

"BUNTER, THE BARD!"

(Bunter not only writes poetry, but he TALKS it! See inside.)



No. 711, Vol. XX.

FOUR-PAGE SUPPLEMENT INSIDE.

September 24th, 1921.



BILLY BUNTER WAS DETERMINED TO WIN THE PRIZE!

(A humorous incident from the grand long complete school story inside.)



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.

"THE ISLAND RAIDERS!"

By Frank Richards.

This is, perhaps, one of the most thrilling stories of Harry Wharton & Co. written by Mr. Richards since he related the adventures of the Famous Five aboard the derelict *Aspasia*.

Harry Wharton & Co. are bemoaning the inability of a Highcliffe football team to come to Greyfriars, when a timely wire comes from some unknown friends on the island off the Black Rock—Storm Island.

Greatly bucked, Harry Wharton & Co. take their strongest team to the island, but are almost immediately captured by a gang of rogues who have the intention of raiding the whole of the island for valuables.

Their subsequent adventures, before they eventually play the football match, are related in Mr. Richards' inimitable way, and will appear in next Monday's issue of the *MAGNET LIBRARY*.

THE "GREYFRIARS HERALD."

There will be another supplement in our next issue, and once again Harry Wharton & Co. ought to be congratulated upon their industry. They have sent in a splendid budget of articles, stories, and jokes from the pens of various fellows at Greyfriars, and I can assure you that you will greatly enjoy reading them.

There is another special number in course of preparation, I am informed. A reader sent Harry the idea, for which he is very grateful, and wishes me to once again state that he is always very pleased to hear from readers. Time, however, precludes Harry from answering letters through the post; but all who write to him should look for a reply in the columns of the "Greyfriars Herald."

COKER OF THE SIXTH!

Most of you have read about Coker of the Sixth. Most of you are aware that Horace Coker of the Fifth is older than Reginald of the Sixth. But how many of you realise what Coker minor had to go through before he was "set" in the Sixth Form at Greyfriars?

The current issue of our companion paper, the "Popular," tells you all about Coker minor of the Sixth. Horace appeals to Harry Wharton & Co. to look after his young brother, who is, it seems, almost certain to go into the Remove. But young Reginald is a brainy boy, and goes into the Sixth.

Can the Removites help him there? Can Coker major help him? Those questions are answered in our companion paper.

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The same issue also contains a splendid complete story of Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood, and an easy competition which gives you a chance of winning pocket-money. Mr. Sidney Drew contributes a magnificent serial, entitled, "The Invisible Raider," whilst Billy Hunter occupies four pages with his now famous "Weekly."

Readers of this paper who like school stories will find that the "Popular" is the ideal paper for the week-end.

You can get the current issue now. The next number will appear on Friday. Get the issue now on sale, and I'm sure you'll want next Friday's "Popular."

THE FINEST BOOK OF SCHOOL AND ADVENTURE TALES FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.



NOW ON SALE!

Correspondence.

R. Russell, 2, Bridport Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey, wishes to correspond with readers overseas, preferably those interested in stamp-collecting.

Miss M. Welch, 62, Pasquier Road, Walthamstow, E.17, wishes to correspond with readers anywhere, ages 17 upwards.

J. Dawson, 5, Clayton Street, off King Street West, Chestergate, Stockport, wishes to correspond with readers anywhere, ages 11-14.

R. G. Barr, 345, Barbadoes Street, Christchurch, New Zealand, wants short stories and articles on photography for his amateur magazine. State price.

J. Ashury, 95, Neebells Park Road, Neebells, Birmingham, would like to correspond with readers interested in stamps.

Terence Mulcahy, c/o. Stewarts & Lloyds (S.A.), Ltd., P.O. Box 296, Pietermaritzburg, Natal, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers in Australia and Canada, ages 14-15.

M. Lurie, 19, Kloof Street, Cape Town, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers interested in stamps.

W. Sherry, 15, Magpie Street, Kensington Park, S.E.11, wishes to correspond with readers in the British Empire, ages 15-19.

R. Garrard, 164, Der Street, Norwich, wishes to contribute stories to a high-class amateur magazine.

Donald Asherson, 7, Prince Street Gardens, Cape Town, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers living in India, Canada, West Indies, and Australia, ages 12-14.

S. Schneider, 1, Constitution Street, Cape Town, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers overseas.

Lucas J. Digne, Glen Lily, Parow, nr. Cape Town, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers anywhere for the exchange of postcards and stamps.

K. M. Mitchell, Nariva, 520, Anniesland Road, Scottdunhill, nr. Glasgow, wishes to correspond with readers, ages 13-14.

Norman Burton, 67, Harrington Street, Cape Town, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers overseas.

J. S. Robson, 308, Rectory Road, Gateshead-on-Tyne, Durham, would like to hear from readers, ages 18 upwards.

Peter Murray, Dunrobin Street, Helmsdale, Sutherlandshire, Scotland, appeals to other readers who have spare copies of the Companion Papers to communicate with him. He is a confirmed invalid, and would be grateful to anybody who can send him some of the stories.

H. Bailey, 22, Greaves Road, Mashro', Rotherham, Yorks, wants readers and contributors for his twelve-page printed amateur magazine.

F. Taylor, 4, California, Winton, Co. Durham, wishes to hear from readers interested in stamps, as he is an enthusiast with a large collection.

