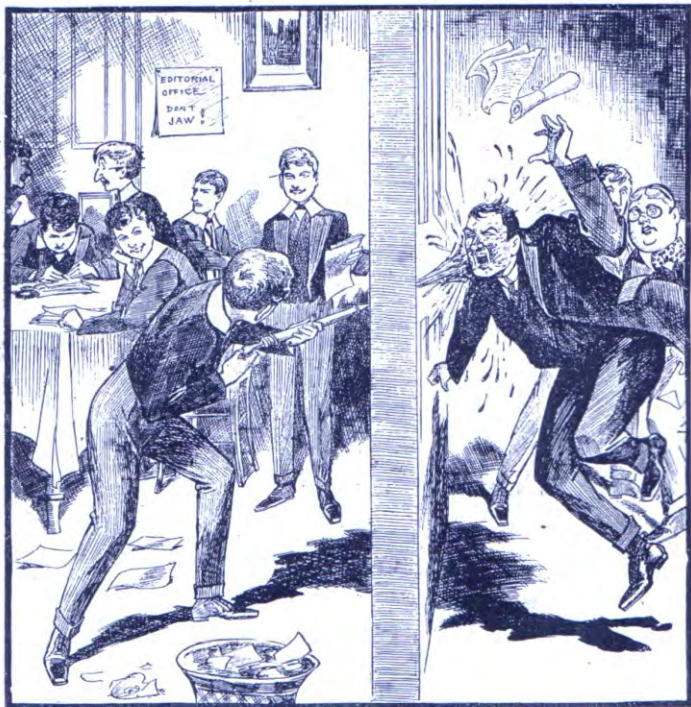


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THE "HERALD'S" RIVAL!



HARD AT WORK ON THE "GREYFRIARS HERALD!"

(An Exciting Scene in the Magnificent Long, Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars.) 1-11-19



The "Herald's" Rival!

A Magnificent Long, Complete School Story of Harry Wharton & Co. :: at Greyfriars School. ::

BY
FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

After the interval.

HARRY WHARTON was looking thoughtful.

There was a wrinkle on his brow, and he had been silent for several minutes.

And the four other juniors who were sitting round the tea-table in Study No. 1 in the Remove were smiling.

The Famous Five were at tea—or, rather, four of them were at tea. Harry Wharton seemed to have forgotten that there was tea in the cup before him, and that there was a hot, buttered scone on his plate.

Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull, Frank Nugent and Huiwee Singh, glanced at the captain of the Remove, and glanced at one another and smiled.

It was understood, when the Co. were called together in Study No. 1 that their chief and leader had a matter of some importance to communicate. Instead of communicating it, however, Harry Wharton had fallen into a fit of deep musing.

Apparently, the matter of importance was a matter of very great importance indeed, and required a considerable amount of reflection.

Bob Cherry, having finished his cold beef, filled the mustard-spoon with mustard, and gently ladled it upon Wharton's buttered scone.

The other juniors grinned.

Wharton did not even observe his playful sham's proceeding.

But as Bob finished ladling the mustard he woke up, as it were, from his deep reverie and spoke.

"The paper shortage—" he began.

Bob Cherry started, and jerked back the mustard-spoon. But the captain of the Remove had not noticed it.

"The—the paper shortage!" ejaculated Bob.

"Yes; the paper shortage—"

"Blimey the paper shortage!" remarked Johnny Bull. "That's not so serious as the butter shortage. I'm getting fed-up with marger!"

"If we run out of impot paper," said Frank Nugent, "I'm quite prepared not

to do any more lines. Economy of impot paper is a jolly good idea!"

"The goodfulness of that esteemed idea is terrific!" concurred Huiwee Jamset Ram Singh.

"Dry up a minute, you fellows!" said Wharton. "I've been thinking it out—"

"Oh, you were thinking?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Eh—yes!"

"I thought there was something the matter. Has it given you a pain?" asked Bob sympathetically. "There sudden changes—"

"I've been thinking it over for some time," said Wharton, unheeding. "Now, I think it's all right. The paper shortage—"

"You've been thinking over the paper shortage?" demanded Bob.

"Exactly! The paper shortage—"

"But surely that's got over by this time—if it matters!" yawned Nugent.

"Just what I was going to say, Frank. The paper shortage isn't exactly got over, but it's eased. Paper is still frightfully expensive, but it can be had."

"Well, we don't want any in this study, do we?"

"Aa! Why did the 'Greyfriars Herald' peg out?" said Wharton. "That jolly celebrated periodical—"

"Hear, hear!"

"That jolly celebrated periodical pegged out because paper ran short. But now that the situation has eased, what reason is there why the 'Greyfriars Herald' shouldn't start again?"

"Restart after the interval?" suggested Bob Cherry.

"Exactly! It was a jolly good paper—"

"Topping!"

"The topfulness was terrific!"

The Famous Five of the Remove were all agreed on that point. There was no doubt that the junior school paper had been topping. All the five had contributed to it. That settled the point.

"We've missed it," continued Harry Wharton. "It was a really good thing, and it was hard cheese for it to peg out as it did. Of course, everybody had to make sacrifices in the war, and the

'Herald' had to go. But now we're landed again in the piping times of peace, it's time for the 'Herald' to put in a fresh appearance—better than ever."

"Hear, hear!"

"That's what I wanted to tell you fellows," continued Wharton. "My idea is to revive the 'Herald' on rather new lines, and make a better thing of it—profiting by past experience, you know. It will cost more, of course—prices are jolly steep, and I believe the price of paper is still about three hundred per cent. up. Still, people will pay to read really good stuff—and we can supply that."

"Hear, hear!"

"Not a doubt about it," assented Bob Cherry, with an eye on Wharton's buttered scone. He was wondering whether the captain of the Remove would observe the mustard before he started on the scone.

But the editor of the "Greyfriars Herald" was not thinking about mustard. He was thinking of his editorial plans. "Good stories, good pictures, good editorial chat, and so on," he said. "And a good serial—"

"Right-ho!" said Bob Cherry heartily. "You can leave that to me!"

"Eh?"

"I don't mind taking on the serial. Something really stunning," said Bob. "All the latest things worked up in it. What about the Pirate of the Clouds?"

"The which?"

"Story of a pirate crew in an aeroplane, you know," said Bob eagerly. "They chuck bombs around, and so forth—awfully thrilling. Blood flows like water. And all that."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Isn't that a ripping idea?"

"Rather too ripping for the 'Greyfriars Herald,' old chap," said Wharton, laughing. "But the first step is—"

"The first step is to get a really ripping serial!" said Bob warmly. "The serial makes the thing hang together, you know. Chaps who get fearfully bored with your editorial chat, and Smithy's sporting notes, and the other stuff, will go on buying the paper to get the next instalment of my serial. That's where

a really good serial comes in. Leave it to me."

"The first step," said Wharton again—judiciously postponing argument on the subject of Bob's thrilling serial—"the first step is to get in communication with the publishers, and find out whether they're prepared to take it up again now. If you fellows are agreed on bringing out the paper again, I'll ask Wingate to let me use the telephone, and get into communication with them."

"Oh, we're agreed," said Nugent. "The agreeableness is terrific!" "You'll have to buck up, then," remarked Johnny Bull. "I believe the publishing offices in London close early."

"I'll cut down immediately after tea, then."

Wharton hurried to finish his tea—starting on the buttered scones. Bob Cherry watched him as if fascinated.

A piece of scone, with a large piece of mustard attached, disappeared into Harry Wharton's mouth.

The next moment there was something that resembled a volcanic eruption in Study No. 1.

"Yoooooooooooooh!"

Wharton leaped from the table, kicking his chair over backwards.

Crash!

"Yurrgggghhh!"

"My hat! What——"

"Goooooooooooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ouch! Ooooooooo! Gug-gug-gug-gug!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Harry Wharton spluttered wildly, with a crimson face.

"Ow! Ow! Mustard!" he shrieked. "Some silly idiot has put mustard on my scone! Ooooooooo!"

"Chaps shouldn't go to sleep at tea!" said Bob Cherry seriously. "Anything is liable to happen——"

"Ooooooh! Was it you, you dangerous maniac? Ooooooooo! Gug-gug-gug!"

"Go it," said Bob encouragingly.

Harry Wharton made a jump for a cricket-bat that stood in a corner of the study. He made another jump for Bob Cherry, and Bob Cherry made a jump for the door.

Fortunately for the humorous Bob, his jump landed him in the passage in time.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Johnny Bull and Nugent and Hurree Singh, as Bob Cherry vanished along the passage, with Wharton in hot pursuit, brandishing the bat.

Rapid footsteps died away in the Remove passage, and there was a sound of a door slamming and a key clicking in a lock. Then there was a sound of a voice breathing blood-curdling threats through a keyhole. And then Harry Wharton retired to wash his mouth at the tap at the end of the passage.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bunter's Scheme!

"I SAY, Harry, old chap——"

"Oh, rats!"

Harry Wharton was going down to the prefects' room, after getting rid of the mustard, when Billy Bunter appeared in the office. The effects of the mustard still lingered, though the mustard itself was gone, and Wharton's remark to the Owl of the Remove was not exactly amiable.

"But, I say, old chap——" persisted Bunter.

"Roll away!"

Wharton hurried on down the stairs. Now that the important decision had been reached, there was no time to lose. It was a "trunk" call to London, and the junior editor did not want to get

through after the publishers' offices had closed.

Billy Bunter grinned, and rolled downstairs after the captain of the Remove. Bunter's business was important, too.

Wharton hurried to the prefects' room, where he found Wingate and Gwynne of the Sixth. He preferred his request to Wingate, and the genial captain of Greyfriars gave him permission to use the telephone. And Wharton at once rang up the exchange, and gave the required number. Then he put up the receiver, and sat down to wait.

Wingate and Gwynne strolled out, and Wharton had the prefects' room to himself. But only for a minute or two. William George Bunter rolled in, blinking round him through his big spectacles, and grinned cheerfully as he sighted the captain of the Remove sitting near the telephone.

"Oh, here you are, old chap!" he said.

"Don't worry!"

"Eh!"

"Don't worry! I'm waiting for a call."

William George Bunter drew himself up to his full height—which was not really imposing—and fixed a withering gaze upon the captain of the Remove.

"If you look on my conversation as a worry," Wharton began, with a great deal of dignity,

"I do!"

"He, he, he!" said Bunter, deciding to take that reply as a joke. "Awfully humorous, ain't you, old chap? He, he, he!"

"Not at all!" said Wharton. "Buzz away, you fat fly!"

"He, he, he! You should keep all that humour for the 'Greyfriars Herald,' you know!" said Bunter, wagging a fat forefinger at him.

Wharton started.

"What do you know about the 'Greyfriars Herald,' you fat boulder?" he demanded. "I haven't said a word outside the study."

"He, he, he!"

"So you were at the keyhole, as usual?"

"If you mean to imply, Wharton, that I would listen at a keyhole——"

"Then how do you know?" snapped Wharton.

"I may have happened to see a paper in a table drawer, or I may not," said Bunter.

Wharton frowned. Since the scheme of reviving the junior school paper had occurred to him, he had been making some notes on the subject, and they reposed in a drawer of the table in Study No. 1. But William George Bunter certainly had no business at that drawer.

"You fat Hun!" said Harry. "You've been rummaging in my study——"

"Not at all. I never had the faintest idea you'd got any notes or anything there," said Bunter indignantly. "I may have been looking for chocolates, or I may not! If a fellow's greedy enough to hide away his chocolates from a pal——"

"There weren't any chocolates there, you fat burglar!"

"So I found—I mean, I wasn't looking for chocolates—that is to say, I haven't been at the drawer at all. I suppose you can take my word, Wharton!"

"Oh, sent!"

"But what interested me," continued Bunter cheerfully, "was one of your notes about payment for contributions. You're thinking of paying for stuff in the new paper?"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"I've been thinking that over," said

Billy Bunter, blinking at him. "I never had time to write for the paper before. A chap with so many engagements can't take on literary work for nothing. But if you're going to pay for the stuff, that makes a difference. I'm quite willing to write for the 'Greyfriars Herald' at, say, ten guineas a page."

"Fathead!"

"For an old pal I'd do it cheaper," said Bunter generously. "I'm not a chap to think much about money, as you know. I'm disinterested—that's me all over. If you want to be close with money, and pin me down to five guineas a page, I'll do what I can to meet you."

"As!"

"I'm perfectly willing to fill up the whole paper from cover to cover," said Bunter liberally. "I'm rather a dab at literary stuff, you know. Some fellows find a difficulty about writing. I never do. It just runs off my pen like—like anything."

"Chump!"

"If you're going to call me names, Wharton, I shall have to consider very seriously whether I can join your staff at all!"

"Will you get away to a home for idiots, and give me a rest?" demanded the captain of the Remove.

"I've been making some notes myself," said Bunter, unheeding. "As you're doing nothing, I'll read them out to you!"

The Owl of the Remove extracted an exceedingly crumpled and soiled sheet of imput paper from his pocket, with two or three amused balls clinging to it. He detached the amused-balls, and jammed them into his mouth by way of a beginning, and then blinked over the notes.

"This is my scheme," said Bunter loftily—"my scheme for running the 'Herald,' you know, in really good style. First, a comic yarn, by W. G. Bunter, to fill a couple of pages. Next, editorial notes, by William George Bunter. Then a news column, by W. G. B. Sporting chat, by W. G. Bunter. Instalment of a thrilling serial, 'The Blood-Reddabbed Buccaneer,' by Captain Corker——"

"Who on earth is Captain Corker?"

"That's a num-de-plum!" explained Bunter loftily. "Me, really, you know, but I think a num-de-plum would be effective there."

"A what?" howled Wharton.

"Num-de-plum—pen-name, you know."

"Oh, num-de-plum! He, ha, ha!"

"You don't get the French pronunciation quite right, Wharton. I say a num-de-plum, and I mean a num-de-plum. After that, a short story by W. G. Bunter. Then a long, complete story—every-story a gem, you know—and I think this ought to be a story of high life. As a chap with no end of aristocratic connections, you know, I can deal with that. 'Sir Reginald the Rake, or, The Mystery of the West End,' by Adolphus de Courcy—another num-de-plum of mine, you know."

"Oh, my hat!"

"As I shall be practically filling up the whole paper, I don't mind making a reduction for quantities," said Billy Bunter generously. "I'll do the whole lot at a very generous figure—say, twenty guineas the lot. As you're going to charge for the paper, you can pay that. The circulation will be immense. Fellows will tumble over one another to buy the paper when it gets out that it's all written by me. Profits will roll in. But I always was a generous chap. Twenty guineas is my figure—to be doubled, say, when the circulation exceeds five millions."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at, Wharton! I'm making you a business offer. Yes or no?" demanded Bunter.

"Ha, ha! No!"

"You don't mean that. I suppose you're aware that it's an editor's duty to get the best stuff possible for his paper!"

Buzzzz! rang the telephone-bell.

"Hallo, I'm through! Roll away, Bunter!"

Harry Wharton took up the receiver.

"But, I say, old chap—" persisted Bunter.

"Shurrup! Hallo!"

"Amalgamated Press!" came through on the wires.

