looked daggers at his plump questioner.

"What's wrong with my face?" he exclaimed.

"Ask me another! I should say it had had a side-slip, or something; or perhaps a horse did it. Do you remember having been kicked in the mouth by a horse when you were a little boy?"

"Mum-mum-my hat!" gasped Coker.

The girl's identity gradually dawned upon Coker's slow brain.

He recognised the likeness between her and Billy Bunter, and surmised—correctly.

rectly, as it happened—that she was the much-talked-of Bessie.

"You—you're wanting your brother?" he stuttered.

"Of course! But I should like a feed first. I'm hungry! Came over from Cliff House without any breakfast—barring a dozen rounds of buttered toast. Have you got a tuckshop in this one-eyed place?"

"Yes," said Coker. "But it isn't open yet!"

Bessie Bunter gave a gentle snort.

"Well, never mind!" she said. "Take me along to your study. You've got a study, I suppose?"

"Ye-e-es."

"Lead the way, then. I'm simply dying for something to eat!"

"But—"

"What are you butting like a billy-goat for? You've got plenty of tuck in your cupboard, haven't you?"

Coker nodded in a dazed fashion.

"That's all right, then! I'll let you entertain me, and then you can find Billy for me!"

"Oh! Can I?" faltered Coker.

"Yes. It isn't very often I give a boy the pleasure of waiting on me. I hate boys! But you're not too bad—except for your face!"

"My fuf-fuf-face?" stuttered Coker, wishing more than ever that Bessie Bunter was a boy.

"Your face could never be your fortune," said Bessie blandly.

Then she paused.

"I'm not so sure, though," she added. "If you went on the music-halls you'd make a great hit. It wouldn't be necessary for you to sing. One look at your face would send any sort of audience into hysterics."

"Great pip!"

Coker felt that he was nearing the end of his tether.

He was a chivalrous fellow, and would never dream of striking a girl.

But this sort of thing was maddening.

"You can take my arm, if you like—" began Bessie Bunter.

Coker turned to flee.

"Come back!" cried Bessie, in a shrill falsetto. "Don't you know it's very rude to walk away in the middle of a conversation?"

But Coker was gone.

He felt that if he stayed with Bessie Bunter a moment longer he would not be answerable for the consequences.

"What a rude person!" exclaimed Bessie. "I thought I had made quite a good impression on him, too! Hallo! I wonder if these boys are friends of Billy's?"

Skinner, Stott, and Bolsover major, of the Remove, approached the school gateway. They were grinning.

"I say—" began Bessie.

The trio came to a halt, and bowed low, each with his hand pressed to his heart.

"At your service!" said Skinner.

"Yea, madam!" murmured Stott.

"What-ho and verily!" said Bolsover major.

Bessie sniffed disdainfully.

"You needn't fall down and worship me!" she said. "I'm fed up with that sort of thing!"

The trio rose.

"Tell me," said Bessie Bunter, "who was that big boy who ran into the building a minute ago?"

"Oh, that was Coker!" said Skinner.

"He's a beast!" said Bessie, with emphasis.

"Better go and tell him so, Miss Bunter," said Stott. "I shouldn't like to try it on myself!"

"No fear!" said Bolsover.

"Look here," said Bessie Bunter.

"He promised me a jolly good feed in his study!"

"He did?" said Skinner incredulously. Bessie nodded.

"He's rather fond of me, you see," she explained. "I can't think what made him take to his heels!"

"The sight of your face, p'r'aps," murmured Skinner.

"Eh? What was that?" demanded Bessie sharply.

"I said that Coker fancied a race," said Skinner calmly. "He's a very athletic sort of chap, you know."

"Which is Coker's study?" asked Bessie Bunter. "I'm simply wasting away for want of a feed!"

Skinner winked slyly at his companions.

"I shall be very pleased to direct you to Coker's study, Miss Bunter!" he said. "Buck up, then!"

Skinner led the way through the Close, and Bessie Bunter was escorted into the building.

A good many fellows caught sight of her, and they stared at the procession in unfeigned surprise.

It was not unusual for a Cliff House girl to visit Greyfriars; but it was almost unheard of for one of them to turn up before breakfast.

Billy Bunter—fortunately for himself—was out of the way.

It would not have done for him to encounter his plump sister just then.

"Here we are!" said Skinner, cheerfully.

And he stopped short—not outside Coker's study, but the study owned by Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth.

Skinner was aware that Mr. Prout was breakfasting in his study that morning. He was aware, also, that the maid had just taken in a laden tray.

Mr. Prout himself would follow on shortly.

"Thanks!" said Bessie. "If Coker isn't there, he won't mind me making a start, I suppose?"

"Not a bit of it!" said Bolsover major. "Coker's an awfully generous sort. He eats very little brekker himself. If you could polish it off for him, he'd be awfully grateful!"

Bessie Bunter's eyes sparkled.

"Good!" she said. And she walked boldly into the study, leaving Skinner & Co. fairly hugging themselves in ecstasy.

Little dreaming that she was the victim of a jape, Bessie Bunter sat down at the table—Coker's table, as she thought—and surveyed the tray and its contents with great satisfaction.

Mr. Prout was the possessor of a healthy appetite, and his breakfast on that particular morning was something more than a square meal.

There was porridge in plenty; there were eggs and bacon, and grilled kidneys; there was toast and marmalade, and a goodly portion of plum-cake; to say nothing of a steaming pot of coffee.

Bessie Bunter attacked the good things with relish.

The walk from Cliff House had whetted her appetite, and she felt quite capable of disposing of Mr. Prout's breakfast in its entirety.

"This is prime!" she murmured. "I didn't know that boys were allowed to have breakfast in their studies. Looks like it, though!"

The porridge disappeared in a flash, followed by the eggs and bacon and the kidneys.

Mr. Prout's toast-rack was then cleared of its contents; and the plum-cake followed, washed down by copious draughts of coffee.

Bessie Bunter rose to her feet with a sigh of contentment.

But she was not wholly contented yet. Like Alexander of old, she looked round for fresh worlds to conquer.

She was approaching the cupboard, when there was the sound of a heavy footstep in the passage.

"Coker!" murmured Bessie Bunter. "I'll make him apologise for being so rude to me just now!"

The study door was thrown open, and a queer sort of gurgling sound on the threshold caused Bessie Bunter to spin round with a start.

What she saw caused her to jump about two inches from the study carpet.

For the visitor was not Coker.

It was a rather flabby-faced gentleman, clad in gown and mortar-board.

For a moment Mr. Prout stood transfixed.

He tried to speak, but coherent words would not come.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bessie Bunter, in dismay.

Mr. Prout glared at Bessie Bunter, then at the empty tray, and then back again at Bessie Bunter.

"You—you have eaten my breakfast!" spluttered the master of the Fifth, in a choking voice.

Bessie Bunter stared.

"Your bub-bub-bub-breakfast!" she gasped.

"Yes—my breakfast! How dare you trespass within my study, madam? And who are you, pray?"

"I'm Bessie Bunter, of Cliff House. I—I thought this was Coker's study."

"What!"

"Isn't this Coker's study, then?"

"Most emphatically it is not!" rasped Mr. Prout. "It belongs to me—Coker's Form-master!"

"Oh!"

"It appears that you have been the victim of a practical joke. That being the case, I shall take no action in the matter. But if I thought you were directly to blame, I should communicate at once with your headmistress! Pray, leave my study, Miss Bunter!"

Bessie Bunter was only too glad to obey.

She stood not upon the order of her going, but went at once.

For several moments Mr. Prout remained glaring at the array of empty plates.

Then, with feelings too deep for words, he rustled away to the domestic regions, to request Mrs. Kebble to replace his vanished breakfast.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

In Hiding!

"H AVE you seen Bessie?"

Squiff of the Remove addressed that question to Billy Bunter at the breakfast table.

The fat junior lifted a startled face from his plate.

"Bessie!" he muttered.

Squiff nodded.

"She's been hunting for you high and low," he whispered.

"Oh crumbs!"

Billy Bunter paused in his attack on the eggs and bacon.

He laid down his knife and fork.

"Is—is my sister here?" he gasped.

"Yes."

"Is she very ratty?"

"Ratty isn't the word for it!" grinned Bolsover major. "She's like a fiery dragon! She wants you to settle up a little debt—"

Billy Bunter shivered.

His reflections were not pleasant ones. Supposing the persistent and warlike Bessie tracked him into the dining-hall?

The fat junior turned quite pale at the thought.

"Oh dear!" he gasped.

"Not gone off your feed, Bunt, surely?" murmured Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter did not answer.

He pushed his plate from him, and rose to his feet.

"Well, Bunter?" said Mr. Quelch, from the head of the table.

"I—I—if you please, sir, I'd like to go out for a walk, faltered Bunter."

"What!"

"I'm badly in need of fresh air, sir. I feel awfully faint."

Mr. Quelch darted a keen glance at the fat junior.

He knew Bunter's little ways of old.

But the Owl of the Remove looked so genuinely off-colour that the Remove-master took pity on him.

"Very well, Bunter," he said. "You may take a stroll in the open air. I trust it will prove beneficial to you."

"Thank you, sir!"

Billy Bunter rolled out of Hall.

His one desire was to escape the vials of Bessie's wrath.

Billy had no brotherly affection for Bessie; and Bessie had no sisterly solicitude for Billy.

Very early in life they had quarrelled bitterly because one received a larger portion of pudding than the other.

And the relationship between them had grown worse instead of better.

Billy Bunter knew that there would be short shrift for him if he encountered Bessie.

That hostile creature would almost certainly attack him—either with blows or hatpins.

Even food was forgotten at that critical moment.

"I must stow myself away somewhere!" mused Billy Bunter. "Lemme see. Where shall I hide? The box-room? Too risky. The crypt? Groo! Much too clammy! The tower? Yes—that's it! I'll stay in the tower till Bessie clears off."

So saying, the fat junior rolled out into the Close.

Then he gave a violent start.

Standing under the elms, with her back towards him, was Bessie!

Quick as thought Billy Bunter dodged into the bicycle-shed near by.

He waited in this haven of refuge, crouched low amongst the machines, until the coast was clear.

Then, making sure that Bessie had disappeared into the building, the fat junior hurried away to the tower.

There was a little room at the top of the old stone stairs.

Bunter entered this room, which was stored with lumber, and carefully barricaded the door after him.

From his antics one might have gathered that his life was in danger.

There was a rug in the corner of the room. Billy Bunter spread it out on the hard boards, and made himself as comfortable as possible in the circumstances.

"Hope Bessie clears off soon!" he murmured. "I daren't show myself until she's gone back to Cliff House. And I shall get jolly hungry up here. Groo!"

Curled up on the rug, Billy Bunter dropped into a doze.

A few minutes later he was sleeping soundly.

It was not a dreamless sleep.

Billy Bunter dreamt that he was being chased towards the edge of a precipice by his sister Bessie, who possessed the tail and horns of a dragon.

She was screaming "Pay up!" in frantic tones; and Bunter was getting nearer and nearer to the edge of the precipice.

"Gimme my ten bob!" hissed the fiery dragon.

Bunter continued his headlong flight, with Bessie in hot pursuit.

Then he suddenly pitched forward into nothingness, and found himself falling, falling—

And then he woke up.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Billy Bunter, the perspiration standing out in beads on his brow. "What an awful nightmare!"

He staggered to his feet, rubbed his eyes dazedly, and went to the window.

Gazing out across the cricket-ground, he saw a number of fellows at practice.

Their merry voices floated up to the fat junior.

Tom Merry was there, and so were Talbot and Figgins and Blake, and the immortal Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

Standing a short distance away were Frank Courtenay, the Caterpillar, and Flip Derwent, of Highcliffe.

Shortly afterwards the party was reinforced by Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd, who had made the long journey from Rookwood, in Hampshire, and by Dick Trumper, the popular leader of the Courtfield juniors.