Frederick Giles, 29, Bassingham Road, Wandsworth, London, S.W. 18, wishes to correspond with readers abroad—subjects, stamps and postcards.

Jack Arthur Samuels, 8, Windmill Street, Tottenham Court Road, W.1, wishes to correspond with London Boy Scouts—if possible, members of the Marylebone Troops, between the ages of 12 and 15.

Alfred Harcombe, 17, Peel Street, Easton Road, Bristol, would like to hear from readers in England or Australia, ages 17-20.

Your Editor.

LONG COMPLETE TALE OF THE CHUMS OF GREYFRIARS EVERY WEEK.

The Magnet Library

The Editor will be obliged if you will hand this copy, when finished with, to a friend.



Bunter, the Bard!

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.

What's Wrong with William?

"WHERE is Bunter?" Mr. Quelch asked the question as he glanced along the Remove dining-table. Greyfriars had assembled for dinner. As a rule, William George Bunter, of the Remove, was the first in the hall, and the last out of it. Bunter was a great trencherman. He ate not to live, but lived to eat.

On this occasion, however, the familiar figure of the Owl of the Remove was conspicuous by its absence. Mr. Quelch could not fail to notice that Billy Bunter was not in view. "Where is Bunter?" he asked again. Up and down the table there was a general shaking of heads.

Skinner, who was by way of being a humorist, lifted up his soup-plate, as if he expected to find Billy Bunter underneath it.

Bolsover major made a pretence of looking under the table, and in struggling back to his usual position, he caught his head a sounding crack on the table's edge.

"Yarooogh!" Bolsover's yell of anguish rang through the dining-hall.

Mr. Quelch frowned. "Thoughtless that will teach you a lesson. Bolsover!" he said. "You should not exercise your queer sense of humour in the dining-hall. Wharton!"

The captain of the Remove rose in his place.

"You will oblige me by finding Bunter and bringing him here at once. Apparently he failed to hear the dinner-gong."

Harry Wharton promptly set off on his mission. He wended his steps towards Study No. 7 in the Remove passage.

As he approached that famous—or, rather, notorious—apartment, which served the double purpose of a study and the editorial sanctum of "Billy Bunter's Weekly," strange noises came to Harry Wharton's ears.

He halted outside the door, and listened.

There were sounds of someone pacing restlessly to and fro, and also of loud mummings.

"What the merry dickens—" began Wharton, in amazement. And he threw open the door of the study.

The next moment his amazement grew. An extraordinary scene met his gaze. The study was in a state of the most appalling disorder. Books and papers were strewn in wild confusion upon the floor. An inkpot had overturned on the table, and a rivulet of blue-black fluid flowed merrily over the manuscript of a detective story which Peter Todd had been writing.

If Peter had come into the study at that moment, instead of Wharton, there would undoubtedly have been ructions. Peter prided himself upon the neatness of his manuscripts, and the sight of the ink flowing freely over his story would have roused him to a state of homicidal fury.

In the midst of all the chaos, Billy Bunter paced to and fro.

The fat junior presented an extraordinary appearance. His jacket was off, and his sleeves rolled up, revealing a pair of very plump forearms. His hair was rumpled and awry; his Eton collar, his fingers, and his countenance bore signs of ink.

Clutched in Billy Bunter's hand was a copy of a weekly periodical. It looked like "Answers."

And ever and anon, as he paced the study floor, Billy Bunter mumbled incoherently to himself. He seemed to be seeking inspiration; and so engrossed was he in that toilsome task that he had failed to notice the entry and presence of the captain of the Remove.

"Bunter!"

The name rang out like a pistol-shot. Billy Bunter stopped short in his stride. He came out of his reverie with a start, and stood blinking at Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton, I wish you wouldn't come barging in like this! Can't you see I'm busy? It's dinner-time, you frabjous ass!"

"Eh?" "Kverybody's in hall!" "Well, I hope it keeps fine for them!" said Billy Bunter. "I'm not going!" "You want your dinner, I suppose?" "No."

Harry Wharton gave a jump. He wondered if he had heard aright.

Here was Billy Bunter, a fellow to whom grub was the be-all and the end-all of existence, calmly announcing the fact that he didn't want any dinner!

"You—you must be rotting!" gasped Wharton, at length.

"Oh, no, I'm not!" was the reply. "I can't sit feeding my face at a time like this, when there's important work to be done."

"Are you getting out the next number of your 'Weekly'?"

"No."

"You—you're not feeling ill, by any chance?"

"Of course not!"

"Well, I'm dashed if I can understand why you don't want your dinner. As a rule, you want your own, and about three other fellows' dinners, in the bargain!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Quelchy's told me to come along and fetch you," said Harry.

"I'm not coming!"

"Your mistake! You're coming along right now!" said Wharton.

And, taking a tight grip on Billy Bunter's collar, he marched him out of the study, helping him on with his jacket as he did so.

Bunter wriggled and squirmed, and protested all the way to the dining-hall. But he was helpless in Wharton's strong grasp.

Kicking open the door of the dining-hall, the captain of the Remove gave Billy Bunter a push which caused the fat junior to slip on all fours in the crowded room.

There was a ripple of merriment from the onlookers.

Billy Bunter picked himself up, and went to his place at the Remove table.

