

BILLY BUNTER UP TO HIS TRICKS AGAIN!

(Read all about "BUNTER, THE BANDIT!" inside.)



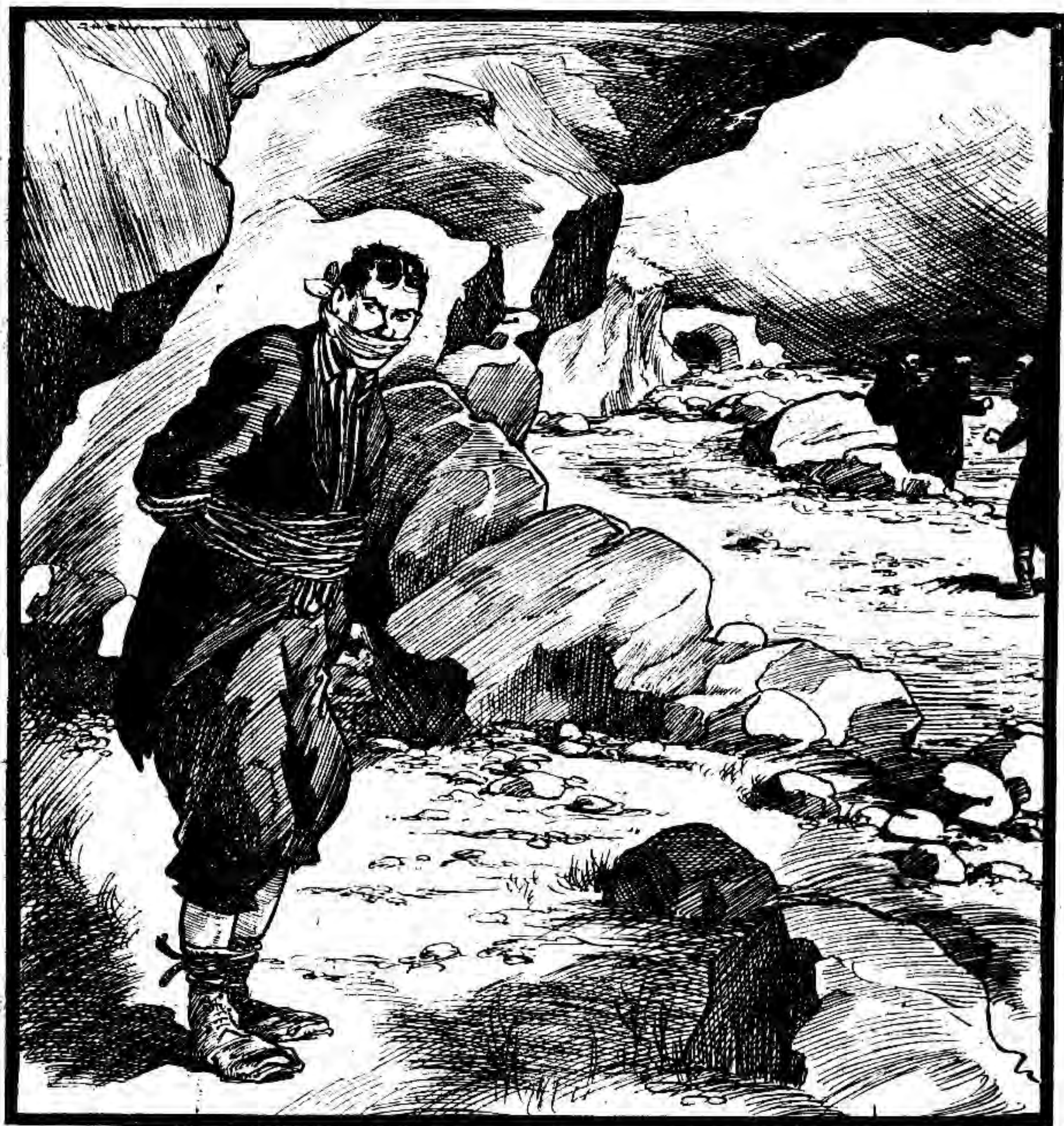
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No. 698. Vol. XVIII.

SPECIAL FAGGING NUMBER OF THE "GREYFRIARS HERALD" INSIDE.

July 2nd, 1921.



COKER, THE DETECTIVE, FINDS THE BANDITS!

(One of the highly Amusing Incidents in the Magnificent Long Complete School Tale in this Issue.)

The Editor's Chat



Address all your letters to:
The Editor, "The Magnet Library,"
The Fleetway House, Farringdon St., London, E.C.4.
I am always pleased to hear from my chums.

FOR NEXT MONDAY.

Next Monday will see the publication of the

SEVEN HUNDREDTH NUMBER

of the MAGNET Library, and I am doing my utmost to make it one of the best issues ever put before you. The grand long complete school story of Harry Wharton & Co. will be entitled:

"COKER'S CONQUEST!"

By Frank Richards.

In this we learn of a great stroke of fortune which befalls Archie and Phyllis Howell, followed almost immediately by a dire peril. Coker comes out very much to the fore in the stirring adventures in which Archie and Phyllis got mixed up. The story is one of Mr. Richards' best, and I cannot do better than repeat to my chums the old, old warning—order your copy in advance!

THE "GREYFRIARS HERALD!"

Next week we shall also have a splendid four-page supplement, in which you will read the contributions of a host of boys of Greyfriars. This supplement of ours still maintains an immense popularity, and most deservedly, too! Harry Wharton & Co. do their best for your amusement, and being themselves boys, no wonder they succeed in entertaining all their thousands of chums.

OTHER ITEMS.

There will be another splendid story of Herlock Sholmes, the great detective, in our next issue, and I hope to be able to find room for another of our popular articles on Camping Out.

The author of the articles mentioned wishes me to convey his thanks to all readers who have so kindly written to him, thanking him for the very helpful hints he has given. As he puts it, he is really only writing his own experiences, for he himself is a keen scoutmaster. Naturally, he is very glad that his articles are not only proving interesting, but useful as well.

I shall talk over a little scheme I have in mind with the author of our Camping Out articles, and see if I can persuade him to tell you more of the great open country, and the immense enjoyment there is to be obtained from the little known and little used highways and by-ways. Of that, however, more anon.

POCKET-MONEY.

I am sure there are many hundreds of my MAGNET chums who have not yet won a prize in "Poplets" Competition, which appears every Friday in our companion paper, the "Popular." There are ten prizes of five shillings each offered, my chums, and the competition is not a hard one.

If you could do with a little more pocket-money, I advise you to try your hand at "Poplets." Winning one prize is no bar to your winning another—as

several readers of the "Popular" could tell you.

Besides the competition, there is a splendid complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, another of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood; a rattling and thrilling instalment of a serial dealing with film "stunts"; and, lastly, a funny supplement, edited by the one and only William George Bunter.

Readers of the MAGNET Library are heartily recommended to get a copy of the "Popular," which is now on sale. After that, I am convinced they will order their copy to be saved for them in the same way as the MAGNET is saved for them now.

NOTICES.

Correspondence.

J. Harry Healing, 6, George Street, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, would like to hear from readers anywhere. All letters answered.

W. Picton, 22, Everington Street, Hammersmith, W. 6, would like to hear from any reader who can help him to obtain the Pinnacle Cigarette Football Photos.

H. Hartley, 3, Carlton Avenue, Batley, Yorkshire, wishes to correspond with readers anywhere, especially overseas, for the exchange of stamps and post-cards.

B. Homer, 45, Latham Street, Liverpool, wishes to hear from readers in the Liverpool district, ages 14-16; also any editor of an amateur magazine.

Cecil Waterman, 25, Amhurst Road, Hackney, would like to correspond with readers, ages 17-18.

Miscellaneous.

W. F. Dineley, 18, Gladstone Road, Seacombe, Cheshire, wishes to hear from readers willing to join an amateur conjurers' league, ages 13-20.

Agents wanted for the selling of an amateur magazine. J. Selwood, 36, Mann Street, Walworth, S.E. 17.

Your Editor.

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Bunter the Bandit!

A Magnificent, Long Complete School Story, dealing with the Adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., and Billy Bunter at Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter Up a Tree!

"**W**HERE'S Sammy?" Billy Bunter came trotting down to the Fag's sports ground where Dicky Nugent & Co. of the Second were putting in some cricket practice at the nets. On Little Side Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove were also at cricket practice. Cricket, or exertion in any shape or form, made no appeal to the Owl of the Remove, so he did not join in the relaxations of his Form-fellows.

He was looking for Sammy Bunter, his minor.

Sammy and Billy were as alike in features, form, and nature as it is possible for brothers to be. Sammy was merely a smaller edition of Billy. And, as Sammy was notoriously a slacker, he was not likely to be found with his Form-fellows on the cricket-ground.

"I say, you kids," said Bunter, "have you seen Sammy?"

Dicky Nugent was preparing for an attack on the wicket of George Gatty. He had no eyes or ears for Billy Bunter at that moment—at least, so it seemed.

Bunter blinked at the fags through his big spectacles and trotted on to the field. He did not notice the twinkle in Dicky Nugent's eye.

"I say, you kids——"

"Play!" roared Dicky.

Whizzzzz!

Dicky took a run, and the leather cricket-ball left his hand like a shot from a cannon. Gatty raised his bat, and then looked astonished. For the ball wasn't coming in his direction at all. Instead, it went whizzing towards Billy Bunter. The fat youth of the Remove stopped the leather with his rotund chest.

Biff!

Billy Bunter was bowled over like a ninepin. He sat on the ground and roared.

"Varooooogh! Help! Owow! Yow!"

"How's that, umpire?" chortled Dicky Nugent.

"Out!" screeched Myers.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fat Removeite sat up, with one grubby hand clasped to his chest, and bellowed.

"Yarooogh! Help! I'm killed! I mean, nearly killed!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a rush of fags towards Bunter. Each seemed anxious to help Billy Bunter to his feet; but there were so many of them, and every one grabbed Bunter at the same time, that the Owl of the Remove disappeared for a few minutes beneath a heap of surging youngsters. At last his plump form became visible again.

"Drag him up—poor chap!" said Dicky Nugent. "I thought I trod on something soft. Was it your head, Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Billy Bunter was grasped in many rough hands and jerked to his feet. He stood there gasping and moaning.

"What the merry thunder did you get on the field for, you chump?" demanded Dicky Nugent. "You Remove blighters aren't allowed here, you know!"

"Groogh! I want to know where Sammy is!"

Dicky Nugent gave a snort.

"Oh, that toad of a minor of yours!" he said disparagingly. "I expect you'll find him in the tuckshop, Bunter. He had a postal-order, I believe!"

"By Jingo!"

Billy Bunter's little round eyes gleamed greedily. He had been made the target of a violently-thrown cricket-ball and had been rolled over and trodden upon and used as a doormat generally, but he seemed to forget all about that. His aches and pains faded away into significance.

Then Sammy's letter had contained a postal-order! Bunter knew that his minor had received a letter. He had, to his great disappointment, been too late

to get at the letter before Sammy claimed it.

Billy Bunter was a very jealous brother, and a greedy youth. When he was in funds—which was a very rare occurrence—he kept those funds strictly to himself; but if he thought Sammy had a remittance he felt it incumbent upon him, as a brother, to claim "halves."

"I wonder where he is?" muttered Billy Bunter to himself, as he rolled off the Second-Formers' pitch. "If he's scoffed it all I—I'll wring the little beast's neck!"

Bunter rolled into Mrs. Mimble's tuckshop, where Skinner, Snoop, Stott, Bolsover major, and Trevor were imbibing ginger-pop and doughnuts.

"Has Sammy been in here, you fellows?" asked Bunter, blinking round through his round eyeglasses.

Skinner & Co. chuckled.

"Yes, rather!" said Skinner. "Are you after his money, Bunt? Well, you'd better look slick; he's got heaps of tin!"

"Simply rolling in filthy lucre, in fact!" said Stott solemnly.

Bunter looked eager.

"I say, you fellows, is that a fact?" he asked. "Has Sammy got a lot of tin?"

"He's a perfect little moneybags, Bunt!" said Skinner, with a grin and a sly wink at Bolsover major. "I believe he's just had a postal-order—a real live postal-order! And, by the way he has been ordering tuck and splashing his money about, I reckon he's had a nice little windfall!"

"Oh, the—the greedy little rotter!" spluttered Billy Bunter, clenching his fat fists hard. "He—he's kept it dark from me! I'll be after him! Where is he?"

"He went over into the Cloisters chewing toffee," said Trevor. "Sammy had a book with him, and stocked himself out with toffee. Better look in the Cloisters for him, Bunt."

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"What-ho!"

Billy Bunter trotted out of the tuckshop, and made tracks for the Cloisters as fast as his fat little legs would travel.

Suspense and anxiety were eating at his heart. Sammy had received a remittance, and had kept it dark from him—his brother! It was a very unbrotherly thing to do! Billy Bunter did not think what he would have done had he been in Sammy's happy circumstances. His one eagerness was to get at Sammy—and what remained of the postal-order.

"I'll make him go halves!" muttered Bunter, as he scuttled under the old elms. "The greedy little beast! I'm broke! I'm hungry—perishing, in fact! He'll have to stand me my whack!"

The Owl of the Remove discovered his minor seated on a block of stone in the Cloisters, deeply engrossed in a large, luridly-covered paper book.

"Sammy!" roared Billy Bunter, rolling up. "Here you are, you beast!"

Sammy Bunter of the Second blinked up through his spectacles. His face was sticky and smeared, and so were his chubby hands. It was evident that he had been eating toffee very recently. The look on his face was not a very welcome one when he saw his major of the Remove.

"Oh, is that you, Billy?" he said. "What do you want?"

"I want my whack!" said Billy Bunter, glowering down.

"Eh?"

"You greedy young pig!" howled Bunter. "I want my whack!"

"You'll get a bigger whack than you want in a tick, young Billy!" snorted Sammy Bunter. "What the dickens are you gassing about?"

"I want my whack of that postal-order you had!" roared the Owl of the Remove furiously. "I'm your major, ain't I? And I'm entitled to my share! Blessed if I can understand what makes you so greedy, Sammy. You certainly don't take after me. I'm a liberal, self-sacrificing chap, I am, and always share things with you!"

"Oh, rats!" growled Sammy. "You're the meanest, greediest, toadiest little grab-all that ever I saw, Billy! How did you know I had a postal-order?"

"I've heard all about it!" screeched Billy Bunter wrathfully. "Why, you—you little miser, you're rolling in tin! You've been stuffing at the tuckshop, and—and—"

"Bunkum!" said Sammy. "You're trying to stuff me, Billy!"

"Why, you young fibber!"

Sammy Bunter arose and blinked curiously at his excited major.

"Who said I was rolling in tin?" he said snappishly. "Somebody's been pulling your leg, young Billy. Aunt Lizzy sent me a postal-order for sixpence—that's all. You know what a mean old cat she is! She doesn't like you, because you scoffed all her apple-dumplings when we were over at her place last. That's why she's sent me a tanner, and not you! What's the use of a tanner—eh? All I've had is a glass of ginger-pop—threepence—and three penn'orth of toffee! Stuffing! I like that!"

Billy Bunter set his eyeglasses straight and blinked at Sammy. He did not feel inclined to believe his minor, whose ideas of veracity were as tottering as his own; but Sammy's statements rang true.

"Oh, the spoofing beasts!" said the Owl of the Remove, clenching his fat fists hard. "Then they were larking all the time!"

He blinked at his minor pathetically through his spectacles.

"Blessed if I know how the old man expects us to live!" he said peevishly.

"He's cutting down the pocket-money

like—like anything! All I had last Friday was a bob, and that went on a glass of lemonade and some tarts. None of the other fellows will advance me any money, either—the rotters! They won't trust me, although I promise to pay 'em back out of my next postal-order!"