"Lucky dogs!" murmured Billy Bunter. "They're going to pretend to play cricket. But their real reason for coming over here is to have a jolly good feed!"

There was a good deal of activity on the cricket-ground; but, although several members of the Remove team had turned out, there was at present no sign of the Famous Five.

There was no sign of Bessie Bunter, either.

Billy Bunter wondered where his sister could be.

He wondered if it would be safe to emerge from his hiding-place and ransack the Remove studies in search of tuck. He would certainly get very hungry if he remained in the old tower without food.

But the haunting prospect of being pounced-upon by Bessie made Bunter pause.

"I'd better stay here until I'm certain she's gone back to Cliff House," he murmured. "The horrid cat! Just like Bessie to start fussing about an imaginary debt of ten bob!"

And Billy Bunter curled up on the rug like a fat dormouse, and sank once more into the arms of Morpheus.

And this time he was untroubled by dreams of fiery dragons!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry's Blunder!

B ILLY BUNTER'S mysterious absence was the topic of conversation in Study No. 1, where the Famous Five had assembled half an hour before the match was due to commence.

"Strikes me," said Bob Cherry, "that Bunter's taking advantage of the cricket-match to do a bit of study-raiding. Bulstrode missed a cake just now, and Ogilvy's jam-puffs have disappeared."

"Our own grub's not been touched, so far," said Frank Nugent.

"True, O king! But Bunter will find his way in here very shortly, you see. At present he's hiding somewhere—"

"Oh, don't worry about that fat porker!" growled Johnny Bull. "Let's come along to the cricket."

"But we can't have our giddy supplies raided while we're away!" persisted Bob Cherry.

"We'll take our chance!" said Whar-ton.

Bob Cherry snorted.

"If you fellows don't mind having the cupboard looted, I do!" he exclaimed.

"You get off to the cricket, and I'll take the necessary precautions against that fat burglar."

"What are you going to do?" asked Wharton.

"Fix up a booby-trap!" explained Bob. "I don't mean a common or garden booby-trap, but the real thing. Plenty of whitewash, plenty of ink, and a crowd of feathers."

"And you think you'll catch Bunter napping?" said Johnny Bull.

Bob nodded.

"Well, you can go ahead," said Johnny. "We'll leave you to it. Don't forget to come along in time for the match."

"All serene!"

Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh trooped out of the study.

They had little faith in the success of Bob Cherry's booby-trap.

Bob himself, however, was very keen on the idea.

He went round to the woodshed, and procured a pail of whitewash and a sackful of feathers, and conveyed them by stealth to Study No. 1.

The ingredients for the booby-trap were duly mixed together in the whitewash-pail, which was suspended on a rail beside the study door.

Bob Cherry mounted a chair, and poised the pail in such a way that Billy Bunter, when he pushed open the door of the study, would tilt it up and cause the contents to descend in a ghastly shower on his devoted head.

Bob Cherry gave a low chuckle.

"I think this ought to do the trick!" he murmured. "Hope Bunter turns up soon. I want to see the fun."

The practical joker seated himself in the armchair, and awaited developments. He hadn't long to wait.

Stealthy footsteps were audible in the passage, and Bob Cherry's heart beat overtime.

The footsteps halted outside the door of Study No. 1.

"Now for squalls and cataracts!" murmured Bob Cherry.

The door was pushed open, and then—

Swish!

Swooooosh!

The pail was overturned, and a perfect avalanche of whitewash and ink, intermingled with feathers, shot down upon the head of the intruder.

"Yoooooop!"

The yell rang the whole length of the Remove passage.

Bob Cherry rocked with laughter.

But the laughter died suddenly away as he gazed at the victim.

"What the thump—" gasped Bob.

He could not for the life of him understand why Billy Bunter was wearing skirts!

Sounds of spluttering and gurgling, varied occasionally by shrill shrieks, arose from the study-raider.

"Bunter!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Then he paused.

"Why—my hat!—it isn't Billy Bunter at all!"

"Yow-ow-ow! I'm Bessie!" came in anguished tones from the apparition in the doorway.

"Bessie! My hat!"

Bob Cherry started up from the armchair like a fellow in a dream.

Mistakes of this sort had happened before.

Booby-traps intended for one person had sometimes descended upon another.

But Bessie Bunter—

For a moment Bob Cherry was at a loss what to do.

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Then he gingerly took hold of Bessie's arm and led her to the armchair.

"Just look at my clothes!" gurgled Bessie Bunter. "They're ruined!"

"I—I—" stammered Bob Cherry helplessly. "Miss Bunter, I'd no idea that—"

"Cherry!"

Bob Cherry jumped, as the stern voice of Mr. Quelch hailed him from the doorway.

"Ye-e-es, sir?" gasped Bob.

"What is the meaning of this outrage?"

Bob Cherry was wondering what to reply, when Bessie Bunter spoke up for him.

"It's a booby-trap!" she spluttered. "This horrid boy has ruined my clothes, and he'll have to pay for them! I hope you'll give him a jolly good caning into the bargain!"

Mr. Quelch surveyed Bob Cherry with the glare of a basilisk.

"How dare you play a practical joke of this description upon a young lady?" he thundered.

"Oh crumbs!" faltered Bob. "I—I wasn't—I didn't—"

"You have caused irretrievable damage, Cherry!"

"I—I'm sorry, sir!" blurted out Bob. "The booby-trap was intended for Billy Bunter. I had no idea that Miss Bunter would come along—"

The Remove-master's acid voice cut into Bob Cherry's apology.

"For this outrageous conduct, Cherry, you will remain in the Form-room to-morrow afternoon until you have completed five hundred lines from the 'Iliad'!"

"Oh!"

Bob Cherry's jaw dropped.

He realised, with a start, that the two-day cricket-match would still be in progress at the time of his detention.

"If you please, sir—"

"Well, Cherry?"

"Couldn't you make it some other afternoon, sir? I'm playing cricket for the Remove to-morrow."

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"I am not prepared to alter my decision to suit your convenience, Cherry! You will stay in to-morrow afternoon and write your lines, and hand them to me when finished."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Aren't you going to cane him as well?" demanded Bessie Bunter.

Mr. Quelch did not reply to that question.

"I should advise you to go at once to the House-dame, Miss Bunter," he said. "She will doubtless help you to remove all traces of this—er—unfortunate mishap."

"Oh, all right!" said Bessie. And she moved to the door.

Mr. Quelch jumped back as the girl approached. He had no wish to relieve Bessie Bunter of any portion of the dreadful concoction which clung to her like a shroud.

Bessie Bunter made her way to the domestic regions, shedding a trail of ink and whitewash behind her.

Mr. Quelch turned to Bob Cherry.

"If there is a repetition of this dangerous joke, Cherry, I shall cane you severely! It is only because of your usually good behaviour that I have been lenient with you on this occasion."

And the Remove-master swept away with rustling gown.

Bob Cherry made his way to the cricket-ground with a dark cloud on his usually sunny face.

He was reflecting that Mr. Quelch's punishment was anything but lenient!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Rough on Coker!

"H ALLO, Bob!"

"Did you work the giddy oracle?"

"Did you catch the ludicrous fat Bunter in the raidful act?"

Bob Cherry gave a grunt as these questions were fired at him by his chums.

He mounted the pavilion steps more like an old man of eighty than an athletic schoolboy.

"What's the matter, old man?" asked Wharton, in concern. "You look quite shaken up."

"I am!" said Bob glumly. "The booby-trap worked all right—but I woke up the wrong passenger!"

"My hat!"

"It was Bessie Bunter who got the dose—not Billy."

"Oh!"

"Serves her jolly well right!" growled Johnny Bull. "She's as bad as her brother. Shouldn't be surprised if it was Bessie Bunter who wolfed Bulstrode's cake and Ogilvy's jam-puffs."

"And she would have looted our cupboard, too, if Bob's booby-trap hadn't been successful," said Nugent.

"But that's not all," said Bob Cherry. "Quelch happened to come along, and he was awfully waxy. I've got to grind out lines in the Form-room to-morrow afternoon instead of playing cricket."

"Great Scott!"

The other members of the Remove Eleven looked grave.

The absence of Bob Cherry spelt disaster to the side.

Bob was a punishing batsman, besides being nippy in the field.

With the possible exception of Harry Wharton and Vernon-Smith, he was the Remove's best cricketer.

And he was doomed to detention in the Form-room—perhaps at a critical time for the Remove.

Johnny Bull broke the painful silence which ensued.

"Didn't you protest to Quelch that you were playing cricket?" he asked.

"Of course!"

"And it was no good?"

"No good whatever."

"Rough luck, old scout!" said Frank Nugent. "Let's hope the match will be over by to-morrow afternoon, and then you won't be wanted."

"It's beastly!" said Harry Wharton. "Still, we must grin and bear it, I suppose."

"No use sending a petition to Quelch, is it?" asked Peter Todd.

Bob Cherry laughed mirthlessly.

"Quelch isn't in the mood to receive petitions," he said. "If you were to put one before him, he'd cancel the match, or something."

"I'll news travels apace, and the whole Remove soon knew of Bob Cherry's escapade and its result.

Feeling ran very high on the subject.

Mr. Quelch was, as a rule, a kind and just man; but in sentencing Bob Cherry to detention he had imposed the worst possible punishment.

Everyone agreed that a licking would have met the case.

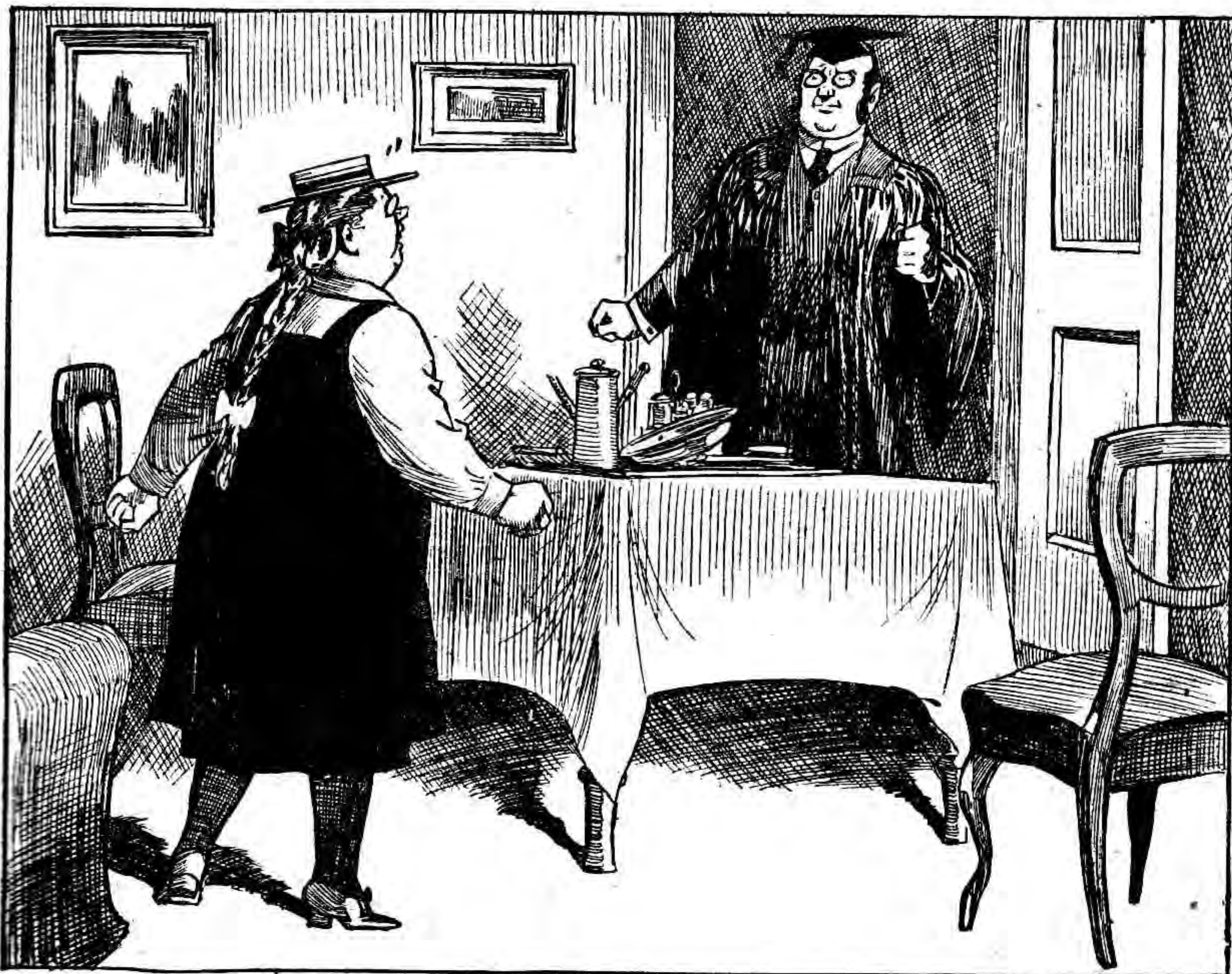
"Wherefore those worried looks?" asked Tom Merry, approaching the gloomy group of cricketers outside the pavilion.