"Bunter!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

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Johnny Bull picked up a cushion, and hurled it with unerring aim at Billy Bunter. "Yarrah!" yelled the Owl. "Now perhaps we shall be left in peace!" grunted Harry Wharton. (See Chapter 3.)

sternly. "Why did you not come in to dinner at the proper time?"

"Because I didn't want any, sir."

Billy Bunter's reply fairly took the Remove-master's breath away. And Bunter's schoolfellows stared at him incredulously.

"It is most unusual for you to be without appetite, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch. "Have you been consuming indigestible compounds at the school shop?"

"Nunno, sir."

"Then what is the reason for your loss of appetite?"

"I've got other things to think about, sir—things that are far more important than grub. I hope I've got a soul that rises above eating and drinking."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

Mr. Quelch looked hard at Billy Bunter.

"Very well, my boy," he said. "I will not compel you to eat your dinner. After the prodigious quantity of food which you consumed at breakfast-time, a brief period of fasting will do you no harm."

Mr. Quelch proceeded with his own meal.

Billy Bunter sat looking at his plate in an abstracted sort of way. The plate was laden with a liberal portion of steak-and-kidney pudding, potatoes, and green peas.

It was a dinner after Billy Bunter's own heart. But the fat junior did not seem to fancy it at that moment. There was a far-away look in his eyes. He did not seem to notice his schoolfellows. As Byron would have said, he was among them, but not of them.

What was wrong with Bunter?

That question was being whispered up and down the Remove table.

All eyes were focussed upon the fat junior, who still sat with a vacant stare, making no attempt to eat what had been placed before him.

After a time, apple-dumplings were served.

Billy Bunter had often been heard to declare that life held no grander treat

than an apple-dumpling. As a rule, he demolished three or four of them. The Greyfriars cook had a gift for making apple-dumplings. They were delicious.

But Billy Bunter sat unmoved as his plate of steak-pudding was taken away, and an apple-dumpling set in its place. He did not even seem to notice the dumpling. And when Bobover major asked him to pass the sugar, he neither heard nor heeded.

Bobover, never particular about table manners, calmly reached out and secured the sugar-basin for himself.

Then Billy Bunter's lips began to move, and he mumbled something unintelligible. He continued to mumble, and presently the sound reached the ears of Mr. Quelch.

"Bunter!"

"Mummmmm!"

Mr. Quelch brought his clenched fist down on the table with an impact which caused the plates and dishes to rock.

"Cease that ridiculous mumbling at once, Bunter! Do you hear me?"

Billy Bunter looked up with a start. "Eh? Were you speaking to me, sir?" he stammered.

"I was!" roared Mr. Quelch. "Your behaviour is most exasperating. What is the matter with you, boy? Are you ill?"

"Nunno, sir!"

"You seem to me to be mentally unbalanced," said Mr. Quelch. "Mumbling to one's self is one of the first symptoms of a deranged mind!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" thundered the Remove-master. "Bunter's behaviour is not a matter for merriment. If I have occasion to reprove you again, Bunter, I shall award you a hundred lines!"

"Oh, excuse me!"

After that Billy Bunter made a great effort to pull himself together.

But he still seemed very preoccupied, and the apple-dumpling remained untouched.

When the meal was over the fat junior was galvanised into action. He rushed away to Study No. 7, flung himself

breathlessly into the apartment, and locked the door.

A crowd of fellows clamoured for admission. They beat upon the door with their fists; they called upon Billy Bunter to unlock the door. But the fat junior heeded not.

"Bunter, you ass!"

"Bunter, you dunder!"

"Let us in!"

"Unlock this door!"

Billy Bunter paid no heed to the clamour.

"I'm locked out of my own study!" howled Peter Todd. "This is the limit!"

"My dear Bunter," said the guileless Alonzo, placing his lips to the keyhole, "I beg of you to grant us admittance!"

No answer.

The juniors in the passage could hear Billy Bunter pacing to and fro in the study, muttering to himself. They marvelled at his curious behaviour, and were very anxious to discover the why and wherefore of it.

But the door remained locked. And the crowd continued to beat their fists upon the panels in rage and impotence.

For reasons best known to himself, Billy Bunter elected to keep his schoolfellows at bay.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Great Expectations!

"WHAT'S all this row about?" Wingate of the Sixth came striding along the passage.

There was a scowl on Wingate's rugged face, and an asphalt in his hand. As he bore down upon the crowd of juniors he seemed like a giant on the warpath.

"We're waiting for a certain fat rat to come out of his hole, Wingate," explained Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is Bunter in here?" demanded Wingate, tapping on the door of Study No. 7 with his asphalt.

"Can't you hear him?" grinned Nugent.

Trap, tramp, tramp!

The movements of William George Bunter within the study were distinctly audible.

Wingate's frown deepened.

"Somebody's perched a copy of 'Answers' from my study," he exclaimed. "If it was Bunter, I'll make the young pirate sit up!"

The captain of Greyfriars had every reason to think that Billy Bunter might be the culprit.

When anything was missing from studies, Billy Bunter was invariably the cause. Bunter had an unpleasant little habit of borrowing things without first consulting the owners.

Wingate continued to rap on the door of the study.

"Bunter," he exclaimed, "open this door at once!"

There was a gasp of alarm from within.

"Oh! Is that you, Wingate?"

"It is!" was the grim reply. "I'm waiting for you to unlock this door, and I'm not disposed to wait much longer!"