"I'm fed-up, too. We're always hard up, and the chaps must think we're as poor as church mice! You ought to think of something. I'd like to make the chaps open their eyes to see us with plenty of dibs. I've just been reading this story about Slim Sylvester, the swell mobster. It's an American story, and tells about a crook who lived a double life, mixing in the best society,



The bull-pup made a high leap at Billy Bunter's fat little legs. "Yooogh!" wailed the Owl of the Remove. "Dragmoff! Take the beast away. I want to come down!" (See Chapter 1.)

respected by everybody, and all the time he was a bandit, robbing people on the Q.T., right and left. Pretty risky sort of game, but that shows you, Billy, what a chap with some enterprise in him can do."

"Yes, that's all very well," grumbled Billy Bunter. "But I'd never thought of that before. That idea seems workable to me, young Sammy. Why shouldn't we live double lives and be gentlemen crooks? There are heaps of money to be made by living on other people—and it's jolly easy, if you know the way how to."

"You'd never do it, Billy!" said Sammy incredulously.

"Really, I can do anything!" said Bunter fatuously. "You know what a clever chap I am. There's nothing I

set my mind upon doing that I can't do. Lend me that book, Sammy, and let me read it. You can call for it this evening."

Sammy Bunter surrendered the lurid literature to his major, and Billy Bunter rolled away, leaving his minor still sucking his toffee.

Billy Bunter's crafty brain was working at unusual speed. Sammy's mention of Slim Sylvester had fired Bunter's imagination. In his mind's eye he saw himself as a gentleman crook, leading a double life, living on the fat of the land. Any other fellow than Bunter would have scoffed at the idea, but Billy Bunter was extremely short-sighted in more senses than one, and in his self-conceit he did not think deeply into matters.

Bunter pulled out the copy of the "Slim Sylvester Weekly" that Sammy had given to him, and walked across the quadrangle with his snub nose buried deeply into its pages. His attention soon became so absorbed with the reckless exploits of Slim Sylvester, that he did not think to look where he was going.

He ran full-tilt into Harry Wharton & Co. as they came off the cricket-ground.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry breezily, giving Bunter a clump with his bat. "Look out where you're tanking, Bunter! That was my bat!"

"Yowp! That was my shoulder, Cherry, you rotter!" gasped Bunter, stopping, and glaring at the Famous Five.

Harry Wharton & Co. chuckled.

"What's this trash you're reading, Bunter?" said Johnny Bull, picking up the periodical that his fat Form-fellow had dropped. "Great pip! 'Slim Sylvester, the Swell Mobster!' Look what rot Bunter is stuffing into his fat head, you fellows!"

"There's plenty of room for it in Bunter's fat noddle, anyway!" said Frank Nugent, grinning. "Bunty, old bun, this tripe is what Quelch would call pernicious literature, and it is our duty, as the governors of the morals of the Remove, to purloin this book!"

"The purloinfulness shall be terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Famous Five.

Billy Bunter glowered at them with a look that bade fair to crack his spectacles.

"Oh, really, you fellows!" he said peevishly. "I'm blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! Are you going to gimme that book, Frank Nugent?"

"Well, as a matter of fact," said Frank Nugent blandly, "we are just going up to tea, and as we've some rashers of bacon to fry, this trash will come in jolly useful to light the fire, won't it, you chaps?"

"Yes, rather!" chorused the Co.

Bunter looked frantic.

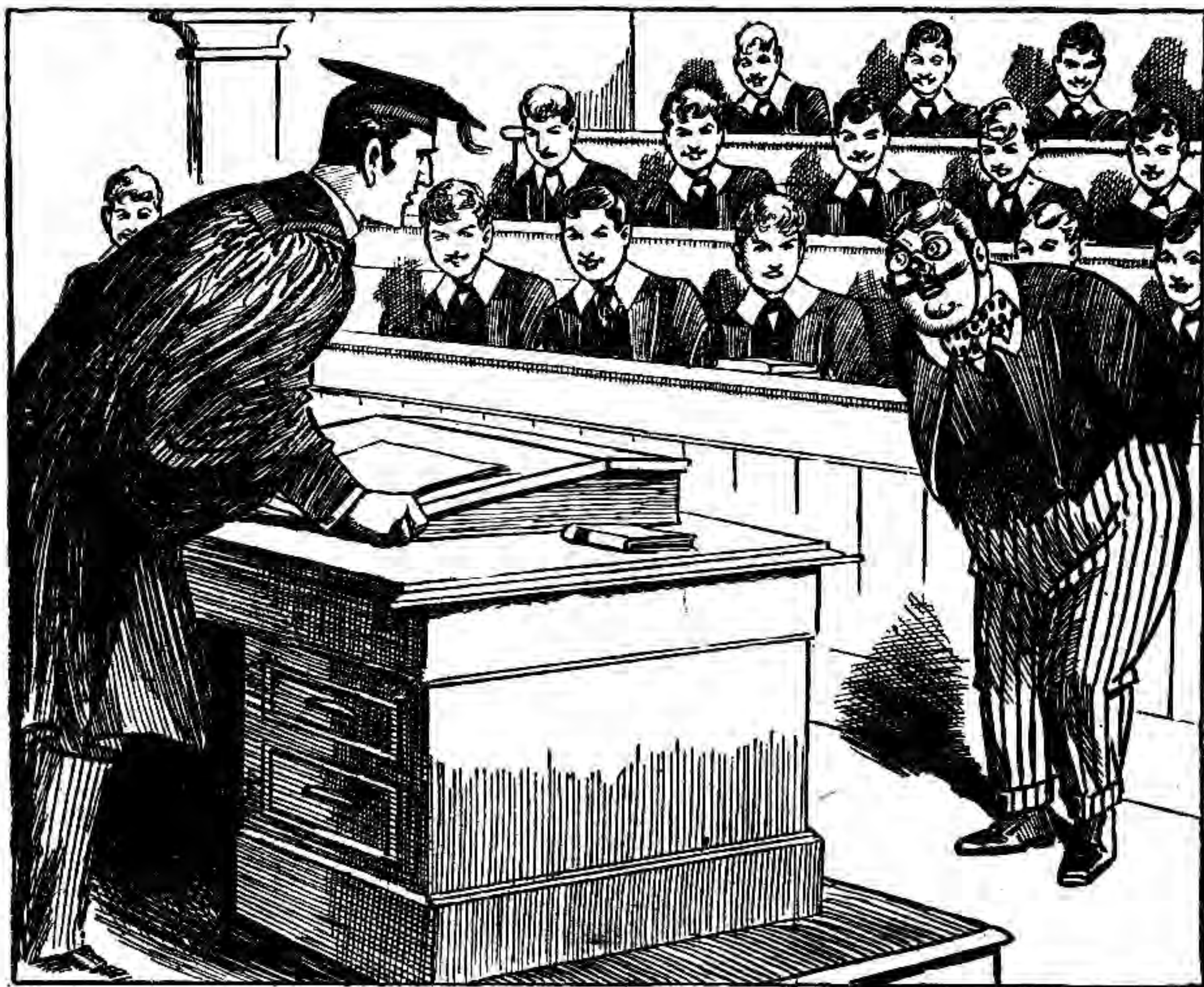
"Don't you light the fire with that!" he howled. "I want it! I want to read it, just to—to see what it's like. Of course, it may be harmless, and in that case I shall give it back to Sammy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co. seemed immensely amused at Bunter's transparent excuses.

Bob Cherry whispered something to Frank Nugent, and took the book from him. A wink passed between him and the others, and Bob strode over to a tree.

"Here, wharrer you going to do, Cherry, you beast!" demanded Bunter, blinking after him.



"Oh, dear! Where am I? What has happened?" groaned Billy Bunter. He kicked off the ropes round his feet, and walked over to Mr. Quelch, blinking through the mask. The Form-master stared at him in surprise. "Bunter!" he exclaimed. "How did you get into such a state?" (See Chapter 3).

"I'm going to pin it up this tree!" said Bob sweetly. "If you want it, Bunt, you can climb up for it!"

"Oh, you—you—you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter made a frantic rush forward; but Harry Wharton and Johnny Bull grabbed him and held him back whilst Bob Cherry shinned up the tree and pinned the copy of the "Slim Sylvester Weekly" to one of the high branches.

"Let me go! Hands off, you rotters!" yelled Bunter, struggling. "I want my book—Yaroooogh!"

Harry Wharton & Co. let Bunter go with a bump. He was not on the ground long. He jumped up, and made a dash over to the tree, from which the cheery Bob had descended.

"There's your precious paper, Bunt!" said Bob, indicating the fluttering volume in the tree. "Let's see you climb for it, old son! It will be good exercise for you, besides entertainment for us!"

"You—you beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Roll up, chaps, and see the climbing porpoise!" bawled Bob, at the top of his voice. "Show now on! No charge for looking! A sight not to be missed!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

William George Bunter blinked round

him, and then up the tree. He wanted those adventures of Slim Sylvester, to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest.

It seemed that he would have to climb for it, for crowds of fellows came up, and not one seemed inclined to climb the tree for Bunter.

"Oh, dear! I—I can't climb!" gasped Bunter, glaring round. "Look here, Cherry, you beast, if this is a joke, I don't see it. Chuck playing the goat, and gimme back that book!"

"It's yours, Bunt, when you care to fetch it!" replied Bob Cherry calmly.

"Go it, Bunt!"

Billy Bunter grasped the tree-trunk, and made a clumsy attempt to climb it. He climbed a yard or so, and then lost his grip. His fat figure slid down the tree-trunk, and smote the cold, unsympathetic ground with a hard thud.

"Yarooogh! Hellup! Yah! Ow-wow!"

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

Ogilvy of the Remove went over to Gosling's lodge, and fetched a ladder. Bob Cherry went with him, and returned with Gosling's bull-pup, Peter.

"Here's a ladder, Bunt," said Ogilvy. "Climb up, old chap; that's the easiest way!"

"Grooogh!"

Bunter set the ladder against a branch and climbed up. It bent under his

heavy weight. He reached the branch and swung on to it, reaching out for the book. At that moment Bulstrode neatly nipped the ladder away, and Bunter had to hang on to prevent himself from falling.

"Yaroooogh! Where's that ladder? I'm f-f-f-falling! I'll be killed!" he bellowed at the top of his unmusical voice.

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

Bob Cherry led Peter, the bull-pup, to the tree, and pointed to Bunter's fat legs.

"Seize him, Peter!" he said.

"Gr-r-r-r!" said Peter, making a high leap at Billy Bunter's fat little legs.

"Yooooogh!" wailed Bunter, hauling himself up into the tree, with a super-human effort. "Dragimoff! Take that beast away! Grooogh! I want to come down!"

"Gr-r-r-r!" growled the bull-pup, eyeing Bunter hungrily.

Harry Wharton & Co. and the others looked on and shrieked with merriment.

Bunter up a tree, with Gosling's bull-pup growling at him below, was too funny!

William George Bunter did not see the funny side of the affair. With one hand gripping the "Slim Sylvester

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Weekly" and the other holding on to the tree, he glared down in terror.

"You rotters! You've done this on purpose! Lemme get down!" he roared. "I'll complain to the Head! Grooooooh! I'm f-f-falling!"

"Don't fall, Bunt; the bow-wow's got his peepers on your bags!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ere, wot's all this?" The voice of Gosling, the school porter, broke into the laughter, and next minute Gosling himself strode into view. He looked astounded when he saw Peter.

"My honny 'at!" gasped Gosling. "So this is where Peter's gone to! Wot I says is this 'ere, my dawg hain't 'ere to be played about with! And wot little rascal took my ladder? Which Hi'd be thankful to you, Master Bulstrode, to 'and me over that there ladder!"

"With pleasure, Gossy!" grinned Bulstrode. "We have finished with it now, thanks."

"Here, don't take that ladder!" hooted Billy Bunter from the tree-top. "Gossy, old man, you take Peter, but not the ladder till I'm down!"

But Gosling was deaf to all Bunter's entreaties.

Driving Peter before him, and with the ladder over his shoulder, he rumbled away, muttering beneath his breath.

Bunter, stranded up the tree, blinked round pathetically at the howling throng of Greyfriars fellows.

"Look here, you fellows!" he cried. "This isn't anything to cackle at! How am I to get down, I should like to know? If I'm injured, or break my neck, you'll be responsible, Cherry, you beast! My death will be at your door!"

"Go hon!" said Bob, not in the least perturbed.

"You've got your book, Bunt, so climb down!" said Harry Wharton, with a chuckle.

William George Bunter looked round helplessly, and saw that that was the best thing for him to do.

He stuffed the "Slim Sylvester Weekly" into his pocket, and swung himself over very gingerly. He grasped the trunk with his fat arms and legs, and started to climb down clumsily. He lost his grip after going a foot or two, and came whizzing down at top speed.

Bump!

"Yaroooooooooooooh!"

Bunter was back again on Mother Earth at last, though he had made a very uncomfortable landing!

Harry Wharton & Co. roared. So did Billy Bunter, but he did not roar with laughter. His howls of agony resounded through the Close!

"Yarooooop! Yah! Ow, ow, ow! I'm hurt!" he bellowed. "I've fractured my spine, and put all my legs out of joint—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter received no sympathy from his hysterical schoolfellows. The luckless Owl of the Remove picked himself up and limped away, with many groans and moans.

He was followed by a wave of merriment from the others.

He went indoors, and locked himself in Study No. 7. And when he had recovered sufficiently from his aches and pains, William George Bunter sat on the softest cushion in the armchair, and devoted his attention to studying the methods of Slim Sylvester, the Swell Mobman!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Recklessness of Bunter!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. were in great spirits that afternoon. The Remove Eleven were shaping well at cricket, and Harry Wharton had every hope of beating Frank Courtenay & Co. of Highcliffe next week.

Bob Cherry had commissioned Wun Lung to get tea ready. The little Celestial was busy making scrambled eggs when the clumps of the Remove came in, still chuckling over the affair with Bunter.

"Tea leady," said Wun Lung. "Libbey callee, but no catchee you. Said he would callee again vellee soon."

Harry Wharton grinned.

"Wib's on the warpath again," he said. "The silly chump wants us to go in for more amateur theatricals—in the summer, mind you! He's acting balmy!"

"The balminess of the esteemed and ludicrous Wibley is truly terrific!" said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh, in his weird and wonderful English.

William Wibley of the Remove was an enthusiastic amateur actor. He was more keen on acting than on anything else. Harry Wharton & Co. gave Wibley his due—he could act. Wib was a first-rate actor. But in the summer months, when the days were all hot sunshine, their schoolboy minds turned to thoughts of cricket, and swimming, and rowing, not amateur theatricals.

"Well, chaps, tea's all ready!" said Harry Wharton, smiling. "I feel rather peckish, so I'm going to set the example by piling in!"

"Hear, hear!"

Harry Wharton & Co. and Wun Lung were soon enjoying their tea.

Soon a tap sounded at the door.

"Come in, fathead!" sang out Bob Cherry, in his stentorian tones.

William Wibley of the Remove came in.

"Hallo, you chaps!" he said. "I've called to ask you, Wharton, whether you can't get up another amateur theatrical show. You know how keen I am on acting. I haven't had a chance to show my talent for a long time. I'm getting stale."

Harry Wharton & Co. grinned.

"Why don't you take up cricket more than you do, Wib?" said the Remove captain. "You're jolly good at imitating people; why don't you try your hand at imitating Fender, or Alphabet Douglas, on the cricket-field?"

"Oh, rats!" grumbled Bull suddenly. "Sounds as though somebody's being chased!"

They listened, and heard violent trappings of feet in the Remove passage. Tramp, tramp, tramp!

Crash!

The door of Study No. 1 burst open, and Dicky Nugent burst in.

"Look out!" roared Harry Wharton, as the Second-Former dived under the table. "You'll knock these cups over! What the dickens—"

"Stop him—Loder!" gurgled Dicky from under the table. "He's going to brain me!"

"Great pip!"

Next minute, Gerald Loder, the unpopular prefect of the Sixth, pounded up, a cricket-stump gripped in one hand, and a look of intense wrath on his hatchet features.

"Where is that little sweep?" he hissed. "I'll scrag him!"

The Removites jumped to their feet and surveyed Loder in amazement.

"What the merry thunder has Dicky done?" demanded Frank Nugent, frowning.