Harry Wharton explained.

"We shall be without Bob to-morrow afternoon," he said. "Quelch's come down heavy and given him detention."

"Phew!"

"Nevah mind, deah boys!" interposed the voice of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "The match will be ovah long befoah to-mowwow aftahnoon. In fact,



Mr. Prout stared at Bessie Bunter, and then at the empty tray. "You—you have eaten my breakfast!" he spluttered. Bessie Bunter stared. "Your bub-bub-breakfast!" she gasped. (See Chapter 2.)

it will only take us a few hours to administah a feahful thwashin' to the Wemove."

"Rats!" growled the Greyfriars juniors.

The clock in the tower chimed eleven.

"Time to get to bizney," said Tom Merry.

He spun the coin, and won the toss.

"Come on, Talbot!" he said.

And the two St. Jim's fellows, looking very cool and resourceful, stepped out to the wickets.

The Remove took the field with grim faces.

They realised that this was to be a battle royal.

In the past they had defeated St. Jim's, Highcliffe, Rookwood, and Courtfield County Council School; but now that they were up against the chosen representatives of all four schools they knew that their chances of victory were, to say the least of it, remote.

Wingate of the Sixth and Coker of the Fifth were acting as umpires.

They seated themselves on camp-stools, and the great match commenced.

The Remove fielded a strong side.

Besides the Famous Five, there were Peter Todd and Mark Linley and Vernon-Smith, and Squiff, Dick Penfold, and Tom Redwing.

Hurree Singh and Penfold shared the bowling.

Runs came quickly at first.

Tom Merry, in particular, played with

rare dash, and the score mounted apace. Thirty runs were registered on the telegraph-board when Bessie Bunter, having removed all traces of that horrible booby-trap, arrived on the scene.

She was hunting for her brother Billy.

Early that morning she had peeped into all the Remove studies in quest of the fat junior, and the smears of jam on her plump face bore ample testimony to the fact that she had sampled Ogilvy's jam-puffs.

Bessie Bunter puffed her way up the pavilion steps, and stood blinking around her.

"Has anyone seen Billy?" she inquired of a group of Removites who were watching the match.

"Your brother seems to have done the disappearing trick, Miss Bunter," said Dick Russell. "He went for a stroll at breakfast-time, and he hasn't been seen since."

"He owes me ten bob!" said Bessie Bunter warmly. "Are you a pal of Billy's?"

"Eh? No fear!" said Russell hastily. "Why?"

"I was thinking you might like to square Billy's little debt for him."

"My hat!"

"If you'll hand me the ten bob I'll give you a receipt," said Bessie.

Russell grinned.

"I haven't ten pence, let alone ten bob," he said. "Besides, I've already

said that I'm not a pal of your brother's."

"Well, you jolly well ought to be!" said Bessie Bunter. "Billy's friendship is worth cultivating, I can assure you!"

Dick Russell didn't seem to think so. He chuckled.

"Instead of making a noise like a broody hen," said Bessie, "you might bustle round and get me some refreshment. How can you let a lady stay out here in this blazing sun without offering to fetch her a ginger-beer and ice?"

"A lady!" murmured Monty Newland. "My hat!"

Bessie Bunter levelled her parasol threateningly at Monty, and he jumped back out of range.

The Jewish junior was renowned for his fearlessness, but, like most plucky fellows, he had a wholesome dread of being attacked by a member of the other sex.

"Look here," said Bessie Bunter, "isn't anybody going to fetch me a cooling drink?"

"Don't all speak at once!" murmured Dick Rake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you wouldn't mind moving a little to starboard, Miss Bunter," said Dick Russell, "I should see more of the game."

"You are a very rude boy!" said Bessie, brandishing her parasol. "I've a good mind to—"

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"Help!" gasped Dick Russell.

And he promptly followed Monty Newland's example.

Bessie Bunter scanned the flannelled figures on the playing-pitch.

"Isn't Billy playing for the Remove?" she asked.

"No," said Dick Rake. "He—he's hardly up to the weight of the other fellows, you see."

"Nonsense! Billy has always been a good hand at hopscotch."

"Hopscotch!" exclaimed Rake. "You seem to have got a bit mixed. This is a cricket-match, Miss Bunter."

"Are you trying to be funny?" demanded Bessie severely.

"Nunno!" muttered Dick Rake, jumping clear of the upraised parasol.

With a contemptuous toss of her head Bessie Bunter moved away.

The juniors gave simultaneous sighs of relief.

"Thank goodness!" breathed Monty Newland. "What a specimen of girlish charm! Did you ever?"

"No, never!" said Russell and Rake solemnly.

Bessie Bunter was very hot and flustered as she walked away.

She had expected to find some fellow in the Remove who would cheerfully settle Billy's debt.

She had also expected to be fawned upon and made a great fuss of by the juniors.

And neither of her expectations had been realised.

"Mean beasts!" she muttered indignantly.

Then she broke off.

"Why, great Scott, there's that boy Coker!"

Horace Coker was seated placidly on the umpire's stool, and Bessie Bunter had sighted him from afar.

"I'll ask him what he meant by running away from me this morning!" she exclaimed.

And, little realising the enormity of her action, Bessie headed straight for the pitch.

There was a gasp from the Remove fieldsmen as they saw her coming.

"My only aunt!" murmured Frank Nugent. "Is this next man in, or what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wingate waved Bessie Bunter back.

The captain of Greyfriars was always a very chivalrous fellow, but there were limits to his chivalry. He could scarcely have been polite to Bessie Bunter at that moment.

"Go away!" he shouted.

"What?"

"If you wish to speak to anyone, you may do so at the end of the innings. You are holding up the game."

"Rot!" said Bessie.

And she continued her triumphant march across the pitch.

Coker saw her coming, and he guessed there would be ructions.

Bessie Bunter's flushed face, and her upraised parasol, were sufficient indications that a storm was brewing.

"Oh crumbs!" muttered Coker.

He leapt up from his stool, and promptly took to his heels.

Bessie Bunter immediately gave chase.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Now for the merry Marathon! Put your beef into it, Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker fled wildly across the pitch, and dodged behind Wingate.

The captain of Greyfriars gave a roar as Bessie Bunter's parasol descended across his broad shoulders.

"Yaroooooh!"

"Help!" roared Coker.

And he clasped Wingate round the neck, dragging him backwards.

Wingate and Coker and umpire's stool collapsed in the grass in a confused mass.

"Got you!" said Bessie Bunter triumphantly.

Whack, whack, whack!

Coker roared and yelled as the parasol descended with stinging force upon his writhing arms and legs.

Bessie Bunter was very far from being athletic, but she certainly got a good deal of power behind her blows.

"Yarooooop!" spluttered Coker.

"Yow! Chuck it! Stop it!"

"This will teach you not to walk away when a lady is speaking to you!" panted Bessie.

And the parasol continued to rise and fall.

The fieldsmen did not interfere.

As Bob Cherry pointed out, they could not very well lay hands on a girl.

Bessie Bunter desisted at length, when her parasol snapped in two, and Wingate and Coker began to sort themselves out.

Fortunately, Wingate had only received one or two stray blows.

But Coker had been through the mill to a terrible extent. He was aching all over.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" he groaned.

"Serve you right!" said Bessie severely.

And then, clutching the broken parasol in her hand, she stalked off the pitch.

She had failed to find Billy Bunter;

she had been unsuccessful in her efforts to raise ten shillings from another source. But she had got her own back on Coker, and that was something.

The spectators were rocking with merriment as Bessie Bunter came off the field.

But there was one person who had witnessed the castigation of Coker with mixed feelings.

From the window in the old tower Billy Bunter had viewed the proceedings.

Bessie's display with the parasol made him less eager than ever to come face to face with his sister.

And, looking out, the fat junior had thanked his lucky stars that he wasn't Horace Coker!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Close Shave!

"O H dear! I'm jolly well famished!"

Two hours had elapsed, and Billy Bunter, in the confines of the old tower, had begun to feel acutely the pangs of hunger.

He had dodged Bessie successfully so far.

But dodging Bessie meant going hungry—a state of affairs which didn't appeal to Billy Bunter in the least.

Bunter had had practically no breakfast, and it was now nearly lunch-time.

From the window the fat junior could see food and drink being set out for the cricketers under the leafy trees.

"And I've got to stick here and starve!" he growled. "It's rotten!"

The fat junior was still in mortal dread of meeting Bessie.

But pangs of hunger overcame his fears.

"I simply must get some grub!" he murmured.

Removing the barricade from the door of the lumber-room, Billy Bunter cautiously descended the winding staircase and emerged into the Close.

The coast was clear. All the fellows were on the cricket-ground, watching the match.

Billy Bunter made his way to the Remove passage.

He hoped to make a rich haul from the various studies.

"Lemme see!" he murmured. "Bulstrode had a plum-cake early this morning. Wonder if it's still in his cupboard?"

But Bulstrode's study did not prove a horn of plenty.

Like Mother Hubbard, Billy Bunter found that the cupboard was bare.

"Rotten!" he growled. "Still, there may be something doing in Ogilvy's study. He had a bag of jam-puffs if I remember."

But again the Owl of the Remove had no luck.

He did not know that his plump sister had been over the same ground before him.

Grumbling to himself, Billy Bunter rolled along to Study No. 1.

He stopped short as he was about to enter that famous apartment.

On the floor was a pool of whitewash, intermingled with ink and feathers.

"My hat! Somebody's been having a fine old game!" exclaimed Bunter. "Looks as if there's been a booby-trap here."

The fat junior rolled over to the cupboard.

"Oh, good!" he murmured.

There was a cold pie on the top shelf, and an assortment of fancy cakes lower down.

"Now for a jolly good feed!" said Billy Bunter, reaching on tiptoe for the pie.

Read

"THE SCHOOLBOY CARAVANNERS!"