Billy Bunter promptly unlocked the door. He could afford to ignore the demands of his own Form-fellows, but he dared not defy the stalwart captain of Greyfriars.

Wingate pushed open the door, and strode into the study. He found himself wading in a sea of manuscripts. Seldom had Study No. 7 presented such a disordered appearance.

OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS.
By FRANK RICHARDS.

In the midst of the chaos stood Billy Bunter, quaking with alarm. He was in the act of tucking something into his inner coat-pocket, when Wingate intercepted him.

"You fat young marauder! This is my copy of 'Answers'!"

"Oh, really, Wingate, I—I thought you had finished with it, you know!"

"Well, I hadn't finished with it, as it happens. And I haven't finished with you, either. I'll endeavour to teach you that raiding senior studies isn't a paying game!"

Wingate grasped Billy Bunter by the collar and swung him across the table. Then he brought his ashpit into play.

"Whack, whack, whack!"

"Ow! Wow! Yaroooooh!"

Billy Bunter's yells of anguish fairly awakened the echoes.

The doorway was thronged with juniors, but there was no sympathy on their grinning faces. They considered that their plump schoolfellow deserved all he was getting.

Wingate desisted at length from his exertions.

Without another word to the victim he strode out of the study, taking his copy of "Answers" with him.

Billy Bunter stood groaning and gasping in the midst of the scattered manuscripts.

"Serve you jolly well right, porpoise!" said Johnny Bull. "What were you doing with Wingate's copy of 'Answers'?"

"He couldn't have been reading it," said Bob Cherry. "He'd be stuck if he came to a word with more than five letters in it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, "can one of you lend me a copy of this week's 'Answers'? I—I don't think it would be safe to borrow Wingate's again."

"Ha, ha! I'm jolly sure it wouldn't!" chuckled Harry Wharton.

"Old Prout takes in 'Answers,'" said Tom Brown. "He goes in for the 'Trebles' competition. He won a fiver once, and he's trying to repeat the experiment."

Billy Bunter promptly moved towards the door.

"I'm going to ask Prout to lend me his copy," he said.

And before anybody could stop him the fat junior scuttled away.

He returned inside a couple of minutes, triumphantly clasping a copy of "Answers."

"Prout was as nice as pie," he said, "especially when I explained to him that I was going in for the poetry competition."

"The—the poetry competition?" echoed Harry Wharton.

"Yes. Haven't you fellows seen it? Here it is." Billy Bunter found the page.

"Special competition for readers under the age of sixteen. You've got to write a poem on any topic you like, and there's a prize of fifty quid for the best effort."

"And you're going in for it?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Of course!"

"Oh, my stars! Bunter—a merry poet! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter, the budding Byron!" gurgled Dick Penfold. "Carry me home to die, somebody!"

Billy Bunter's mysterious behaviour was explained at last.

The fat junior had fallen a victim to the craze of verse-writing—a craze which is generally very acute while it lasts. He had been in the throes of composition—

hence the littered appearance of the study. Hence, also, Billy Bunter's indifference to dinner.

In his burning anxiety to win the prize of fifty pounds offered by "Answers," Bunter had let everything else go by the board.

It did not seem to occur to the fat junior that his chances of winning the prize were very remote, if not actually nil.

There were scores of youthful poets up and down the country who could produce excellent verse of the high standard required by "Answers." But Billy Bunter, who could hardly find a rhyme for his own name, hadn't a dog's chance of succeeding. He sometimes wrote doggerel for his own "Weekly," it was true. But the effort of composing it was terrific.

Harry Wharton & Co. were convulsed with merriment.

"This is the richest thing I've struck for whole terms!" said Frank Nugent. "Bunter going in for a poetry competition! Great jumping crackers!"

"If it were an eating contest, he'd stand a jolly good chance!" said Vernon Smith. "But he can't write poetry for toffee! He can't even spell!"

"Oh, really, Smithy! When my name appears as the winner of the fifty quid, you'll have to eat your words!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"When the editor of 'Answers' reads your contribution, he'll either have you chained up, or place himself under police protection!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter flourished a fat fist in the laughing faces of his schoolfellows.

"Dry up, you cackling asses!" he snorted. "If you've only come here to mock me, you can jolly well clear off!"

I've quite made up my mind to win this fifty quid. I've borrowed a rhyming dictionary from Potter of the Fifth, and I'm going full steam ahead!"

"You'll be the death of me, Bunt!" sobbed Bob Cherry.

At that moment the bell rang for afternoon lessons.

Tucking the copy of "Answers" and the rhyming dictionary also, into his pocket, Billy Bunter rolled away to the Remove Form-room, with a hilarious crowd at his heels.

Mr. Quelch invariably found Bunter a trying pupil. And on this particular afternoon the fat junior drove his Form-master almost to distraction.

Instead of paying attention to the lesson, Billy Bunter held his rhyming dictionary open under the desk, and stole sly peeps at it from time to time.

Presently he began to mumble aloud, as follows:

"Tatch—catch—snatch—hatch—batch—detatch."

"Dry up, you fool!" muttered Bulstrode, who sat next to Bunter.

"Quelch will hear you in a minute!"

"Dig—pig—big—wig—sprig—twig!" mumbled Billy Bunter.

Mr. Quelch looked up sharply.

"Bunter!" he roared.

"Shout—lout—out—rout—Prout!" murmured the fat junior.