Loder ground his teeth.

"The young brat shoved a herring at the bottom of my clothes-box last week!" he grated. "It's made my best clothes smell like a fishmonger's apron—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Harry Wharton & Co.

Loder went red.

"I'll skin the little sweep!" he howled. "Where is he?"

Dicky, under the table, was gradually worming his way out at the other end.

But Loder, glaring down, spotted him, and made a dive under the table after the humorous fag.

Thud!

"Look out, you chump!" shrieked Frank Nugent. "You'll have the table over in a tick!"

"Chuck it, you burbling idiot, Loder!" roared Harry Wharton.

But Loder did not reply. He had hold of Dicky's legs under the table, and a wild and whirling struggle was taking place.

"Yaroooooh!" wailed Dicky Nugent, his head poking out beneath the bottom of the tablecloth. "Rescue, you fellows! He'll murder me!"

"I'll teach you to put herrings among my clothes, to go bad and make 'em smelly!" hooted Loder. "Kim here!"

"Yoooooooooh!"

"Mind the table!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Oh, my only hat! There goes the teapot! The sugar's gone all over the eggs! Look out!"

Crash!

The table lurched sideways, and, before the Removites could stop it, went over on end, pitching all the tea-things into the grate, and all over the carpet.

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

"Oh, my only sainted aunt!" gasped Harry Wharton, glaring round at the ruin. "Look at our tea! It's done in! Loder, you awful rotter—"

"I can't help your tea!" grated Loder, getting Dicky's head into chancery and pummelling away unmercifully. "You shouldn't harbour this refractory kid! You were trying to hide him from me!"

"Yooooooooop! Yah! Ow, ow, ow!" howled Dicky. "Draggimoff! Loder, you cad, leggo! Yaroooooh!"

Thump, thump, thump!

"Here, let that kid alone, Loder, you bully!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, striding forward and looking at the prefect with flashing eyes. "He's had enough! He—"

"Yooooooooooooop!"

That was a wild howl from Loder.

Dicky Nugent had worked a pin loose from his waistcoat, and suddenly jabbed the business end of that pin into a tender spot in Loder's leg.

Loder gave a howl, and involuntarily clasped the wounded spot.

That was Dicky's opportunity, and he took it.

He scuttled out of the study door, and beat a hasty retreat down the Remove passage.

Loder, bellowing with fury, followed.

Dicky slid down the banisters, and simply whizzed by Sammy Bunter, who was coming up.

As luck would have it, Loder pounded down the stairs just as Sammy turned to blink after Dicky Nugent.

Loder cannoned into Sammy Bunter, and, with a wild whirling of legs and arms, the pair sailed down the stairs.

"Yow! Yow! Yow!"

"Oooooooooooooop!"

Bump, bump, bump!

Thud, thud!

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Dicky Nugent, as the luckless pair smote the linoleum on the bottom landing. "More haste, less speed, Loder, old pip! Good-bye-eeeeee!"

Loder struggled to his feet, and looked dazedly round him.



Neddy was not used to such treatment from strangers, and when Sammy caught hold of his tail he lashed out his back legs, sending the fat Second-Former flying. Then he ducked his head down and Billy went sailing over like a stone from a catapult. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. (See Chapter 4.)

His head had struck the bottom stair, and he could see the whole solar system at once.

"Yaroooooogh!" moaned Sammy Bunter, sitting up. "What's happened? Has the roof fallen in, or is it an earthquake? Groooooogh! I'm hurt!"

"You clumsy little cub!" howled Loder, when the whirling stars had gone from his dazed vision. "You got in my way! What did you get in my way for, eh? Take a hundred lines!"

"Yowp! Really, Loder—"

"Br-r-r-r-r!"

Loder stamped away to find the elusive Dicky Nugent.

Sammy Bunter, moaning pathetically, limped upstairs again and made his way along the Remove passage to Study No. 7.

He tapped and entered.

Billy Bunter was seated in the arm-chair, reading the "Slim Sylvester Weekly."

"All alone, Billy?" asked the fat Second-Former.

"Yes, rather!" smirked William George Bunter. "Come in and close the door, Sammy. Peter Todd is having tea with Tom Brown and Rake, Alonzo's having tea in hall, and Dutton's progg-ing with Penfold. We're all alone, and I'll show you my bandit make-up!"

"Your whatter?" gasped Sammy.

"My bandit make-up!" said Billy Bunter, with a pompous air. "I've read all about Slim Sylvester, and I've made up my mind, Sammy, to work the same

stunt at Greyfriars. I'm going to lead a double life. On the surface, I shall be William George Bunter, a pupil of the Remove, and an ordinary schoolboy, but in secret I shall be a bandit—a gentleman crook! I'll rob people right and left, hold people up in the open air and at night time, and make heaps of tin! Nobody will know, because when I'm working the bandit trick, I shall do just what Slim Sylvester did. He wore a mask, a large cape, and a wide-brimmed felt hat he could pull well down. He was also a frightful dandy with it—that's why they called him the swell mobeman! Just watch me make up!"

Sammy Bunter blinked at his major in amazement.

Billy's plan quite took his breath away. He hadn't thought for a minute that Billy would think seriously of becoming a bandit.

"I—I say, Billy, this isn't all gam-mon, is it?" asked the Second-Former.

William George Bunter snorted.

"Gammon! Of course not!" he said.

"I've got nerve, I have! This job requires a chap with plenty of nerve—and I've got it! The double life is the life for me. Look! Here's the cloak and the mask and the hat. I pinched 'em all from Wib's props. He won't miss 'em, I don't suppose."

Sammy Bunter watched his major with great curiosity, as the egregious Owl of the Remove proceeded to don his "bandit" garb.

With the cloak depending from his

shoulders, the mask over his eyes, and the felt hat rammed down on his head, Billy Bunter looked quite a romantic picture.

"There you are!" he said, with a smirk of satisfaction, drawing on a pair of chamois leather gloves. "Don't you think I look the real thing, Sammy? How do you like me as a gentleman crook?"

Sammy made a wry face.

"You look too weighty, and you ain't got a gentleman's manner!" he said flatly.

Billy Bunter, the bandit, snorted.

"Don't jaw out of the back of your neck, young Sammy!" he said. "Of course I look the part! Who will know me, in this rig-out? Besides, I can disguise my voice, you know, besides work ventriloquism. I reckon I ought to make a good thing out of this bandit business!"

Sammy Bunter rubbed his nose dubiously.

"It's too risky for my liking, Billy," he said. "Suppose you were found out, and—"

"I sha'n't be found out!" said Billy Bunter confidently. "Haven't you read what Slim Sylvester did? He had a double, and used to use him to prove an alibi. Now, you look like me, Sammy, so, if need be, you'll have to be my alibi—see?"

"H'm!" grunted Sammy. "I don't know so much!"

Bunter major glowered.

"Now, don't cry off, Sammy!" he said. "Think what heaps of money we shall be able to make on the quiet! We'll use No. 3 box-room as our headquarters, and live the double life! It will be as easy as rolling off a form!"

Sammy got up.

"All right, Billy," he said, "I'll work this bandit business with you, but mind, if anything goes wrong, you'll have to take the blame for leading me into it!"

"Oh, don't be such a silly duffer!"

Sammy Bunter departed for the Second Form-room, to do his prep.

William George Bunter took off his bandit costume, and hid it in a box in the cupboard.

He was too stupid to weigh the consequences of his project. Billy Bunter was enamoured with the reckless adventures of Slim Sylvester, and thought he would be able to imitate the exploits of that enterprising gentleman.

The double life appealed to him. He would be a schoolboy bandit, and make heaps of money! Billy Bunter chuckled softly to himself.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Bandit Abroad!

MOSSOO was having a rest after dinner next day.

It was a hot day, and Monsieur Charpentier—Mossoo for short—thought a brief siesta in an armchair, and one of his favourite cheroots, a necessary preparation to taking the Remove for French.

Perhaps Monsieur Charpentier had some reason for thus getting into trim for the lesson before him. Perhaps that lesson was somewhat of an ordeal. The Greyfriars Remove were not the most orderly form in the school. And when Mossoo took them in French, they sometimes found a little harmless amusement in pulling the little Frenchman's leg.

Leaning back in the comfortable folds of the armchair, with his feet resting on the table, and puffing contentedly at his cheroot, Mossoo felt at peace with himself and with all the world.

Gradually, he got drowsier and drowsier, until his bewhiskered little chin sank forward to rest on his chest, and Monsieur Charpentier fell into a blissful slumber. French for the Remove was second lesson that afternoon, and as he had the first of the afternoon to himself, Mossoo felt that he could afford to indulge in "ze forty winks."

Minutes passed, and then, very very quietly, the door was opened, and a stealthy figure entered. It was a plump figure, clad in an enveloping cloak, a mask, and a felt hat pulled well down. The intruder presented a truly weird and impressive aspect.

William George Bunter chuckled softly to himself. This was his first essay as a bandit, and he was determined that it should be successful. He was to emulate the example of Slim Sylvester, and take what he willed.

He crept over to the slumbering French master, and, with a stealthy movement, took Mossoo's gold watch and chain in his fat palm. The watch and chain went into Bunter's capacious pockets. He was feeling in Monsieur Charpentier's breast pocket for his pocket-book, when the smoke from the cheroot, which was a particularly strong brand, got down Bunter's throat, and he coughed.

"Groooooooh!"

"Ciel! Vat is zat?"

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Mossoo awoke with a startled cry. He nearly slid off the armchair when he saw the masked bandit.

Billy Bunter wrapped the cloak round him, and dragged out of his pocket an old revolver he had picked up cheap in a Friardale second-hand shop that morning.

"Hands up!" he said throatily. "Do not make a sound, or I'll let daylight into your body!" Bunter was repeating the words the famous Slim Sylvester used. They sounded quite thrilling to him. And they had their effect on the excitable little Frenchman. He looked at the bandit in genuine terror.

"Mon Dieu!" he ejaculated, throwing up his hands. "Is it zat you are ze robber? Rascal, I am at your mercy!"

"Keep quiet, sir—I—I mean, you white-livered son of a Chicago street-manicurist!" growled Bunter, a la Slim Sylvester. "All I want are your valuables. Now, then, hand them out!"

"But how can I hand zem out, rascal—chien," demanded Monsieur Charpentier, "ven you demand of me zat I shall hold ze hands over ze head?"

"You can bring down your hands; but mind, I've got my gun on you!" threatened the amateur bandit. "Now then, sir—your cash!"

Monsieur Charpentier's eyes gleamed. He was a brave little gentleman, although easily excitable. He was quite under the impression that this was a real bandit. It did not occur to him that it might be a practical joke. He took it very much in earnest. And his brain worked swiftly to devise a plan for getting the better of the bold, bad fellow.

He withdrew his hand from his pocket, and some coppers rattled. Billy Bunter's little, round eyes gleamed greedily through the slits in his mask. Here were coming the first fruits of his operations as a bandit!

Bunter extended a fat hand for the money, and then received a decided shock.

Monsieur Charpentier, leaning back in the armchair, suddenly reached forward with his legs, planted his feet on the bandit's chest, and gave a shove.

William George Bunter went spinning. "Yarooooogh!" he roared as he collapsed upon the floor with a thud that made the windows rattle. "Oh, crumbs! Yow-yow-yow!"

"Ze boot is on ze odder leg!" shrieked Mossoo, jumping up excitedly and making for a long sword that hung on his study wall. "I will smite you wiz ze sword! Rascal, you zink zat you have me at your merr-ree! But zat is not so! Ze combat shall be a la morte!"

Billy Bunter gave a wild leap to his feet as he heard that. He was not strong on French, but even Bunter knew that "a la morte" meant "to the death." And, having no wish to leave this terrestrial globe so suddenly, Bunter the Bandit dragged open the door, and hurled himself through into the passage, just as the excited little French master made for him with the sword outstretched.

Bunter ran as he had never run before. Fear lent wings to his fat, cumbersome body. Fortunately, his howls did not attract attention, because Mossoo's room was in the back corridor, on the ground floor, and, besides, everybody else was upstairs, getting ready to go into afternoon lessons.

William George Bunter had chosen the right time to thrust himself upon the French master as a bandit!

Mossoo, had he been less excited, would have instantly recognised Bunter—not only by his voice, but for the fact

that his hat and gown fell off, revealing his tightly-fitting Etons.

But the falling off of Bunter's gown helped the amateur bandit.

Mossoo tripped over it, and the voluminous gown soon became entangled with his legs.

While Monsieur Charpentier was struggling on the linoleum, Billy Bunter made tracks for the Remove Form-room, which was not far away.

He scuttled inside, and with a desperate look round him, slammed the door and bolted over to the Form-room cupboard.

It was a large cupboard, and it had recently been emptied of all the old exercise-books the bottom had been filled with. But, large as it was, there was barely room for Billy Bunter's fat body.

With the cupboard door opened barely an inch, Bunter peeped out, his eyes and ears strained.

He heard Monsieur Charpentier coming, and his heart beat quickly.

Bunter drew a deep, deep sigh of relief as he heard Mossoo's footsteps hasten past the Form-room.

"Whew!" muttered Bunter, rolling out. "That was a jolly close shave, and no mistake! The murderous old rotter! Fancy wanting to stick me with that horrid sword! Grooooo! I—I wonder whether it's safe to go out?"

Clang, clang, clang!

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Billy Bunter. "There goes the bell for lessons! I—I can't get this rotten mask off! Oh, what shall I do?"

Necessity is the mother of invention, and in this case it caused Billy Bunter's cunning brain to act quicker than it usually acted. He grabbed some cord at the bottom of the cupboard, and managed to bind his feet. Then he did likewise to his hands, holding them behind his back and working the cord with his fat fingers. That done, he wriggled inside the cupboard, and pulled the door to with his teeth.

Click!

The cupboard door locked when shut, and could only be opened from the outside.

Billy Bunter was a self-made prisoner in the Form-room cupboard.

Next minute there came a tramping of feet from outside, and the Removites began to assemble in the Form-room for afternoon lessons.

Billy Bunter waited tremblingly in the cupboard. He was "in" for it now, he realised, and had to carry out his deception to the bitter end.

The Remove were all soon in their places, and then the heavy step of Mr. Quelch sounded. Immediately the buzz of conversation in the Form-room ceased.

Mr. Quelch went to his desk, which was very close to the cupboard.

Billy Bunter could almost feel the silence as Mr. Quelch's eagle eye roved over the Form-room.

"Where is Bunter?" he exclaimed.

The Remove looked at the empty seat where Billy Bunter usually sat, between Skinner and Hazeldene.

"Goodness gracious!" Mr. Quelch's voice rang out sharp and testily. "Bunter not here? Have any of you boys seen him?"

"I saw Bunter in the Remove passage just after dinner, sir," spoke up Harry Wharton.

"Has anybody seen him since?"

There was silence.

"Dear me! What an extraordinary thing!" exclaimed the Remove master. "I trust that no harm has befallen Bunter. Monsieur Charpentier has been attacked by a masked ruffian who entered his study and demanded money

(Continued on page 9.)

The Greyfriars
HERALD

SUPPLEMENT No. 27.
Week Ending July 2nd, 1921.



Assisted by BOB CHERRY (Fighting Editor),
VERNON-SMITH (Sports Editor), MARK
LINLEY, TOM BROWN, and FRANK NUGENT.

Address all letters to HARRY WHARTON,
c/o The Magnet Library, The Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, E.C. 4.

EDITORIAL!
By Harry Wharton.

Flickings From Fag-Land!
By HOP HI.

LODER'S WAR-CRY!
By Dick Penfold.

Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings cometh forth wisdom—sometimes!

Anyway, I am allowing the infants of the Second and Third Forms to have an issue practically to themselves this week.

Dicky Nugent has been worrying me for a long time to produce a Special Fagging Number of the "Greyfriars Herald," in which he could air his grievances. He actually asked me to stand aside and let him edit the paper for this week; but as the members of the inky-fingered tribe are such shocking spellers, it is only right that one or two Removites should contribute, in order to save my readers the torture of wading through columns of ill-spelt articles.