"Fleetway House?" asked Wharton.

"Yes."

"Put me on to Room X, please!"

"I say, Harry, old chap," said Bunter, "you'd better close with my offer. I may withdraw it, and refuse to write for your paper at all. What will you do then?"

"The same as I shall do now," answered Wharton, laughing.

"Oh, really, you knew—"

"Shurrup! Chap's talking!"

Wharton devoted his attention to the telephone, and Billy Bunter grunted and listened. Wharton's communication with the Fleetway House was brief, but satisfactory. Circumstances had changed, and there was no longer any difficulty in the way of resuming publication of the "Greyfriars Herald." Which was very satisfactory news. Harry Wharton wore a cheerful smile when he hung up the receiver at last.

"Good!" he remarked.

"I say, old chap—"

"Good-bye, Bunter!"

"But, I say, Wharton!" exclaimed Bunter, pursuing the captain of the Remove to the door. "Shall I bring my copy to the study now?"

Wharton paused.

"You can bring it to-morrow, at five in the afternoon!" he said.

"Oh, good!"

"We shall want to light the fire for tea—"

"Eh?"

"And your copy will come in useful—"

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter.

Harry Wharton quitted the prefects' room, smiling. Billy Bunter rolled out after him, in a state of great indignation.

"Look here, Wharton—" he roared.

"Bow-wow!"

"Mind, if I'm left out of this paper, I shall start a rival paper on my own, and knock yours into a cocked hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton ran up the staircase, and disappeared. Billy Bunter blinked after him in great disgust, and snorted with indignation. After the generous and liberal offers he had made, Wharton's conduct could only be described as black ingratitude.

"I say, Wharton—" Bunter howled up the stairs.

No reply.

"Beast!"

And William George Bunter rolled away in great wrath.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Getting Busy!

"WHAT rot!" said Bolsover major.

Bolsover's remark was caused by a large and prominent placard on the door of Study No. 1, the following afternoon. On the THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 612.

placard, in large letters daubed with a brush, was the following warning:

"EDITORIAL OFFICE!"

NO ADMITTANCE EXCEPT

ON BUSINESS!

DON'T KNOCK!"

Bolsover major raised a large hand and knocked, in spite of the warning notice—or perhaps because of it. There was a buzz of voices inside the study—the editorial work was not proceeding in silence. It being a half-holiday, the staff of the "Greyfriars Herald" had agreed to spend it in labour on the first number of the new edition. And as Study No. 1 was the editorial office, the staff had gathered there to work.

The "Greyfriars Herald" was undoubtedly a fine publication, and lacked few things to make it perfect. But whatever it may have lacked, it did not lack editors and sub-editors. Harry Wharton was chief editor; and he had a numerous army of supporters. Bob Cherry was fighting editor; Herbert Vernon-Smith was sports editor. And there were plenty more. The Famous Five all had leading positions on the staff; the Bounder was prominent there, and Squiff and Peter Todd were conspicuous. As for the contributors, their name was legion.

Not all offers of contributions had been accepted, of course. Billy Bunter's literary gifts were not recognised by anyone but William George Bunter. Even Bob Cherry had had to be gently but firmly dissuaded from perpetrating a blood-curdling serial of piracies in the clouds. Harold Skinner's offer of a race-course story had been declined without thanks; and when Stott offered a most engaging yarn, entitled "Sweeney Todd, the Blood-stained Barber," Stott was bidden take it away and bury it deep. Bob Cherry told him they did not want biographies of the ancestors of any members of the staff; to which Peter Todd made personal rejoinders that interrupted the editorial proceedings for a full five minutes.

In fact, it was not so difficult to get contributions as to get them into the paper when accepted. Space was limited, and for that reason, as Harry Wharton explained, it was necessary for the quality to be simply top-hole. To make sure that the quality was up to the required standard, the staff were doing most of the work themselves.

But, in spite of the warning notice on the door of the editorial sanctum, that afternoon was not to be spent in peaceful and uninterrupted labour. For it had got about that contributions to the junior paper were to be paid for!

The news electrified all the literary aspirants in the Remove—and some outside the Remove, too.

It was generally, in such matters, considered a sufficient reward to see one's contributions, or perpetrations, as the case might be, in print. But payment in addition was very acceptable. Fellows thought it an excellent idea, and they agreed that on those lines Wharton had a right to exact contributions of the very highest quality. And they were all prepared to send in stuff of the highest imaginable quality.

Bolsover major was the first to arrive that afternoon. He was only the first. He thumped at the door with unnecessary emphasis, after reading the warning notice. And a bawling voice answered from within:

"Go away!"

"The door's locked!" exclaimed Bolsover major. "Open it at once!"

"Hock it, Bolsover!"

"I want to see the editor."

"The editor is not at present on view, Buzz off!"

"Look here, I hear that you are paying for contributions!" bawled Bolsover through the keyhole. "I don't mind making a few guineas in my spare time."

"Go hon!"

"I don't, really! I've dashed off a little thing for the paper—"

"Now dash off again—"

"Eh?"

"And take the little thing with you!"

"Look here!" roared Bolsover major, thumping angrily at the door. "Talk sense! I'm coming in!"

"Rats!"

"Hallo! You here already?" said Kipps, joining Bolsover major in the passage. "What's the matter with the door?"

"The silly chumps have got it locked!" growled Bolsover.

Oliver Kipps tapped.

"Let me in, you fellows! I've been doing a page of conjuring-tricks for the paper!"

"Conjuring-tricks are at a discount," came Wharton's voice from within.

"Light your fire with them, old chap!"

"Why, you silly ass—" howled Kipps.

Hazeldene and Tom Brown and Russell came along the passage. All three had wedges of impot-paper in their hands.

"No admittance except on business!" said Dick Russell. "Well, I'm here on business. Let me in, Wharton!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"I've got a little thing here—"

"Take it away and bury it!"

"Look here!" shouted Hazeldene. "Don't you want contributions for the rag?"

"All contributions to be placed in the editorial letter-box!" came the reply from behind the locked door.

"Where's the editorial letter-box, fat-head!"

"In the Common-room downstairs!"

"That's all very well," said Tom Brown. "But I want to see the editor personally, and explain—"

"All manuscripts are given careful consideration, and if unsuitable are returned to the senders, provided that sufficient stamps are enclosed to pay the return postage!" shouted Bob Cherry, in a sing-song voice, and there was a chorus in the editorial sanctum.

"Ass!"

"Fathead!"

"Open this door!"

Some more of the Remove turned up to join the crowd outside Study No. 1. The locking of the editorial door seemed to produce general exasperation. That door was the recipient of a variety of thumps, bangs, kicks, and stamps, which made the editorial work proceeding within rather difficult.

"Clear off!" called out Harry Wharton. "We'll send the Fighting Editor out to you in a minute."

"Eh?"

"Send him out!"

"We'll scalp him!"

"It's up to you, Bob!" grinned Frank Nugent.

Bob Cherry grinned and shook his head.

"I'm working!" he answered. "And Fighting Editors don't fight half the Form at once! Let 'em rip!"

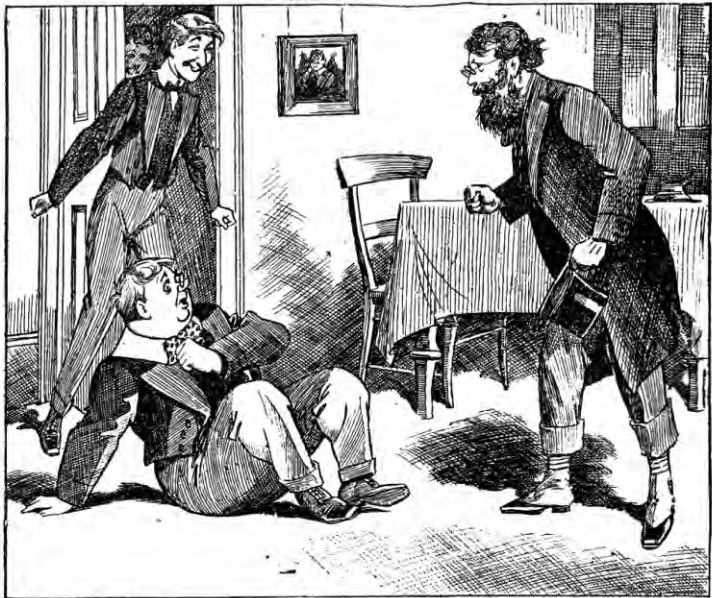
Bang! Kick! Bang! Crash!

"My hat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "This is getting too thick! How the dickens is a chap to do literary work with this going on?"

"The esteemed echo answers how!" murmured Hurrell Singh.

Bang! Crash! Bump!

"Cheeky ass!" exclaimed Bolsover



Bunter's editorial visitor made a step towards him, and pounded him suddenly on his fat chest. "Yaroooh!" roared the astounded Owl. There was a bump as he sat down on the carpet. The door opened and a dozen laughing faces looked in. "What's the row?" inquired Peter Todd. (See Chapter 9.)

major indignantly. "They fancy themselves as editors! We buy the paper, and that's a jolly good deal more important than editing it, I think."

"Yes, rather!"

Bang! Bump! Bang!

"Open this door, you cheeky asses!" yelled Bolsover major through the keyhole.

Bob Cherry rose to his feet and methodically filled a squirt at the inkpot. Then he stepped softly to the door. "Do you hear me?" came Bolsover's powerful voice.

Bob put the squirt to the keyhole and let fly.

"I tell you—Yawch—groooh—oooooh—gug-gug-goooooh."

Bolsover major jumped back from the keyhole, ejecting ink on all sides. There was a howl of protest from his comrades.

"Why, I'll—I'll—groooh—I'll—yoop—I'll—splattered Bolsover major. "I'm chook—chook—chook! I'm—Groooh—hoooh!"

Bolsover major stamped away along the passage in towering wrath. The rest of the juniors hammered on the door; but they did not apply at the keyhole again. The hammering went on till Wangate of the Sixth came up the stairs, three at a time, with an ashplant in his hand and a deadly gleam in his eyes. Then the crowd

suddenly broke up, and found business in other quarters with remarkable celerity.

And then, at last, the numerous staff of the "Greyfriars Herald" were able to settle down quietly to work.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Fiat Goes Forth!

"WHAT about tea?"

Bob Cherry asked that question a couple of hours later.

Work had been going on manfully. Inkpot paper was being used up at a reckless rate, considering the fact that there was still a paper shortage—and the ink was running out. There was a good deal of ink about the study—some on the carpet, some on the table, plenty on editorial fingers, and a few spots on editorial noses. But the first number of the new edition of the "Greyfriars Herald" was growing.

"Tea!" repeated Harry Wharton vaguely.

"Tea!" said Bob.

"Oh, how tea!" said Johnny Bull, without looking up.

"Isn't anybody else getting hungry?"

"Never mind that!" said Squiff. "Dry up!"

"Well, I've finished, you know."

snarled Bob. "No good sticking indoors too long at a time."

"Take a little run!" suggested Vernon Smith.

"How are you getting on, Irky?" asked Bob Cherry, bestowing a powerful smack on the shoulder of the Nabob of Bhanipur, who was chewing the end of his pen with a very thoughtful expression.

"Ow!" howled Hurrer Singh, nearly swallowing his pen in the unexpected shock. "Gur-gur-gur-groooh."

"Order!" rapped out Peter Todd.

"Bow-wow! Can't a chap ask a chap how a chap is getting on?" demanded Bob. "Irky's been wrinking up his face for hours, and I don't believe he'll ever get it quite undone again."

"My esteemed fat-headed Bob—"

"Well, what's the game?" asked Bob.

"Let's hear it."

"I have been compositely perpetrating the elegant and admirable poetry," explained Hurrer Singh. "I flatterfully consider that I have equalled with poetic taste the sublime productions of Poet Shakespeare and Poet Milton."

"Oh, my hat!"

"The elegant subject of my rhymeful lacerations—"

"Your which?" asked Nugent faintly.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 612.

"My esteemed and ridiculous rhymeful lucubrations," said the nabob.

"Help!"

"The esteemed subject is the great and absurd game of football. This will be appropriate seasoning."

"Possibly the ass means it will be seasonable," remarked Bob Cherry, after some thought.

"I shall be terrifically pleased to read out a few verses of my ludicrous composition," said Hurree Jamsel Ram Singh modestly. "It is written in the elegant ducency of great poet. The beginfulness is strikeful."

"Great pip!"

"Lend me your esteemed ears, as Poet Shakespeare remarks in one of his playful compositions."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The editorial staff lent Hurree Jamsel Ram Singh their esteemed ears, and listened with smiling faces as the nabob, after a little modest preliminary cough, read out:

"When coldful winter pearful nighs,
And late lamented summer dies,
The frostful bite and blustery breeze,
Bring coughful cold and wheezeful sneezes.

While stormful breezes fiercely blow,
To football-ground we gaily go;
With ludicrous and frantic shout,
We kick the flying ball about,
Till shades of night are falling fast,
We then return to our repast,
Increased in health and appetite,
We eat with Bunterful delight—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hurree Jamsel Ram Singh's poem was interrupted by a roar. The Nabob of Bhanipur blinked at his fellow-authors over the manuscript.

"This is not comic poem," he explained. "The seriousness is awful and terrific."

"Our mistake!" grinned Bob Cherry. "I certainly thought that the comicfulness was terrific and awful."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I have only read the beginfulness. The improvetfulness is great as the esteemed poem meanders on its progress. There are only two hundred lines—"

"By Jove! I think Bob was right about its being tea-time," said Harry Wharton. "Take a lot of care of that poem, Inky. We're not going to waste poetry like that on the first number—"

we'll reserve that for a Special Number—a very special number—"

"Very special indeed!" said Bob Cherry. "In fact, the specialfulness will be terrific!"

"Like the poem!" murmured Nugent. "Perhaps you do not think that this poem is equal to lucubrations of honourable Shakespeare?" inquired the nabob warmly.

"My dear chap, Shakespeare couldn't have written that," said Bob. "Even Shakespeare had his limits. And all the staff will agree that that poem is the limit."

"Hear, hear!"

Hurree Jamsel Ram Singh looked rather perplexed, as the editorial meeting broke up. The members of the staff dispersed to their own quarters to tea, and Wharton and Nugent were left alone in Study No. 1. They were beginning a well-earned tea when William George Bunter blinked in at the door. Harry Wharton pointed to the passage.

Bunter sniffed.

"I haven't come here to offer you any contributions!" he said loftily.

"Thank goodness!"

"My offers have been refused!" said Bunter.

"They have!" agreed Wharton.

"My intention," continued the Owl of the Remove, "was to be kind. I really meant to make the rag a success for you. Now I won't!"

"Alas!" sighed Nugent.

"I shall refuse to take any further notice of your rag!" continued Bunter.

"You may ask me for literary work on your bended knees, and I shall turn up my nose at you!"

"My hat! Isn't it sufficiently turned up already?" asked Wharton, in surprise.

"I don't want any cheek!" roared Bunter. "I've come here to give you warning! I'm going to down your rag!"

"Eh?"