Mr. Quelch picked up a cane.

"I am tired of remonstrating with you verbally, Bunter!" he exclaimed. "Stand out before the class!"

"Brain—insane—cane—pain!" muttered Billy Bunter prophetically.

Mr. Quelch strode forward, and jerked the fat junior from his place.

"How dare you persist in uttering this absurd jargon of rhymes, Bunter?" he thundered. "Are you not aware that I am addressing you?"

"Oh, crumbs!"

The rhyming dictionary fell to the floor with a thud.

Billy Bunter was hauled out in front of the class, and commanded to hold out his hand.

Swish, swish, swish!

"Yaroooooh!"

The cane bit into Billy Bunter's fat palm, and he executed a sort of waltz on the floor of the Form-room.



"I wish you chaps would disappear. You really have no right in here," said Bunter, peevishly. Harry Wharton & Co. stared blankly at their plump schoolfellow, and Johnny Bull tapped his forehead significantly.

(See Chapter 4.)

"Now go to your place!" panted Mr. Quelch. "And if I have a repetition of this conduct, I will conduct you before Dr. Locke!"

Billy Bunter squeezed his hands tightly together, and squirmed back to his seat. And he was wise enough not to consult the rhyming dictionary again until afternoon lessons were over!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Poetry Fever!

THE Greyfriars Remove had it badly.

They had fallen victims to the poetry craze.

In some cases, it amounted almost to a disease.

Even the fellows who had laughed at Billy Bunter for having the complaint, now had it themselves.

Very little prep was done in the Remove studies that evening.

The poetry competition promoted by the "Golden Ome"—as "Answers" was popularly called—had set everybody bursting into rhyme.

There had been a run on the bookstall at Friarsdale Station, and every available copy of "Answers" had been bought up. Billy Bunter discovered that he had plenty of rivals in the field.

Everybody in the Remove seemed to be going in for the competition. No entry-fee was required, and the contest was open to everybody under the age of sixteen.

This was rather a blow to Coker of the Fifth, who did not come within the age limit.

Coker, who rather fancied himself as a poet, was heard to remark that the fifty-pound prize would have been "a dead cert." for him, if only he had been

eligible. The other fellows felt relieved to think that the editor of "Answers" would be spared the awful torture of having to read one of Coker's priceless effusions!

The Famous Five intended to enter for the competition. So did Mark Linley, and Peter Todd, and Archie Howell, and Bob Cherry, and a score of others.

Dick Penfold, the recognised poet-laureate of the Remove, was also heard to remark that he was going to compete. But he did not speak boastfully of his chances, as Billy Bunter did. He set about his task in a quiet and determined manner. Quiet determination was a characteristic of the rebel's son, and because of it he was likely to fare better in the competition than his rivals.

Harry Wharton & Co. spent the evening in Study No. 1, stringing verses together.

They had numerous interruptions. Billy Bunter was the first visitor. He came rushing into the study with the rhyming dictionary in one hand and a sheet of paper in the other.

"I say, you fellows! I've got an inspiration at last!"

"Take it away and bury it!" growled Johnny Bull.

Billy Bunter ignored that polite injunction.

"I've made a start with my poem—my first poem!" he said. "I've got the first verse written. I'll read it out to you fellows, if you'll give me your word of honour, if you won't crib it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The idea of anybody wishing to "crib" anything which Billy Bunter had written struck the Famous Five as being decidedly humorous.

"You silly fat chump!" said Bob Cherry. "We should have to be jolly

hard up for ideas before we started cribbing from you!"

"Yes, rather!" said Frank Nugent. "Let's hear this wonderful first verse of yours, Bunter."

The fat junior cleared his throat, and proceeded to declaim, in all solemnity, the following touching lines:

"When I first came to Greyfriars School
I was a little boy;
The apple of my pater's eye,
My mater's pride and joy."

"Water!" gasped Bob Cherry faintly. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter blinked at the laughing juniors through his big spectacles.

"Blest if I can see anything to cackle at!" he said perversely. "I consider that's a jolly good start!"

"Well, if that's only a start, may we never live to hear the finish!" said Nugent forcibly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's wrong with that verse?" demanded Billy Bunter indignantly.

"Boy and 'joy' are ripping rhymes!"

"But 'school' doesn't rhyme with 'eye'!" said Harry Wharton. "You might as well attempt to rhyme 'bacon' with 'Shakespeare'!"

"Ass!" said Billy Bunter. "The first and third lines aren't supposed to rhyme!"

"Oh, aren't they?" said Wharton. "We live and learn. I suppose that's what you call blank verse?"

"Very blank verse!" said Johnny Bull. "A complete blank, in fact—like Bunter's mind!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter snorted.

"You can say what you like about that verse," he said. "But the metre's perfect, the rhyming's perfect, and the whole thing's perfect! That verse alone would be sufficient to win me the fifty quid!"

"Or make the adjudicator swoon!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That verse of yours, my podgy and unpoetical Bunter," said Harree Singh, "is the biggest atrocity that your ludicrous brain has ever perpetrated!"

"Hear, hear!" said Harry Wharton. "And now you can buzz off, Bunter. We're busy!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

Billy Bunter lingered in the study. Whereupon Johnny Bull picked up a cushion, and hurled it with unerring aim at the fat junior.

With a wild yell the Owl of the Remove went whirling through the open doorway.