Toddy, as you will observe, has come along with another of his priceless Terrors Shocke stories. I'm afraid that Terrors is a very defective detective. Sherlock Holmes and Sexton Blake would lick him into fits. At the same time, you can't deny that Terrors Shocke is distinctly comical. One of my readers told me that he laughed so much over the side-splitting antics of Terrors that he nearly burst his boiler!

Of course, Dick Penfold, our unmuzzled poet, is represented in this number. Once again Loder of the Sixth is the subject of Pen's ditty. If the bard of the Remove isn't jolly careful, he'll be getting his eye in a sling, so to speak.

Letters of praise and criticism continue to pour in by every post.

One of my girl readers—Lilian K., of Chesterfield—tells me that I am much too hard on Billy Bunter. This is not the first time I have been accused of this.

Now I don't really consider that I'm hard on Billy Bunter at all. In fact, Bob Cherry tells me I'm a jolly sight too lenient with him. Of course, Billy is constantly getting biffed and bumped, but that's his own fault entirely. As soon as he learns to behave like a little gentleman, the biffings and bumpings will cease forthwith.

One critic goes so far as to say I am jealous of the success of "Billy Bunter's Weekly." Nothing could be more absurd. I like to see the rival paper doing well, and I get a dozen copies every week myself, to send out to friends and relatives. I should hardly do this if I were jealous of Billy's journalistic achievements.

But I have come to the end of my space, as the man said when he was tottering on the brink of a precipice.

Cheero till next week!

Me no likee fagging. In the language of the classics, me muchee fed up. Me findee a cigarette on Loder's study mantelpiece, and me puffee at it. Suddenly the room go round and round, and poor Hop Hi get quite giddy. Then Loder come in, and he say: "You giddy young thing! How dare you sample my smokes?" And then he grabee holdee of cruel ash-plant, and administer six sharp cuttee. Yow-ow-ow!

Poor Hop Hi, always getting into trouble! Me try to balance a tray of crockery on my nutee, and it slipee offee and crashed into fireplace. Loder come in, and he lookee daggers at me. Then he throwee me at the broken crockery, and instruct Nugent miuor to sweepee up the fragments!

The other day me borrow Loder's bike, and try to ridee into Courtfield. Me Andee bike much too big for little Hop Hi. Me come a dreadful cropper, and smashee bike to smithereens. By way of punishment, cruel Loder tie me to the branch of an elm-tree by my pigtail. Handsome Bob Cherry come and cuttee me down, and now me got no pig-tail. Boo-hoo!

Me tinkes all fagging ought to be abolished. Me tell Loder so, and he givee me black eye, thick ear, and powerful punchee on nosee. Me now hobble about on crucehee. Loder is a savage beaste. If this was my native country, me chopee offee headee!

Hark! I hear Loder calling "Fagee. Fagee!" Poor Hop Hi got to go down to village and buy smokes. Me gettee Loder some explosive cigarettes, and give him a shockee. Ha, ha, ha!

AN APOLOGY!

I must apologise to my readers for the absence of an "Impertinent Interview" this week. Our interviewer is not only impertinent, but thoroughly lazy, and he has failed to come up to the scratch with his contribution. I will see that he is kept up to the mark—with a cricket-stump!—in future.—Ed.

Night, and the shadows falling
O'er hill and crag.
Somewhere a voice is calling,
"Fag! Where's my fag?
Where has the beggar got to?
Why won't he bring my smokes?
Somebody's told him not to!"
Thus Loder fumes and chokes!

"Fag! Fag! Fag!
Come with the speed of a stag!
If you don't lay my table
As fast as you're able
I'll bully and bluster and brag!
Come at the double,
Or else there'll be trouble!
Fag! Fag! Fag!"

Night, and the stars are gleaming
O'er Greyfriars School.
Somewhere a voice is screaming,
"Where's that young fool?
If he fails to fetch me a packet
Of Flor de Turnip cigars,
I'll tan his hide with a racket,
And make the young brat see stars!"

"Fag! Fag! Fag!"
Is Loder's perpetual nag.
"Come to my study,
My boots are all muddy,
So polish them up with a rag!
Haste from afar
With a big fat cigar,
Or a fag! Fag! Fag!"

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Great Expectations

By TOM BROWN.

"Good news, Betsy?" inquired Skinner. Betsy major, for whom the postman had just brought a letter, nodded gleefully.

"Read this," he said, handing Skinner the missive. "It's from my Uncle Bob. He's simply rolling in quids, and he's going to let me share his giddy prosperity."

Skinner perused the letter with interest. It ran thus:

"My Dear Percy.—I have heard reports of your progress from time to time—in fact, your father showed me the last letter you wrote to him, in which you stated that you were the champion boxer, runner, cricketer, scholar, and swimmer in your Form.

"This is very encouraging news, and I feel that I ought to show my appreciation of your efforts in some tangible form. I therefore propose to send you at the end of the week a 'tenner,' which you may expend exactly as you please.

"Kindest regards, my dear boy.

"Your affectionate

"UNCLE BOB."

Uncle Bob was not the only person who was affectionate.

No sooner had he read the letter than Skinner slipped his arm lovingly through that of Betsy major.

"This is great news, Betsy!" he exclaimed. "A tenner, by Jove—ten merry quidlets to spend how you please! Of course, you're not the champion boxer, runner, and all the rest of it; but I don't blame you for telling the tale. It's got you a nice fat tip, anyway."

As for Betsy, he was almost purring with pleasure. For some weeks he had been in the state known as stony, and the prospect of a "tenner" arriving was as balm in Gilead.

"It's the biggest tip I've ever had!" he said, speaking as if he was already in possession of the ten pounds. "Dash it all, I shall hardly know what to do with it when I get it."

"I'll advise you how to spend it, dear old chap," said Skinner, with increasing affection.

Five minutes before, he had been quarrelling with Betsy. But the quarrel was forgotten now. To see Skinner and Betsy walking arm-in-arm through the Close, a stranger might have imagined that they were a reproduction of those immortal friends, David and Jonathan, or Damon and Pythias.

The arrival of that letter had transformed Skinner from a foe to a friend—a very close friend, too, for he stuck to Betsy major like a leech, and would not allow him out of his sight.

From that time forth, Skinner was Betsy's devoted slave. He could not do enough for the bully of the Remove. He served him far more faithfully than any fag. When Betsy said "Come," he came; when Betsy said "Go," he went. He ran errands all day long, with a view to getting into Betsy's good books.

"When that tenner comes along," reflected Skinner, "I shall be in clover!"

In the Remove dormitory the fellows were amused by the spectacle of Skinner unlacing Betsy's boots, putting his trousers in the press, folding his jacket for him, and even tucking him into bed! And when the rising-bell rang, Skinner flew downstairs and brought up a jug of hot water for Betsy. No valet could have served his master with such touching devotion.

Betsy loved being waited on hand and foot. It suited him down to the ground.

Skinner's solicitude for him, coupled with the expectation of the tenner, combined to make Betsy's miserable life happy.

"When do you expect your remittance, Betsy?" inquired Skinner, after he had prepared Betsy's tea on the Friday afternoon—or, to be more correct, on the study table.

"To-morrow morning," was the reply.

"Oh, good!"

"My Uncle Bob's a brick!" said Betsy heartily. "Not many uncles would be prepared to stump up a tenner."

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"No jolly fear!"

That evening Skinner's devotion to Betsy was even more marked than previously. He hovered around Betsy's bed, awaiting his master's orders, and executing them with admirable promptitude.

"Thy slave am I!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner glared defiantly at the laughing juniors.

"Betsy's a jolly decent chap!" he said warmly. "I'd go to the ends of the earth for him. I—I'd die for him, almost!"

"What would you die for him—his socks?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Next morning Skinner rose with the lark. He dressed himself, and then Betsy, after which the couple went downstairs to await the arrival of the postman.

Both were very excited, and their eyes were gleaming in anticipation of good times to come.

At last the hobnailed boots of the ancient postman made themselves heard on the flagstones.

Skinner and Betsy could not contain their excitement. They rushed at the postman, dashed the bundle of letters from his grasp, and then burrowed on their hands and knees in the Close, looking for the letter from Betsy's uncle.

It was Betsy who found it. He sprang to his feet with a cry of triumph.

"Got it!"

"Hurrah!"

But Betsy's joy was short-lived. He tore open the envelope with feverish fingers,



Skinner and Betsy made a dash at the postman, knocked his bundle off his back, and began to search feverishly among the scattered letters.

and something fluttered to the ground. Skinner stooped and picked it up—then he uttered an exclamation of blank amazement.

For the "something" was a postal-order—a postal-order for sixpence!

"There—there's some ghastly mistake here!" cried Betsy.

"Let's hear what your uncle's got to say," said Skinner.

Betsy produced his uncle's letter, and read it aloud:

"My Dear Percy.—Herewith I enclose the tenner, as promised. Spend it how you please, but do not make a beast of yourself, dear boy.

"Ever your affectionate

"UNCLE BOB."

"A—a tenner!" shrieked Skinner. "We must have misread the first letter."

That proved to be the case. For when Betsy major referred to the original letter from his uncle, he found that the "a" in "tenner" was badly written, causing him and Skinner to imagine that the word was "tenner."

"Oh, what a giddy sell!" groaned Betsy, in deep disgust.

Skinner groaned, too. And from that moment his affection for Betsy cooled perceptibly. In fact, the bully of the Remove found himself without a tenner—and without a fag!

OUR AGONY COLUMN.



(All advertisements for this column are charged for at the rate of twopence per line. Cheques and postal-orders to be made payable to the Advertisement Manager, who intends to have a jolly good time on the proceeds!—Ed.)

FAG WANTED URGENTLY!—Must be sober, steady, and industrious, and willing to lick my boots morning and evening. My late fag, George Gatty, need not apply. If he does, he will be booted out of the window!—Apply in person, with clean hands and collars, to **GERALD LODER**, Sixth Form.

to James Walker take notice that I shant fagg for you any more bekwase you are a beest and a booby and my life isnt worth living and yours wont be if you tuch me agane bekwase i shall appeal to my bruther who is a prizefighter and get him to deal with you so their!—**BOLSOVER MINOR**.

LOST ON SATTERDAY LAST. TWO HANSOM WITE MICE.—One clean-shaven, the other with a long mistosh. They were last seen in the cheese-vat in the skool kitchen. Anyone returning same (the mice, not the cheese-vat) to **DICKY NUGENT**, Sekkond Form, will be sootably rewarded.

FAG WANTED.—"Woodbine" or "Gold-flake" preferred.—**HAROLD SKINNER**, "Smokers' Corner," The Woodshed, Greyfriars School.

HAS ANYBODY SEEN MY FAG?—He was last seen alive on Wednesday evening, when he was trying to reach down a plum-cake from the top shelf of my cupboard. The cupboard fell down on top of him, and he is presumed to have vanished through a crack in the floorboards. Any information concerning the young brat's whereabouts will be gratefully received by **PATRICK GWYNNE**, Sixth Form.

FAG REQUIRED for oiling cricket-bats. Working hours—7.30 p.m. to 7.15 p.m. Salary—fourpence per week, payable in advance. Suit of overalls provided. Excellent prospects for oily youth. Apply, with references from previous fag-master, to **GEORGE WINGATE**, captain of Greyfriars.

CAN HENS LAY EGGS? Certainly! But can fags lay tables? Certainly not! Anyway, I am willing to pay a tanner a week, and provide grub, for any fag who can lay my table without reducing the crockery-ware to fragments, and smashing up the happy home generally. Apply. **LAWRENCE FAULKNER**, Sixth Form.

I KARN'T GET A FAG FOR LOVE OR MUNNEY.—Sam fellows say that I am not aloud to have one, but that's all rot. This is a last despritt appeal for a smart and brany youth. Don't all rush!—**HORACE COKER**, Fifth Form.

NOTISS!—I will fagg for anybody—even that beest Loder—provided I can get all my meals free, gratis, and for nicks.—**SAMUEL TUCKLESS BUNTER**, Sekkond Form.

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR WORK?—If so, come to the Fags' Agency in Study No. 7. We charge you one shilling a month, and get you a post within a week, with prospects of good wages. Don't worry yourself—come to the **FISHY FAGS' AGENCY!**



Looking after Loder!

Written by DICKY NUGENT, and translated into readable English by JACK DRAKE.

"FAG WANTED! Good pay and prospects for willing and industrious youth. 'Apply within.'"

This announcement was pinned to the door of Loder's study. A score of fags perused it in the course of the day, but they didn't exactly fall over each other in their efforts to get the job.

Fagging for Loder is no catch. Nobody wanted the job at any price. The "good pay" referred to in the announcement would probably be twopence a week, and the "prospects" were those of getting jammed with an ashplant several times a day.

"It isn't good enough," said Gatty of the Second. "I'd as soon fag for Gosling, the porter, as for that beast Loder."

"Same here," said Myers. "Loder will have to whistle for a fag. He certainly won't get me!"

Meanwhile, Loder of the Sixth was getting in a royal rage. He hadn't received a single application in answer to his advertisement.

To make matters worse, some waggish youth had scribbled across Loder's announcement, in blue lead pencil, the words:

"NOTHING DOING, LODER! THE ONLY PLACE WHERE YOU ARE LIKELY TO GET A FAG IS AT THE TOBACCONIST'S!"

Loder gritted his teeth with rage. He intended to hold a big celebration in his study next day, and he had already invited Carne and Walker, of the Sixth, and several other gay dogs who were not averse to smoking Loder's cigarettes and having a good time at his expense.

In order that the celebration should be a success, it was highly necessary that a fag should be obtained to purchase the provisions, lay the table, prepare the grub, and so forth.

But no fag was forthcoming.

"There's nothing for it," growled Loder, "but to employ press-gang methods. If I can't get any volunteers, I shall have to apply compulsion."

Ashplant in hand, he strode out into the corridor, and bellowed at the top of his lungs: "Fag!"

The only response was a scuffling of feet. And they were scuffling in the wrong direction.

Loder caught sight of Gatty sprinting along the corridor like a champion of the cinder-path.

"Come here!" he roared.

"Rats!"

"If you don't obey me this instant, I'll tan your hide for you!"

"More rats!"

Without wasting any more time in words, Loder promptly set off in pursuit of Gatty.

The latter ran like a hare, but he had the misfortune to fall head over heels down the steps at the end of the corridor, and this brought about his capture.

"Now, you cheeky young cub," panted Loder, gripping the fag by the collar, "you're jolly well going to fag for me! And every time you show a hint of slacking, I'll liven you up with this ashplant!"

Gatty, protesting in a shrill treble, was whirled along to Loder's study.

At first he refused point-blank to do the prefect's bidding. But when he had received a few cuts with the ashplant, he realised that it would be wise to submit. Loder was in an ugly humour, and he was not to be denied.

Gatty gave in at length.

"What do you want me to do?" he asked sullenly.

"Lots of things," said Loder. "First of all, I want you to go down to the grocery stores in the village and get these things."

And Loder handed the fag a list containing about two dozen items.

"I shall want a giddy pantechnicon to fetch all this lot!" said the fag.

"Don't talk rot! It won't be a very big parcel, and you can get young Myers to give you a hand. When you've got the

groceries, I want you to call in at the tobacconist's and get me half a dozen 'Swell Mob' cheroots. I want to send them to my brother in Ireland."

Gatty knew well enough that the brother in Ireland was a myth. Those cheroots would be consumed by Loder and his friends at the study celebration.

The fag set off on his errand, taking Myers with him. It was lucky he did so, for the parcel of provisions was weighty in the extreme.

"Loder's a rotten tyrant!" growled Gatty, as the two fags struggled along with their burden. "I sha'n't have a minute to call my own now. There's going to be a spread in Loder's study to-morrow night, and I've got to prepare it."

"You'd almost be justified in poisoning the grub," said Myers.

"I've a jolly good mind to!" said Gatty savagely.

When the weighty parcel was deposited in Loder's study, Gatty received not a word of thanks.

"Did you get the cheroots?" asked Loder.