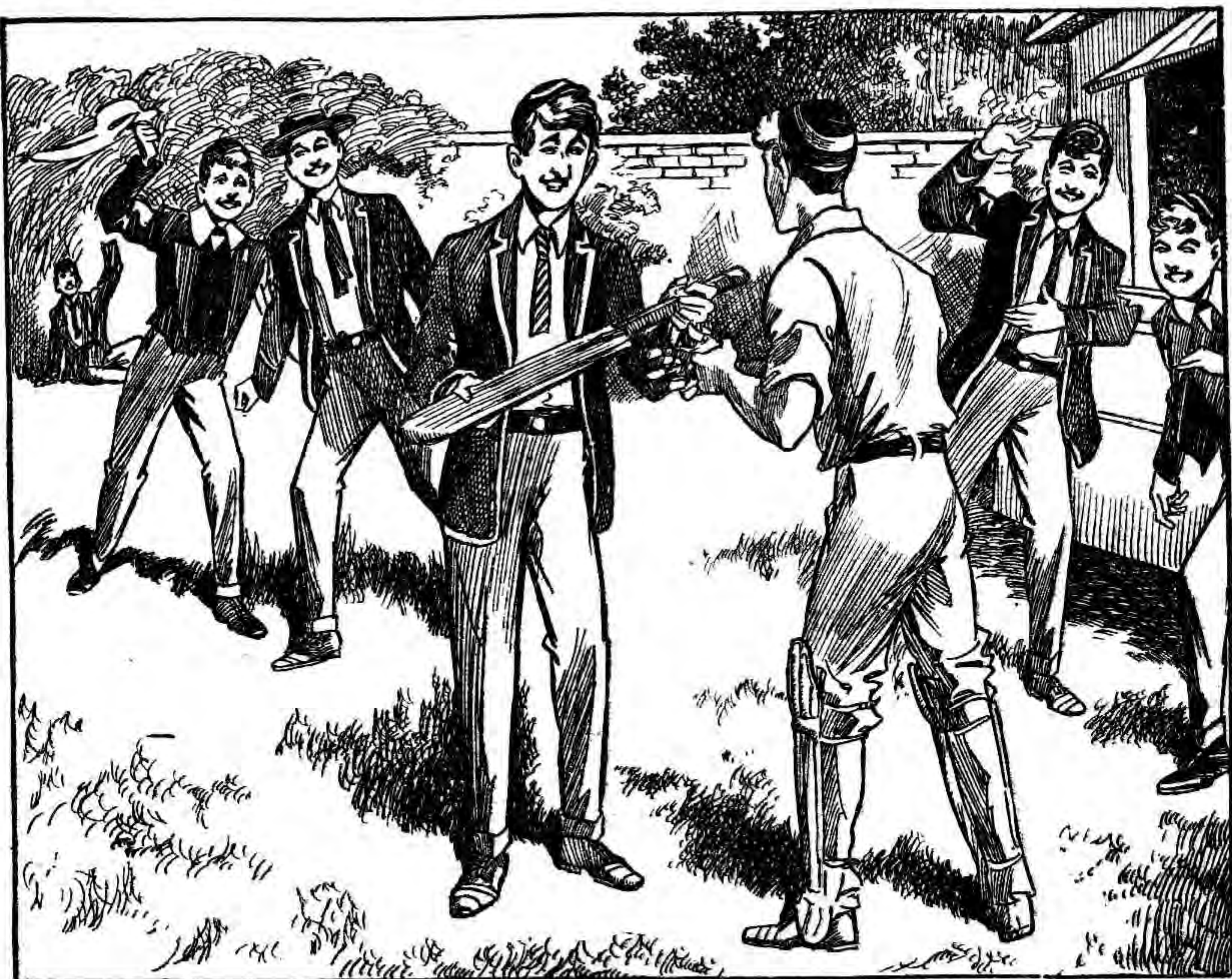
A Wonderful Complete Story of TOM MERRY & CO. at St. Jim's,

By MARTIN CLIFFORD, in

"THE GEM."

Out This Wednesday.





A cheer greeted Bob Cherry as he came on the cricket ground. Peter Todd emerged from the pavilion, and thrust a bat into Bob Cherry's hand. "Good luck, old chap!" he said. (See Chapter 8.)

At that moment a heavy footstep sounded in the passage.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter.

Quick as thought he jumped back from the cupboard and dived beneath the study table.

He was only just in time.

The study door opened, and Billy Bunter, scarcely daring to breathe, peeped from under the tablecloth at the intruder.

Then he drew back again, his fat limbs trembling.

For the visitor was his sister Bessie!

Billy Bunter crouched beneath the table, fervently wishing the floor would open and swallow him up.

Supposing Bessie discovered him!

The thought made Billy Bunter shiver.

Alone with his sister in Study No. 1, there would be none to help him.

Bessie would have him at her mercy. And the fat junior, his imagination running riot, pictured himself being brained with the study poker.

Bessie Bunter had no suspicion, however, that anyone else was in the study.

She advanced towards the cupboard; and the next moment Billy Bunter could hear her smacking her lips with relish.

His sister was about to start on the feed which he had fondly hoped to devour!

The next few moments were a martyrdom to Billy Bunter.

Cramped in every limb, yet not daring to move, he remained in his hiding-place, while Bessie sampled the good things.

From time to time Billy Bunter heard his sister use such exclamations as, "This is prime!" or, "It fairly melts in the

mouth!"—and it was almost more than the fat junior could hear.

At last a grunt from Bessie signified that the orgy was at an end.

"I'm still hungry!" murmured Bessie. "If only I could find Billy I'd squeeze that ten bob out of him and go and have a feed at the tuckshop! Just wait till I do find Billy! He'll wish he'd never been born!"

Billy Bunter was wishing that already.

The fat junior felt that he would be unable to remain in his uncomfortable position a moment longer without betraying his presence.

He was stiff and cramped, and, moreover, he experienced a violent desire to sneeze.

Luckily, however, Bessie Bunter, having satisfied herself that there was nothing more to eat, walked out of the study.

Billy Bunter fairly gasped with relief. He crawled out from his hiding-place, and stood listening to Bessie's retreating footsteps.

"Blow Bessie!" he murmured. "Why did she want to come barging in here? She's wolfed all the grub; and I'm simply famished!"

It would be too risky, Bunter reflected, to venture into any of the other studies.

He might encounter his sister—and that was a tragedy which must be averted at all hazards!

With a rueful glance at the empty plates and dishes, the Owl of the Remove scuttled away down the passage, and returned to his hiding-place in the tower.

Seldom had the fat junior felt so utterly miserable.

He was cut off from the world, so to speak, and he had no means of getting food.

Glancing out of the window, he noticed that the cricketers were at lunch.

The sight was almost too much for Billy Bunter.

"Blessed if I can stand this!" he muttered. "I shall have to get some grub somehow!"

As he spoke he caught sight of his minor crossing the Close.

"Hi, Sammy!" he shouted.

The fat fag looked up in surprise.

"What on earth are you doing up there, Billy?"

"I—I want to keep clear of Bessie!" explained the Owl of the Remove. "She's trying to dun me for ten bob!"

Sammy Bunter chuckled.

"Good luck to her!" he said.

"Look here," said Billy Bunter, "I'm jolly hungry! I've had nothing to eat all day!"

"Not my fault, is it?" said Sammy.

"You're not a bit sympathetic. I'm jolly well starving, I tell you!"

"Buck up and get it over, then!"

Billy Bunter controlled himself with a great effort.

"Now, be a sport, Sammy!" he said.

"I want you to do me a favour."

"Well?"

"I want you to go along to Coker's study—in the Fifth Form passage, you know—and bag all the grub you can lay your hands on."

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"My hat!"

"Then you can bring it to me here."

"Oh, can I?" growled Sammy. "What do I get for this noble deed?"

"A bob," said Billy Bunter—"when—when my postal-order arrives! I'm waiting for it every day—"

"It may be for years, and it may be for ever!" chuckled Sammy.

"Look here!" said Billy Bunter, leaning out of the window and blinking at his minor through his big spectacles. "Are you going to raid Coker's study for me, or are you not?"

"Not!" said Sammy promptly.

"Then you're a little beast—"

"Bow-wow!"

"I'll lick you as soon as Bessie's gone!"

"Rats!"

"I've a jolly good mind to come down to you now—"

"Come on, then!"

Billy Bunter was about to comply when he caught sight of his sister Bessie crossing the Close.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped the fat junior. And he promptly dodged back out of sight.

But he was too late.

Bessie's keen feminine eyes had detected him at the window.

The next moment her voice floated up to him.

"Billy! Come down—come down at once! So that's your little game, is it? You've been hiding in the tower!"

Billy Bunter was too paralysed to reply.

"If you don't come down in two minutes," said Bessie, "I'll come up and fetch you!"

A painful pause followed.

Then Billy Bunter heard his sister ascending the stone staircase.

"Thank goodness I had the savvy to barricade the door!" murmured Billy.

Bessie Bunter had evidently not expected a barricade.

She was surprised to find that the door refused to budge under persistent pressure from without.

"Billy, you little beast—"

"You can't get in!" said Billy Bunter. "You can shove till you're blue in the face, but it won't be any use. I should advise you to chuck it!"

And Bessie did chuck it—at length.

But her last words to Billy were not reassuring.

"You needn't think you've escaped me!" she exclaimed, through the key-hole. "I'm going back to Cliff House now, but I shall come over here again to-morrow!"

Billy Bunter groaned.

"I say, Bessie, do be reasonable!" he entreated. "I'll pay you that ten bob the moment my postal-order arrives!"

But Bessie Bunter was deaf to the voice of the charmer.

"I'll deal with you to-morrow!" she said darkly. "Your life won't be worth living by the time I've finished with you!"

"Oh, really, Bessie! Let me give you the ten bob out of my postal-order, and we'll call it square!"

But Billy Bunter's brilliant suggestion was wasted on the desert air. Bessie had gone.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

An Uphill Game!

WHEN Coker of the Fifth had recovered from the effects of Bessie Bunter's unexpected onslaught, the great match—Remove versus Remainder—was resumed. Tom Merry and Talbot continued to bat well.

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Under the blazing sun the Remove fieldsmen panted and perspired.

But they never grew slack.

The fielding reached a high pitch of excellence, and the picking-up and throwing-in was smart and clean.

But the two batsmen were irresistible.

They piled up runs at a tremendous rate, and the Removites were given a good deal of leather-chasing.

Hurree Singh and Dick Penfold, the two bowlers, were relieved at length by Harry Wharton and Vernon-Smith.

But the change yielded no result. If anything, the rate of scoring increased a little.

"These beggars seem determined to stay at the wickets all day!" grunted Bob Cherry. "Try a googly, Harry."

Wharton tried one.

The next moment a couple of tiles came clattering down from the pavilion roof.

Talbot had shown his contempt for balls of the "googly" variety.

At lunch-time the two batsmen were still together.

Tom Merry was 57, not out, and Talbot 55, also not out.

The Remove fieldsmen were rather glum as they sat down at the tables under the trees.

"This is what comes of accepting Tom Merry's challenge!" growled Johnny Bull. "We might have known the other schools would smash us!"

"They haven't smashed us yet," said Harry Wharton doggedly. "They're batting well, but it's a perfect wicket, and there's no reason why we shouldn't put up quite as good a show when our turn comes."

When the game was resumed, Vernon-Smith sent down a fast rising ball which Tom Merry played into the hands of Squiff at point.

"Good-bye, Bluebell!" said Tom Merry, as the St. Jim's junior made his way to the pavilion.

"Let's hope the merry wickets will fall like ninepins after this!" said Peter Todd.

Peter's hope, however, was ill founded.

The next man in was Jimmy Silver.

He flogged Vernon-Smith to the boundary four times in succession; and the Bounder, a few moments later, asked Wharton for a rest.

"Toddy had better take a turn," he said. "They're making hay of my stuff."

Peter Todd exercised all his wiles; but Talbot and Jimmy Silver continued to hit.

The Removites resigned themselves to a day in the field.

They began to seriously wonder whether Harry Wharton was justified in accepting Tom Merry's challenge.

It looked very much as if they had bitten off more than they could chew.

Jimmy Silver was bowled at last. A yorker from Peter Todd displaced his off stump.

But the batsmen who followed on all made a good show.

Not until the tea interval was Tom Merry's team finally disposed of; and the score-sheet was an amazing one.