"Now, perhaps we shall be left in peace," granted Harry Wharton.

But he was too sanguine.

Scarcely had Billy Bunter taken his hurried departure when Skinner came in. He nodded affably to the Famous Five, who returned his nod with fierce glares.

"Travel!" said Bob Cherry curtly.

"Impossible!" said Skinner. "The last train left Friarsdale half an hour ago. I say, you chaps, I've finished my poem for 'Answers.' It's great stuff. Thought it out and put it on paper inside ten minutes. There's a record for you! They say that Milton once composed a poem in a quarter of an hour. Well, I've beaten Milton by a neck!"

"But Milton's poem will live so long as the English language is spoken," said Nugent. "Whereas yours won't live at



"Which hand, sir, please—the left or right? And please don't hit with all your might!" said Bunter. That was too much for the Removites. They simply roared. "Ha, ha, ha!" (See Chapter 5.)

all. It'll perish miserably in the waste-paper basket in its infancy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's all very well for you fellows to cackle," said Skinner. "But when I start to recite my brilliant poem you'll begin to sit up and take notice."

"You're sure you shan't need to take a stimulant—in the form of a stiff lime-juice and soda?" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Listen!" said Skinner dramatically. "My poem is called 'The Eve of Waterloo!' There was once a great battle fought at Waterloo, you know."

"Go on!"

"I've described it ripingly," said Skinner. "The first verse goes like this:

"There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered then

Her beauty and her chivalry; and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women

And brave men.
A thousand hearts beat happily, and

when
Music arose with its voluptuous
swell,

Soft love looked love to eyes which
spake again,

And all was merry as a marriage-
bell.

But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes
like a rising knell!"

Skinner paused.

"You fellows must admit that that's the real goods!" he said.

"It certainly is!" agreed Wharton.

"Quite one of the best things that Lord Byron ever wrote!"

Skinner gave a startled gasp.

"Oh, crumby!" he ejaculated. "Then—then you know?"

"Of course we know, fathead!" said Nugent. "Do you imagine for one moment that you can palm off one of Byron's poems as your own work?"

"Of all the cheek!" exclaimed Johnny Bull, rising to his feet. "Bump the cad!"

Skinner turned to flee, but he was too late.

The other members of the Famous Five sprang to their feet and assisted Johnny Bull to give Skinner the bumping he deserved.

Three times in succession the cad of the Remove landed with great violence on the floor of the study. And by the time the ordeal was over Skinner bitterly regretted having attempted to deceive the Famous Five.

"Now get out!" said Harry Wharton.

And Skinner went, with Bob Cherry's boot to facilitate his exit.

"Now," said Johnny Bull, resuming his seat, "we can get on with the washing."

Even as Johnny spoke a gentle tap sounded on the door of the study, and Alonzo Todd wandered in, bearing a lengthy roll of manuscript in his hand.

"Get out!" roared five voices in chorus.

"Really, my dear fellows—"

"Scat!"

Alonzo Todd backed away towards the door. But he did not put himself on the other side of it.

"You really must hear my effusion!" he said. "I am sure you will agree with me, my dear fellows, when I have declared it, that it is a potential prize-winner. It is called 'An Ode to an Expiring Blackbeetle'—"

"Really, my dear fellows—"

"Scat!"

Alonzo Todd backed away towards the door. But he did not put himself on the other side of it.

"You really must hear my effusion!" he said. "I am sure you will agree with me, my dear fellows, when I have declared it, that it is a potential prize-winner. It is called 'An Ode to an Expiring Blackbeetle'—"

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"You really must hear my effusion!" he said. "I am sure you will agree with me, my dear fellows, when I have declared it, that it is a potential prize-winner. It is called 'An Ode to an Expiring Blackbeetle'—"



The chair tilted back suddenly, and Hurree Singh was precipitated into the fireplace. "Oh! What have I done?" he groaned. "That verse of yours," said Johnny Bull, ferociously. "It's the most appalling drive!" (See Chapter 6.)

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Alonzo Todd seemed surprised at the laughter. But he took encouragement from it.

"It is a most touching ode," he said.

"It describes all the emotions that the poor insect experienced before it was crushed to death under Bolsover major's relentless heel!"

"Help!" gasped Bob Cherry.

Alonzo unfolded the roll of manuscript.

Then, raising one hand aloft with a dramatic gesture, he proceeded to recite his effusion.

"See, the harmless little beetle
Down the passage crawling!

Wonder if Bolsover's feet'll
Send the creature sprawling!"

Alonzo paused. He made a queer gulp, as if he were choking back a sob.

Then he wiped his eye.

The Famous Five wiped their eyes also—with merriment.

"Oh, my hat!" gurgled Bob Cherry.

This beats Billy Bunter's effort hollow!"

"Poor little beetle!" murmured Nugent.

"Can we bear to hear of its tragic fate? Boo-hoo!"

The guileless Alonzo thought that Nugent was genuinely moved.

Delighted to think that he had appealed to the emotions of the Famous Five, he proceeded to the second verse:

"Prowling like a midgey rhino,
Little dreaming of its doom—

Little guessing that the fire
Soon would be its awful tomb!"

The Famous Five almost went into hysterics.

"Prowling like a midgey rhino,
Little dreaming of its doom—

Little guessing that the fire
Soon would be its awful tomb!"

The Famous Five almost went into hysterics.