"By starting a rival paper," said Bunter. "That's my intention. I'm going to freeze out your rotten paper by offering the public really good stuff!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Your rotten rag may drag on a weary existence for a few weeks, but wait till 'Bunter's Weekly' comes out! You'll get the kybosh then!"

"My dear ass—"

Bunter raised a fat hand.

"No good making appeals now!" he said. "I've decided!"

"But—"

"You can plead for mercy till you're black in the face, Harry Wharton, but I shall show you any!"

"I was going to say—"

"You needn't say anything! The fiat has gone forth!" said Billy Bunter loftily. "You're done for! You needn't say a word!"

"I was going to say—"

"Rats!"

"Shut the door—"

"Eh!"

"With yourself on the other side of it—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Or I shall shy this loaf at you!"

Wharton raised the loaf. Billy Bunter gave him a glare that bade fair to crack his spectacles, and departed from Study No. 1, closing the door with a bang that rang along the Remove passage. And Wharton and Nugent settled down to tea, smiling, utterly regardless of the sword of Damocles that was suspended over their editorial heads.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. Literary!

"BLOOD—"

"Eh?"

"Oceans of blood—"

"What?"

"Blood was shed in torrents! The decks ran with it, and it was splashed as high as the maintruck—"

"Great pip!"

Peter Todd stopped in the doorway of Study No. 7, and stared blankly at the Owl of the Remove. Billy Bunter was seated at the table, with a sheaf of impot paper before him and a pen in his hand, and a huge variety of blot scattered over every object within range.

It was a few days since the restarting of the "Greyfriars Herald" after the interval, as Bob Cherry described it. During those few days the staff had been very busy indeed, and a very gorgeous first number was growing under their busy hands. Billy Bunter was also busy, apparently. His muttered ejaculations as he scribbled indicated that he was engaged upon literary work. To judge by his remarks, the literature thereof was what Hurree Singh would have termed terrific.

"The dead lay in piles on the crimson deck!" continued Bunter. "The streams of blood splashed over the maintruck—"

"What's that game?" demanded Peter Todd.

Bunter blinked up, with an irritated look. Deep in the throes of composition, he had not noticed Peter before the latter spoke.

"Cut off!" he snapped.

"Eh?"

"Hook it, please!"

"I've come in to tea," remarked Peter. "You can't have tea here! I'm doing literary work," said Bunter. "Do you think artistic work can be done with greedy bounders interrupting because they want tea?"

"I suppose you've had your tea?"

"I've had a snack! There wasn't much in the cupboard."

"Have you scooped all there was in the cupboard?" roared Peter Todd.

"If you're going to make a fuss about half a dozen sodas and a tin of sardines and a cake, Todd, I'll pay for them, if you like!" said Bunter scornfully.

"Pay up, then, you owl!"

"Later! At the present moment I'm expecting—"

"Expecting a postal-order!" shrieked

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"I say, you fellows, shut up! It's too bad, you cackling there and this fellow cackling on the telephone! I wonder what he's cackling at?" "Ha, ha, ha!" "Shut up!" roared Bunter. "This chap is being impertinent! He says my stuff is no good." (See Chapter 10.)

Peter. "Oh, I know! Am I to have your expectation for tea?"

"I wasn't referring to my postal-order, Toddy. I'm expecting some handsome cheques."

"Some which?"

"Handsome cheques."

Peter blinked at his fat study-mate. This was rather a new departure for William George. Generally he was expecting postal-orders. Probably the handsome cheques were likely to arrive about the same time as the postal-orders. But Peter was interested.

"And who's going to send you handsome cheques?" he inquired. "Your uncle the duke, or your aunt the duchess, or your cousin the rag-and-bone man?"

"You silly ass! I mean, I'm going to get cheques for literary work. This!" said Bunter, tapping the blotty and smudgy sheet before him.

"My hat! Is that literary work? You've made a litter, certainly, but—"

"I'll read you out some, if you like," said Bunter condescendingly. "I've got rather a bright, descriptive way of writing. You see the thing happens, as it were. None of your stodgy stuff. Thrilling, you know. This is a description of a naval battle in the war. 'Blood—'

"Nuff! I heard you as I came in—something about chaps having blood splashed over their trucks—"

"Ass!" snorted Bunter. "That didn't refer to their trousers—it means the main-truck. That's something or other on a mast or something."

"Oh, I see!"

"Listen to this bit. It's real descriptive writing, you know." And Bunter read it out: "Hard a-starboard!" cried the captain, as the cannon-ball struck him in the eye. The helmsman turned the wheel, and the engineer put full steam on, and the sailors climbed on the masts and things and set the sails—"

"Sails and steam together?" asked Peter. "Isn't that rather a mixture?"

"That's all right! You don't know anything about ships, Toddy! Then it goes on: 'The battleship turned round, and crashed into the German cruiser. Torrents of blood flowed—'

"From the ship?"

"Nunno! From the Huns, you know. 'Yells of despair from the ferocious Huns rent the welkin—'

"The welkin?"

"Welkin."

"What's a welkin?"

"Authors always say that, ass! They mean it made an awful row—see? 'The sea was covered for miles with the bodies of dastardly Huns, and the raging waves were encrimsoned—'

"That's a good word!"

"Down went the German cruiser with all hands—"

"If they went down, how could they cover the sea for miles?" inquired Peter. Todd meekly.

"That's descriptive writing, you ass! You're not literary, Peter Todd! 'One fearful yell of anguish rent the welkin—'

"The same welkin?"

"Of course! 'Then there was silence—deep, dead silence—broken only by the cries of the dastardly Huns, the thunder of cannon, the roar of the wind, and the boom of the raging waves—'

"Must have been jolly quiet! Nothing else breaking the silence!"

"No. 'Ha, ha!' cried the captain."

"After the cannon-ball had hit him in the eye! Must have been a really humorous chap to cry 'Ha, ha!' after that. What a sense of humour!" said Peter.

"You're a Philistine, Peter Todd! You don't understand art!" said Bunter. "I shan't read out any more!"

"Well, I'd rather have tea," admitted Peter Todd. "Don't you think you've rather overdone the gore, Bunter?"

"Certainly not! That's thrilling! It's the stuff that excites the reader, you know; and he gets this for twopence, too!"

"Well, I rather think any reader would get excited if he found he'd given two-pence for that stuff!" said Peter. "But who's going to give you two-pence for it? Is it written for the 'Bodiam Times,' or—"

"You silly chump!"

"Or, the 'Colney Hatch Chronicle,' or—"

"I'm accustomed to jealousy," said Bunter loftily. "This is written for the Greyfriars paper!"

"The 'Herald' isn't going to be two-pence—and that stuff isn't going to be in the 'Herald,' you fat duffer! If the editor put in that kind of descriptive writing we'd lynch him!"

"I should disdain to write for the 'Herald.' This is for the real, genuine Greyfriars paper—Bunter's Weekly."

"Bunter's weekly—in the head, I suppose."

"Oh, don't be a funny ass! You'll see this in print when my paper comes out," said Bunter. "It's going to smash the 'Herald' to smithereens. I'm not going to allow any of you lot to write for it. The 'Herald' won't come out at all, in fact. I'm going to offer the publishers my paper instead, and, of course, they won't look at the 'Herald' after that. They're business people, you know—they know a good thing when they see it. I'm rather sorry for Wharton! I added Bunter magnanimously."

"But I feel bound to give his rag the kybosh!"

"Peter Todd chuckled."

"It's barely possible that the rag will survive it," he remarked. "Now, what about tea?"

"If you've got anything for tea, you can trot it out; put it on the chair—I want the table off present—"

Tom Dutton came into the study at that moment, with a bundle under his arm. The deaf junior glanced at the littered table.

"Clear this off, Bunter!" he said. "Can't be done!"

"Tea, you know!"

"You can't have the table!" snapped Bunter. "I'm doing literary work!"

"If you call me a Turk, Bunter—"

"I didn't, you ass!"

"Eh?"

"I'm writing!" howled Bunter. "Can't you see I'm busy? Go and eat cake!"

"Well, I don't mind a joke," said Dutton. "I don't quite see where the joke comes in; but I don't mind. Let us have the table."

"Will you buzz off, you chump?"

"I don't know what you mean about a stump, but you'll get the stump fast enough if you don't clear the table!"

"Oh, my hat! Will you leave a chap alone?" yelled Bunter.

"Certainly not; you never square!" answered Dutton. "You won't get a loan out of me! Now, then, we want the table!"

And Tom Dutton began clearing off the valuable manuscripts. Peter Todd grinned and lent him assistance.

"Can I have some of this paper to rub out the frying-pan?" asked Dutton.

"You—you, Ham! Leave it alone, and leave the table alone! I'm going to write—"

"All right? Right you are, then!"

Tom Dutton gathered up a handful of the naval battle, and started on the frying-pan. Bunter leaped to his feet with a yell.

"Gimme my manuscripts, you silly idiot!" The fat author clutched away his naval battle, much to Dutton's surprise.

"Eh? You said I could have the papers," said Dutton. "You distinctly said 'All right.' Are they any good?"

"Eh?"

Billy Bunter gathered up his manuscripts.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 612.

scripts, glaring at his study-mates. He rolled out of the study with them in great wrath. Tom Dutton stared after him.

"Is that fat duffer going really potty?" he asked. "What's the matter with him, Todd?"

"Only a little lit off his top!" smiled Peter.

"What shop? Do you mean the tuck-shop?"

"Oh dear!"

"Well, if he's gone to the tuckshop, let's hope he will bring in something for tea," said Tom. "It's time he stood his whack at tea-time. Bet you he won't, though!"

And Tom Dutton was right; Bunter didn't!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. Great Expectations!

"CAN you—"

"No."

"Lend me—"

"Nix!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Rats!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were in the quadrangle, chatting over the literary work then under way for the famous first number of the 'Herald,' when William George Bunter joined them.

The Owl of Ice Remove had a packet in his hand—neatly tied up, and sealed and addressed.

"Will you give a fellow a chance to speak?" he demanded. "I want a bob—"

"Phone to one of your titled relations, old chap?" suggested Bob Cherry. "Bobs are short!"

"They're all out of town, you know, and—"

"Why not phone to their country mansions, then?" inquired Johnny Bull. "Look here, I want a bob to post this manuscript," said Bunter. "If you're going to be mean—"

"That what?" ejaculated Wharton.

"Manuscript!"

"Ye gods!"

"You haven't finished your first number yet?" grinned Bunter.

"No; it takes time."

"It doesn't take me such a jolly long time to get out a first number!" jeered Bunter. "I'm rather a dab at literary work, you know. I could have helped you through. I won't though!"

"Oh, usual, those cruel words!" pleaded Bob Cherry.

"I say I won't, and I mean I won't!" retorted Bunter. "I would have, if I'd been treated with proper civility and respect. I was perfectly prepared to take the whole thing in my hands. My offer was treated with disrespect, and I've withdrawn it! It's too late now!"

Bob Cherry sobbed.

"Too late!" repeated Bunter firmly. "I was prepared to do the whole stunt for a paltry twenty guineas a week. Now I've decided to run a rival paper and equal sort of rag, you can't complain. It's your own fault. You must admit you've agreed for it."

Sob!

"While you fellows have been fooling about, I've done the trick," continued Bunter. "I've done the whole first number of 'Bunter's Weekly: the Genuine Greyfriars Paper.' That's the title of it. Now I'm going to send it to the Fleetway House—"

"Eh?"

"And when they see this, you can guess how much attention they'll give to your stuff!" smiled Bunter. "I can just see the editor rubbing his hands over it—"

"Do editors rub their hands over the

wastepaper-basket!" asked Nugent, in surprise.

"I can just see him rubbing his hands with glee!" said Bunter, unheeding.

can just hear him calling to the sub-editor, and saying: "This is the real stuff, this is it! Who's this chap Bunter? We must try to get him to come up here and join the regular staff!"

"You—you—you can hear the editor saying that?" stammered Wharton.

"Something of the sort, you know. I'm not certain whether I shall accept the offer when I get it," said Bunter thoughtfully.

"Of course, I shouldn't mind leaving Greyfriars—I'm wasted here. It depends largely on the screw they offer. If they make it a hundred pounds a week I shall think of it."

"I wouldn't take less than that!" said Johnny Bull gravely.

"I shan't!" said Bunter. "I know my value, you see. Most probably they'll want me to take over the 'Gem'—"

"Eh?"

"That's one of their papers, you know—not a bad paper, you know; a chap named Clifford writes for it. He writes fairly well; but not in my style, of course!"

"Nunno; I hardly think it would be in your style!"

"The chap isn't bad, but he hasn't my descriptive power, you know. That's really a gift; authors are born, not made," explained Bunter. "I've often thought how much better I could do the stuff. I might take it on. I've not decided yet."

"Well, it's rather early to decide that, isn't it?" murmured Wharton.

"No need to think it out yet, you see. It isn't a pressing question, so far."

"Nunno, not quite, I should say."

"I don't know about that bagging Clifford's job," said Bunter generously.

"I think I ought to consider that. Still, perhaps I could give him some work as a ghost, you know. The chap writes fairly well, and perhaps I could sandwich some of his stuff in with mine occasionally. The readers wouldn't mind Clifford doing a bit now and then, if they had plenty of my stuff."

"I should imagine they'd be rather glad—if they had plenty of your stuff, old top! Are you going to do the leading article in the 'Times' too?"

"I've thought of that," assented Bunter calmly. "I don't know—I haven't decided yet. But the first step, of course, is to get the editor to see what a chance he has of getting a really good literary man on his staff. This will do it."

Bunter tapped the packet with a fat forefinger. "I can just see their eyes opening when they see this! I can hear the editor saying to that chap Clifford when he comes in, 'Look at this, will you, Clifford? Can't you do us something like this?'"

"Poor old Clifford!" sighed Bob Cherry. "Don't suppose he could, however hard he tried."

"No, I suppose not. As I said, it's a gift. But to come back to business. I want to pay the postage on this manuscript, so I shall want a bob. I suppose you're not going to be mean about a bob, Wharton, simply, because you're jealous of my literary style."

Harry Wharton felt in his pockets.

"I think you deserve the bob, Bunter," he said. "I'll lend you a bob on one condition. Let poor old Martin Clifford have a look-in occasionally, when you've got the 'Gem.'"

"I will!" said Bunter magnanimously.

"That's a good sort," said Wharton. "Here's the bob."

"Thanks. I'll let you have this back on Saturday. I've told them to phone."

explained Bunter. "So I shall know to-morrow."

"That's a good sort," said Wharton. "Here's the bob."

"Thanks. I'll let you have this back on Saturday. I've told them to phone."

explained Bunter. "So I shall know to-morrow."

"That's a good sort," said Wharton. "Here's the bob."

"To 'phone?" repeated Bob Cherry. "I didn't know there was a telephone in Study No. 7."

"I've given them Quelch's number." "My hat! Have you asked Mr. Quelch?"

"Well, no. I'm going to tell him later. He might have refused permission, you know. I can't have my literary career mucked up at the very beginning to please a dashed old Form-master! I may want you fellows to lend me some tin, if I have to go up and see them. But, of course, I shall square this week. I've mentioned in my letter that I shall require a hundred pounds down."