It read as follows:

T. Merry c Field b Vernon-Smith	57
R. Talbot c Nugent b Todd	102
J. Silver b Todd	70
F. Courtenay c and b Singh	22
A. A. D'Arcy b Singh	25
R. Trumper run out	12
G. Figgins c Wharton b Penfold	20
T. Dodd lbw b Singh	14
R. de Courcy not out	55
J. Blake c and b Penfold	12
P. Derwent b Singh	12
Extras	9
Total	410

"Oh, help!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"What a score!"

"Looks as if we shall be licked by an innings!" said Nugent.

"Plus a few hundred runs!" growled Johnny Bull.

"The outlook," said Hurree Singh, "is not of the esteemed hopeful character. But we will performfully do our best."

Tea was a curious meal—a gloomy one for the Remove, and a gay one for the Remove's opponents.

Harry Wharton and Vernon-Smith went in first for the Remove, and they had to face the bowling of Frank Courtenay and Jimmy Silver.

Tom Merry's side had scored swiftly; but the Remove scored even quicker.

Boundaries came in rich profusion, and the runs mounted fast.

But the wickets fell fairly frequently; and when the time for drawing stumps arrived, the Remove were all out, with Tom Merry's team enjoying a lead of 150 runs on the first innings.

The members of the visiting side were accommodated for the night in the school sanatorium, where they were made thoroughly comfortable.

Harry Wharton & Co. retired, as usual, to the Remove dormitory.

There they discovered Billy Bunter, lying awake with a pitiful expression on his fat face.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Where have you been all day, porpoise?"

"Keeping clear of my sister. She's trying to dun me for ten bob, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's all very well to cackle," said Bunter indignantly. "I haven't had a morsel of grub all day! I believe I'm dying!"

"Good!" said Johnny Bull. "You might leave me that eighteen-carat brass watch of yours!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts!" said Bunter. "How would any of you fellows like to go a whole day without grub?"

"Serves you right!" growled Peter Todd. "You shouldn't be so funky of meeting Bessie. If you owe her ten bob, and can't pay up, be a man, and tell her so!"

Billy Bunter grunted.

"You don't know what Bessie is," he said. "I'd rather meet a raging lion! I say, you fellows, have you got any grub about you?"

"Nix!" said Bob Cherry.

"Then I shall die of starvation! I really can't last out till breakfast-time."

"That's the best news we've heard for a long time," said Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts!" growled the fat junior.

And he turned over in his bed—but not to sleep.

His mind was still occupied with the problem of obtaining food.

Later on, when the dormitory was hushed in slumber, Billy Bunter slipped from his bed and made his way by stealth to the domestic regions.

He was in clover.

A large rabbit-pie, newly-made, stood on a shelf in the pantry, and the Owl of the Remove, who really was ravenous by this time, made short work of it.

Then, undetected and unobserved, he made his way back to the Remove dormitory.

And, for the first time in many hours, Bunter experienced a feeling of complete comfort and content.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Race Against Time!

CRICKET, like football, is a game of surprises.

When the second day's play started, the great game took a dramatic turn.

The Remove bowlers were at the very top of their form.

Tom Merry, Talbot, and Jimmy Silver were cleaned bowled in the first over, and by lunch-time the whole side was out before a hundred runs had been scored.

"That's tons better!" said Harry Wharton.

The flush of hope had returned to his cheeks.

There was yet a chance that the Remove might win—a slender chance, but a chance, for all that.

They needed two hundred and fifty runs, and they had the whole of the afternoon to get them in.

But they would be without Bob Cherry.

Bob had his imposition to write. And five hundred lines, unless he wrote at express speed, would occupy him all that afternoon.

"I've a jolly good mind to defy old Quelch," said Bob Cherry, during lunch.

Harry Wharton looked grave.

"You'd only make matters a thousand times worse, Bob. Besides, Quelch would be bound to spot you playing cricket!"

"But you may want me——"

"We'll do our best without you, old scout. Don't go running a halter round your neck!"

There was a determined gleam in Bob Cherry's eyes.

"I know what I'll do," he said. "I'll dash off those giddy lines at top speed, and try and get 'em done by about three o'clock. Then I shall be in time for my innings."

Wharton laughed ruefully.

"You'll never do it!" he said.

"Never's a long day. You trust your uncle!"

As soon as lunch was over Bob Cherry went along to the Form-room and started on his gigantic task.

Bob was not, as a rule, a swift writer. But on this occasion he excelled himself.

His pen fairly flew over the paper.

The familiar opening lines of the "Iliad" had never been dashed off in such hot haste.

"Of Peleus' son Achilles, sing, O Muse, The direful wrath, which sorrows numberless

Brought on the Greeks, and many mighty souls

Of youthful heroes, slain untimely, sent To Pluto's dark abode, their bodies left

A prey to dogs and all the fowls of heaven."

After an hour's hard writing, Bob Cherry surveyed his progress.

"My hat! I've not written a hundred yet!" he exclaimed.

And, jabbing his pen in the inkpot, he scribbled away more furiously than ever.

A cheer floated through the windows of the Form-room—a signal that the match had been resumed, and that the Remove had started on their task.

Bob Cherry jumped up and went to one of the windows.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were at the wickets, and they seemed to be settling down into a steady game.

"Good luck to them!" murmured Bob.

And he turned back to his task.

Another hundred lines were laboriously written, and then a third hundred.

By this time Bob Cherry was aware that several of the Remove wickets had fallen.

"Wonder if they'll be wanting me?" he murmured.

Something seemed to tell him they would.

Bob's wrists were cramped, but he wrote on doggedly.

The Form-room door opened, and Mr. Quelch looked in.

"Ah! You are writing your lines, Cherry?"

"Yes, sir. I'm nearly through!"

"What?"

Mr. Quelch was obviously surprised.

"Do you mean to say that you have completed nearly five hundred lines, Cherry?"

"Yes, sir. I'm fighting against time," explained Bob. "I—I was thinking I could get the lines finished in time for my innings."

"Very well, Cherry. Bring the lines to my study when you have finished them."

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How Bob Cherry got through the last lap he never knew.

He worked like a nigger.

All his energy was concentrated upon the conclusion of his task.

At length he rose to his feet with an exclamation of relief.

"Thank goodness!"

The imposition was finished.

Bob Cherry blotted the final sheet, and sprinted along to the Form-master's study.

"These lines have been very hastily written, Cherry," said Mr. Quelch.

Bob groaned.

Supposing he should be ordered to write the lines all over again?

Luckily, no such fate was in store for him.

"I can quite understand your eagerness to complete the task, Cherry," said Mr. Quelch. "You may go!"

"Thank you, sir!"

Greatly relieved, Bob Cherry hurried round to the cricket-ground.

A glance at the telegraph-board caused him to quicken his pace.

Nine wickets were down, and the Remove still needed seventy runs to win!

A cheer greeted Bob Cherry as he

came—a cheer which was taken up all round the ground.

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Bob!"

Peter Todd emerged from the pavilion, and thrust a bat into Bob Cherry's hand.

"Good luck, old chap!" he said.

Fortunately, Bob Cherry was still in his flannels.

Without pausing to glance round, he hurried on to the pitch.

The other man in was Mark Linley.

Bob Cherry could have shouted for joy.

He and the Lancashire lad understood each other perfectly.

There were no two fellows in the Remove team more likely to make a determined last-wicket stand.

The Caterpillar, of Highcliffe, was bowling—and the Caterpillar was always dangerous.

Bob Cherry faced him without a tremor.

And when the ball came, fast and deadly, it was snicked through the slips to the boundary.

Bob was certainly in fighting trim.

Time and again he leapt out of his crease like a tiger, and sent the ball speeding away beyond the reach of the fieldsmen.

Mark Linley backed him up loyally.

Mark's score was already a big one, and he added to it rapidly.

Swiftly the margin of 70 runs was lessened, until only twelve runs were wanted to give the Remove the victory.

Only twelve!

And yesterday it had seemed a hopeless case!

"Bob's splendid!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, his eyes sparkling. "I've never seen him in better form."

The bowlers exerted themselves to the utmost. The fieldsmen in the slips crouched low, ever on the alert.

But Bob Cherry gave no chances.

He scored a two, and then a four. And then, running out to meet a half-volley from the Caterpillar, he sent the ball soaring clean out of the ground.

A hush followed—a hush of breathless wonder.

The Removites could scarcely believe, even now, that they had won.

Bob Cherry's dramatic innings had been played so quickly that the necessary runs had been knocked off before the spectators were fully aware of the fact.

But the silence of the crowd was short-lived.

A ringing cheer was sent up from the pavilion—a cheer in which everyone—victors and vanquished alike—joined.

Tom Merry was the first to congratulate the Friars.

There was an expression of utter surprise on the face of the St. Jim's fellow.

Had anyone told him a day before that his strong team would come a cropper against the Greyfriars Remove he would have flatly refused to believe it.

But the miracle had happened. The Remove had won!

They would never be able to repeat the performance, perhaps. But the fact remained that they had now defeated an eleven composed of the best talent from four rival schools.

And the curly-headed, sunny-tempered Bob Cherry was acclaimed by all as the hero of the hour!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Raiders!

"At last!"

Bessie Bunter uttered the words in tones of triumph.

She had returned to Greyfriars that morning in accordance with

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her threat, and had hoped to run her brother to earth.

But the Owl of the Remove had again taken refuge in the tower—determined to keep warlike Bessie at arm's length.

But the rabbit-pie which Billy Bunter had consumed overnight was not sufficient to keep him satisfied for long.

All the morning he had been without food, and at last he had emerged, like a fat rat, to spy out the land.

And at the corner of the Remove passage he had bumped into the very last person in the world he wished to see—his sister Bessie!

"At last!" said Bessie again. "You've given me the slip for nearly two days, but I've got you now!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"What do you mean by dodging me—eh? Aren't you pleased to see your sister?"

"Of—of course!" stammered the wretched Billy. "I—I'm awfully pleased to meet you, Bessie!"

"Fibber!" said Bessie scornfully. "You know jolly well you tried to fight shy of me!"

"I—I didn't—"

"What about that ten bob you owe me?"

"Dud-dud-do I owe you ten bob?"

"Certainly! You borrowed it off me last time you were home for the holidays!"

"I—I don't remember—"

"No, you wouldn't!" snapped Bessie.

"You're not a Pelmanist. But I remember! And you're going to settle up, here and now!"

"I—I can't!"

"Nonsense!"

"Oh, really, Bessie! I'm stony!"

Bessie folded her plump arms, and planted herself in Billy Bunter's path.

She looked like a feminine edition of Napoleon.

"If you don't pay up," she said, in measured tones, "I'll give you a good hiding with my parasol!"

"Ow!"

Billy Bunter had seen Coker of the Fifth go through the mill, and he was not exactly pining for a dose of the same medicine.

"Look here, Bessie, don't be a beast. I'll pay up as soon as I get my postal order! I really am expecting a postal order, you know!"

"I don't believe you!" said Bessie.

"What's more, I mean to lick you! I think I'll begin now!"

Billy Bunter backed away in alarm.

"Hold on!" he muttered. "I—I've got something to tell you!"

"Buck up, then!"

"Would you like a jolly good feed?"

"Eh?"

"A really top-hole spread—cakes and doughnuts and jam-puffs and maids of honour—"

Bessie stared incredulously at her brother.

"You're inventing all this!" she said.

"I'm not—honest Injun! I happen to know where there's plenty of grub stowed away—and if you'll promise not to touch me, and to let the ten bob stand over, I'll let you go halves!"

Bessie reflected a moment.

"All right," she said at length, withdrawing her parasol.

A great load slipped from Billy Bunter's mind.

"Come with me," he said.

And he led the way towards the box-room.

"If you're telling fibs, Billy," said Bessie, "I won't spare you!"