Gatty nodded, and produced an envelope from his pocket. The envelope contained half a dozen torpedo-shaped horrors.

"That's good!" said Loder gruffly. "You can hop off now. I sha'n't want you any more this evening. But you've got to put in



The door opened, and Loder & Co. entered the study. They stared in surprise at the two strangers, at their cigars, and the empty table. "Who are you?" asked Loder.

a field-day to-morrow, cooking and cleaning up the study."

Gatty's experiences on the following day were not enviable. He found Loder a hard taskmaster. Every time he paused in his work he received a cut with the ashplant which made him jump into action again.

At last everything was in readiness for the feast.

Eatables of all sorts were set out on the table, and the study was as clean as a new pin.

Loder and his cronies were in the senior Common-room, waiting for Gatty to give them the signal that all was ready.

Gatty, however, did not proceed immediately into the Common-room. He strolled across to the tuckshop, in order to imbibe a ginger-pop after his labours.

As he crossed the Close a couple of gentlemen in clerical attire bore down upon him. One was so plump that he resembled Billy Bunter on a larger scale; the other was so thin and scraggy that a gust of wind would almost have blown him away.

"Good-evening, my little man!" said the plump clergyman, addressing Gatty.

The fag scowled. He resented being called anybody's little man.

"We have called to see Dr. Locke, in connection with the Fund for Providing the Solomon Islanders with Silk Spats," continued the plump cleric. "Perhaps you would be good enough to direct us to his study, or to his private residence?"

"We have tramped a long way, and are

sorely in need of rest and refreshment," said the thin gentleman.

"You certainly look as if you could do with a good square meal," thought Gatty. But he did not express his thoughts aloud.

"Dr. Locke's gone over to Courtfield, sir," he said. "But I believe he was expecting you. Anyway, the table is laid in his study."

"Ha, ha!" said the plump parson, rubbing his hands with great relish. "Lead us thither, my child!"

Gatty promptly escorted the two clergymen—not to the Head's study, but to Loder's.

An appetizing odour of fried sausages greeted the nostrils of the two clerics as they entered.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated the thin gentleman, gazing around. "One would scarcely expect a headmaster's study to appear like this. There are hardly any books on the shelves, and—good gracious!—there are cricket-bats and things lying about."

"The Head's a great athlete, sir," murmured Gatty.

"And a man of great hospitality!" said the stout person, dropping into a chair, which nearly collapsed beneath his weight. "Upon my soul, this is an excellent repast—excellent! Let us fall to, my friend!"

Scarcely able to control his mirth, Gatty bolted from the study, and left the two clergymen to their own devices.

Both were very hungry. Both did full justice to the good things which were set out before them.

The sausages, the buttered rolls, the cake, the pastries, disappeared with lightning rapidity.

The stout clergyman, besides possessing Billy Bunter's bulk, seemed to have inherited his appetite.

By the end of a quarter of an hour, the eatables had been practically disposed of.

"Ha! What do I see on the mantelpiece?" exclaimed his plump reverence. "Cheroots, if I mistake not. Light up, my friend."

They sampled a cheroot each, and found them so much to their liking that they sampled another. And it was at this juncture, whilst they were blowing smoke-rings towards the ceiling, that the door opened, and in walked Loder, Carne, Walker, and three others.

Loder stopped short with an exclamation of astonishment and dismay.

"My only aunt!" he ejaculated.

The stout clergyman looked up.

"What do you want here?" he asked. "You have no business to enter the headmaster's study without knocking."

Loder gave a gasp.

"This isn't the Head's study!" he almost shouted. "It's mine!"

"What!"

"And I'd like to know what you mean by scoffing my grub!" said Loder truculently.

The two clergymen rose to their feet, looking utterly bewildered.

"We—we were led to understand that this was Dr. Locke's study!" said the thin gentleman.

Loder nearly choked.

"Somebody's been pulling your leg," he said angrily. "Can you describe the kid who directed you here?"

A description was accordingly furnished, which left no doubt in Loder's mind that Gatty was the practical joker.

As soon as the clergymen had departed, mumbling their apologies, Loder searched high and low for Gatty of the Second. But he found him not.

Gatty discreetly kept out of the way until the affair had blown over. And Loder could not very well report the fag to the authorities, lest it should come out that he had had cheroots in his study.

Greyfriars laughed loud and long over Loder's discomfiture. And from that time forth Gatty has never been asked to fag for Loder. For which relief much thanks, as Billy Shakespeare says!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 699.



An Entirely New Series of Stories, featuring Terrors Shocke, the Amazing Detective, and his assistant, Shaker.

THE CASE OF THE STOLEN CRICKET-BAT.

"Wingate speaking, Mr. Shocke. I'm the captain of Greyfriars, you know."

"Indeed!" yawned Terrors Shocke, who was reclining in bed, his bony hand clasping the telephone-receiver. "I, too, should have been captain of Greyfriars once, but for one trivial circumstance. I was expelled from the school before I could get any higher than the Third Form. What's your trouble, Wingate?"

"I've lost my cricket-bat, sir."

Terrors Shocke chuckled.

"Like most other bats, I suppose it has flown at night," he said.

"That's just it, Mr. Shocke. The bat was in my study before I went to bed last night. This morning I find it missing. Can you come down to Greyfriars and investigate the matter?"

"Really!" protested Shocke. "I fail to see why my great talents should be employed in discovering the whereabouts of a three-and-sixpenny cricket-bat."

"It isn't a three-and-sixpenny one!" cried Wingate indignantly. "It cost quids and quids! It's the bat that my uncle used when he made a double century for the M.C.C. against the Timbuctoo Tourists! That bat, Mr. Shocke, represents a whole chapter of cricket history. I'd rather lose my right hand than lose such a treasure."

"Oh, very well!" said Terrors Shocke, stifling a yawn. "Shaker and I will come down to Greyfriars and see what we can make of this pretty little problem."

"Thanks awfully, sir!"

Wingate rang off, and Terrors Shocke, after replacing the receiver on its hooks, stepped out of bed.

"While I am dressing, Shaker," he said, "go on in advance to Charing Cross and take two first-class tickets to Friardale."

"But the money, Shocke—"

"Tell the booking-clerk you'll drop in and pay him in a day or two."

"But he will never consent to such an arrangement—"

"In that case, we shall have to disguise ourselves as bovine creatures—no disguise will be necessary in your case—and travel down to Greyfriars in the cattle-truck."

I did not relish my friend's suggestion, but as we were short of funds, it seemed the only way.

Shocke was soon clad and in his right mind. He looked very smart in his twenty-five shilling blue serge suit and his neat cloth cap, pulled down over one ear. One would have taken him for a Piccadilly "nut" rather than a celebrated investigator.

By the time we reached Friardale, however, Shocke's suit was sadly rumpled. Travelling in a cattle-truck does not improve one's appearance.

We scrambled out at the siding while the train was slowing up, and made our way across the fields to Greyfriars.

Wingate of the Sixth was waiting in the school gateway. There was a troubled look on his rugged face.

"I'm so glad you've come, Mr. Shocke!" he said, advancing to greet us. "I'm awfully worried about the loss of my bat. I'm all at sea without it."

Shocke nodded.

"You say you left it in your study last night?"

"Yes."

"And has anybody had access to your study since that time?"

"Only my fag. You see, I locked the door, and gave him a duplicate key."

"Ah! That narrows the case down considerably. Your fag is the only person who could have entered your study; therefore, it is he who has appropriated the cricket-bat."

"Shocke!" I gasped. "Your deductions are truly marvellous!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 699.

My friend smiled.

"It takes a clever mathematician like myself to put two and two together, Shaker. What is the name of your fag, Wingate?"

"Bolsover minor. But why should he take my bat?" asked Wingate, in puzzled tones. "He couldn't use it in public. It would be recognised as mine at once."

"He may not have taken your bat with a view to playing with it," said Shocke.

"Then what—"

"I will explain anon," said the great detective. "Meanwhile, both my friend and I are ravenous, having come away this morning without any breakfast."

Rather reluctantly, Wingate escorted us to his study.

A small fag—evidently Bolsover minor—was engaged in juggling with the teapot.

"Look after these gentlemen, kid," said Wingate, "and give them something to eat. Excuse me," he added, turning to us, "but I've got to get along to the cricket-ground. I hope you'll do your best to discover my bat, Mr. Shocke."

At the mention of the cricket-bat, Bolsover minor's face flushed crimson and then turned deathly pale.

"Ha, ha!" muttered Shocke, sotto voce. "This is our man, Shaker! Methinks he will be in irons by nightfall!"

Bolsover turned towards us.

"What would you like to eat, gents?" he stammered.

"Kippers," said Shocke promptly, "provided they are tame ones!" he added hastily.

"If I've got to do kippers," said the fag, "I shall have to light the fire."

Bolsover minor hurried out of the study. Scarcely had the door closed behind him when my friend clutched me by the arm.

"Come, Shaker!" he exclaimed. "Let us follow this bat-stealing brat to the woodshed."

We shadowed Bolsover minor round the corridors, and across the Close to the woodshed. We then flattened our noses against the small window and peered within.

We saw Bolsover minor foraging about among a heap of lumber. Presently he brought forth something which had been buried beneath the pile. It was the cricket-bat!

Steadying the bat in his left hand the fag picked up a deadly-looking axe, and was about to bring it down on the splice of the bat when Shocke made his presence known.

"Hold!" he cried.

Bolsover minor spun round with a startled cry.

"The game's up!" said Terrors Shocke. "I'll trouble you to hand over that piece of wood."

The bat was duly handed over, and five minutes later it was in Wingate's possession.

"Mr. Shocke!" gasped the astonished captain of Greyfriars. "How and where did you find it?"

"The explanation is perfectly simple," was the reply. "I requested your fag to prepare some kippers for our consumption. In order to do this, it was necessary for him to light a fire. Owing to the coal strike, no coal was obtainable, and there has been such a demand for firewood that the supplies were exhausted. Bolsover, therefore, decided to chop up your cricket-bat, not realising its historical value. You will be well advised to keep your bat under lock and key after this. And now we must be catching our train, so if you will hand over my fee of ten guineas—"

But Wingate was already moving away with rapid strides.

Bolsover minor having plotted to chop up Wingate's bat, Wingate had evidently resolved to chop up Bolsover minor!

A PETTISHUN TO THE HEAD!

By Dicky Nugent.

To Mr. Dockter Locke, Esq., Headmaster of Greyfriars.

We, the undersigned, konsider we have a fare and just greevance, and we theirby rekuest you, Sir, to lend us your ears. Everybody nose what terribul times we fags are having, but we haven't the cheek to tell you to your face, Sir, so we are sending this pettishun. We tost up who should take it to your studdy, and it fell to Bolsover minor. We hope you will resevee him kindly, Sir, and not lick him, as he has a frail and delliket konstitution.

Now, Sir, we will plaice our appeel before you. We fipd it too much fag to do too much fagging. We are being worked to deth by our respected—I meen, respective—fag-masters. We haven't a minnit to call our own.

Every mourning early we have to wake the prefex, and take them up cups of tea. If it isn't properly maid, we get into hot water. Then, Sir, we have to tidy up all the studdies, and cleer up the remanes of the krockery we smashed overnite. Then, Sir, we have to go to our lessens. Then, Sir, when we come out of mourning skool, we have to fag at the netts for the a-4-menshuned prefex. Then, Sir, we have to snatch a hasty dinner, and go down to the villidge and make purchases for our fag-masters. After this we have more lessens, and after this we have to lay tea in the studdies, and after this we have to run a lot more errands.

Pleese, Sir, this konstant running about takes all the stuffing out of us, so to speek. We don't even have time to wash our nex, or to write a few lines to our rellashuns saying we hope they are kwite well as it leeves us at prezzant.

In short, Sir, we are fed up—right up to the neck! And we're not going to stand it, or sit down under it, any longer. "Skoolboys never shall be slaves"—that's our mottoe. We don't wish to be rood or cheeky, Sir. We like and respeck you very much, in spite of your beestly tirranikle ways. But we feel that we have come to the end of our tether, and we hearby beg to give notiss that unless you issew a decree to abbollicate fagging, we will go on strike! We will not lay the table, or cut the bred, or do any manna of work.

Of corse, Sir, if you agree to all fags reseveing a hansom remunerashun for there services, and having a one-hour day, we shall be kwite willing to carry on as before.

Hopping, Sir, that you will give this pettishun your kind konsidderashun, and that you will not chuck Bolsover minor out on his neck,

We remane (Sir),

With best resper (Sir),

Your loyal skollers,

RICHARD NUGENT,

GEORGE TUBB,

GEORGE ALFRED GATTY,

HOP HI,

SAMUEL TUCKLESS BUNTER.

Etc., Etc.

BUNTER THE BANDIT!

(Continued from page 8.)

at the point of a revolver. Is it possible that Bunter has fallen into the ruffian's hands?"

There was a buzz of startled conversation in the Form-room.

What had happened to Bunter? Why hadn't he turned up for lessons?

Mossoo had spread the alarm of his hold-up by a masked bandit, and Greyfriars was throbbing with the news. Mr. Quelch's conjecture might be correct. Perhaps Billy Bunter had fallen foul of the daring rascal who had entered Greyfriars in broad daylight, and held up the French master!

William George Bunter, hiding in the Form-room cupboard, chuckled.

Nothing could have aided him better in his cunning deception.

Mr. Quelch left the Form-room, to instruct Gosling and Trotter to hunt for the missing Removeite.

When he returned to the Remove Form-room, Mr. Quelch was wearing a worried look.

The Removeites could not help thinking that lessons were going to be an ordeal that afternoon. That was because the first lesson was Euclid. The Remove did not shine at Euclid. That gentleman may have been very learned and well-meaning in his way, but he had certainly made things hard for many future generations of schoolboys. As Harry Wharton remarked, Mrs. Euclid, who destroyed some of her husband's theorems during a domestic disturbance, might have "gone the whole hog," so to speak, and destroyed the lot. Those theorems then, would not have been inflicted upon long-suffering schoolboys, and Euclid's spouse would have endeared herself to the hearts of the youth of Posterity. As it was, Euclid's theorems still existed, and they made pupils "fed up," and masters "ratty."

William George Bunter stayed in the cupboard. He knew a thing or two. Euclid was decidedly not one of his strong points. He would rather wait in the cupboard and listen to the rest of the Form grind theorems until the lesson was nearly over, before he showed himself or, rather, caused himself to be discovered. For he was quite a prisoner in the cupboard. The door was locked from the outside.

The Euclid lesson proceeded, but it was apparent that neither Mr. Quelch nor the Removeites had their concentration upon the renowned theorem of Pythagoras. They were thinking of the mysterious bandit who had invaded the time-honoured walls of Greyfriars, and of the mysterious disappearance of William George Bunter.

Mr. Quelch was just winding up the lesson when suddenly a weird sound came from the interior of the cupboard.

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed the Remove master, wheeling round. "What was that?"

Groan!

Billy Bunter thought it time to divulge his presence. He groaned in a truly pathetic manner.

"Good heavens!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch. "There is somebody in the cupboard! I—I wonder—"

Bob Cherry, in the front row, jumped out of his place, went over to the cupboard, and dragged open the door.

The form of Billy Bunter rolled out.

"Grooooo!" moaned Bunter weakly. "Oh dear! Where am I? What has happened? Yooooogh!"

"Bunter!" yelled everybody, in amazement.

Billy Bunter kicked away the cords from his feet, and arose. He walked over to Mr. Quelch, blinking through his mask.

The Removeites, having recovered from their amazement, yelled with laughter.

Billy Bunter, in a mask, and in a dusty and rumpled state, was verily a sight to see and wonder at!

Mr. Quelch regarded his fat pupil in horror.

"Bunter!" exclaimed the Remove master. "How—how did you come to get into that state?"

Billy Bunter gave a pathetic moan.

"Yow-ow! I'm all dazed and bewildered, sir!" he said, in a pathetic voice. "Have I been unconscious all this time, sir? Oh dear! The villain! It was awful!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "What villain, Bunter? My poor boy, surely you have not been attacked by that masked desperado, and incarcerated in the cupboard?"