Billy Bunter rolled away with the packet and the shilling, leaving the chums of the Remove chuckling.

The fat junior was certainly counting his chickens rather early.

An hour later William George Bunter returned, looking rather tired and dusty, but quite satisfied.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob, as the Owl of the Remove rolled in. "Have you done the trick?"

Bunter nodded. "Yes, the manuscript's gone," he said. "They'll get it in the morning. I'm sorry for you chaps."

"That's awfully kind of you, Bunter!" "I'm a kind-hearted chap," said Bunter. "But, dash it all, a fellow must think of himself! Besides, a chap ought not to hide his light under a bushel. If

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Something Like.

AFTER lessons the next day there were several fellows in the Remove who were keenly interested in the movements of Mr. Quelch.

As a rule, the juniors did not give their Form-master very much thought on a half-holiday, unless they chanced to be detained. But on the present occasion Mr. Quelch's movements were of great interest.

Sometimes Mr. Quelch spent a half-holiday in his study at literary work. Sometimes he went for a walk.

And six members of the Remove were very anxious to know which he was going to do on that particular afternoon.

Billy Bunter greatly preferred the Remove-master to be out when his telephone call came from the publishing offices in London. And the Famous Five preferred him to be out when the telephone call came from the call-office in Friarlands. They were agreed on that point, though with different objects in view.

So they were all pleased when Mr. Quelch put on his hat and coat and left the School House.

With great interest they watched him walk down to the school gates and disappear.

"Now the coat's clear," remarked

his mind. He was rather inclined to blame himself for not having taken this step earlier. But he had never fully realised before the distinctive literary gifts he possessed. He had been quite surprised, in fact, by the facility he found in his new line. Literary stuff fairly ran off his pen when he set himself to the task. Page after page had been covered with ease. And it was all first-class stuff, too. Bunter was sure of that. On the point there was no room for doubt. Bunter knew!

The future held great possibilities. Probably he would leave Greyfriars—which would be rather a pity in some ways. He had looked forward to being in the Sixth, and becoming captain of the school, sometimes. But, after all, he could not afford to waste time fooling about at Greyfriars when there was practically a gold-mine at his feet in the metropolis. No, he would leave Greyfriars, and throw himself into literary work, which came so very easily from his pen. That was evidently the best step to take.

Bunter was still dozing and dreaming golden dreams when the telephone-bell buzzed sharply.

The fat junior was on his feet at once. He rolled to the telephone and grabbed the receiver.

"Hallo!" "Hallo! Is that Greyfriars?" It was

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he's got literary gifts he ought to make use of them."

"And you're expecting a telephone call now?" asked Bob, with a glimmer in his eyes.

"To-morrow," answered Bunter. "I told them to 'phone to-morrow afternoon, as it's a half-holiday, you know. Quelch is almost certain to be out."

"And if he isn't?"

"Well, if he isn't, I shall simply tell him I want the telephone," said Bunter loftily. "An author can't be bothered for want of a dashed telephone! Quelch ought to think about the credit I shall bring on the school. He will be known as the Form-master who had me in his class, in the future, you know. When I'm a big gun in the literary world, I mean."

"When!" murmured Bob. "The whiffuness is terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter!" remarked the Nabob of Bhanipari.

Bunter sniffed.

"I expected envy!" he answered. And he rolled on, disdainful.

Bob Cherry wore a wide grin when he came into Study No. 1 to tea with the Co. Apparently there was a humorous thought in Robert Cherry's brain. As he proceeded to explain that humorous thought over the tea-table, there was a sound of merry chortling in Study No. 1. And five merry juniors decided that Billy Bunter should not be disappointed in his expectation of a telephone call on the following afternoon.

Billy Bunter, with a blink at the Famous Five, who were in the big doorway.

"Looks like it," agreed Harry Wharton.

"I hope my call will come before the old duffer trots in again!" remarked Bunter.

"May come quite early," suggested Bob Cherry.

"Yes. I told 'em to make it early."

"And they're sure to do as they're told?"

"Oh yes!"

Billy Bunter rolled away to the Remove-master's study.

There he ensconced himself in Mr. Quelch's armchair, evidently with the intention of waiting in the study till his call came.

The fat junior seemed to entertain no doubts about that call. He had a happy consciousness of his own value as a literary man.

"Well, of all the fat chumps!" murmured Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Time I got on my bike, I think!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"Go it!"

Bob Cherry wheeled his bicycle out and rode away to Friarlands. Quite unconscious of Bob's movements and intentions, Billy Bunter sprawled in Mr. Quelch's armchair and waited.

He dozed a little in the chair, having done not wisely but too well at dinner. As he dozed he reviewed the future in

a deep bass voice that came along the wires.

"Yes; who's wanted?"

Billy Bunter had a lingering doubt that the call might be for Mr. Quelch, after all. But the next words in the deep bass voice relieved him of his doubt.

"Can I speak to Master Bunter?"

The Owl of the Remove grinned with satisfaction over the instrument.

"Bunter speaking!" he answered.

"Oh! Is that W. G. Bunter?"

"That's right."

"The perpetrator—I mean the author—of 'Bunter's Weekly'?"

"Yes."

"Good. You required an answer by telephone this afternoon, Master Bunter. I lost no time in ringing you up."

"Thanks!"

"Not at all."

"Lucky you caught me here," said Bunter.

"Quite by chance; I've got a lot of engagements for this afternoon."

"Well, of all the——"

"Eh?"

"I—I mean, it was very fortunate I caught you, Master Bunter. Now, I suppose you are aware that you have produced some very extraordinary work."

"Yes, rather."

"I firmly believe that nothing like it has ever been written before."

"Very likely. A bit unique, I think," said Bunter.

"Very unique. Quite original in every way. Even the spelling is original."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 612.

"What?"

"I—I—I mean, it is scarcely credible that a schoolboy—any fellow at any school—could produce such stuff."

"I've got rather a literary gift," explained Bunter. "It comes quite easy to me. Rolls off my pen, in fact."

"And you did all this unaided?"

"Quite!"

"Wonderful! Are you prepared to see me if I call upon you at Greyfriars?"

"Certainly."

"Can you see me this afternoon? There is no time to lose."

Bunter purred over the telephone. He wished the Famous Five could have been present to hear that. Evidently the gentleman at the other end of the wire knew good literary work when he saw it, and wasn't going to let an opportunity pass him of securing it.

"Come this afternoon by all means," he answered. "As it happens, it's a half-holiday, so it will be all right."

"I'll come. Expect me as soon as I can get back—I mean, as soon as I can get to Greyfriars."

"Right-ho! Ask for W. G. Bunter, Study No. 7. By the way, about the hundred pounds—"

"Oh, yes, you wanted a hundred pounds down!"

"That's my figure."

"No doubt you mentioned this trifling sum—"

"Eh?"

"This trifling sum by mistake. You probably meant a thousand pounds."

Bunter gasped.

"Exactly! A—a thousand. Of course! I—I—I wonder what made me say a hundred!"

"Now, Master Bunter, I am empowered to give you as many pounds as you like."

"Oh!"

"You yourself shall determine the number."

"Ah!"

"I will come at once, and when we are together you shall specify the exact amount. I leave it entirely to you."

"Oh crumbs! I—I mean, come as soon as you can, will you?"

"Undoubtedly. Good-bye for the present."

"Good-bye, sir!"

Bunter put up the receiver, and executed a little dance of triumph round Mr. Quelch's study-table. He was feeling exuberant. He had known, of course, that he had great literary gifts; he had not been troubled with any doubts on that score. But it was something to have confirmation like this from headquarters.

The Owl of the Remove rolled out of Mr. Quelch's study at last.

The bestific expression on his fat face attracted attention at once.

"Postal-order come!" called out Peter Todd.

Bunter blinked at him.

His blink was lofty and scornful! Hundreds of pounds were dancing before his eyes, and he felt a lofty and profound contempt for Todd, and for everybody else at Greyfriars.

"Don't be cheeky!" he answered.

"Hey?"

"I don't want any cheek from you, Todd. I want to be treated with proper respect during my last few days here."

Peter Todd jumped.

"You're not leaving!" he ejaculated.

"Dash it all, that's too good to be true!"

"I expect to be leaving school shortly to take up a prominent position in an editorial office."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Meanwhile, I don't want any cheek."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 612.

And keep out of the study this afternoon, Todd."

"What for?"

"I'm expecting a visitor—a rather important man from my publishers."

"Your—your—your what?" stammered Todd.

"My publishers," said Bunter calmly, enjoying the amazed stares that were turned upon him by half a dozen fellows.

"I'm expecting a large sum of money this afternoon, too."

"My hat!"

"Hundreds of pounds, in fact."

"Is he potty?" asked Squiff, addressing space.

Bunter sniffed.

"It's no secret," he said. "I'm offered any sum I like to name for my literary stuff—Bunter's Weekly, you know."

"Draw it mid."

"I've just had it on the telephone."

"Eats!"

"You'll soon see!" roared Bunter.

"Who's been pulling your silly leg?"

asked Peter Todd, in blank astonishment.

"Yah!"

Billy Bunter rolled away disdainfully. He left the juniors blinking, and a little later William George might have been seen strutting in the quadrangle with his nose elevated even more than Nature had elevated it—swelling with importance to such an extent that he really seemed in danger of sharing the fate of the frog in the fable.

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Out This Wednesday.



THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

An Important Visitor.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry greeted the Owl of the Remove as he wheeled his bike in. The extreme leftness of William George's strut struck Bob at once, and he realised that this was the outcome of the talk on the telephone.

Billy Bunter paused in his promenade, and fixed his glasses on Bob Cherry disdainfully.

He stared at Bob's face with that withering glance, and let it travel down to Bob's feet. Then it travelled up to Bob's astonished face again. This was what Bunter called looking a fellow up and down.

Bob Cherry ought to have been withered by it; but he only blinked at Bunter in surprise.

"What's the matter with your eyes, Bunter?" he asked.

"Eh? Nothing!"

"Then what are you blinking in that extraordinary way for?"

"Br-r-r!" grunted Bunter.

The withering look had been wasted. Bob Cherry did not even seem to know that he had been looked up and down.

"Did you get your call on the telephone?" inquired Bob, with a twinkle in his eyes.

"Certainly!"

"My hat! And is it all right?"

"Naturally!"

"Naturally!" murmured Bob. "Oh, my!"

"I'm offered a large sum down," said Bunter. "Hundreds of pounds, if you want to know. Not that it's your business, Bob Cherry. You needn't come round to borrow any of it. I'm not going to lend you any!"

"I won't borrow any of those pounds," said Bob. "I dare say you won't care for them when you get them. Wealth is a responsibility, you know!"

"It might be to a poverty-stricken boulder like you," agreed Bunter. "But I've always been accustomed to wealth. My father isn't a half-pay major?"

And William George elevated his fat little nose once more, and walked away scornfully.

In the smile of prosperity, beautiful traits of Bunter's character were evidently coming to light. Charming as he had always been, there was no doubt that prosperity would add to his fascinations.

Bob Cherry smiled, and walked on. His chums were waiting for him in the School House, with smiling faces.

"Swallowed it!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"Like a gudgeon!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "It's really too bad to pull the fat duffer's leg like this."

"Well, if he wasn't a conceited ass, he wouldn't be spoofed by that chatter on the 'phone," said Bob Cherry. "Only Bunter would suppose that rot like that could come from an editorial office."

And now he's expecting a visitor to hand him hundreds of pounds!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's not going to be disappointed. Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is! Hush!"

"The hushfulness is terrific!"

Billy Bunter rolled in. He cast a lofty blink at the Famous Five, and called out:

"Wharton!"

"Adam!" smiled the captain of the Remove.

"I'm expecting a visitor this afternoon—rather an important visitor. I want him shown up into my study at once!"

"Eh?"

"Wait at the door for him, and bring him up as soon as he comes."

Harry Wharton looked at Bunter. The



There was a grin on Bunter's fat face as he stopped by the river with the packet in his hands that had been entrusted to his care. "Beasts!" he murmured. "After leaving me out—ungrateful rotters!" Bunter raised the packet. Splash! There were eddying circles in the stream, and the waters closed over the packet. (See page 14.)

Owl was giving orders as if he were the head of the school at least. Apparently the fat author supposed he could "fag" the captain of the Remove.

"Are you off your rocker?" asked Wharton at last.

Bunter frowned, and raised a fat hand commandingly.

"No cheek!" he said.

"Cheek!" repeated Wharton dazedly.

"Yes. I don't want any back-chat. Just do as you're told, and I shall be satisfied with you."

With that William George rolled on to the staircase, and began to mount the stairs. Harry Wharton made a step after him, but Bob Cherry stopped him.

"Let him rip!" he murmured.

"Giving me orders!" said Wharton dazedly. "Me! Him! My hat!"

"It's all right—you can show his visitor in—"

"There isn't going to be any visitor, ass; and if there was, do you think I'm a dashed footman, waiting on Bunter!"

"My dear man, there is going to be a visitor, and you're going to show him in to Bunter's study," said Bob with a chuckle. "Let's go and see Wibley. I want to borrow one of his false beards!"

"Oh! Him! My hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five followed Bunter up

to the Remove passage, chortling. At the door of No. 7 Bunter blinked round.

"Wharton!" he rapped out.

"Hallo!"

"Go down at once, and wait for my visitor—to show him in."

Wharton gasped.

"I—I—I'll go down in a minute, Bunter."

"A minute won't do! Go down now!"

"Go down, old scout," said Bob Cherry. "Don't you hear Bunter giving orders? Remember, Bunter is practically a millionaire now!"

Harry Wharton went down the staircase. Billy Bunter rolled into Study No. 7, and sat down there. Peter Told and Tom Dutton were out-of-doors, and the Owl had No. 7 to himself.

He waited there for his visitor.

Meanwhile, Bob Cherry and his comrades repaired to Wibley's study, where they found the leading light of the Remove Dramatic Society. As soon as the circumstances were explained, William Wibley lent his aid, and, amid many chuckles, Bunter's "visitor" was prepared for the meeting with the amateur author.

Bunter waited in No. 7, little dreaming of the preparations that were going on up the passage.

It was about half an hour later that

there came a tap at the door, and Harry Wharton looked in.

"Gentleman to see you, Bunter!"

If Billy Bunter had been a little less obtuse, he might have been made suspicious by Wharton's meek obedience to his commands. But the fatuous Owl only took that obedience as what was due to his importance. He had never had less due before. Now he was getting it. That was all.

"Show him in!" he said loudly.

Wharton turned to someone in the passage.

"Will you step in, sir?"

"Certainly!" replied a deep bass voice—the voice of the telephone, which Bunter recognised at once.

And the visitor stepped in.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Not a Thousand Pounds!

BILLY BUNTER rose to his feet. In spite of the sport he derived from unbounded self-satisfaction and conceit, the fat junior felt a slight tremor.

So much depended on this interview! He blinked with great interest at the visitor. He had not had dealings with

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 612.

editorial gentlemen before, and he did not quite know what to expect.