Billy Bunter grinned.

He threw open the box-room door, and displayed to view a really magnificent spread.

A hamper stood on the floor, and it contained all the good things Billy Bunter had mentioned—and many more besides.

Bessie's eyes sparkled.

"This is prime," she said. "Who does this little lot belong to, Billy?"

The fat junior chuckled.

"It belonged to the cricketers," he said, "but it belongs to us now! Pile in!"

Bessie needed no second bidding.

Her appetite was equal to, if not superior, to that of her brother.

When they both got going, the affair seemed to develop into a neck-and-neck race between them.

Billy Bunter would have preferred sampling the contents of the hamper on his own.

But he had made his peace with Bessie; and that, after all, was the main thing.

Nothing was heard in the box-room for some moments save the steady champing of jaws.

"I suppose we're quite safe?" ventured Bessie at length.

"Safe as houses!" said Billy. "The fellows are still playing cricket. Pass the chocolate macaroons!"

"Thanks; but I'd prefer them myself!" said Bessie blandly.

And she made short work of the tempting delicacies.

Within a very brief space the contents of the hamper were reduced to a few crumbs.

And then, just as the two plump raiders were about to take their departure, there was a sound of footsteps in the passage.

A party of Remove cricketers were coming to collect the tuck and convey it to the cricket-ground.

The door of the box-room was thrown open, and Bessie and Billy Bunter each gave a startled gasp.

They were caught like rats in a trap!

"My only aunt!" exclaimed Frank Nugent, stopping on the threshold. "Our grub's been raided!"

"I say, you fellows—" faltered Billy Bunter.

"You fat young thief!" shouted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, you know! I haven't laid a finger on your beastly grub! It was Bessie!"

"The same old story!" said Squiff. "You're trying to show us over again that Eve tempted Adam to the forbidden fruit!"

"Of course, it was Billy who scoffed it all!" said Bessie Bunter. "I was merely a looker-on!"

"Why, you—you—" stuttered the Owl of the Remove.

The cricketers paused in uncertainty.

They scarcely knew how to act.

Had Billy Bunter been alone they would probably have bumped him—hard.

But they could scarcely bump his sister Bessie.

It was a perplexing problem. But it was soon solved.

"What has happened?" asked a quiet voice.

The juniors spun round.

Phyllis Howell and Philippa Derwent, of Cliff House, had come up behind them.

It was Phyllis Howell who had spoken.

But she need not have asked the question.

A glance at the empty tuck-hamper showed her clearly enough what had happened.

"Has Bessie Bunter been raiding your tuck?" asked Flap Derwent.

Harry Wharton nodded.

"In that case, you can leave her to our tender mercies!" said Phyllis Howell grimly. "We'll take her back to Cliff House and teach her a lesson!"

"Oh, really, Phyllis—" protested Bessie.

"Are you coming quietly?" asked Flap Derwent. "If not, we shall be compelled to use a little gentle persuasion!"

Bessie Bunter gave a wild glance round, but there was no way of escape open to her.

Reluctantly she yielded herself up to her captors.

"I'm awfully sorry this should have happened," said Phyllis Howell, turning to Harry Wharton. "This fat gormandiser is a disgrace to Cliff House. But you may rely on us to point out to her the error of her ways!"

The Removites grinned.

And Phyllis Howell and Flap Derwent, smiling cheerfully at the Greyfriars juniors, started off for Cliff House.

Bessie Bunter, owing to circumstances over which she had no control, accompanied them.



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THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Squaring Accounts!

WHEN the footsteps of the three girls had died away down the passage Billy Bunter became the centre of a hostile crowd.

"Now, you fat worm—"

"What do you mean by scoffing our grub?"

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

"March him out into the Close!" commanded Harry Wharton.

Willing hands grasped the quaking Owl of the Remove, and he was duly escorted along the passage and out into the Close.

Billy Bunter was in a tight corner—one of the tightest in his school career.

But for the arrival of Phyllis Howell and Flap Derwent he might have got off scot-free.

The Removites could not very well have punished him whilst his sister Bessie was present.

But now that Bessie had been taken away to judgment it was different.

Just as the victim was ushered out into the Close, Bogg, the postman, toiled up.

"Letter for Master Bunter!" he grunted.

"My hat!"

"Not the celebrated postal-order, surely?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter's eyes glistened.

"Yes, it is!" he said confidently.

"Gammon!"

"It is, I tell you!"

"Rats!"

"I'll show you, if you like!"

"Seeing's believing!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Give the fat beast the letter!" said Harry Wharton.

The letter was duly handed over, and Billy Bunter was allowed to open it.

Quite a crowd of fellows had collected on the scene by this time.

"Buck up, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter ripped open the envelope, and his fat face beamed. He flourished something in his hand.

"Told you so!" he exclaimed triumphantly.

"Mum-mum-my hat!" gasped Harry Wharton.

For Billy Bunter had produced from the letter, not a postal-order but a cheque.

The juniors fairly gasped.

They could not remember the fat junior ever having received a cheque before.

"Must be a mistake!" said Peter Todd.

"Or a dummy cheque!" said Squiff.

"It isn't!" said Billy Bunter. "You can read the letter if you like! It's from the Editor of the Companion Papers!"

"Who?"

"What?"

"Which?"

"The Editor of the 'Magnet,' you know, and the 'Gem,' and the 'Boys' Friend'—"

"Rot!"

The next moment, however, the juniors realised that Billy Bunter was, for once in his life, telling the truth.

The letter bore the address of the Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London.

It ran as follows:

"Dear Bunter,—I have pleasure in enclosing herewith cheque value thirty shillings, in payment of your contribution to the 'Extracts from the 'Greyfriars Herald' and 'Tom Merry's Weekly' in the 'Gem' Library, entitled 'How I Played for the First Eleven.'"

"Your contribution was evidently not

intended to be humorous, but my readers found it immensely so.

"Trusting you will not do yourself an injury with the enclosed remittance,

"Yours faithfully,

"THE EDITOR."

"Then it's true!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Great Scott!"

"A cheque for Bunter!"

"And from the Editor of the Companion Papers!"

"Wonders will never cease!"

The juniors could scarcely believe the evidence of their eyes.

But there it was, beyond all doubt or dispute.

Billy Bunter had actually received a cheque for one of his literary contributions!

It took a very long time for the excitement to dwindle away.

And then the juniors recalled the fact that Billy Bunter had to be punished for appropriating their feed.

"Bump him!" rapped out Harry Wharton.

"Here, I say—hold on—I—I mean, leggo!" gasped Bunter.

The avengers closed in upon him with grim faces.

"You're not going to wriggle out of this, my pippin!" said Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter saw that the situation was desperate. And, on Shakespeare's authority, desperate situations require desperate remedies.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Bump him!" repeated Harry Wharton.

"I—I'm sorry I scoffed your feed! I won't do it again!"

"Rats!"

"I'll tell you what I'll do!" said Bunter. "I've always been a generous sort of fellow, as you know. I'll give you this cheque so that you can lay in a fresh supply of tuck."

"What!"

"I mean it!" said Bunter. "Let me off the bumping and you shall have this cheque! That's a sporting offer!"

Harry Wharton turned to his chums.

"Shall we?" he asked.

"Yes, rather!"

"We've got our guests to think about," said Nugent. "Can't let 'em go short of tuck."

"No—rather not!"

"Very well, Bunter," said Harry Wharton. "We'll get Maundy to cash it for us, and we'll lay in a fresh supply of tuck from Mrs. Mumble's."

Billy Bunter handed over the cheque.

It was like parting with a whole row of teeth to have to do it. But the fat junior was driven to desperation.

It so happened, however, that Harry Wharton only expended a pound on his purchases; and Billy Bunter duly received the ten shillings change.

So his contribution to the Companion Papers was not wasted labour, after all!

It was a very merry party of juniors which sat down to tea under the shady trees.

The pound had been well and wisely expended, and there were ample supplies of tuck.

The great match was over and won—thanks chiefly to Bob Cherry, whose display at the eleventh hour had been one of the finest ever witnessed on the Greyfriars ground.

Never had Bob been held in such high esteem as on this occasion.

It was not as if the Remove had defeated a common or garden team.

They had triumphed against one of the strongest junior elevens it would be possible to raise; and, as Peter Todd remarked, the Remove would not have been able to repeat that wonderful performance in a thousand years.

It was Tom Merry who proposed the toast:

"Bob Cherry, of the Remove!"

And the demonstration which followed was one that Bob Cherry would never forget.

This was truly his day of days!

As for Bessie Bunter, that plump damsel experienced a very sorry time of it when she got back to Cliff House.

The girls of that famous institution dealt with her after their own manner; and it was a manner which Bessie Bunter found very painful!

Greyfriars expected to see more of Bessie Bunter in the near future; but the plump Cliff House schoolgirl kept her distance.

Phyllis Howell and Flap Derwent gave Bessie clearly to understand that if she raided any more Remove studies at Greyfriars she would be treated to something lingering, with boiling oil in it.

In spite of her promise to Billy Bunter that the ten-shilling debt was off, Bessie made one last desperate attempt to extort the money from the Owl of the Remove. She expended a perfectly good three-halfpenny stamp in sending him the following note:

"Dear Billy,—The girls have given me a dreadful time, and it's all threw you!"

"Why didn't you lock the box-room door while we were having our feed? You mite have known we should be spotted!"

"I feel very savidge about it; and the only way you can redeme yoreself in my eyes is to send me that ten bob you owe me!"

"Yore luvving sister,
"BESSIE."

To which epistle Billy Bunter replied on a postcard, with the brief but expressive monosyllable:

"Rats!"

Billy Bunter's own ten shillings were expended in riotous living.

He made himself quite bilious after sampling Mrs. Mumble's supplies; and the theory of the Editor of the Companion Papers that the fat junior might do himself an injury was well founded!

And for many days afterwards, one of the most amusing topics of conversation in the Greyfriars Remove centred around the recent manoeuvres of Bessie versus Billy!

THE END.

(Don't miss next Monday's Grand Complete Story of HARRY WHARTON & CO., by FRANK RICHARDS.)

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Goggs Grammarian

By Richard Randolph

SYNOPSIS.

Johnny Goggs comes to Rylcombe Grammar School from Frankingham with his chums Trickett, Blount, and Waters.

Goggs is a ju-jitsu expert, a clever impersonator, and the organiser of many brilliant japes. He leads an expedition of Grammarians to St. Jim's, and accomplishes one of the most daring night raids ever perpetrated.

It reaches the ears of the Head, who tells Gordon Gay to bring all the juniors concerned to his study.

(Now read on.)

Bingo, the Butcher.

THE Head dropped down heavily on the adventurers. All were caned, all had impositions, and there was also a week's gating for all.

But a caning is a mere passing incident, and a week soon flits by, while being gated helps to get impositions done. That was Goggs' view, expressed to the rest in his usual polysyllabic fashion, anyway; and, though Wootton minor and Carboy cavilled at it, most of the others agreed with him.

Larking & Co. were left severely alone. Two of them were in Coventry during the whole of that week; and Carpenter practically shared the sentence with them of his own choice. Fellows gave up nodding to him when they found that he would not even return their nods.

But, loyal as he was to his unworthy pals, there was a change in Carpenter. His spirits were low, and his conscience seemed to have become very wakeful.

"Carp's going right off the rails," remarked Snipe to Larking, as they lay under a tree beside the silvery Ryll one broiling hot half-holiday, each with a cigarette between his lips.

"Let him go!" growled Larking.

"I don't even know where he is this afternoon."

"I don't, either—and I don't want to!"

"He won't stand in with us in anything we can do to get even with that gang," said Snipe, throwing the end of his cigarette into the water, and picking a blade of grass to chew.

"We can't do anything," answered Larking hopelessly.

"Are you going to chuck it?"