"Yes, I have, sir!" said Bunter, nodding his head eagerly. "He was an awful ruffian! I saw him running away from Mossoo, and did my best to stop the rascal. I gritted my teeth, and, caring naught for my own peril, although the rascal had knives and a revolver, I hurled myself upon him, and dragged him to the floor. Then began a desperate struggle—a fight for life and death, sir! I grappled with him, and just as he was going to cut my throat, I wrenched the knife from him. But, despite my brave struggles, he got hold of me and dragged me in here. Fighting to the last, I had to submit. He tied me up, and knocked me unconscious, and the next thing I remember was waking up inside that cupboard, and hearing your voice. Oh, sir, I've had an awful time!"

Mr. Quelch and the Remove had listened to Bunter's story in amazement. That it was a tall story they had no doubt. Bunter's imagination was once again running away with him. That was a habit of the Owl of the Remove, but he blissfully thought that he would be believed.

"Bless my soul!" That was Mr. Quelch's first ejaculation. "Then you—you have been in that cupboard all the time, Bunter?"

"Yes, I—I suppose, so, sir!" replied Bunter, with another groan. "Yow-ow! I do feel ill, sir! I'm sure I couldn't stand French lesson!"

Mr. Quelch looked hard at Billy Bunter.

So did Harry Wharton & Co.

They had their doubts as to Billy Bunter's story. They knew their Bunter of old. His story of the desperate struggle was a romance of his own invention, of course. Bunter dragged the mask off his fat face.

"Well, Bunter, you certainly appear to have fallen foul of the daring miscreant who attacked Monsieur Charpentier!" said Mr. Quelch. "Can you describe your assailant to me?"

"Yes, sir, I believe so," replied the Owl of the Remove. "He was a big, fat, hulking ruffian, dressed like a gentleman, with a cloak and a large felt hat and mask. When he took off the mask and shoved it on me, I saw that he was a very handsome man. He didn't look a bit like a crook, sir—quite a gentleman, in fact! He must be one of those gentleman crooks we read so much about. But he was jolly desperate—Gropoogh! He gave me an awful time of it!"

Harry Wharton & Co. looked incredulously at Billy Bunter.

The Owl's story seemed so unreal, yet it was certainly an amazing affair.

Monsieur Charpentier came in, to take the Remove for French.

Mossoo was still looking flustered.

His eyes opened wide when Mr. Quelch acquainted him of Billy Bunter's predicament.

"Ciel!" said Mossoo. "Zis is tres—very distressing, Monsieur Quelch. Ze voleur—ze thief who come to me is ze desperate rascal. Buntair, my poor garcon, I am much grieve to hear zat you got it what you call in ze neck. I zink zat I shall excuse you ze lesson."

"Oh, thank you, sir!" said Billy Bunter joyfully.

Mossoo sat down at the desk facing the Remove, and Billy Bunter followed Mr. Quelch from the Form-room. The Removeites were in a state of high excitement, and poor Monsieur Charpentier had great difficulty in getting French lesson under way.

William George Bunter accompanied Mr. Quelch to the Head, where he gave a heightened account of his imaginary "experiences" at the hands of the bandit.

As he returned to his study, excused lessons by Mossoo, the Owl of the Remove chuckled softly to himself.

So far, he was safe. Nobody suspected that he—Billy Bunter of the Remove—was the bandit who had invaded Greyfriars. His cunning had pulled him through what might have been a crushing failure at the start of his lawless career.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Brothers in Misfortune!

"WELL!"

Sammy Bunter made that demand of his major, in the quadrangle, later that afternoon, when lessons at Greyfriars were over for the day.

William George Bunter winked.

"The first stunt worked like a charm, didn't it, Sammy?" he said. "The Head, and Quelch, and Mossoo, and in fact all Greyfriars, think that there's a desperate bandit operating in the neighbourhood. Little do they know where that bandit is, or who he really is. Don't you think it's working splendidly?"

"Not bad," replied Bunter minor. "But what's the proceeds of the robbery on Mossoo, Billy? Mind—we go halves, or I'll give the whole show away."

William George Bunter glared.

"I'll punch your blessed head if you start squealing, young Sammy!" he said darkly. "All I got from Mossoo was his gold watch and chain—worth about two quid, I should say. We can't get the money yet—not until the affair's blown over a bit. A bandit has to be careful, you know."

"Ye-es, I suppose so," said Sammy. "What's the next move, Billy?"

"The next move," replied the Owl of the Remove, with an artful look, "is to learn to ride a horse, Sammy."

"Eh?"

"Slim Sylvester rode a horse!" said Billy Bunter impressively. "He used to work the Dick Turpin stunt, you know—dash out upon unsuspecting wayfarers in lone country roads, and demand their money or their life. That's the wheeze I'm going to work. I'll pinch a horse from somewhere, and then roam about the countryside with my mask and cape on, and cause quite a sensation. Nobody will suspect that the bandit is a Greyfriars chap!"

"By Jingo!"

"We've plenty of time before prep!"

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said Billy Bunter eagerly. "Let's go down to the Leg o' Mutton field, by Friardale Wood, and see if we can get one of those horses that Farmer Roskilly leaves there to graze. A keen chap like me ought to be able to ride a horse in no time."

"Right-ho," said Sammy. "I don't mind, so long as you don't want me to start riding horses. I've no objection to seeing you kicked all over the field."

"Oh, rats!"

The two Bunters rolled out of the gates of Greyfriars together, and went down Friardale Lane towards the wood. Harry Wharton & Co. were lounging by the tuckshop as the two fat juniors left the school. They looked at each other meaningly.

"What have those two fat rotters got on, I wonder?" said Johnny Bull, in his blunt way. "I reckon there's something fishy on board, Harry."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"Yes; we ought to keep an eye on Bunter, I'm thinking," he said. "His yarn about being shoved into the cupboard by the masked robber this afternoon didn't quite wash with me. You fellows know what whoppers young Bunter tells. The Quelch bird took in his yarn, but I've got my suspicions. Do you remember Bunter and that merry book yesterday? He seemed jolly interested in the adventures of Slim Syl-something or other, the Swell Mobman, didn't he?"

"By Jove! So he did!" said Bob Cherry. "I wonder if Bunter is on the same game?"

"The fat idiot is mad enough to do anything!" said Harry Wharton. "If Bunter's trying to spoof the school—"

"We'll be after him!" said Bob Cherry warmly.

"What-ho!" said Frank Nugent.

"The what-hofulness is terrific," said Inky.

Harry Wharton peered down the Friardale Lane at the two receding figures of Billy and Sammy Bunter.

"Let's take a stroll down the lane," he said. "I think we'd better keep an eye on those two precious rascals."

"Good egg!"

The Famous Five set out from Greyfriars, and followed in the tracks of the Bunters, down Friardale Lane.

Billy Bunter and his minor took the bridle path that led along the side of Friardale Wood, to the neighbouring property of Farmer Roskilly. In a field that was easily accessible from the wood, the farmer usually kept a number of horses, and sometimes a goat and a donkey.

The Bunters scrambled through the hedge, and into this field.

Billy Bunter set his eyeglasses straight, and blinked round him.

"Oh, dash!" he exclaimed. "There are no horses, Sammy! We're done!"

"What's that over there?" inquired Sammy, blinking at the far corner of the field, by the haystack.

Billy Bunter was very short-sighted. He blinked.

"It looks like a pony—or it may be a donkey," he said. "Let's come over and have a look, Sammy!"

When they reached the region of the haystack, they saw a bright-eyed donkey chewing blithely at the grass.

Billy and Sammy looked at the donkey, and then at each other.

"Well?" demanded Sammy. "What about it, Billy? Can't you ride that donkey?"

"Ahem!" coughed the Owl of the Remove, eyeing the donkey rather apprehensively. "D-do you think it's all right, Sammy?"

"Why not?" demanded Sammy.

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warmly. "There isn't a horse for you to practise on, so why not a donkey, Billy? If you learn to ride a donkey properly, it's just the same as riding a horse."

"Oh, all—all right, then," said Billy Bunter, nerving himself. "Slim Sylvester never shirked anything, so I won't. I—I think I'll practise on this old moke, and then to-morrow I may be able to get a horse."

"I'll untether him," said Sammy Bunter.

Over in the hedge the Famous Five were watching. They gasped when they saw Sammy Bunter untether the farmer's donkey, and lead it into the middle of the field.

"What the merry dickens are the young idiots doing with that donkey?" gasped Frank Nugent. "They're surely not going to steal it!"

"No fear!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, with a sudden chuckle. "Bunter's going to ride the old moke—look!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

William George Bunter was making frantic efforts to get on the donkey's back. Considering that he was making the attempt from the wrong side of his steed, the fact that he was unsuccessful is not surprising.

Billy Bunter slid off Neddy's back, and landed on the grass with a bump.

"Yoooooogh! The beast!"

"Get up, Billy, and try the other side!" said Sammy encouragingly.

Billy Bunter rose laboriously, and went round to the other side of the donkey, who was placidly grazing.

"Help me on, Sammy!" he gasped with his two fat hands on Neddy's back.

Sammy grasped his major's legs, and pushed him upwards. Billy Bunter reached his right leg over the donkey's back, and pulled himself up.

"Groooooogh! I'm the wrong way round!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bob Cherry, dashing into the field. "You don't ride a donkey facing his tail, Bunter! Look out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Neddy did not appear to relish the heavy weight of Billy Bunter on his back. He reared up on his hind legs, and Bunter slid off with a howl.

"Yarooooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hee-haw!" bleated Neddy, blinking round defiantly. "Heee-aw-aw-aaawww!"

"Get up, Billy, and try the other Bunter, dragging his winded major to his feet. "Can't you get on better than that? Look what you've done—here comes Harry Wharton and the rest."

William George Bunter groped for his eyeglasses, jammed them on his snub nose, and blinked at the Famous Five as they came up, laughing.

"Oh, really, you fellows—" he began peevishly.

"What's the merry game, Bunter?" demanded Harry Wharton. "Are you going in for donkey riding as a fine art?"

"Mind your own bizney, Wharton!" grunted Bunter. "I suppose I'm allowed to teach myself to ride a horse—I mean a donkey—if I choose?"

"Certainly, you chump," replied Harry, laughing, "so long as old Roskilly doesn't catch you."

"Oh, blow Roskilly!" said Bunter.

"Look here, you fellows, you might stop that silly cackling. This isn't anything to laugh at. I—I've just been reading a book on how to reduce fatness. I am rather—er—plump, you know, and was interested to read that horse-riding is a good cure. As there isn't a horse here, I'm going to practise on this donkey."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five shrieked, Billy Bunter glared.

"Really, you know—"

"Oh, carry me home to die, somebody!" gurgled Bob Cherry, wiping salt tears of merriment from his eyes. "Fancy Bunter going in for donkey-riding as a fat reducer! Bunter, my fat pippin, you'll be the death of me yet!"

"Oh, ring off!" snapped Bunter. "One of you chaps might give me a lift up!"

"With pleasure, Bunter!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Hold the fiery steed, Inky, while I bunk up poor old Bunter! Steady there, Neddy!"

Neddy suffered himself to be held by Hurree Singh. Billy Bunter placed his plump arms round the donkey's neck, and Bob Cherry pushed him on. Neddy tossed his head, as if protesting against being hugged round the neck so tightly.

"Are you ready, Bunter?" asked Bob cheerily.

"Groooooogh!"

"Don't choke the poor beast, you know!" chided Bob. "That's right—ease up a bit! Now don't lose your head, Bunter! Right away!"

Bob patted Neddy's haunches, and the donkey, with a duck of his head, started off.

"Yoooooogh!" gasped Bunter, clutching the donkey's neck like a drowning man clutches at a spar. "Hold me up, somebody; I'm fit-falling!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

Neddy, unused to having such a load on his back, went clattering over the field with as much speed as he could muster. Billy Bunter hung on like grim death.

"Hellup!" he roared. "I'll be off in a minute! Groooooogh! Sammy, you beast, come and hold me up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Sammy scuttled after his major, and caught up with the donkey.

Now, Neddy was a spirited donkey. He did not understand this treatment a bit. A stranger—and a very heavy stranger at that—had insinuated himself upon his back; and Neddy meant to give him a high old time.

"Yarooooogh!" roared Bunter, as the donkey commenced to butt merrily. "I'll be killed! My neck will be broken! The animal's gone mad! Stop him, Sammy!"

Sammy got in Neddy's way, but the donkey swerved. He made a grab at the donkey's tail as he whizzed by with Billy still clutching his neck.

That did it!

Neddy, with a fierce snort, kicked out his hind legs, and Sammy went flying. So did Billy Bunter. He sailed off the donkey's back like a rocket, turned a somersault in the air, and landed on his back with a wild howl and a heavy bump.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Famous Five.

"Yoooooogh!" howled Bunter. "Help! I'm dead—I mean, I'm dying! My backbone's fractured, and I've got dislocation of the spinal column! Yarooooogh!"

"Yow, yow, yow!" came from Sammy Bunter.

Neddy clattered off, and, from far away, by the haystack, came the sound of the donkey's untuneful voice:

"Hee-haw! Hee-ee-ee-hawwwww!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were quite helpless with laughter for some minutes.

When they had sufficiently recovered from their mirth, they hauled the Bunters to their feet.

"Poor old Bunter!" sobbed Bob Cherry. "What were your sensations, Bunter, when you found yourself hitting the breeze? I'll write a special article on this for the next number of the 'Herald.'"

"Yooooop!" was all Bunter said. "I'm hurt! I shall expire in a minute! Call



"We'll drop you into the water if you don't confess everything!" said Harry Wharton. Bunter was collared, and they raised him over the pond. He saw that it would be useless to argue, so very slowly he told them the whole story. "Well, I'm jiggered. To think that the fat ass has hidden all the stuff in the Tower!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. (See Chapter 7.)

the ambulance, quick! Oh, you can laugh at me! I don't mind! Now I'm drawing my last breath, I forgive you all! Groooooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, Bunter, here comes Earner Roskiley!" said Frank Nugent warningly. "He's looking for the fellow who's been riding his donkey!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

William George Bunter made tracks for the hedge, and scrambled through, with an agility that was remarkable for one who was drawing his last fleeting breath. Sammy was a good second through the gap. Harry Wharton & Co. followed, chuckling with mirth.

Out in the Friardale Lane, the Bunter brothers dusted themselves down. They needed it, after their rough treatment at the hands—or, rather, the legs of Neddy, the donkey!

"If at first you don't succeed, have another shot, you know, Bunt!" said Bob Cherry cheerily. "There's a mule in that field over there—shall we fetch him out for you?"

"Oh, rats!" growled Bunter, who was walking with a decided limp.

"What about the vaulting-horse in the gym, Bunt?" inquired Frank Nugent sweetly. "We could get old Coker to fix his motor-bike on to it, and pull you round the village in quite the jockey style!"

"Br-r-r-r-r!"

The Bunters went into Greyfriars in a very disgruntled frame of mind. Billy

Bunter's essay at horsemanship had not been a success. He would have to abandon the idea of becoming a mounted bandit.

And Harry Wharton & Co., who, of course, had no suspicion of Bunter's real motive in wanting to ride a horse, laughed loud and long over the affair!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Night Alarm!

WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER, when making efforts to obtain money, whether by fair means or foul, was nothing if not a determined stickler.

The affair of the donkey did not daunt him. The spirit of the bold, bad bandit was infused in his blood, and he felt reckless, just as Slim Sylvester felt reckless. Like Alexander of old, Bunter looked round for fresh worlds to conquer, and he and Sammy had a consultation in their secret meeting-place in the Ruined Tower that evening.

"We'll ransack Greyfriars from top to bottom to-night," said the amateur bandit, with that air of cool abandon that the book said Slim Sylvester usually affected. "It will be as easy as rolling off a form, Sammy. Nobody will know who did it, and in the morning they'll all say that it was the same bandit who attacked old Mossoo this afternoon. They'll be right; but they won't guess it was me! He, he, he!"