The visitor was rather short—for a man, though he would have been rather tall for a boy. He carried a silk hat in his hand, and his head was covered with thick and rather long hair—almost like a wig. Bunter thought. He had long, curling mustaches, a beard, whiskers, and spectacles. With all those adornments there was very little of his face to be seen.

He was dressed in a frock-coat too long for him, and grey trousers turned up about seven or eight inches. Altogether, he was not much like what Bunter had expected. Still, there he was!

"Master Bunter?"
 "Yes, I'm Bunter," said the fat junior.
 "Glad to meet you, Mr.—Mr.—"
 "Mr. Robert!" said the visitor. "Probably you know my name?"

"I don't remember hearing it before," said Bunter. "Will you sit down, Mr. Robert?"

"Thank you!"
 The visitor sat down.
 There was a giggling in the passage without, and Bunter frowned. He did not want the serious and business-like character of the interview spoiled by fags giggling in the passage.

The fat junior opened the door and blinked out.
 "I say, you fellows, clear off!" he snapped.

To Bunter's surprise there were a dozen or more of the Remove gathered near the door of Study No. 7. All of them were smiling.

"You hear me?" rapped out Bunter.
 "The heartfulness is terrific, my esteemed and idiotic Bunter!"

"Well, clear off!"
 Bunter snapped the door shut.

Mr. Robert was blinking at him over his spectacles. He did not seem to need the use of his glasses, he looked over them all the time. Probably he had his reasons for that.

"Now, sir!" said Bunter.
 "Now to business, Master Bunter. I am here with full powers to conclude negotiations," said Mr. Robert impressively.

"Good! I want to talk business," said Bunter. "You've offered me a thousand pounds—"

"If you want them," said Mr. Robert.
 "Oh, I want them all right," grinned Bunter. "But that's for the first number of 'Bunter's Weekly,' of course."

"Precisely."
 "You're offering the same for the second number?"

"If you desire it."
 "Done!" said Bunter, hardly able to contain his satisfaction. "There's more money in this kind of thing than I thought."

"Money!" repeated Mr. Robert. Oh! Ah! Yes, of course!"
 "I'm prepared to turn out 'Bunter's Weekly' regularly at the same figure," said the Owl of the Remove.

"On our side, Master Bunter, we shall be prepared to hand out the same figure. We feel that you deserve it."

Bunter rubbed his fat hands.
 "My dear fellow, that's all right," he said. "I've only lately discovered that I had a literary gift, really. Of course, I always knew I could write."

"Oh! You—you always knew that?"
 "Yes, I wrote a poem when I was a fag in the Second Form here," said Bunter complacently. "I could let you have that, if you like. I would let that go for—for, say, twenty guineas."

"Pounds, Master Bunter, if you like."
 "Oh, all right! I remember, it—it's THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 612.

a really good thing," said Bunter. "It's an 'Ode to a Dying Fly.'"

"Oh, my hat—I mean, go on!"
 "It runs like this:

"Now summer's balmy day is done,
 Unhappy fly, thy course is run.
 Upon the ground I see thee lie,
 And weep for thee, O dying fly!"

"Rather good—what?" said Bunter.
 "Topping! So you are a poet as well as an author, Master Bunter!"

"The fact is, I can do pretty nearly anything," said Bunter modestly. "It's only a question of turning my powers in any direction I choose, you know. I'm willing to place all my talents at your service. If you like, I'll take over the 'Gem.' I guarantee to turn out much better stuff than Martin Clifford."

"Oh!"
 "You can put me on to the 'Boys' Friend,' too, if you like. I can beat that chap Conquest hollow."

"Ah!"
 "Anything you like, in fact."
 "You are sure you can manage it all, Master Bunter?"

"Oh, yes! Quite! The stuff fairly rolls off my pen," said Bunter confidently. "I've got powers, you know. But to come back to the 'Weekly,' I'm glad you've been able to see how good it is. I sent some stuff to our local paper once, and the editor had the dashed cheek to send it back with an impudent note. You've got more sense! I'm glad of that."

"Ahem!"
 "You'll want a receipt, I suppose?" said Bunter, who was anxious to see the colour of his visitor's cash.

"Quite immaterial, my dear boy."
 "Well, as we've agreed on the price of the stuff, if you wouldn't mind—"

hinted Bunter.
 "Certainly!"

The visitor rose to his feet.
 "How many pounds shall I give you?" he asked.

"As many as you like!" grinned Bunter.

"Very good! If I give you too many you can stop me, you know."
 "He, he, he! That's not likely."

"Well, here goes!"
 What happened next was astonishing—to Bunter! His editorial visitor made a step towards him, and pounded him suddenly on his fat chest.

"Yaroo!" roared the astounded Owl.
 There was a bump as he sat down on the carpet.

He sat there in a state of blank astonishment, blinking up at his extraordinary visitor over his spectacles, which had slid down his fat little nose.

"One!" said the visitor.
 The door opened, and a dozen laughing faces looked in.

"What's the row?" inquired Peter Todd. "Anything wrong, Bunter?"
 "Yow-ow-ow!"

The editorial gentleman looked at the juniors over his spectacles.
 "I am giving Bunter the price agreed upon!" he explained. "I have so far handed him one pound! There are nine hundred and ninety-nine more to come!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "If you are ready, Master Bunter,

I—"Yow-ow-ow!" You silly idiot, wharrer you at!" yelled Bunter. "Wharrer you punching me for, you dummy!"
 "Pounding you!" corrected the visitor.

"Eh!"
 "I agreed to give you a thousand pounds. You have had only one. My time is rather of value, and I should be

glad if you would get up and take the rest. There are nine hundred and ninety-nine—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 Billy Bunter did not get up.

Nine hundred and ninety-nine pounds on the chest from the stranger's heavy knuckles did not attract him in the least. The fat junior squirmed as far away from his amazing visitor as the study would allow, and blinked at him in alarm and dismay.

"He's mad!" gasped Bunter.
 "Get up, Bunter!"

"I won't get up!" roared Bunter. "I say, you fellows, send for the police!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "But how am I to pound you if you remain on the floor, Master Bunter?"

"Yah! I don't want to be pounded, you silly idiot! You said you'd give me a thousand pounds—"

"There are nine hundred and ninety-nine waiting for you—"

"Keep him off!" howled Bunter.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do you mean to say that you are satisfied with a single pound?" asked the visitor.

"Or! Yow! You rotter! I don't believe you're an editor at all!" gasped Bunter. "I—I believe I've been spoofed! Oh dear!"

"Go on!" remarked the visitor.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you are satisfied, Bunter, of course I will not insist upon paying you in full. But you are welcome to the remaining nine hundred and ninety-nine if you wish!"

"Yah!"
 "Sure you won't have them!"
 "Yow-ow. Keep off!"

"Then this interview is over," said the visitor. "Thanks for the whiskers, Wiley!"

The editorial gentleman took his whiskers off, and the beard and moustache came off with them. The wig followed, and then Bunter gave a yell:

"Bob Cherry, you beast!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—you rotter!" yelled Bunter. "It was you on the telephone!"
 "My hat! It's dawning on him at last!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in wonder.

"What a brain!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry moved to the door, the interview being over. Bunter scrambled to his feet, shaking a furious fat fist at his humorous visitor.

"Oh, you rotter! I've a jolly good mind to lick you!"

Bob Cherry turned.
 "Hallo, hallo, hallo! You want the rest of the pounds?"

"No!" yelled Bunter, dodging round the table. "Gerrout of my study, you beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 The chortling juniors crowded out, leaving William George Bunter blinking after them, with fury in his blink, and rubbing his fat chest, where he had received the only pound he was likely to receive for his valuable literary work.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Question of Money.

"YAH!"
 That was Billy Bunter's elegant and expressive remark when he met the Famous Five in the Common-room that evening.

Harry Wharton & Co. were smiling. Bunter was no longer strutting. Having discovered that he had been "spoofed" on Mr. Quelch's telephone, and that his literary works had not, after all, met with an enthusiastic reception in

editorial quarters, Bunter had descended considerably from his elevation. For, with the exception of Bob Cherry's, there had been no telephone call for Bunter that day. His instructions had evidently passed unheeded, and this did not look like enthusiasm on the part of the editorial powers.

So doubt was creeping into Bunter's fat mind; and he was no longer in the mood of the ancient gentleman who was like to strike the stars with his sublime head.

"Yah!" repeated Bunter, blinking at the chimes of the Remove with wrathful disdain. "Wait till to-morrow! There'll be a letter to-morrow, and then you'll see!"

"Best of luck, old top!" said Bob Cherry. "If you're in want of any more pounds, don't forget to mention it to me."

"Yah!"
And with that crushing reply Billy Bunter looked the Famous Five up and down, and turned away scornfully.

Bunter was not, by this time, so confident as his words implied. He waited for the morning's post rather anxiously. But there was no letter for Bunter in the morning.

Editorial communications seemed to be taking their cue from his celebrated postal order, which was always expected and never arrived.

"It'll come at midday!" Bunter said to Peter Todd.

"I hope it does, old chap!" said Toddy. "I'll come down to the bank with you to cash the cheque, and bring a cricket-bag for the money."

"Yah!"
But Toddy and his cricket-bag were not called upon that afternoon. There was no letter by the midday post.

"Jolly queer, ain't it?" Bunter said to Harry Wharton.

"What—Bunter's Weekly," do you mean?" asked the editor of the "Greyfriars Herald."

"No, as; my not getting an answer, I mean! I told them distinctly that I wanted an answer at once!"

"Did you put in stamps for the stuff to come home with?"

"Eh? No; why should I?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, it's safer!" he said. "Editors get an awful lot of stuff sent to them, and I don't suppose they can pay all the return postages out of their own pocket."

Bunter sniffed.

"But my manuscript isn't coming back!" he said.

"Oh!"

"It's only your jealousy of my literary style that makes you suggest it, Wharton!"

"Oh!"

"But I'll tell you what I'll do," said Bunter generously. "I feel that I've been rather hard on you, Wharton. As the only fellow in the school who can really write, I feel that I ought to stand by you. I'll withdraw my 'Weekly,' and come on the staff of the 'Herald'—"

"Will you?"

"I mean it, old chap! I'll see you through. I shall simply ask for half the takings, whatever they are. You fellows can have the other half to pay expenses, and so on, and if there's anything left over you can keep it for yourselves. I can't say fairer than that!"

"My dear porpoise, I think you'd better stick to 'Bunter's Weekly,'" said the captain of the Remove, laughing. And he walked away.

"Beast!" was Bunter's rejoinder, as he went.

By the late post there was still no

letter for Bunter. It was really very puzzling. The same was the case the next morning. But by that time Bunter's patience was exhausted. After morning lessons on Friday he rolled into the prefects' room, after ascertaining that that apartment was unoccupied, and started on the telephone. He rang up the exchange, and gave the number, and waited for his trunk call. Several juniors looked in at the door while he was waiting, with smiling faces. Billy Bunter gave them a lofty blink.

"Just telephoning to my publishers," he said, in an off-hand way. "You kids can hook it!"

But the "kids" did not hook it. They were interested to hear William George Bunter's telephonic communications with his publishers.

The bell rang at last.

"Flectway House? All right! I want Room X, where they do the 'Greyfriars Herald.' All right!"

Bunter blinked round at the faces in the doorway.

"Now we shall see what we shall see!" he observed.

"Well, that's very probable, at least," assented Bob Cherry. "I suppose you'll accept an offer of a thousand pounds, Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, dry up! I can't have you kids chattering around while I'm talking to my publishers."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo!" Bunter was at the transmitter again. "Yes, that's right—Greyfriars! No; I'm not Wharton! I'm Bunter! Don't know the name? What rot! I sent you 'Bunter's Weekly'—Oh, you know now—why the fellow's laughing! What the thump is he laughing at?" exclaimed Bunter, in indignant surprise.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, shut up! It's too bad, you cackling there and this fellow cackling on the telephone! I wonder what he's cackling at? Hallo! Yes! What? Would have been returned if stamps had been enclosed? What the thump are you going to return it for? No good! Did you say no good? Do you call yourself an editor?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut—up!" roared Bunter. "This chap is being impertinent! He says my stuff is no good!"

"Go hon!"

"Hallo! Do you know what you're talking about, who ever you are? No good! I like that! What, you don't like it? Well, you're a silly ass! Send it back at once! Eh? Stamps! Oh, bother the stamps! I've got no stamps to waste! You put it in the wastepaper-basket if you dare! Why, I'll—I'll—I'll—Now the beast's rung off!"

Billy Bunter jammed the receiver on the books, and turned a wrathful fat face on the juniors yelling in the doorway.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! But I might have expected this!" said Bunter bitterly. "If they see anything in your 'Herald' stuff they wouldn't be likely to understand my style. Good descriptive writing is wasted on them! I shall refuse to do anything more for them."

"I should," gasped Bob Cherry.

"I mean it!" said Bunter. "They can implore me on their bended knees if they like; but I shall refuse! But I'll tell you what, Wharton. I've decided, after all, not to bring out 'Bunter's Weekly.' Too much fog, you know, and I shouldn't

have time, with so many engagements on all sides; but I'll tell you what. You can rely on me for the 'Greyfriars Herald.' You can rely— I say, Wharton, don't walk away while I'm talking to you, you beast!"

But Harry Wharton had walked away.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Very Deep of Bunter.

"D ONE!"
Half a dozen voices pronounced that word in tones of great satisfaction.

It was done at last; the first number of the new "Greyfriars Herald"—and now it was done the many editors and sub-editors agreed, without a dissentient voice, that it couldn't have been done better.

"And now it's done we'll get to work on the next number," said Vernon Smith. "This lot ought to be put in the post this afternoon, though!"

"Yes, rather!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! This isn't a moneylender's office, old tub. Roll away!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I've come here to do you fellows a service."

"Fan me, somebody!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"I mean it!" said Bunter, blinking at the grinning staff of the "Greyfriars Herald." "You haven't treated me well. But I'm a forgiving chap. I'm going to take your rag down to the post-office for you."

"Eh!"

"And post it!" said Bunter.

"My hat!"

"Do you think we'd trust it in your hands," grinned the Bounder, "or the postage-money, either?"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Thanks all the same, Bunter," said Harry Wharton, laughing, "but we'll manage to post it ourselves."

"But, I say, you fellows, you want to get on to the next number, you know," said Bunter persuasively.

There was a loud chortle in Study No. 1. William George Bunter was so excessively obliging that it was pretty clear that he had an axe to grind.

"And you'll go down to Friarsdale for us?" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Oh, certainly!"

"And spend the postage-money at Uncle Clegg's?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, really, Bull, if you can't trust me with a bob—"

"Catch me trusting you with a brass farthing!" said Johnny Bull.

"The—the fact is, you fellows, I'm going to pay the postage myself."

"What!"

"I mean it," said Bunter, at the "Herald" staff stared at him, "every word. You've treated me badly, but I forgive you. I'm heaping coals of fire on your heads, you know."

"Well, my hat!" said Bob Cherry.

"Seal it up," said the fat junior briskly. "I'm ready to go."

"Timeo Damos!" chuckled the Bounder. "I fear the Greeks when they bring gifts. What's your little game, Bunt?"

"Oh, really, Smithy, if you suspect me of thinking of chucking it away—"

"Wha-at!"