"What's the use of trying to keep it up? I hate the whole gang, and I always shall hate them. But I can't see how we can ever score over them. Goggs is too much for us."

"It's that dough-faced reptile you hate worst, I suppose?" said Snipe viciously.

"Yes, of course. He's at the bottom of it all."

"Then I fancy our best plan is to leave the rest of them alone for a bit—their turn will come, you know—and concentrate upon Goggs."

"All very well to talk like that! But how are we going to get at him?"

"I rather think I have a dodge," replied Snipe. "Hand over your cigarette-case, old bird."

Larking handed it over, and waited.

"Do you know that new butcher fellow—Bingo, they call him? His name's really Binks, I believe."

"I've seen the cad. What's he got to do with it?"

"A lot—if things work out as I hope. He's

a regular prize-fighter; comes from the East End somewhere, and has boxed in some of the halls."

"I've heard something of that sort. Been scrapping about the village, and licked all comers, hasn't he?"

"Yes."

"I should like to see him take down Goggs' number, but—"

"That's just my notion, Lark!"

"I don't see how it can be worked."

"But I do—at least, I've thought it partly out, and I'm beginning to see my way through."

"You can't go and bribe the chap to lick that glass-eyed object."

"Not so sure. Something of that sort might be worked. I don't fancy Bingo's above bribing."

"It would come out."

"It might—and, again, it might not. I shouldn't care a fat lot either way. I'd give a heap to see that perishing parrot put through it!"

Snipe's face was very vicious as he said that. Larking's, though less unwholesome, was hardly more pleasant.

These two had brooded over their defeat and their punishment until they were festering with malice—ready for almost anything in the way of revenge.

"Let's roll over to the village and have a look at the boulder," suggested Larking.

Snipe was quite ready to do that. They followed the course of the river, and within ten minutes or so were in the sleepy village street.

Hardly anyone seemed stirring that sultry afternoon. Cats basked in the sunshine before cottage doors; dogs had sought the shade, and lay with protruding tongues; sun-blinds were up. Mrs. Murphy had in her window an interesting announcement concerning ice-cream.

The butcher's shop was exactly opposite hers. The bruising Bingo was not on view at the moment, and Larking said:

"An ice-cream or two wouldn't be half a bad notion, Snipey. If the butcher cad comes out we can see him from inside there."

"I'm on!" replied Snipe, always ready to sponge upon his pal.

They passed in, and ordered vanilla ices. The shop was cooler than the street, and smelt very pleasant. But Mrs. Murphy herself looked anything but cool when she appeared.

"Busy, Mrs. Murphy?" asked Larking.

"I am that, sir! Two of the St. Jim's young gentlemen came in yesterday and gave a special order for a feed here to-morrow. There's a rare lot coming, St. Jim's and your school. But I dare say you know all about it, and very likely you are coming yourselves?"

Snipe scowled. Larking said lightly:

"We may, and we may not. It's hot weather for heavy feeding, Mrs. Murphy."

"Well, a body must eat something, you know, sir," said the buxom dame, as she passed out again.

"You know what that feed means, I suppose, Lark?" said Snipe in low tones.

"I've heard something about it. Bet between our bounders and the St. Jim's crew, and our lot winning on the raid of that night. Isn't that it? Needn't worry us much."

"I wish I could think of some way of spoiling it for them!" returned Snipe.

"Hallo! There's Bingo!"

Larking rose and lounged to the door.

He saw a stocky, powerful fellow of seventeen or so, who had just emerged from the shop opposite, and now stood on the pavement with legs astraddle, looking monarch of all he surveyed.

His face was large and red, and the nose was a trifle on one side, as if from some blow which had damaged the bridge. His sandy hair was sleek and greasy. His feet and hands were big. He looked as if he might be slow and clumsy; but when he moved it could be seen that he was neither.

The sun shone full upon him as he passed beyond the shade of the sun-blind, and his red face glowed like a carbuncle.

He passed his hand over his hair, and gazed around as if in quest of either admiration or a fight.

In the little world of Rylcombe Mr. Percival Binks had made quite a stir. He could use his fists as none of the village lads could use theirs, and he told astonishing tales of the high old times with "West End nobbs," which his skill with the gloves had brought his way. They might be termed incredible tales, but for the fact that Rylcombe credited them.

It was an honour for a village girl to be asked to walk out with Mr. Binks. It was a distinction for a village lad to be knocked down by him. And Mr. Binks bestowed honours and distinctions liberally.

He had never had such a time in his life as he was having at Rylcombe. It seemed sometimes almost too good to be true.

As yet he had not run up against either St. Jim's or the Grammar School. He had heard of both, of course, and had seen the colours of both about, worn by boys of all ages from eighteen to eleven. He was rather looking forward to the time when he might get a chance to show some of them what a great man and a mighty smiter Mr. Percival Binks was.

And now that time was coming.

Mr. Binks' master was away that afternoon, and the fact made the arrogant Percival even more arrogant than usual. When he saw three big fellows, all wearing the red-and-white St. Jim's ribbon around their straw hats, approaching, he stepped in their way.

The three were Cutts, Gilmore, and St. Leger, all of the Fifth, and all youths of the sporting type. They were on their way to the Green Man, for a surreptitious game of billiards.

Larking and Snipe knew the trio slightly, and did not like them. They had tastes in common; but the great men of St. Jim's Fifth looked down upon members of the Grammar School Fourth as small fry.

Therefore, seeing Percival's attitude, and guessing what it meant, Larking and Snipe chuckled.

Mr. Binks had to move into the middle of the road to put himself in the path of Cutts, Gilmore, and St. Leger. But he did not mind that trouble.

"Here, dash it, you fellow, get out of my way!" snapped the lordly Cutts.

"Bought the bloomin' road, 'ave yer?" answered Mr. Binks. "If not—an' I've 'ad no notification to that there effect—you can walk round, an' be dashed to you!"

Cutts halted, and his chums also pulled up, though they looked as though on the whole they would have preferred walking round.

"Look here, my good fellow—"

"I'm not your good feller, mister; an' don't you go callin' of me nasty names like that, or you an' me will disagree!" retorted Bingo.

"Which would be rather unpleasant for one of us," said Cutts.

"You're right; an' that one would be you!"

Cutts glared down at Bingo.

There was probably little difference between the two in weight, but Cutts was some inches taller.

"It seems to me," said the Fifth-Former, slowly and weightily, "that you're asking to have your head knocked off!"

Bingo thrust his bullet-head, reeking with grease, within a couple of inches of the St. Jim's fellow's face.

"Lemme see you knock it off!" he said tauntingly.

It was more than Cutts could stand. He did not use his fist, but he brought his right hand round flat with a force that made the butcher-lad reel.

"Take that!" he snorted.

"An' you take that!" roared Bingo.

And he dashed his fist full at the face of Cutts.

But Gerald Cutts was no duffer with his fists.

He warded off the blow, taking it on his arm. The strength behind it was evident, even so.

"I say, Cutts, you can't row in the street with this fellow, by gad!" protested Gilmore.

"Can't I? Seems to me the dashed difficulty is to avoid rowin'! You don't suppose I'm goin' to have his beastly, greasy head shoved into my face, an' say thank you for it, do you?"

"You've bloomin' well gotter fight me!" said Bingo.

"Oh, if you're spoilin' for a thrashin', an' there's any quiet place near where we can have a couple of minutes together—"

"There's the slaughter-house!" said Bingo.

"Faugh!" ejaculated Cutts.

"Enough to make a fellow ill to suggest that on a day like this!" said St. Leger loftily.

"After I've finished with 'im I don't mind makin' you ill!" said Bingo. "If you don't like the slaughter-house—an' now I come to think of it you wouldn't fancy the 'ard floor when I come to knock you down—there's the cricket-field not a 'undred yards away. We could go along there."

Bingo did not appear to be at all worried about the shop of which he was in charge. But there was really nothing doing, so that may have been excusable on the part of Bingo.

He locked up. Cutts was not keen. But his pride would not let him back out, and he felt certain that victory over the butcher-lad would only take a few minutes.

"Beastly hot!" he said to St. Leger and Gilmore, as they walked by his side to the village cricket-ground, Bingo going ahead. "But it will soon be over, an' that chap's badly in need of a lesson, the greasy cad!"

"You ought to be able to give it to him all right," replied Gilmore. "But, now I come to think of it, this must be the merchant who's fairly puttin' fear into the Rylcombe bounders!"

"He won't put fear into me!" said Cutts. "Pity the fellows who think him such a nonsuch aren't here to see!"

Which was precisely what Bingo was thinking as he strutted ahead.

This fight was not staged at all to Bingo's taste. He liked an admiring crowd; and there was no crowd here—only his opponent, that opponent's pals, and two boys from the Grammar School.

For Larking and Snipe were following.

Bingo had not failed to notice that. The fellow had the vanity of a peacock. When the ground was reached he beckoned to the Rylcombe pair.

"One of you jest second me," he said in his lordliest fashion. "I don't cotton to havin' a bloke what's a pal of the other Johnny's."

Larking was about to give him a haughty answer, but Snipe whispered a word or two in the ear of his chum.

"Worth while. Make friends with the cad!"

"I haven't any objection to seconding you," said Larking.

Gilmore acted for Cutts, and St. Leger held the watch.

"Two-minnit rounds—one minnit between rounds. That do you?" asked Bingo.

It was plain that the fellow knew a good deal about the game. When he rolled up

(Continued on page 16.)

The Editor's Chat.

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This, I must point out, is not possible; and the only way I can help my girl and boy chums is by once again telling them that it is absolutely imperative for them to ORDER their copies in advance.

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THE ANNUAL.

A good many of my friends send me programmes of what 'hey think should be the make-up of the Annual. Some of them, evidently, would like to see a volume as big as a house, or, at any rate, the size of a fair-sized bungalow, so that they could settle it out in the garden, build a roof over it, and then settle down to a good holiday in its company. But the Annual will not be as immense as all that. It will not rival the height of the dome of St. Paul's if stood on end. The paper in it, if laid down page by page—it would want a bit of doing, too!—would not cover the Milky Way. The ink used, if placed in fire-buckets, placed side by side, would be nowhere near the amount of water in the Atlantic Ocean. But, all the same, and notwithstanding, the Annual is taking a lot of work and plenty of material, and if it is not the biggest success of anything I have ever had to do with, then I shall be most extremely and illimitably surprised.

TOO GOOD!

Week by week I am hearing from correspondents that Harry Wharton is too good. I do not think it; but there the matter stands. Some of my friends evidently yearn to see Harry Wharton kick over the traces, make a row, take sides with the malcontents, and go on strike—in fact, any old thing of that sort. There are plenty of chaps to act in that way. Harry Wharton is there to show the other side. But, despite sundry whimsical, fantastical little growls of this kind, the critics keep on reading the tales. That may seem passing queer, but so it is! Now, when a man grumbles at a special restaurant, and yet continues to dine there—or take his breakfast or tea, or whatever it is, at the place in question—you seem to cotton to the interesting and informative fact that his complaints are not real. He is just having a merry splash in the argumentative way. You know how the old rhyme went (I fancy they enjoyed it in the Stone Age, or thereabouts):

"Oh, isn't your life extremely flat
When there's nothing whatever to grumble
at?"

Oh, don't the days seem lank and long
When all goes right and nothing goes
wrong?"

There, we have it straight from the shoulder! A Briton must grouse. He would hardly be a genuine Briton if he did not have his cheery fling in this way now and then. But please remember it is quite absolutely, immeasurably, and gigantically right to let me know your passing mood. I want to know. Every week I ask the question: "Any complaints?" It is a way they have in the Army, you know, and shades of opinion do count. But Harry Wharton is not "over good." He is in a responsible position, and has to keep things right; but there is really nothing of the Good Little Georgie about him.

H. A. H. (YOUR EDITOR).

NOTICES.