"Did anybody ever hear of a black-beetle that resembled a rhinoceros?" gasped Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Alonzo Todd looked astonished at the laughter.

"Really, my dear fellows, I am surprised that a pathetic verse like that should excite your risibility!" he said.

"This is not intended to be a comic poem."

"Oh, isn't it?" said Johnny Bull, in wonder. "I made sure it was a humorous skit on something!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bear with me, my dear fellows, whilst I recite the third verse," said Alonzo.

"It is the most poignant verse in the poem."

"I suppose it goes something like this!" said Bob Cherry.

"Weep and howl, ye gloomy gushers!
Soon there comes a heavy tread.

Bolav, with his beetle-crushers,
Kills the little beggar dead!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Alonzo Todd lifted his hands in horror.

"I am amazed, Cherry, that you can jest at such a moment!" he said.

"I'll guarantee that verse beats yours, anyway," said Bob. "Let's hear your version."

"One minute," said Nugent. "Wait till I've wrung out my handkerchief!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

In a croaking voice Alonzo Todd rendered his third verse.

"Burly, beefy, big Bolsover,
Stalks along with giant tread.

Knocks the little creature over,
See its tiny arms outspread!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Burly, beefy, big Bolsover,
Stalks along with giant tread.

Knocks the little creature over,
See its tiny arms outspread!"

Bob Cherry lay back in his chair and licked up his heels in a paroxysm of merriment.

The other members of the Famous Five laughed so much that they seemed in imminent danger of breaking blood-vessels.

Alonzo Todd, looking very perplexed, waited until the laughter had subsided somewhat. Then he continued his recitation:

"On its back it lies a-wriggling—"

"Enough!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Spare us the rest, Loney! As you are strong, be merciful!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Alonzo would have been wise to take the hint. Instead of which, he went on reciting. Whereupon, the Famous Five sprang to their feet, seized the amateur poet, and bumped him soundly.

Three times in succession Alonzo descended to the floor.

"Ow, ow, ow!" he gasped.

"On his back he lies a-wriggling!" quoted Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Alonzo Todd picked himself up and limped sorrowfully away. He had expected his "Ode to an Expiring Black-beetle" to make a great hit. But in three days poetry—real poetry—was not appreciated, apparently. It was like casting pearls before swine. Alonzo had expected applause; he had received a severe bumping. And it was with a heavy tread, and an equally heavy heart, that he limped away to his own study, carefully avoiding all blackbeetles en route!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

William the Rhymer!

BILLY BUNTER was seated alone in Study No. 7.

He was working by the light of a paraffin lamp.

Mr. Quelch had given the fat junior permission to stay up late, on condition that he did not use the electric light.

Billy Bunter had been in the habit of wasting a considerable amount of electric light when working late on his "Weekly." Mr. Quelch was determined to put that little habit in the bad.

So Bunter had to be content with the dull glow of the paraffin lamp.

He had drawn the armchair up to the table, and he was laboriously proceeding with his poem—the poem that was to win the fifty pounds offered by "Answers"—perhaps!

Billy Bunter's rhyming dictionary lay open on the table, and ever and anon the fat junior paused, with pen uplifted, and mumbled a string of rhymes.

"Green, feed, weed, creed, speed, intercede."

Bunter was not a rapid worker. He lacked a fluent pen. He composed, on an average, about one line per hour; and even then he generally "scrapped" it in favour of another line.

Study No. 7 resembled the premises of a waste-paper merchant. There was paper everywhere—on the floor, in the fireplace, on the chairs, on the table, and on the window-sill.

The firm which supplied Greyfriars School with stationery would have blessed Billy Bunter could they have seen him at that moment.

The rest of the Removites had retired long since.

As a matter of fact, it was long past the seniors' bed-time. Indeed, most of the masters were in the act of turning in.

But William George Bunter remained at his post, mumbling rhymes to himself over and over again until his brain was a veritable storehouse of rhymes.

Boom!

A solemn chime rang out from the school clock-tower.

"By Jove, that gave me quite a shock! It really must be one o'clock!"

Billy Bunter spoke in rhyme quite unconsciously. He had become so saturated, as it were, with rhyming, that he had developed that rare disease of babbling in rhyme.

"I'll sit and slog with pen and ink, for just another hour, I think!" murmured the fat junior.

It is probable that he would have remained in the study indefinitely, had not Harry Wharton chanced to wake up just after one o'clock and discover that Billy Bunter's bed was empty.

The captain of the Remove got out of bed, slipped on a dressing-gown, and aroused his chums.

Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh were shaken in turn. They sat up in bed, blinking drowsily at Harry Wharton.

"Anything wrong, old chap?" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Yes. Bunter hasn't come to bed yet."

"My hat!"

"Surely the mad duffer hasn't been scotching in his study all this time!" exclaimed Nugent.

"Looks like it. We'd better go down and rout him out."

Wharton's chums promptly arose and donned their dressing-gowns. Then they followed their leader out of the dormitory and down the stairs.

Groping their way along the Remove passage to Study No. 7, they threw open the door.

A podgy face beamed with ink was turned towards them with alarm.

"I say, you fellows, what's the game? Don't startle me. It's a shame!"

The Famous Five gasped.

"He—he's spouting in rhyme!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"What you chaps would disappear."

"You really have no right in here!" said Bunter.

"My hat!"

Harry Wharton & Co. stared blankly at their plump schoolfellow.