"As if I'd chuck it into the river just because I'm lunk out of it!" said Bunter reproachfully. "The thought never even entered my mind."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The "Herald" staff yelled. Billy
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 612.

Bunter's excessive obligingness was fully explained now—though the happy Owl was quite unconscious that he had given his amiable scheme away.

"So that's the game?" gasped Wharton.

"Certainly not! Haven't I just said that the thought never even entered my mind?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear chaps, we must trust Bunter," said Bob Cherry, closing one eye at his comrades. "He's assured us, and we know what his assurance is worth."

"We do!" chuckled Nugent.

"If you really mean it, Bunter—"

"I do, old chap."

"Then get out your bike, and we'll bring the packet down when it's done up."

"I shan't want my bike to do a hundred yards—"

"Eh? It's more than a hundred yards to Friarlane."

"I—I mean—" stammered Bunter.

"It's about a hundred yards to the river," said Bob. "But you're not going near the river, are you?"

"Nunno! Of—of course not, I—I—I'll get the bike out at once."

And William George Bunter hurried away.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another, chuckling. As Billy Bunter's little scheme was as clear as the sun at noon, the "Herald" staff were not likely to fall victims to it.

"Well, of all the silly owls—" said Nugent. "As if we'd trust him with the packet, especially after he's told us what he wants to do with it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Still, we mustn't disappoint Bunter, as he's so obliging," said Bob Cherry. "I'll get the packet ready—"

"Why, you ass, what do you mean? Hasn't Bunter said that he's going to chuck it into the river?" exclaimed Peter Todd.

"No; he's said that he isn't going to."

"You know what he means, though."

"Quite so; and if it will give Bunter any satisfaction to chuck a packet into the river, why shouldn't he have that pleasure? It doesn't take long to tie up a packet of old newspapers!"

"Oh! Ah! Ha, ha, ha!"

Five minutes later Bob Cherry came downstairs with a neat packet in his hand, sealed and addressed. He found Billy Bunter ready with his bike, and the Owl held out an eager, fat hand for the packet.

"You'll be awfully careful with it, Bunter?" said Bob impressively.

"You bet!"

"Mind you register it, and bring back the receipt."

Bunter started.

"The—the receipt!" he stammered.

"Yes; they give you a receipt for registered letters, you know."

"Oh! I—I—I might lose the receipt, of—of course."

"Never mind so long as the packet is safe."

"Rely on me," said Bunter.

And he pedalled away with the precious packet. Five minutes more, and Bob Cherry also pedalled away from Greyfriars, on a visit to the post-office at Friarlane. And he grinned as he passed Bunter's bike in the lane. Bunter's bike was there, but the Owl was not to be seen. The machine was leaning against a tree. Through an opening in the trees the gleam of the river could be seen in the distance. And Bob Cherry chortled and rode on to the village, where he registered a packet for the Fleetway House.

Meanwhile, Billy Bunter had reached the bank of the Sark.

There was a fat grin on Bunter's face as he stopped by the river, with the packet in his hands that had been entrusted to his care.

"Beasts!" he murmured. "After leaving me out—ungrateful rotters! They wouldn't have taken me in so easily as this! He, he, he!"

Bunter raised the packet.

Splash!

There were eddying circles in the stream, and the waters closed over the packet. And William George Bunter turned away with a fat chuckle.

"Hallo! You're soon back!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, when the Owl of the Remove wheeled his bike in at the gates.

"Yes, I scorch'd, you know," said Bunter.

"You must have! Where's the receipt?"

"I'm sorry to say it blew away, Wharton."

"Oh, my hat!"

"It doesn't matter, you know—the packet's all right! It's quite safe where it is—quite!"

And Billy Bunter rolled on.

During the following days anyone who had observed Bunter carefully might have noted that the Owl of the Remove seemed to have some secret cause for satisfaction. Fat grins would break out on his face at all moments—especially when the "Herald" staff happened to refer to the expected "proofs" of the first number of the school paper.

"So you're expecting proofs—what?" Bunter asked once.

"Of course," answered Wharton. "We have to go over the proofs, you know."

"He, he, he!"

"What are you cackling at?"

"That's telling!" chuckled Bunter.

"He, he, he!"

Bunter's "He, he, he!" was frequently heard during that week. Any mention of the "Greyfriars Herald" was sufficient to start him like an alarm-clock.

And when, on Saturday afternoon, a bulky packet arrived for Harry Wharton, and the "Herald" staff gathered round to see it opened, Billy Bunter joined them in a state of enjoyment. Wharton remarked that it must be the proofs, and that remark seemed to tickle Billy Bunter into almost a paroxysm of mirth.

But the fat grin disappeared from his face when the packet was opened and Wharton unfolded the printed slips.

For it was the proofs!

"Good egg!" said Bob Cherry. "We'll go over these this afternoon, and post them back to-day. Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the matter with you, Bunter?"

Bunter's round eyes were almost bulging through his spectacles.

"Are they the—the—the proofs?" he stammered.

"Yes, rather!"

"But—but they can't be!" gasped Bunter, in bewilderment.

"Well, they are!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"But—but they never got the copy!" stammered Bunter.

"Don't you remember posting it for us?" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They can't be the proofs!" howled Bunter, astounded and enraged. "I jolly well chucked that packet into the river! Yah!"

"Jolly lucky that the copy wasn't in it, then," yawned Bob Cherry. "Come up to the study, you chaps—we'll start on these proofs at once."

And the staff adjourned to the editorial office.

Billy Bunter blinked after them dazedly.

In Study No. 1 the "Herald" staff were soon busy with the proofs. Many hands made light work; and they were nearly finished, when Billy Bunter blinked in at the door.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Well, you fat rogue?" said Harry Wharton.

"I—I want to do you fellows a service. I'll—"

"What?"

"I'll take the proofs down to the post-office for you if you like—"

"Well, my only hat!"

"I mean it," said Bunter fatuously.

"You hand the packet over to me—"

"Here, I say, wharver you at? Yaroooh!"

Bump!

Slam!

From these sounds that rang along the Remove passage it appeared that on this occasion Billy Bunter's kind offer of service had been declined.

THE END.

(Don't miss next Monday's Grand Long Complete Story of Greyfriars School, entitled "THE BOUNDER'S FAULT!" By FRANK RICHARDS.)

NO. 1.

"THE GREYFRIARS HERALD"

OUT TO-DAY.

GET IT!

OUR GREAT NEW SERIAL STORY.

START READING TO-DAY.



THE MINERS' CHAMPION

A Stirring New Tale of the Ring.
By PERCY LONGHURST.

SYNOPSIS.

Harry Rhodes, a miner and amateur boxer, of Loxborough, a mining village, meets Joshua Martin, the manager and principal backer of Anthony Hanna—"Cust-Iron Tony"—a wonderful Scottish light-weight boxer, who has come to Loxborough to train. Harry lives with an uncle, James Rhodes, who has trained him, and who had himself been a boxer years before. He had left the Ring through some tragedy of which Joshua Martin knows the facts, much to James Rhodes' alarm.

At a small gymnasium one night Harry Rhodes issues a challenge to anyone in the place to three rounds. The challenge is accepted by a stranger, who proves to be Tony Hanna.

After a thrilling contest the famous Scottish boxer is defeated by Harry. On the way back to his hotel Hanna instructs his manager to secure Harry Rhodes as a sparring partner for him. Something in his tone makes Joshua Martin feel uneasy. "I'll be careful; don't you worry!" said Hanna.

(Now read on.)

Joshua Martin's Threat.

ALL the same, Martin didn't feel satisfied. He was thoughtful for the rest of the walk, and the troubled expression in his eyes stayed there. The gipsy blood in Hanna made him a dangerous person when his passion was aroused.

And Martin had a further worry. It was that some rumour of the unlucky encounter with Harry Rhodes might slip into the public ear to the detriment of Hanna's reputation. There had been too many witnesses for the manager to feel at all comfortable. To keep the mouth of every one of them shut was out of the question.

In addition, was the knock-out itself. True, he was well aware that Hanna had been a bit "fresh" when he started out for Moseley's gym, but the knowledge didn't help him to get rid altogether of a disagreeable suspicion.

Was Tony Hanna going back?

Fervently Joshua Martin hoped the fear was ungrounded. He had made a good thing out of Tony Hanna during the past twelve months.

He obtained some consolation next morning from the discovery that Hanna was filled to overflowing with the desire for work. After breakfast, during which the manager kept a very still tongue, Tony announced his intention of going for a sharp walk.

"Glad to hear it," Martin returned, with much satisfaction.

"And while I'm gone," Tony went on, "you just get up an' see that Rhodes kid, an' fix it up that he comes down here to box with me."

"Right you are!" Martin agreed; but he didn't feel too hopeful.

"Don't forget," admonished Tony,

while donning a thick sweater, "you got to get him down here. Don't matter what it costs!"

"Do my best, don't you worry!" Martin assured him.

"Someone'll do some worrying if you don't!" said Tony darkly.

So, having seen Hanna depart, with Mike Brayne, his trainer, to keep him company, Joshua Martin put on his hat, lighted a fat cigar, and strolled along Loxboro' main street until he reached the little cottage which was the Rhodes' domicile. He knocked loudly, and after a short wait the door was opened by James Rhodes.

"Mornin', Jimmy!" Mr. Martin said affably.

James Rhodes eyed him for a while with cold, unfriendly eyes, and then curtly inquired what he wanted.

"Oh, just a bit of a talk, Jimmy," Martin replied. "But I don't want it standing out 'ere." he added, for Rhodes made no motion to stand aside.

"What about?" Still Rhodes made no move.

"Bus'ness—private an' important, Jimmy. 'Ere, let me in an' I'll tell you."

But still James Rhodes did no stir.

"Reckon, Jimmy, you don't want everybody to hear what I got to say," Martin drawled, and he winked gently.

"Come in!" Rhodes said suddenly, and made room for the other to enter.

But no sooner was Martin inside and the door closed than Rhodes turned upon him angrily, his forehead reddening.

"I thought I'd made it clear yesterday I didn't want any more to do with you, Joshua Martin," he said bluntly. "Now, what's this you have to talk about? Say it quickly, an' then get out!"

"You ain't hospitable, Jimmy, an' that's a fact," observed Martin, unruffled. "Not like you was once upon a time. Still, I'll try to please you, seein' as we're old friends. Here's my business: Let that kid of yours come up to th' White Rose an' give Tony Hanna a hand in 'is trainin'."

"You're wasting time!" rejoined Rhodes, and put his hand on the door-handle.

"We're short o' sparrin' fellers, an' I'm ready to pay th' kid real handsome, I went on Martin, still pleasantly. "Two quid a week, six weeks certain."

By way of reply, James Rhodes pointed to the door.

Martin smiled patiently, shaking his head.

"Think it over, Jimmy!"

"I have already, and I don't change my mind."

"Look 'ere," and Martin tapped a fat

forefinger gently on the other's deep chest—"look 'ere! Tony Hanna's most anxious for that kid to come. Says he's just got to come, no matter what it costs. I'll make it two-ten!"

"So Tony Hanna wants him—after last night!" sneered Rhodes.

"Bad as you wants me to clear outer 'ere," grinned Martin. "That Harry's a real fine boxer, an' Tony knows it. That's why."

"He shall not go!" said Rhodes obstinately.

And James Rhodes was the more determined in that resolution because it was not so many hours back that he and Harry had talked over this very proposition. His uncle had let slip the suggestion Martin had made to him when they had talked in the cottage the previous morning, and Harry had taken it up with considerable eagerness.

It wasn't that success had given the lad an attack of swollen head, but the suggestion of acting as sparring partner to such a notable boxer as Tony Hanna had certainly appealed to him.

He had argued that the chance was one not to be neglected; that it would prove an addition to his boxing education that ought not to be thrown away, and he had been anything but pleased by his relative's very decided disapproval, for which James Rhodes had flatly refused to give any solid reason.

And Harry had resented such opposition. The more strongly his uncle disapproved the stronger grew his own desire. Why his uncle should so disapprove he could not understand, and James Rhodes made the mistake of not telling him. To the lad it seemed no more than an arbitrary exercise of authority.

For the first time there had come ill-feeling and anger between Harry and his relative, and this had not departed when the lad had left home to go to his work in the pit. The old heartiness and affection had been absent when he said good-bye.

Joshua Martin could not have come to him at a more unpropitious moment.

Opening the door, Rhodes looked meaningfully at his visitor, but Martin did not budge.

"You won't oblige me in this, Jimmy?" asked Martin persuasively.

"Harry shall not go to act as chopping-block to your man Hanna!" Rhodes answered emphatically.

"Not for my sake?"

"No. Get outside!"

All right, Jimmy, I'll go," said the manager patiently. "Though what I think of you, for the sake of old times,

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 612.

I won't say. But what some folks'll think—when at Scotland Yard, for instance—when they get to know as I seems to feel they will, where to lay 'ands on 'e feller they wanted fifteen year ago, over that affair o' Con Streeter, I can make a pretty—"

The anger had gone from James Rhodes' eyes, its place taken by sheer terror. The man's sturdy, muscular frame was trembling like that of a woman about to faint. His lips opened, and his jaw fell.

"Stop!" he interrupted hoarsely. Joshua Martin turned his back to the door and looked.

"Well," he said, grinning, "what about it?"

The Worn Gloves.

AT two o'clock that same afternoon, the grime of the pit removed, a small bag in hand, Harry Rhodes went through Lexboro', his destination the White Rose—a roomy, old-fashioned hostelry situated about ten minutes' walk out of the village.

For one who was going to do the very thing he had badly wanted to do he wasn't either looking or feeling as happy and contented as he might. He had got his own way, but, as often happens in such circumstances, his satisfaction was not overwhelming.

Back from the colliery, he had found his uncle as usual, but going about with a certain quietness—an unhappiness, so it seemed to the lad, very different from his customary self.

"You'll find the hot water all ready, Harry," he had said, "but don't get into your boxing togs when you've finished tubbing."

"Eh?" Harry had looked at him in some surprise.

"There'll be no boxing lesson to-day," James Rhodes had explained, finding something to do that kept him from looking at the lad.

"How's that, uncle?" Harry had wanted to know.

"Not from me, boy! But you'll get it down at the White Rose, so you'll lose nothing."

"The White Rose?" Harry repeated. "Yes," James Rhodes said quietly. "I've withdrawn my opposition to your going to spar with Hanna."

"Uncle!" The lad was too delighted to notice his relative's warbling tone.

"Yes, that's right. You'd set your mind on it. Besides, I've been thinking it over, and I see it isn't fair to you. It's to your interest, Harry. I didn't think of that last night. Go, my boy! I'm quite willing."

And at that a revulsion of feeling had come upon Harry. His ambition, upon which he had been so keen, suddenly seemed a poor enough thing. For a moment he had hesitated, and then he had gone to his uncle's side.

"I say, uncle, you're only doing this because you think I'm taking it so much to heart—" he began awkwardly. But his uncle interrupted.

"No, Harry," he said, with an attempt at cheerfulness. "I was wrong. It will be a chance for you that I have no right to prevent. You go, my boy. I want you to go. It'll do you good. And you'll be well paid."