"I don't know so much, Billy," said Sammy Bunter, rubbing his nose dubiously. "In my opinion, you're acting the giddy goat, and we ought to chuck this rot. It's all very nice and exciting, but suppose we were nabbed?"

"Nabbed!" snorted Billy Bunter, with great bravado. "Who will suspect us? Here we have our secret hiding-place, where all the stolen stuff is stored—"

"Yes—one gold watch!" snorted Sammy disparagingly. "It strikes me, Billy, you've led me into something too jolly risky. Mind, if the cat comes out of the bag, you'll take the blame as you're the elder. I'm being led on by you!"

"Oh, you make me tired!" said the Owl of the Remove. "Blessed if I've ever come across such a funk! Look at me! See how brave and fearless I am! Bravery and recklessness are the chief things in the making of a bandit!"

"Bandit rats!" snapped Sammy. "Anyway, what's this wheeze for this evening?"

Billy Bunter explained, in hurried tones, that he would dress up in his bandit clothes, mask and cloak complete, and perform the raid, starting at the Head's study, and visiting as many rooms as he had time. Sammy was to occupy his bed in the Remove dormitory, in case Harry Wharton or any of the others woke up and looked at the bed. Sammy was very unwilling at first, but when Billy Bunter told him what glorious

feeds they would have on the proceeds of the banditry, the Second Form fag was persuaded to fall in with the wishes of the Owl of the Remove. Thus it was arranged.

Eleven boomed from the school clock-tower that night, and William George Bunter sat up in bed. He had managed to keep awake with difficulty, for usually he was the first in the Remove dormitory to go to sleep.

"You fellows asleep?" he inquired, in a soft voice.

Nobody answered.

"Oh, good!" said Bunter.

He scrambled out of bed, and hastily donned his clothes. He took the mask and hat and cloak from under the bed, where he had previously hidden them, and put them on. Then, with the old revolver gripped in one fat hand, he crept to the door.

He met Sammy in the passage. The plump fag was in his pyjamas, and was very sleepy.

"Get into my bed, quick!" said Billy Bunter. "This is where Slim Sylvester the Second gets busy! He, he, he!"

Sammy Bunter needed no second bidding. He went into the Remove dormitory, and tucked himself into his major's bed.

"Hallo! Who's that?"

Harry Wharton sat up suddenly, awakened by Sammy knocking the locker at the side of the bed with his elbow.

"Yaw-aw-aw!" said Sammy, and next minute he went to sleep.

The captain of the Remove looked round in the bright moonlight, and, satisfied that nothing was the matter, returned to the warm sheets.

William George Bunter, meanwhile, was on the warpath.

The amateur bandit of Greyfriars meant to do a good night's business.

Slim Sylvester worked better at night-time, and Billy Bunter was now an ardent disciple of that enterprising and lawless gentleman.

He made his way along to the Head's study, tried the door softly, and opened it.

Then Billy Bunter received a shock.

In the moonlight that was streaming in at the open window of the room, he saw the crouching figure of a man, wearing a mask, directing the light of a pocket-torch on to the door of the Head's safe.

Even as Bunter the bandit gasped, there was a click, and the safe door swung open. Next minute, the unknown marauder had sprung to his feet, his gaze riveted upon Billy Bunter.

He raised his hands above his head.

"All right, mate," he said, in a low voice. "I guess you needn't threaten me wiv that 'ere gun o' yours. I knows when I'm caught. Blessed if I know 'ow you got in! I thought as 'ow I was the only one as was on this crib. Rough luck, this is—copped red-anded by a cove on the same lay! Wish I 'adn't got the darn safe open; that's all I wish! It was a job, it was!"

William George Bunter was dazed and frightened at first. But gradually it dawned upon his slow-moving wits that he had surprised a burglar robbing the Head's safe, and that that burglar, thinking him to be one of his own kidney, and seeing the revolver he held in his fat hand, was giving in to him.

That made Billy Bunter feel quite brave.

"Yes; I've caught you properly, you beast!" he said, in a gruff voice. "You'd better hop off before I plug you with a round of lead! Mind, I've got my shooter on you! Get out!"

That was how Slim Sylvester would have said it, Bunter thought. The masked rascal scowled, and went to the window.

"You can get the swag mate, but you won't get away with it!" he said, clambering through the window. "You bet I'll be on yer track outside!"

With that he was gone, and Bunter the Bandit was left in possession of the field.

"By gum!" gloated Bunter, going over to the safe and opening the door. "What a stroke of luck! I'd never have got that door open, myself. And—Oh, my hat! Quid-notes and fivers! Heaps of 'em! Oh, my hat!"

Bunter's fat hands closed greedily over the wads of notes. It did not take him long to remove everything of immediate value from the safe.

His pockets bulged with his swag as he crept away from the Head's study. He did not trouble to close the safe door. Bunter was highly elated. As a bandit, he seemed to have had a stroke of the best of luck!

Bunter went along to his own study, and stuffed the stolen money underneath the fender. Nobody would think of looking for it there, and in the morning he would consign it to the secret hiding-place in the Old Tower.

"I—I think I'll go along and raid old Prout!" muttered the Greyfriars bandit to himself.

He made his way along to the room where Mr. Paul Pontifex Prout, the Fifth Form-master, slept.

Sounds of heavy snoring came through the door, as Bunter arrived outside.

The fat marauder chuckled to himself.

"Good! The old bird is asleep! Now for a good old burgle!"

Bunter opened the door softly, and peered round with great caution through his mask. Mr. Prout was in bed, deep in the arms of Morpheus. His snores proclaimed that fact in an unmistakable manner!

Bunter went over to the dressing-table, and the first thing he saw was a set of false teeth. Next minute they were in the depths of his capacious pockets. He chuckled at the joke. His fat hand wandered further, and groped on top of the alarm clock that Mr. Prout kept to wake him in the morning.

Now, the alarm was set for 6.30 a.m., but, considering the fact that Mr. Prout had paid the magnificent sum of five shillings sterling for that clock, it is not surprising that the alarm mechanism was rather erratic. Bunter sent the alarm-clock spinning, and a moment later the air was dizzy with the discordant ringing of the alarm-bell.

Ting-a-ling-a-liog! Buzzzzzz!

"Oh, lor!" groaned Bunter.

"Bless my soul!" Mr. Prout heaved out of bed like a hippopotamus charging out of the Nile. "What in the name of all that's marvellous—Good heavens! The bandit!"

Mr. Prout caught sight of the masked face of Billy Bunter. The amateur bandit darted round the bed, and Mr. Prout slid after him.

"Villain! Rascal!" boomed the Fifth Form-master. "I'll have you! Where is my trusty Winchester repeater? Ah! I have it! I have shot Rockies, sir, in the grizzly mountains—I mean mountains in the grizzly Rockies—I mean—"

Bang!

The sharp snap of Mr. Prout's Winchester repeater rang through the room, and the "kick" of the firearm caused Mr. Prout to step backwards into the fender. Down came the fire-iron with a clatter, and Billy Bunter, whose brain was in a whirl at the sudden change events had taken, let out a bellow of fear.

"Yarooooogh! Yah! Ow! I'm shot! I'm killed! Yow! Yow! Yow!"

But Billy Bunter's fat form hadn't been the bullet's billet. That shot had gone clean through Mr. Prout's bedroom window, shattering the glass and letting in a stiff breeze that sent cold shivers up that gentleman's insufficiently garbed legs.

"What are you, villain?" thundered the dauntless Prout, who had shot grizzlies in the Rockies in the year '89, and performed all manner of deeds of valour which, when—if ever—they are told to the world, will make the name of Paul Pontifex Prout, M.A., ring

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throughout posterity. "Come forth and surrender!"

But Billy Bunter did not surrender. He summoned his scattered wits, and reached out for a blanket from Mr. Prout's bed. As the Fifth Form-master advanced, Bunter brought down the blanket over his bald cranium, and tied it securely.

Mr. Prout gave vent to some muffled howls, but Billy Bunter did not stop to listen. He scudded out of the door, and made tracks for the juniors' sleeping quarters.

Billy Bunter, as he ran, peeled off his cloak and hat and mask. These he thrust behind a cupboard in the corridor, and then skipped into the Second Form dormitory, which was the next door he came to. Sammy's bed was empty. Dicky Nugent & Co. were all fast asleep. Bunter dived into Sammy's bed, and pulled the clothes over him. Then he listened.

Five minutes elapsed, and then a certain liveliness became audible from outside. Mr. Prout had managed to get free from the blanket, and was now on the track of the bandit, with his Winchester repeater in his hand, and Coker, Potter, Blundell and Fitzgerald of the Fifth at his heels.

Billy Bunter groaned when he heard Dicky Nugent give a sleepy gasp, and sit up.

"Yaw-aw-aw! What's all that noise outside?"

Paget and Bolsover minor sat up.

"Grooooooh! Something's up, chaps!"

The Second-Formers were soon awake. It seemed that all Greyfriars was awake.

Doors banged open, and startled voices demanded to know what was wrong.

"Bunter!" exclaimed Dicky Nugent, stirring the figure in Sammy Bunter's bed with his foot. "Wake up! Something's up!"

"Grooooooh!" mumbled Bunter, shivering. "I don't want to get up! Lemme alone!"

The fags thought Sammy was nervous. He was noted as being as big a funk as Billy Bunter. So Dicky Nugent & Co. crowded to the door.

"What's up?" demanded Dicky, as the Famous Five, clad in slippers and pyjamas, came along, followed by Skinner, Vernon-Smith, Bolsover major, and Squiff.

"The bandit's at Greyfriars again!" said Skinner. "Prout's been attacked!"

"Whew!"

The Head came downstairs in his pyjamas. Mr. Quelch almost ran into Mr. Prout on the stairs. Herr Gans, the German master, his short hair bristling up like the spikes of a porcupine, waddled out of his bed-room, gripping a poker.

"Himmel!" he cried. "Vat iss all das? Der bandit haf come—ain't it?"

"Yes, sir!" cried Ogilvy excitedly.

"Mr. Prout's been robbed, and—"

"The Head's safe has been burgled!" roared Bob Cherry, dashing up. "I've just had it from Wingate! The safe's open, and all the money missing!"

"Good heavens!" cried Mr. Quelch.

"Gott in Himmel!" cried Herr Gans.

"Mon Dieu!" shrieked Monsieur Charpentier. "Zen ze rascal he has come again! Oh, c'est terrible—n'est ce pas?"

Greyfriars was throbbing with life at that late hour.

Wingate and North, and several seniors from the Sixth and Fifth, went out into the quadrangle, armed with cricket-stumps, to look for the bandit.

Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Upper Fourth scoured all the box-rooms. Harry Wharton & Co. hunted high and low for the miscreant. But no results were obtained.

Dr. Locke rang up the police, and ordered all the boys back to bed.

"The miscreant has gone now, and this disorder can avail us nothing!" said the Head. "Every boy will return to his dormitory."

The confusion had given Billy and Sammy Bunter the opportunity to change back into their own dormitories. Billy Bunter was sitting up in bed as Harry Wharton and the others came in, after a fruitless hunt after the midnight marauder.

"The villain's gone!" said Harry Wharton. "Isn't this affair the giddy limit, chaps? The masked bandit, whoever he is, must have the cool nerve of a dozen. And he must be a jolly clever rogue, too, for he opened the Head's safe without even damaging the lock!"

"Yes, by Jingo!"

William George Bunter chuckled softly to himself as he lay in bed.

Suspicion that he was the mysterious bandit, if there had been any, was lifted now. How could Harry Wharton & Co. connect him with the opening of the Head's safe, which was the work of a trained expert?

It was a long time before the boys went to sleep again. William George Bunter was snoring with the first. He was in quite an easy frame of mind, and he dreamed blissful dreams, in which mountains of tuck and daring hold-ups, in which he was the moving genius, were mingled.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Coker on the Warpath!

"WELL, of all the silly chumps—"

"Of all the blithering fat-heads—"

"Of all the burbling jabberwocks—"

Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent were responsible for those expressive remarks. They had come along the Remove passage next day after dinner, and found Horace Coker of the Sixth on his hands and knees on the floor, examining the linoleum through a magnifying-glass.

Coker looked up. He glared when he saw the Removes.

"Cut off, you cheeky kids!" he said.

"I can't have you interfering with me!"

"What the merry blazes are you up to, Coker?" demanded Harry Wharton, in wonder. "Are you looking for something?"

"Yes, I am!" said Horace Coker, bending down again and squinting through the magnifying-glass.

"Lost anything, Cokey?" asked Bob Cherry solicitously.

"Shurrup!"

"What a nice, polite youth!" said Bob. "Charming, I'm sure!"

"Lost the diamond out of your tiepin, Coker?" inquired Frank Nugent.

"No, you young idiot!" bawled Coker, looking up in exasperation. "Can't you see? I'm looking for footprints!"

"Footprints!"

"Whew!"

Harry Wharton & Co. gasped.

"Whose footprints are you looking for, Coker?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"Your own?"

"No, ass—the bandit's!"

"Oh!"

That was all the Removes said at first. Then, as they saw Coker grovelling on the linoleum, squinting through the magnifying-glass, they burst into howls of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Horace Coker looked up with a glare like unto that of a basilisk.

"Will you cheeky Remove kids shut

up?" he roared. "I'll mop up the floor with you in a minute!"

"Hallo! What's the row?" asked Bulstrode, coming along with Tom Brown and Oliver Kipps.

"Coker's turned detective!" explained Bob Cherry. "Look at him with his little spyglass! Cokey, old bun, you want a bloodhound, and you'd be complete. There's a good bloodhound for sale in the canary shop in Friardale—"

"Will you shurrup?" howled Coker. "I—I—I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The mighty Horace went quite red.

"Look here," he bellowed, squatting on his haunches, and blinking at the hilarious Removes. "I haven't come down here to be made a laughing-stock of! I'm after the bandit, and mean to run him to earth—"

"You'll run to seed, Cokey, before you catch him!" grinned Frank Nugent.

"Why don't you get on the trail of Prout's false teeth?" inquired Bob Cherry pleasantly. "The poor chap couldn't take lessons this morning, could he?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's a clue to work on, Coker!" said Harry Wharton, with a chuckle. "The bandit found it necessary to steal Prout's false teeth. Ergo—that's Latin—that bandit hadn't got any teeth of his own! See?"

"H'm!" said Coker reflectively.

"There may be something in that theory, young Wharton. I'll put it down in my notebook for further reference."

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled the Removes, as Horace Coker solemnly withdrew a notebook and made a note of Wharton's theory.

"There's nothing to cackle at, you cheeky young rotters!" growled the high and mighty Horace. "Wait till I've run the bandit to earth and recovered the stolen property—you won't laugh then!"

"No, Coker—we shall faint with surprise!" said Harry Wharton sweetly.

Coker jumped to his feet in exasperation. His rugged face was red with wrath. He—Coker—was being chaffed by a mob of cheeky kids whilst he was engaged on the most important work of detecting the bandit! It was sickening—disheartening!

"I won't stand it!" roared Coker. "Clear off, you kids, or I'll slaughter you!"

"Go ahead with the slaughtering, Coker, old cabbage!" said Bob Cherry. "But before you start, have you any last requests to make? Do you want flowers at your funeral, or just a stick of celery—?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker wasted no more time on words. Breathing like a warhorse, he charged into the midst of the Removes. They swallowed up Coker like a human flood. They dragged him down and sat on him. They pulled his hair and rolled him over. Bob Cherry rammed the spyglass down the back of Coker's neck. Johnny Bull shoved Coker's collar down after it. Horace Coker roared, and fought manfully. But he was no match for the heroes of the Remove. They dragged him to the head of the stairs, raised him on high, counted three, and whirled him down.

Coker found that the bottom stair was the lowest. He collapsed on the mat, and blinked round him dazedly. His jacket was split up the back, his hair was ruffled, his nose felt as large as a fair-sized pumpkin, and altogether Horace Coker was in a parlous state.

He arose groggily and pushed back his cuffs. Coker would have charged up the stairs again, but Wingate came out of

the hall and laid a detaining hand on him.