Back Numbers Wanted.

Eric France, 282, Woodbine Avenue, Toronto, Canada—"Nelson Lee Libraries," 1-80; also "Penny Populars" with Sexton Blake. Double price offered.

Frank Sykes, 153, Grey Street, South Reddish, Stockport, near Manchester—"Gems" and "Magnets." Write first.

William H. Gander, Box 503, Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, Canada—"Boys' Friend" prior to 725; "My Magazine" previous to Vol. 13. Write first.

P. Moore, 7, Artano Cottages, Dublin—"Boy Without a Name," "Spy of Sedgemere School," "Shunned by the School." 6d. each offered. Write first.

George Miller, 3, Prospect Place, Grundy Street, Poplar, E. 14—"Magnets" before 200; 3d. offered, and postage; from 200 to 400, 1d. each. Write first.

Herbert S. Johnson, 72, Ospringe Road, Faversham, Kent—No. 2, New Series "Penny Popular." 6d. offered. Write first.

W. Gray, 52, Erskine Road, South Shields—any red-covered "Magnets." Write first.

W. G. E. Dyer, Glencoe, Appendix Street, Southam, Rugby—"Penny Popular," No. 2.

John Sims, 47, Bernard Street, Uplands, Swansea—first nineteen numbers of the St. Jim's Gallery. Write first, stating price.

Geo. Wright, 10, New Station, Rugby—"Through Thick and Thin." 4d. offered, and postage. Write first.

C. B. Skinner, 7, Wenhan Road, Worthing, Sussex—"Gems" and "Magnets," 1-260; 1s. each for 250 and 302 of the "Gem." Any price offered for others. Write first.

Correspondence, etc., Wanted.

Ernest Calolan, c/o Mrs. B. Worboys, Clay Cross, Derbyshire—with readers in British Isles, Derbyshire preferred, aged 17.

Leslie S. Digby, 15, Queen Street, Colchester, wants correspondents at Bath, Ramsgate, Margate, York, Poole, Peterborough, and Blackburn.

John Wm. Spencer, 5, Dogford Road, Royton, near Oldham, Lancs, will give information on insects, butterfly and moth breeding, etc., to any reader who sends a stamped, addressed envelope.

Miss Gwendolen Thomas, formerly of Oswestry, Salop, is requested to write to her friend, Sarah Crawford, 11, Marchmont Street, Edinburgh. Will anyone knowing her address communicate?

Miss Ada Stork, 11, Russell Street, Skipton, Yorks—with girl readers anywhere, 18-22.

Miss C. Yarker, 4, Rendall's Yard, High Street, Skipton, Yorks—with girl readers anywhere, 18-22.

A. G. Smith, 85, Milton Avenue, East Ham, E. 6, would like to hear from his old chum, Edward Gaiser, last heard of at Kentish Town—the one who remembers "Old Tass," and "Tam o'Shanter."

Herbert Francis, 40, Sixth Avenue, Manor Park, E. 12—with readers in South Africa, 11-13.

S. Morton, 134, Queen's Road, Heeley, Sheffield—with boy readers anywhere in the United Kingdom.

S. Lunn, 2, Wensley Street, off Henry Street, Belfast—with readers, 11; those of Haydon Bridge, Northumberland, preferred.

R. Fishwick, Florian, Lawrie Park Avenue, Sydenham, S.E. 26, wants readers for amateur magazine, 3d. post free.

J. Mulqueen, 38, Catherine Street, Limerick, Ireland—with readers anywhere, 14-16.

N. Prideaux, 76, Brynland Avenue, Bristol, wants members for World Wide Correspondence Club. Readers in Essex, Surrey, Devon, and Monmouthshire, should write to A. Dallow, 2-32, Bordesley Park Road, Small Heath, Birmingham. Magazine, 3d., edited by G. W. Blamphin, care of Jas. Bacon & Sons, 17-19, Bassett Street, Liverpool.

H. Mellows, 68, Gill Street, Blackley, Manchester—with readers overseas. English language.

his shirt-sleeves, too, he revealed biceps that surprised the St. Jim's seniors.

But he looked heavy and clumsy, and Cutts never doubted his ability to lick him.

"I don't know that there's any need for rounds. Two minutes ought to be enough for me to polish you off in," he replied. "But have it as you dashed well like!"

"Time!" said St. Leger; and the conflict began.

A Surprise for Cutts.

BINKS held out his hand, but Cutts looked at it scornfully.

"I don't shake hands with your sort of person, my good fellow," he said.

"Oh, don't you, cocky? But you get my sort of person's fist in your sneerin' dial, I reckon!"

"We'll see about that," returned Cutts.

"I say, you know, dash it all, Cutts! You ought to have gloves—what?" said St. Leger nervously.

"Gloves be hanged! I sha'n't be a couple of minutes puttin' this bounder out of action," Cutts answered.

"Oh, well, as you like. Time!" said St. Leger.

Bingo, the butcher, danced up to Cutts at once. Larking noticed that the fellow was far lighter on his feet than his rather heavy appearance would have suggested.

He feinted with his left, and, as Cutts guarded the seeming punch at his chest, got home with lightning quickness on his chin. "My hat!" gasped Gilmore, as Cutts reeled and almost fell.

But the St. Jim's Fifth-Former was no duffer, and his superior height and length of arm were bound to tell in his favour as soon as he realised the folly of underrating his opponent.

That punch on the chin had gone far to make him realise it.

For the rest of the round he used his length of arm to keep Bingo away, and, on the whole, with success, though the butcher did succeed in getting home one or two on his chest.

Cutts was a hefty, muscular fellow, but he was hardly in the pink of condition. The smoking habit told against any chance of that.

"Good! Jolly good!" said Larking to his principal, at the end of the round.

"Call that good, do you?" growled Bingo. "I'll show you something a juiced sight better than that before long!"

The seconds had no chance of doing much for their men. Towels and basins were lacking, and the ministrations of Gilmore and Larking could not go much beyond giving a knee when required.

In the course of the second round Gilmore began to think that Cutts might be needing more than that before long.

"I say, you Grammar School bounder," he

said politely to Snipe, "you'd better run across to those cottages and get basins an' towels an' things. I dare say the people there have a wash now an' then."

"You'd better go and fry your ugly face!" retorted Snipe, bold for once.

"For two pins I'd—"

"Offer him three, Snipey!" said Larking. "It would be such an improvement to see it fried."

"Hallo! There appears, my dear Bags, to be some sort of an entertainment in progress here," remarked the voice of Goggs.

Four more spectators had arrived upon the scene, for Bags, Tricks, and Wagtail were all with Goggs.

Snipe scowled, but Larking grinned.

Snipe, who was an utter funk, judged others by himself, and imagined that Goggs would hardly care to face Bingo after seeing his form. He fancied that the plot he had thought out was spoiled for good and all.

Larking, who, with all his faults, had courage, knew better than that. He was certain that Goggs would not show the white feather.

The second round finished with Cutts breathing hard and Bingo smiling clean round to the back of his neck, in spite of a swollen nose and a big bruise on the forehead.

Gilmore did not know any of the four, but that mattered little.

"I say, you Grammar School kids," he said to them, "we haven't any basins or towels or things. Run an' fetch some from one of the cottages, will you?"

"Run yourself!" replied Wagtail, who objected to being called a kid.

"My dear Waters, that is not truly polite," purred Goggs. "Do as the nice gentleman wishes, if only to oblige me."

"I don't want to oblige you!" Wagtail growled.

"I'll go," said Tricks. "I rather fancy the big chap will be wanting a sponge before long."

He cut off. Wagtail hesitated a moment, and then went after him.

Goggs and Bags threw themselves upon the turf, and settled down to watch the combat.

It was hammer and tongs in the third round. Both combatants went at it hard, and both took a good deal of punishment.

But at the end of the round Cutts had bellows to mend, and began to look very dishevelled; while Bingo, though his face showed the marks of the Fifth-Former's fists, breathed quite easily, smiled pleasantly, and showed an unruffled, greasy head, with not a hair out of place.

"Hot stuff!" said Gilmore.

"Confound the fellow!" growled Cutts. "He's a regular prize-fighter!"

"You're getting on top!" remarked Larking to Bingo.

"What did you reckon?" replied the butcher lad.

The fourth round was fast and furious. It was just ending when Tricks and Wagtail returned. They had commandeered two

basins and two towels, but they had only been able to get one sponge. Sponges are not frequent articles in cottage homes.

"Let 'im 'ave it," said Bingo generously. But the words he added took away some of the generosity. "E wants it now, an' 'e'll want it worse soon—to chuck it up!"

Gilmore sponged the face of his chum, and fanned him assiduously. Cutts was in a furious temper.

"Oh, keep cool!" said Gilmore. "The cad will lick you if you don't. He's cool enough."

"He won't lick me as long as I can stand!" hissed Cutts.

"I believe that," remarked Goggs to his chums. "But I am not sure that our friend from St. Jim's will much longer be able to preserve his equipoise."

"What's that got to do with it?" asked Wagtail.

"Oh, think it out, fathead!" said Bags.

"What is an equipoise, anyway?"

"It is, in a manner of speaking, connected with that which you do not possess, my dear Waters," Goggs replied.

"And what is it I don't possess, ass?"

"Understanding. The equipoise of our friend yonder may fail in consequence of his being unable any longer to continue upon his feet, and that will be a failure of understanding—a thing so common with you that to remark upon it is almost—"

"Oh, you are a silly ass! Just look at 'em!"

They were at it again, and Bingo was fairly hustling Cutts. No longer did the Fifth-Former's reach enable him to stall off his active, hard-punching opponent. The guarding arm had dropped, bruised and wearied, and the left had lost much of the force that had characterised its earlier punches.

In tip-top condition Cutts might have been the better of the two, though he lacked the ringcraft that Bingo's experiences in town had taught him. He was quite a good boxer, and he had courage.

But he was unfit. He gasped and panted, his eyes were wild, and his legs were going tottery.

All through that round he was trying to defend himself, and not managing it at all well. The one punch he got home on Bingo showed his pluck, for it came close to the end, when he had looked almost incapable of an effort, and there was real force in it for all that. Bingo went back to his second's knee with his right hand to his jaw.

But he grinned still.

"There's more in the chap than I thought," he said cheerfully. "But I reckon this 'ere round settles it."

"Shouldn't wonder," replied Larking.

"You can finish him off and take on another after him!" Snipe put in eagerly.

"Those bounders seem to be fairly cherishing the butcher merchant!" remarked Bags.

"Snipe's got something or other up his sleeve," said Tricks. "Can't make it out myself. Who are these St. Jim's chaps?"

"They're seniors," Wagtail said. "They don't wear Etons."

"Holmes, you surprise me!" said Goggs gravely.

He also fancied that Snipe had something up his sleeve.

It was not merely out of malice against Cutts that Larking and Snipe were befriending Bingo, he felt sure. They did not really appear to have any feeling against the St. Jim's fellow, but they were unmistakably keen on seeing Bingo put him through it.

Why?

Goggs rather thought he could guess.

Cutts came up for the next round in very groggy-fashion.

He was game still, but he was going down the road that has defeat at its end, and he knew it.

The knowledge galled his pride and raised his fury.

To be beaten like this by a mere butcher's boy half a head shorter than himself!

How the Fifth and Sixth would grin when they heard of it!

Lefevre, the skipper of the Form, was very far from loving Cutts. Kildare and Darrel and the rest of the prefects, save for one or two wrong 'uns, regarded him as an outsider.

They would all be pleased, Cutts knew. Perhaps he exaggerated their pleasure, forgetting that they would look upon his defeat as in some sort of a set-back for the school. But the thought of them was wormwood to Cutts.

He went for Bingo with renewed ferocity.

(There will be another splendid long instalment of this grand school story in next Monday's issue of the MAGNET. Order your copy in advance.)

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