"Oh, that is good of you!" the lad cried enthusiastically.

And while splashing in the bath and under the shower he had given vent to his pleasure by loud and continuous singing that had come to James Rhodes' THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 612

ears, and seemed to deepen the sadness in his face and increase the careworn expression he was wearing.

Fresh and bright, dressed, with a hearty farewell he had left the cottage. But the nearer he approached the White Rose the smaller grew his satisfaction, though it never occurred to him to question the reason his relative had given for the complete reversion of his decision.

But once in the great barn which Joshua Martin had fitted up for use as a gym, effusively welcomed by both Hanna and Martin, and curiously eyed by the two strapping boxers engaged to give Hanna his practice, this feeling left Harry. Martin was more than agreeable. Hanna asked him a number of questions, and complimented him on his skill, but neither made the slightest reference to the startling event of the evening before.

After three rounds with the bigger of the other two boxers, Tony Hanna invited Harry to put on the gloves.

"Reckon I must be gettin' slow," he observed absently, smiling. "An' that's something I can't afford. You're that quick at hitting, an' nippy on yer feet, ye ought to wake me up a bit. No!"—he glanced quickly at the pair of gloves Harry had picked up and was about to draw on—"don't you use those old things. Take a new pair. I ain't afraid o' bein' knocked about." And he grinned.

So Harry put aside the well-worn, big, eight-ounce gloves he had taken and accepted the new ones the manager provided. Without further preliminary they set to work.

Six two-minute rounds they went through, and lively enough they were, the three onlookers watching with deep interest.

The bout was almost as lively as the impromptu contest of the night before. Neither spared the other, and Hanna fully lived up to his reputation of making his assistants earn their money and a bit over. Some of his punches were as hard as a horse's kicks, so that his opponent was made to understand it was anything but a soft job he had taken on.

When he landed, which was frequently, in spite of Harry's splendid defence and wonderful footwork, his blows hurt. Once he brought off a tremendous wild swing that sent Harry clean through the ropes. Two inches to the left and the lad would have been in dreamland. He picked himself up, dizzy and all abroad, and with Hanna coming after him like a cyclone unloosed, it was all he could do, by stalling and boxing on the retreat, to carry him through the finish of the round and keep clear of the actual knock-out which it was obvious Hanna fully intended to administer. He congratulated himself the round was of two minutes only.

But he pulled through, and made the final round a real rouser, keeping to out-fighting, and with the aid of his long reach and a straight left contrived to keep his adversary at arm's length, and even to get a bit of his own back.

Both fighters were puffing and blowing freely when time was called, and the three spectators signified their appreciation of the display by an outburst of sincere enthusiasm.

"Go on like that, Tony, nex' month, an' yer a sure winner!" declared one of the two boxers flatteringly. "The champ'll think he's struck a blessed tank!"

"You done well, Rhodes!" Joshua Martin said heartily, assisting in the removal of Harry's gloves. "You're

giving our man jus' what 'e wants—eh, Tony!"

And Hanna grinned and grunted. "Fair enjoyed myself!" he panted. "Why can't you two duds fight that way?" he asked, turning upon his assistants.

They grinned, and one inquired of Harry if he felt as though he had been boxing.

And Harry laughingly admitted that he did. To tell the truth, several of Hanna's blows had bruised him pretty severely—so much so that he felt as if he had been hit with a naked fist. And, finding an opportunity of handling the gloves Hanna had worn without being observed, he came to the conclusion that his feeling wasn't such a mighty long way from the fact.

They were the old pair he had himself been going to put on when Hanna intervened, and he discovered that, big as they looked, nearly all the padding over the knuckles and at the edge had been removed, so that the effect of a blow was much the same as if no glove had been worn at all.

He wondered whether Hanna's choice had been accidental, or if he habitually used that particular pair of gloves.

"Yer a real find, Rhodes!" Martin cried boisterously, as he dressed himself to leave, having been informed no more was required of him. "Be down 'ere same time to-morrer afternoon. Don't forget."

He put a hand on the lad's shoulder and lowered his voice confidentially.

"Between you'n me, these other fellers ain't doing Tony much good. Now, you're wakin' 'im up proper—givin' 'im jus' what 'e wants. Fact, I ain't gaspin'. You come down 'ere for the nex' month; an' it'll be a tanner in yer pocket, an' another one likely if Tony wins 'is champ. contest, which 'e certainly will do with you to take 'im along like you done to-day. Be a feather in your cap, my son. Only—" he dropped his voice to a whisper—"we can rely upon you not to say nothin' about las' night—eh?"

"Why, certainly!" Harry answered quickly.

"That's all right, then. Accidents will 'appen, y'know; but least said is soonest mended. 'Arr'ast two to-morrer."

Harry gone, and the two assistants sent outside, the manager turned to Hanna.

"Well?" he asked.

"It ain't!" came the prompt reply, Hanna's face black as a thundercloud. "Streeth! It's like fightin' a real contest ev'ry day!"

And he burst into a perfect torrent of insulting language concerning Harry that made his listener sit up.

"What's up, Tony? Ain't you satisfied?" he asked.

"Gr-r-r! Satisfied! I'm goin' to get my own back on that whelp some easier way'n this!" returned Hanna. "Quicker, too!"

"You 'ad th' right gloves, didn't you?"

"Yes. An' two'r three times he nearly had me, if they was new gloves he was wearin'!" And Hanna tenderly caressed his jaw. "But I'll fix him, see if I don't!" he added viciously.

But either he was in no great hurry to carry out his intention, or Harry refused to give him the chance, for during the following week nothing more serious happened to Harry Rhodes than the collecting of a number of very painful bruises, the same being due to Hanna's odd preference for using his old and ill-stuffed pair of gloves. One afternoon Harry remarked upon it.

"Not much stuffing left in those gloves," he observed.

And Hanna's sole answer was a curt: "I like 'em!"

But, reaching the gym ten minutes late on the third day, and finding Hanna engaged in a bout with Steve Phipps, one of the two assistants, Harry noticed that Hanna was not wearing his favourites.

He was not one to believe ill of any body, but it certainly did occur to him that the pugilist's preference for the worn-out muffers only appeared when he himself took the ring.

But he made no complaint, and contrived to obtain an immense amount of satisfaction out of these afternoon sets. He was learning a lot, too, though—or, rather, because—the bouts were vastly different from the daily practices with his uncle.

These, of course, had ceased, and it pained Harry greatly to note the change that had come over his uncle. James Rhodes had become a silent, moody man. He seemed as though all interest had gone out of his existence. A queer nervousness now possessed him. Occasionally he inquired how Harry was getting on at the White Rose gym.

So much did Harry feel the alteration in his relative, and, believing himself the cause, that one day he spoke to his uncle about it.

"You'd rather I gave it up, uncle, wouldn't you?" he concluded.

But to his great surprise James Rhodes eagerly denied any such wish.

"No, no, no!" he replied hastily. "You keep on with it, Harry. It's to your benefit. And for that reason I don't want you to drop it. I'm sorry I opposed you in the first place. And now, with this trouble at the pit, the money you earn comes in mighty useful."

He referred to a lock-out of the workers at the mine where Harry had been employed. The original cause of dispute had been something quite trifling, but the men had obstinately refused to give way, and the colliery owner had thereupon shut down the pit, Harry going out with the rest.

So, having the whole of the day at his disposal, he was to be found at the White Rose at other times than in the afternoon. Invited to accompany Hanna during his outdoor work, he more than once accepted.

Had he realised the satisfaction this brought to Tony Hanna, he would have been more than a little disgusted.

Hanna, biding his time, more than once grinned his peculiarly evil grin. His temper certainly became more genial, which Joshua Martin noticed, but said nothing.

A Coward's Trick.

SOUTH of Loxboro' stretched a wide expanse of rough, moorland country, with never a house nor building within sight for miles. It was a wild and lonely spot, but a first-class road cut through the moor, and the air was brisk and exhilarating. This road was a favourite one with Hanna for his daily spins.

One morning, in company with his trainer and Harry Rhodes, he was returning from exercise, and, suddenly ascertaining he was tired and wanted a rest, they sat down by the roadside. In a few minutes Hanna rose and strolled upon the moor. A small terrier belonging to Brayne, the trainer, which frequently accompanied them, went along with him.

Twenty yards from the road's edge one came upon an abandoned quarry—a deep excavation, with precipitous sides over-



Harry felt that in another second the belt would give way, and he would be hurled backwards. Suddenly, from above the edge of the quarry, he saw the face of Tony Hanna appear, a mocking, exultant look in the dark eyes. "This is where you get the knock-out for a finish, eh?" whispered Hanna.

grown with grass and heather, brushwood, and small trees. It was thither that Hanna made his way, Brian Boru, the terrier, at his heels.

Suddenly Hanna looked quickly round him, noted that Harry and the trainer were in conversation, and his hand shot downwards, grabbing the dog by the scruff of his neck. One swing and the unfortunate animal went whirling over the edge of the quarry.

Strolling back casually, the boxer rejoined the others by the roadside.

A few minutes longer and Hanna got up again.

"Better be getting on!" he observed. The others agreed, got up, and were ready to resume, when Hanna said:

"Brayne, where's that pup o' yours?" "Dunno!" Brayne answered, looking around. "He was here a minute ago. Hi, hi! Come here, ye spalpeen! Brian Boru, ye imp o' mischief, an' where is ut ye've hidden yerself?"

But, in spite of profuse calling and whistling, the pup did not make an appearance.

"Tis th' little varmint he is; but I can't be after lavin' him!" Brayne declared.

"Well, don't be all night, Micky!" Hanna said indifferently; and, whistling, he stood staring down the road.

Harry joined in the search for the pup, of which there was no sign or sound until

its owner's steps took him to the edge of the quarry.

"Bogorra! 'Tis down here th' poor baste is!" he shouted loudly.

Harry joined him quickly, and the two peered over the edge, below which could be heard a faint, painful whimpering.

"'Tis his voice; I'd know it in a thousand!" Brayne declared. "But how 't' get th' poor baste out—"

He broke off, staring disconsolately down into the quarry, which certainly looked most unpromising. A descent seemed impossible, the top four or five feet being an almost perpendicular face of smooth stone, with never a likely foot or hand hold.

"'Tis ahtared to death th' poor creature'll be!" the trainer said miserably. "There's neither meself nor anyone else can get down there!"

Harry and Brayne, being engaged in intently examining the rock wall, Tony Hanna came up, and the situation was explained to him.

"Can't you climb down?" he asked, turning to Harry. "You said yer a good climber. I can't do nothin' in that line myself; my head's a good!"

Harry looked doubtful. His head was good, his nerves were sound, and it wouldn't be the first time that he had climbed into and explored an abandoned quarry. This one, however, presented difficulties worse than any he had yet encountered.

Brayne, bemoaning the fate of his little favourite, looked at the lad with pitiful appeal.

"D'ye think it can be done?" he asked. "Shure, th' little baste is th' jewel o' my heart, an' 'tis ready to bruvk wi' th' thought of its dyin' this and wry!"

"If it is possible to get him out, we certainly can't leave him to starve to death!" replied Harry. "I'll try!"

He had been carefully examining the rock, and came to the conclusion he could not overcome the difficulty of the first few feet overcame. Six feet below the top was a ledge; if that might be reached, further descent looked possible. But to attempt to drop on to that ledge over a vertical six-foot wall was equivalent to suicide.

"Can't do nothing without a rope!" Hanna declared.

But Harry thought otherwise. There was a big knob of rock at the edge of the quarry he thought might be utilised, and a couple of feet down the face he had detected a tiny crevice or split that might serve as a foothold. With something to steady him, he believed he might get down.

It was a big risk, but he thought he could manage it. And with the piteous visioning of the miserable dog in his care he felt he could not go away without doing something to rescue it from a horrible fate. Brayne had wandered off to the far edge of the quarry to seek some easier way of descent.

"I've got a belt, so have you," said Harry to Tony. "If we fasten them together and hang them over that rocky knob, I think it'll do for me to steady myself by if I try to let myself down. You can see that the belts don't slip off the knob."

"Why, yes; that looks all right," replied Hanna eagerly. "I'll see after the baste."

To take off and fasten the belts together was the work of a moment. The new strap was then looped and hung over the knob.

"See it doesn't slip off!" said Harry. Then, with a good grip of the belt in

his right hand, he proceeded to lower himself, feet first, and very carefully, over the edge.

It was a ticklish business, one calculated to try the nerve of an expert cragsman; but Harry did not allow his mind to dwell on the idea of a possible slip. He too found the crevice, and for a couple of seconds he held there, steadying himself. Then he let go with his left hand, and, pressing himself close to the face, all his weight on his right hand, he allowed himself to drop lower and lower, until one foot rested on the ledge.

"All right!" called Hanna. "So far," answered Harry. "The rest of it looks easy. It's the getting back, though!"

Down he went. Trees, roots, and shrubs gave him plenty of holds, and he found no difficulty. Once he halted for a few moments, and, glancing up, he thought he caught sight of a sudden flash at the quarry edge, something like the glint of the sun on bright metal. But the thought left his mind at once. Guided by the crying of the dog, he soon made his way to where the poor animal lay.

Bodily injured Brian Bora was. He made frantic efforts to stir as soon as he saw his rescuer, but was unable to move; proof of serious injury. But Harry had wasted no time in examination. There was nothing useful could be done until the inn was reached. Taking off his coat, with bits of string he contrived a kind of bag, in which he tenderly placed the dog; then he tied together the sleeves at the cuffs and slipped the loop over his neck. With the bag lying across his back, his arms were left free to accomplish the ascent.

In five minutes he was standing on the ledge. And now came the tug-of-war. Gripping the belt, to which was entrusted the whole of his weight, he tried to haul himself upward, well aware that if he belted, gave way, or slipped off the knob nothing could save him from a terrible backward fall into the quarry. And that would probably mean a broken back.

"Can you get up?" he heard Hanna ask, his face just visible over the edge of the rock.

"Try to."

And some trying was necessary. Once, in the effort to swing himself up and get a toe into the crevice, he felt the belts slip forward, and the feeling came to him as though his stomach were trying to climb up his mouth—a ghastly sensation. Another tug—another slip—his belt caught and held him to the crack. With a powerful drag on the belts he raised his body so that he was able to draw himself closer to the rock; and then he loosened his grip with the left hand, intending to throw his hand upward and clip his finger-tips over the topmost edge. Even as he made the motion he glanced upward, and his eyes caught that which checked him and brought a gasping cry to his lips.

Across the belt was a slit that widened and lengthened before his eyes.

Harry's whole body stiffened in horror. His arm remained motionless in mid-air. He felt incapable of movement. His eyes glued to the slit, he watched as they grew fascinated by the sight, seeing it extend. Then a wild fit of trembling shook him from head to heel.

He felt that as another second the belt would give way, and himself be hurled backwards.

With the strength of despair he pulled downwards with his right hand. To do so seemed madness, the pressure hastening the widening of the remaining half-inch

of leather, but something told him that in the effort lay his salvation. Simultaneously the fingers of his left hand shot upwards, seeking the edge, which seemed so far away from them. The weight of the dog slung behind his back held him back, dragging him downwards.