"Enough of that, Coker. Leave the juniors alone."

"Sha'n't!" roared Coker. "I've been chucked down the stairs—me!"

"What were you doing in the Remove passage, anyway?"

"Looking for footprints!" howled Coker. "I'm on the trail of the bandit! I'm going to nail him! You see! Sherlock Holmes won't be in it with me!"

"Don't be such a silly idiot, Coker!" said Wingate, bursting into a laugh. "Better keep off the grass, and look for footprints in the Fifth Form passage or in the quad or on the roof, or anywhere else you like!"

"Why, you—you—you——" spluttered Coker.

But he did not engage in further conflict with Harry Wharton & Co. Even Coker realised that he had bitten off more than he could chew.

Greyfriars was buzzing with the romantic and amazing happenings of the previous night. The police-inspector from Courtfield had arrived that morning and made inquiries. But it seemed that the bandit had got free, and hopes of capturing him and recovering the stolen money were not high.

The Bunter brothers thought it a rich joke.

They met in their secret meeting-place in the Old Tower, and Bunter showed Sammy the wads of notes he had taken from the safe.

Sammy's little, round eyes gleamed greedily.

"My word!" he breathed. "Halves, Billy!"

"Not yet!" said Billy Bunter cautiously. "We've got to be jolly careful, you know. Better keep this money up here, with Mossos's watch and the other things, until things are quieter. Then we'll whack out the swag."

"Gimme ten bob to go on with, anyway!" grunted Sammy.

Billy Bunter gave him ten shillings on account of his share in the spoils.

"Tell you what, Sammy," said the Owl of the Remove, struck with a sudden idea. "Let's have a picnic on the rocks by Pegg Bay this afternoon? Harry Wharton and the others are going for a ramble there, and we may have the chance to do some business. Hold 'em up, you know."

Harry Wharton & Co. had planned a ramble over the coast by Pegg Bay that afternoon, as the cricket-pitch was being rolled.

They had also planned a jape on Coker. Coker was fairly on the warpath as a detective. He was as keen on clues as a naturalist is for rare butterflies. His inquiries did not always bring the result desired. For instance, when Mr. Prout discovered Coker subjecting his bed-room to an examination beneath the magnifying-glass, the master of the Fifth did not like it a little bit. He snorted—actually snorted!—when Coker explained that he was on the track of the bandit. Mr. Prout had no faith in Coker. He called him a stupid lout, a ridiculous young booby, and other things of a similar nature. But Coker did not despair. His hunt for clues that day was as agile as ever.

Coker's heart gave a leap of joy when he discovered a note in the Cloisters written in a crabbed, untidy hand. This is what Coker read on the note:

"Dere Joe,—Ope you crack the crib at Greyfriars orl rite. Suckseed or fail,

meet me at the cave by Pegg Bay tomorrow afternoon, same time.—Yors,
"ALF."

Here was a clue at last! He did not think of japes!

"He's swallowed it whole!" chuckled Bob, stepping from his place of concealment. "Poor old Coker! He was simply made to have his leg pulled. He will provide us with a little harmless and necessary amusement this afternoon—what?"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bowled Out!

PEGG BAY, enclosed by high cliffs in which old caves abounded, presented a picturesque scene in the afternoon sunlight.

Harry Wharton & Co. were abroad with Wibley of the Remove. Coker was also on the cliffs, and they were out to jape Coker.

"This is the chance you've been waiting for, Wib," said Harry Wharton. "Here are all the props. Make up as a ruffian, and leave a trail for Coker over the cliffs to that large cave near the coastguard-station. Bob and Johnny Bull are going to be there, also dressed as ruffians. Coker will follow the trail to the cave, and then you'll spring out on him and nab him. Take off his clobber, and dress him up as a scarecrow. Coker will look rather nobby walking home in that rig-out, won't he? Being Wednesday afternoon, the clothiers' shops are shut, so that he won't be able to get any more on the way!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wibley carried out his part with alacrity. He was an adept in the art of make-up. By the time he had finished his transformation into a ruffian he was quite unrecognisable as William Wibley of the Remove.

"You look a thorough cut-throat, Wib!" chuckled Harry Wharton. "Coker will be spoofed a treat! Now cut off!"

Wibley "cut off." He set to work making tracks as he went. It was not a difficult task. He tramped across a deep, narrow gully shut in by rocks. The soil there was soft, and he dug his feet down heavily so as to make it appear that a big, heavy man had trodden there.

At length he reached the cave Wharton had chosen for their raid on Coker. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull were there, disguised so that they looked out-and-out ruffians of the worst type.

Harry Wharton and the others were looking for Coker.

They knew he was scouring the Shoulder somewhere. And after a few minutes search they found him. Coker was peering among the rocks with his spyglass. Exactly how he would discover the bandit by that means was best known to Coker.

He glared when Wharton, Nugent, Hurree Singh, and Squiff came up.

"Clear off!" growled Coker.

"Please, Coker, we've something to tell you," said Harry Wharton meekly. "We have discovered a trail in the gully just over there."

"By Jingo!" said Coker, jumping up. "Is that so, Wharton? You're not spoofing?"

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"No, Coker—honest Injun," said Wharton solemnly.

Coker strode over to the gully, directed by the Removites, who exchanged sundry winks and sly glances.

Horace Coker had swallowed the bait. The look of satisfaction on his face was truly gratifying to behold as he flopped down on his knees and squinted at the tracks through his magnifying-glass.

"Found anything, Coker?" asked Wharton sweetly.

Coker pointed dramatically to the tracks that led into the cave.

"Yes, he's in there now," said Coker. "I'll tell you kids how I deduct it. You see the tracks leading in? There are no return tracks. That means that the bandit's in there!"

Harry Wharton & Co. gasped. They thought that it was time to gasp.

Coker breathed hard.

"I'm going to attack him, and chance his revolver," he said. "You kids can follow, unless you feel nervous—"

"Oh, we'll come!" said Wharton heroically. "You sha'n't go into awful danger alone, Coker!"

"Don't jaw!" snapped Coker. "I'm going to charge!"

And Coker rushed forward at top speed.

He would not have been surprised at any minute to have heard a shot ring out. Really it was very plucky of Coker. Harry Wharton & Co., too, were very brave. They charged after Coker in great spirits.

There were no revolver-shots. Coker barged into the darkness of the cave, and then an evil-faced ruffian confronted him.

Coker halted.

"A spy!" hissed the rascally stranger, who was really Wibley in disguise. "Up, mates, and at 'im!"

"Back up, you kids!" roared Coker, flinging himself at Wib.

"We'll run along and fetch help, Coker!" cried Harry Wharton. "Don't worry, old chap. You'll be all right so long as they don't kill you. It won't take us more than half an hour to get to Pegg and back. You can keep the rascals at bay until then!"

"Yarooooogh!" roared Coker, hitting out, and receiving a few hard blows himself. "Don't leave me here, you little funks! Yah! Ow!"

Wibley, Bob Cherry, and Johnny Bull piled on top of Coker, and pulled him down. Strong ropes were bound round his legs and arms. Coker was as strong as a horse, and he fought desperately. But he was no match for the three sturdy juniors. Bob Cherry alone was the champion fighting-man in the Lower School. Johnny Bull was a fine boxer, and Wib was very handy with his fists.

"Got 'im!" said Wibley, with a throaty chuckle. "Wot shall we do with 'im, mates?"

"Chuck 'im over the Shoulder!" said Bob Cherry huskily.

"Bury 'im alive in the sand!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"No, mates," said Wibley. "We've done enough killin'. Twelve murders in one day is quite enough, and I 'ate the number thirteen."

Coker was thrilled. What bloodthirsty ruffians! he thought. Twelve murders in one day. It was horrible!

"I'll 'ave 'is clothes, anyhow!" went on the disguised Wib. "These 'ere old things will do for 'im. We'll leave 'im 'ere, and make orf. We'll be far away before 'e's found."

"Orl right, Joe!"

Coker's clothes were taken from him, and he was garbed in a tattered old bob-tailed coat, baggy trousers that reached just below his knees, old boots, and a gaudily-striped shirt. He looked for all the world like a scarecrow!

"Good!" said the rascal Joe. "Now we'll beat it, boys! Got all the swag?"

"Yus!"

Coker groaned as the rascals went from the cave.

Ten minutes later the heroes of the Remove were seated among the rocks, enjoying an al fresco tea.

They chuckled when they thought of Horace Coker languishing in the cave.

Coker would be on tenterhooks, believing the bandit and his gang to be escaping.

Coker simply asked to have his leg pulled—and Harry Wharton & Co. had pulled it with a vengeance!

"Look!" gasped Bob Cherry, in a faint voice.

They looked and saw a masked face peering at them over a rock, and the barrel of a revolver was pointed at them. The mask and a broad hat well pulled down was all they could see of the mysterious person behind the rock.

Instinctively they all jumped up.

The same thought passed through their minds.

"Good heavens!" muttered Harry Wharton, moistening his dry lips. "The—the bandit!"

"Hands up!" rapped a harsh voice from behind the rock. "I'm desperate, I am! You've got to turn your pockets out and place all your valuables on this rock, or I'll shoot!"

How were Harry Wharton & Co. to know that it was Billy Bunter who was holding them up? Bunter was taking care not to show himself. Being a ventriloquist, he could easily disguise his voice. Mechanically they raised their hands.

"Mind, I've got you well surrounded with my men!" growled the bandit behind the rock. "No. 7, where are you?"

"Ere I am, sir!" came a voice from a rock on their left.

Harry Wharton & Co. started.

"No. 10!" rapped the bandit.

"Over 'ere, sir!" came another voice from the other side.

Billy Bunter was ventriloquising, thus making it appear that he had confederates hidden among the rocks.

The Removites regarded the masked face and the revolver in horror.

"Now, you with the big feet and ugly face, come forward and empty your pockets!"

Bob Cherry went red as he realised that the bandit referred to him.

He walked forward and emptied his pockets.

Harry Wharton came next. And each of the Removites had to do the same in turn. By the time all had placed their valuables on the rock there was quite a heap of watches, fountain-pens, pen-knives, tiepins, pocket-books, and money.

"Come forward, No. 15, and gather up the swag!" grated the masked bandit behind the rock.

A short figure arose from behind a rock near by—a figure garbed completely in a black robe, which obscured every part of his body.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at this strange figure in amazement.

The robed confederate of the bandit walked over to the rock and stretched out a hand to collect the spoil.

Harry Wharton watched, his hands still above his head.

Then, all of a sudden, he drew a deep breath.

The hand that emerged from the black

gown was a plump hand, such as he had often seen belonging to a certain fag at Greyfriars. The nails were dirty, and there were smudges of ink all over that hand.

Sudden swift suspicions entered Harry Wharton's head. His gaze wandered to the hand holding the revolver, and, for the first time, he noticed that that, too, was a fat hand.

The teeth of the Remove captain came together with a click.

He made a sudden rush at the black-gowned figure. He landed on top of the mysterious person and dragged him over. The gown came off, and the plump figure of Sammy Bunter was revealed.

The other Removites almost fell down in amazement.

"Sammy Bunter!"

"The little spoofer!"

"Yarooogh!" wailed Sammy, kicking and struggling desperately. "Lemme go! It wasn't my fault! Billy led me on! Ow—ow—ow!"

The masked bandit behind the rock gave a gasp, and, jumping up, dived away over the rocks. But the other Removites realised everything now, and in a trice Bob Cherry, Nugent, and Johnny Bull were chasing Bunter.

Bunter tripped over his cloak and fell. The avengers pounced upon him at once.

"The game's up, Bunter!" said the Remove captain. "I'm hanged if I know how you've managed to spoof us so long! But we've bowled you out at last! So you are the bandit who has caused such a disturbance at the school! Turn their pockets out, chaps!"

The pockets of the Bunter brothers were turned out. Several five-pound notes came out of Billy Bunter's pocket. The Removites gazed at them in amazement.

"These must be the missing notes!" gasped Harry Wharton. "My only hat! Did you break open the Head's safe last night, Bunter?"

"Nuuno!" gasped Bunter. "I didn't open the safe! I know nothing about it, Wharton, really! This is only a joke for this afternoon! Can't you see it? No harm done really—he, he, he!"

But Harry Wharton was not to be bluffed.

He wanted to know how Bunter had obtained possession of those notes. Bunter had had a fling as a bandit, and now the day of reckoning had come!

"Lug him over to that field below!" said the Remove captain grimly. "We'll chuck him in that pond if he doesn't confess."

Bunter was taken down the steep path, until a large field was reached.

Harry Wharton & Co. raised the Owl of the Remove on high, and suspended him over the murky waters of the pond. His hat, mask, and gown were ripped off.

"Now, Bunter!" said Wharton grimly. "Confess, you little rotter, or we'll pitch you head-first in!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" wailed Bunter, wriggling. "Lemme go! I'll confess! Don't drop me in! Yooooop!"

"Confess!" howled Bob Cherry, in his ear.

Then, still suspended over the water, Billy Bunter made a full confession. Once or twice he attempted to wriggle out of an explanation, but when he was lowered menacingly towards the water he changed his mind. William George Bunter was not fond of water in any shape or form.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "So that fat thief has been hiding all the stuff in the old tower! He did rob the Head's safe, after the other rascal had opened it! By Jingo! The little rotters!"

Harry Wharton & Co. then became aware that Horace Coker was running up.

Coker was in a state of great excitement. He looked very funny in his scarecrow costume. But he was not thinking about his personal appearance.

"Come on, you kids, there's still time to capture the bandit!" he roared. "I managed to scramble out of my bonds, and then I saw one of the ruffians return to the cave. He was carrying a bag, and I reckon it's full of swag. You've got to come and help me capture the ruffian. I'll see that you come to no harm."

Harry Wharton & Co. set Bunter down on the bank of the pond, and looked in astonishment at each other.

"Perhaps it's the fellow who opened the Head's safe!" said Wharton swiftly. "Come on, chaps! This is worth looking into!"

They arrived at the cave-mouth just as a swarthy, dirty rascal came out.

"There he is!" roared Coker. "Go for him, you kids!"

The dauntless Coker led the attack by flinging himself on the man.

Harry Wharton & Co. were not a second later.

The ruffian fought desperately, giving vent to foul oaths. But he was no match for the Greyfriars fellows. Within the space of five minutes he was made a prisoner with the ropes that had previously served as Coker's bonds. Harry Wharton & Co. then went into the cave, and after a brief search came back with the bag.

Harry Wharton opened it, and gave vent to a swift whistle of amazement.

"Here are all the things Bunter stole!" he exclaimed. "Look, here's Mosscoo's watch, and Smithy's inkstand, and Mauly's cuff-links! And here's the rest of the money taken from the Head's safe!"

"How on earth did this rotter get them?" demanded Bob Cherry. "Bunter says he hid them in the old tower!"

"This rotter must have watched Bunter, knowing him to be the one who surprised him in the Head's study last night, and discovered where he hid the money," said Harry Wharton quietly. "Then, this afternoon, when most of the fellows were out, he got into the ruined tower, took all he found there, and came up here to hide 'em. Luckily we left old Coker there, otherwise we should have returned to Greyfriars, looked in the old tower, and found all the stuff gone—for good!"

"Great pip!"

"So we'll take this chap to the police and return to Greyfriars," said Wharton. Which they did.

Dr. Locke was delighted at the stroke of fortune that had enabled the stolen property and the money to be recovered. He congratulated Harry Wharton & Co. and Coker on the part they had played.

Harry Wharton & Co. gave Billy and Sammy Bunter the ragging of their lives in the gymnasium that evening. The two young rascals were bumped, and tossed in a blanket, and made to run the gauntlet until they felt that life was simply not worth living.

As Harry Wharton pointed out, Billy Bunter was more of a fool than a rascal. Otherwise, he deserved expulsion from Greyfriars. William George Bunter received a thorough lesson, and he groaned himself to sleep that night, realising once again that the way of the transgressor is hard. And thus ended the exploits of Bunter, the Bandit!

THE END.

(Now turn to my Chat—Ed.)

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