Suddenly, from above the edge of the quarry, he saw the face of Tony Hanna appear, a mocking, exultant look in the dark eyes.

For what seemed an eternity to Harry, though actually it was not longer than a second, the two gazed at each other.

And like a flash the truth was revealed to Harry.

A wave of anger rushed over him; he felt himself grow burning hot.

"This is where you get th' knock-out for a finish—eh!" whispered Hanna.

Another Challenge!

PANTING, quivering, Harry found himself on the rim of the quarry, though he had no notion of the muscular effort that had brought him into safety. Ten feet away stood Tony Hanna, face pale and lips compressed.

Then came a cry, and around the edge of the quarry Harry saw Brayne, the trainer, running.

"Have ye got him?"

From his knees Harry scrambled to his feet and stood, swaying.

"He's here; but I'm afraid the poor little chap is pretty badly hurt," he answered.

Drawing the coat over his head, he ripped the strings apart and lifted out the yelping terrier.

"You'll see to him, Brayne," he said, very quietly. "I'd get him back to the inn if I were you, as quickly as possible. I'm coming in a little while."

And, without staying to listen to the Irishman's outburst of gratitude, Harry stepped towards Hanna. He rolled up his shirt-sleeves as he walked.

"You cut that belt through," he said, when he was quite close.

"I did. And now I'm going to hammer ye to bits!" retorted the boxer savagely.

And he swung his right fist at Harry's jaw.

Throwing up his left elbow, Harry blocked the blow and sent out his right, taking the Scot in the short ribs and hurling him back three feet.

"Take your time, and take off your coat; you'll be glad to be without it very soon," rejoined Harry.

Brayne, unconscious of what was happening, was already going down the road at a hard trot, his injured pet in his arms. Then, withdrawing into the road, Harry Rhodes and his treacherous enemy set to work.

It was, on the part of the aspirant to the championship, a savage battle. What scraps of science he had he threw to the winds, relying on the fury of his attack and the weight and power of his tremendous blows. He fought with all the savagery of a wild animal, disdaining defence, and seemingly careless of what befell himself so long as he was able to injure his antagonist. And this carelessness, dearly as he paid for it in punishment received, made him the more formidable opponent. Powerful as he was naturally, passion lent him an additional strength.

(There will be another splendid instalment of this grand new boxing story in next Monday's issue of the MAGNET. Order your copy in advance.)



FOR NEXT MONDAY!

Our next magnificent long, complete tale of the Chums of Greyfriars School is entitled:

"THE BOUNDER'S FAULT!"

By Frank Richards,

and deals largely with Vernon-Smith and his chum Hedwing. The Bounder's solicitude for his friend leads him to the most reckless action, which is destined to have far-reaching consequences of the most serious description.

Our next long instalment of

"THE MINERS' CHAMPION!"

By Percy Longhurst,

is one that my readers will thoroughly enjoy. The development of Harry Rhodes' career in the boxing world is full of incident of the most absorbing interest.

THE "GREYFRIARS HERALD."

It is cheery to be able to record the fact that the "Greyfriars Herald" has enjoyed such a welcome back home as easily passes all records. I know how eagerly my friends waited for it, and how reasonably impatient they grew at the necessary but trying delays. Delays always are trying. You know what it is to get hung up in a train which has lost heart as it reached the outskirts of London or some other big town, and draws up amidst some miserable bit of scenery with a wet road running under a bridge, and a lot of advertisements as to the kind of candles one ought to burn, and the sort of pickles it is considered wise to have with your beef. As you know all such matters before, the reminder is quite unnecessary, and you only wish the old train would get a move on. Talking about getting hung up brings to my mind several points which I want to touch on directly, but for the moment I wish to speak of the "G. H." and what it really means.

AMATEUR JOURNALISM.

It is always good to see fellows taking part in the production of periodicals. They put their best into them. It is a labour of love, and that description of work always draws the very utmost out of those participating in it. I am inclined to think the "Greyfriars Herald" was, in the old days, the inspiration for a good many of the smart, look-alike little sheets which appeared all over the country, from Penzance to Thurso and Wick—yes, and farther afield, too. "Harry Wharton's Weekly" showed in many ways—and is still showing—how such a cheery publication should be run. Of course, for many it is not a question of printing. A written-out magazine is a good start, and it is wiser to magnify the enterprise without costly costly.

THE FATE OF A WAG.

This is all linked up with wit. There was never an amateur paper yet which did not rely to some extent on wit and humour. Wit is the sauce of life. Real humour is, and always should be, in immediate partnership with charity, and that great wisdom which makes allowance for all the frailties of human nature, and its shortcomings and failures. Some folks get a mistaken impression altogether. They imagine that biting satire is wit, that the quality Cardow styles as "sarc" is of the same brand; but humour pure and simple is a kindly affair, and never interferes with the feelings of others. A sense of humour should be found in the mental kitbag of every traveller through this funny world. Its possession lightens the journey wonderfully, shows you something of what the other chap really has got in his mind, explains away misunderstandings, eases troubles, and enables the owner of the saving sense—this priceless sense of humour—to put himself in the place of the man who seems to be going all wrong.

You must take into account the viewpoint of your fellow-travellers. Don't say at once that they are a lot of silly nasses because they do not chance to agree with you. It won't do at all. It is no good being rigid and uncompromising. It is not good form. It is not plain common-sense. Moreover, it proves that you—however correct your surmises may be in the main—are absolutely in the wrong on the other issue—to wit, that of intolerance to your comrades. But these thoughts have taken me away from the disaster of a man named Chalmers, who thought he was a real, born humorist.

THAT COMIC WEEKLY.

It was just this way. Chalmers had been engaged for the best part of his life in work which he fancied was ungenial and quite unworthy of his rare abilities. You may have seen cases of this sort. As a matter of fact, the business to which Chalmers devoted long years, fitted his turn of mind perfectly. All the time he was at it he was most successful, and everybody appreciated him, and said to themselves, "What a smart and clever fellow he is!" The fact was Chalmers was busy on writing-up learned reports about trade and such-like subjects. He showed merchants where to dump their goods, etc. You could not have any more serious work than that. All the time Chalmers was saying to himself, "I am really a wit of the wittiest," and whenever he could he let off jokes in the speeches he had to make. Those jokes were coldly received. Then he retired on a princely fortune, and started a comic weekly just to keep himself busy. He shovelled the quips and cranks into this periodical. He gave his very best. There were nights when he tossed feverishly on his pillow think-

ing out a new scream, a fresh wheeze, which should bring a laugh to everybody.

It was not at all a bad paper as papers go. I saw it. It had subtlety and dryness of observation, and all that sort of thing. But would the public buy it? "No," said the public. "This man is not a wit. He is a learned fellow who writes on trade. How should he understand how to be funny?" So the paper failed. It was given away, and after it had ceased publication—and before you saw copies used as wrappings for butter, Chalmers was hurt. He was grieved. If the public would not take him as a humorist of the first water—well, he would be serious with a vengeance. So he set about another paper. "This paper shall be as serious as they want," he muttered to himself savagely, as he launched the new venture. It was the gravest of the grave. There was nothing gay about it. There were articles about the philosophy of prehistoric man, about how the Ancient Britons endeavoured to start the game of golf, and of the scant success which greeted their efforts. Even the Ancient Britons were of a strictly conservative tendency. Chalmers wrote of the superstitions which prevailed in that far-away period known to some as the Pleistocene-to-you-see-EPOCH—though some dub it the Pliocene. Surely the great reading public would appreciate such a weekly as that! Not one little bit! You cannot count on the public. It has its moods, and its own special way of understanding things. This way is not yours as a rule. It suddenly remembered—that is, the public did—that Chalmers had run a comic weekly. It had taken a few years for this knowledge to soak in, of course. It always does. And when the new paper came out everybody thought it was really comic. People bought the weekly at once. There were queues at the book-stalls. The paper was sold out. News-agents took their hair because of their own lack of foresight in not ordering sufficient copies. In the trains folks were seen chucking over the articles about the Ancient Britons. They saw humour where there was none—or, rather, where there had not been any intended. People forgot their troubles in reading about how pre-historic man earned his living. They realised at last that Chalmers was genuinely funny. Trying to be funny is actually a big mistake. Humour has to be spontaneous if it is to be successful. It is wise to remember this truth. It is accidental wit that matters. Organisers of amateur magazines will be well advised to go slow with wit. Let it come of itself. It is the better way.

Your Editor

GOGGS, GRAMMARIAN.

OUR MAGNIFICENT SERIAL STORY.

By RICHARD RANDOLPH.

Paying the Price!

"Well, I must say you're pretty beautiful!" said the great George Alfred Grundy, contemplating the two prisoners.

"Tell you what, dear boys," drawled Ralph Keckness Cardew, "I've thought of a fine an' fittin' punishment for these two villans!"

"What is it?" asked Talbot.

"Let them be jawed to death by Grundy," answered Cardew, with a face as grave as that of an undertaker.

"Rais! We can do better than that!" said Gordon Gay.

"Then you are indeed inventive in tortures!" Cardew replied.

Grundy turned at him. But no one else paid any heed.

"What do you think you're going to do with us?" asked Larking.

"Try you first, punish you afterwards," Frank Monk answered.

"If found guilty, of course!" put in Cardew.

"If! Why, you silly ass—" began Bugs.

"As there appears to be no doubt of it, is it really worth while to waste time in a trial?" Cardew inquired blandly.

"Come to that, there isn't," said Kangaroo, staring at the two as though they belonged to some specially noxious species of vermin.

"Rats to your pillin' trials!" snarled Larking, writhing under that look. "What's the use of it? This thing's clear enough for anyone!"

"You confess?" said Levison.

"Confess be hanged! There isn't anything to confess. You know it all. We're caught out, and I suppose we'll have to go through it. But you'd better watch me when you get busy with your 'punishment,' or some of you may find yourselves seriously damaged!"

Snipe groaned dimly. He felt that Larking was only making matters worse, if to make them worse were any way possible.

But that was Larking all over—a wrong-headed pride, and courage at the wrong time. Larking would have stood up to fight any two of their captors now, and have fought as long as there was a ounce of strength left in him. There was no fight in Snipe.

"What's to be done with them?" asked Jack Wootton.

"Shall we let them go?" said Goggs.

Now that the time for it had come he cared less about getting even than he had expected to care. He had, indeed, a curious feeling that he was even with them already; that this defeat of their schemes was punishment enough for them.

Which, of course, was absurd.

Larking glanced at him with wonder in his eyes.

"I'll tell you fellows all you need to know about it," he said. "We planned this to take down Goggs' awn. Snipe came round him by pretending to be in difficulties, and took them by me. I couldn't have done

that, but I agreed to it. Snipe forged that letter, but I agreed to it. And that's all about it!"

"It isn't!" whined Snipe. "He hasn't said a word about Cutts. Cutts was in it as much as we were!"

Talbot and Levison, Clive and Cardew, Noble and Dane, and Glyn and Grundy exchanged significant looks. They would not forget that.

Then came a brief conference. At the end of it Wootton minor went to a thicket near by and cut an ashplant.

Bingo acted as executioner, at his own request, and he laid on with a will.

Snipe howled, Larking set his teeth and made no sound.

"Now, I vote we duck them in the brook!" said Wagtail.

But no one seconded that.

"You can go!" rapped out Gordon Gay.

"And we hope we'll never see you again!" added Monk.

"You never will—me, anyway!" retorted Larking.

Cardew stepped up to him and held out his hand.

"Good-bye, Lark!" he said. "We've been chums, anyway."

Larking stared a moment at the hand offered him. Then he took it.

He said nothing; but when he turned to go there was something like a mist before his bold, hard eyes.

They went—Larking with his head drooped, Snipe sinking like the cur he was. And but for they passed out of sight when, from another direction, Messrs. Black and Brown appeared.

"Tie the dogs up, some of you—sharp!" ordered Gordon Gay.

It was not an easy task, but somehow it was done. The two poachers came on unsuspectingly. They had been seen before they saw. An ambush was laid for them, and they walked right into it.

Then that celebrate the rush of the Grammarians, the St. Jim's vigorous use was made of the ashplant. Then they were tied up and deposited in the cottage.

"I'll have the poor fellows may be hungry before they get free," said Goggs.

"Do you mind?" asked Talbot.

"Oh, dear no, not in the very least!" replied Goggs.

"Anyone in a desperate hurry to get to the station?" inquired Gordon Gay.

It appeared that no one was. In fact, everyone there seemed willing to leave going home until the morrow.

Then they celebrate the occasion, with Goggs as the guest of honour!" said the Grammarians leader.

"You will come, of course, Binks?" Goggs said.

"Oh, you ain't wanting me?" said Bingo.

"Wrong, old chap!" Talbot said heartily.

"We can't do without Bingo, can we, you fellows?"

"Rather not!" came a chorus, in which all joined.

"I'd like to come, if you're sure of that," Bingo said, almost shyly. "An' I have got a day off."

"Right-ho! That settles it," replied Gordon Gay.

And they started off for the camp.

Goggs fell behind, with Bugs and Tricks and Wagtail. When they drew near the camp they found that Carpenter had hanged back behind the rest.

"Good-bye, Goggs!" he said, holding out his hand.

"But—"

"You fellows don't want me! You can't!" "But we do!" replied Goggs earnestly.

Carpenter wavered. It was rather his way to waver.

"All right! I'll stay," he said huskily.

It was well that he stayed. It was well that most of the others did all they knew how to make him feel himself one of them.

Carpenter would have a fair chance next term, and the memory of that day would help him. He was weak; but without Larking and Snipe to lead him astray he might manage to travel the straight road.

And at last he would have one ready to help him as long as Johnny Goggs was at Rylcombe.

THE END.

NOTICES.

Back Numbers.

Jack Sheppard, 47, Gideon Street, Bathgate, Lillithgow, Scotland, wants "Magnets," Nos. 450-480. 2d. each offered.

H. Berman, 9, Ross Hill Street, Derby, has for sale "Magnets," Nos. 427, 439, 440, 442, 446, 462, 466, and 481; "Gems," 450, 463, and 470.

William Warburton, 6, Smithy Green, Ince, near Wigan, Lancs., has for sale 75 "Magnets" after 506.

A. Callard, California, Great Ayton, Yorks., has 150 back numbers of the Companion Papers for sale.

E. B. Fletcher, 7, Beaulieu Villas, Finsbury Park, N., wants "Magnet" entitled "Sir Jimmy's Secret."

Harry Milner, 27, Torrance Street, Montreal, Canada, wants "Magnets," Nos. 1-502, 504, 531, and 32. Write first.

John McKinley, 200, W. Young Street, Halifax, Canada, will exchange American boys' books for Companion Papers dated before 1919.

H. Howell, 62, Northdown Street, Kings Cross, N. 1, has for sale "Magnets," 580-602; "Gems," 583-602; "Penny Populars" (new series), 11-30; and "Nelson Lees," 170-220.

E. Swift, c/o Clayton & Co., Karrier Works, Huddersfield, has for sale "Gems," 571-602; "Penny Populars" (new series), 1-50—presentation plates 1 and 2.

Signed

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