"My poem's getting on first-rate. To win the prize will be my fate!" observed Bunter.

Johnny Bull tapped his forehead significantly.

"He's got bats in his belfry!" he said.

"Absolutely!"

"The ludicrous fat chum is wandering in his mindfulness!" said Hurree Singh.

Billy Bunter glared at the speaker.

"Don't talk to me like that, you nigger! Or else your chivvy I'll disfigure!"

Hurree Singh clenched his hands.

"Take back that threat, porpoise," he said, advancing upon Bunter, "or I will definitely snipe you on the boko!"

Harry Wharton reached out his hand, and jerked the Nabob back.

"Go easy with him, Inky. He's not responsible for what he says or does. He's mad!"

"Mad as a hatter, or a March hare!" said Nugent.

"I wish you chaps would go away! I can't compose things, if you stay!" said Bunter petulantly.

"You're going to compose yourself!" said Wharton grimly.

"Eh?"

"You're going to compose yourself to slumber! Do you think we're going to let you stick here all night, you champion chump?"

"From Mr. Quelch I had permission to stay and write my composition!" said Bunter.

"Oh, my hat! Collar him!"

Several pairs of hands were promptly fastened upon Billy Bunter.

The fat junior was hoisted to his feet, and marched out of the study.

Frank Nugent remained behind for a moment to extinguish the lamp.

Protesting volubly—and in rhyme—Billy Bunter was forcibly taken along to the Remove dormitory. He showed no desire to undress himself, so Bob Cherry did it for him. He wrenched off Bunter's clothes, and forced his limbs into the highly-coloured suit of pyjamas which the fat junior wore.

Assisted by Wharton and Johnny Bull Bob then lifted Billy Bunter into bed.

"Let's hope that when he wakes up in the morning he'll be cured of that frightful disease of jabbering in rhyme!" said Harry Wharton.

"If he isn't cured, we'll jolly soon cure him!" panted Bob Cherry. "A few bumpings ought to do the trick."

Yes, rather!

Billy Bunter remained awake a long time, blinking into the darkness.

His brain was still teeming with rhymes, but he had sufficient sense not to utter them aloud. Harry Wharton & Co. were not likely to lend him a sympathetic ear.

The grey dawn was creeping in at the high windows of the Remove dormitory before Billy Bunter sank into slumber.

And then he had a delightful dream. He saw himself purchasing a copy of "Answers" from the bookstall on Friarale Station; and on opening the periodical, he was greeted by the following paragraph:

"POETRY COMPETITION RESULT!"

"The Editor has great pleasure in announcing that the cash prize of Fifty Pounds, for the best poem submitted in this contest, has been awarded to

WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER,

Greyfriars School,

Friarale, Kent,

whose effort was by far the most brilliant of the fifteen thousand submitted. A cheque has already been despatched to the lucky winner."

If Billy Bunter's dream came true, he would indeed be in clover.

But, alas!

Dreams sometimes go by contraries!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

An Incurable Disease!

THE rising-bell is clanging out. I must get up, without a doubt!"

It was Billy Bunter who made that poetic observation. His schoolfellows gazed at him in wonder.

"He's still got it!" said Bob Cherry.

"As badly as ever!" said Johnny Bull.

"I say, you chaps, I'm feeling weary. And everything seems dull and dreary. I wish I didn't have to rise. Heavy with slumber are my eyes!"

"What's the silly duffer babbling about?" gasped Archie Howell. "Has this poetry competition turned his brain, or what?"

(Continued on page 15.)

NEXT

MONDAY!

"THE ISLAND RAIDERS!"

A SPLENDID TALE

OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 711.

The Greyfriars HERALD

SUPPLEMENT No. 38.

Week Ending Sept. 24th, 1921.



THE SCHOOL HOUSE



Harry Wharton
Editor



THE ENTRANCE GATE

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

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

A CANDIDATE FOR THE ZOO!

A Special Letter.

The following letter has been addressed by Peter Todd, of the Remove, to the President of the Royal Zoological Society:

"Dear Sir,—There is a strange creature here at Greyfriars. It is partly a porpoise, and hardly a box-constrictor. It is also a true human, inasmuch as it is able to speak. It responds to the name of 'Buntie'."

"I have made a careful study of this strange creature, and beg to forward you my report herewith.

"I have watched Buntie at the breakfast-table, and its antics are extraordinary. It can consume a dozen rashers of bacon at a single sitting, and then squeal for more. It can also eat toast and marmalade until further orders.

"The creature, so far as I can ascertain, is quite tame. It has never been known to attack any human beings, except a youth of its own tribe, named Rammy. The latter was alleged to have robbed Buntie of a sixpenny postal-order, whereupon what a box-constrictor was doing with a postal-order in its possession I cannot imagine.

"I also watched the strange creature at the dinner-table, and its gastronomic feats put those of breakfast-time entirely in the shade. It consumed plate after plate of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, and such an enormous quantity of vegetables that it must carry a vegetable garden in its interior!

"I was wondering if you had any accommodation for this mysterious creature in the Zoological Gardens, and whether it would be better to place it with the other porpoises, or with the box-constrictors. Its fate, I may add, entitles it to a prominent position in the monkey-house.

"If you will let me know, I will make arrangements to have the strange beast packed in a special cattle-truck, and despatched to London. We wouldn't mind keeping it at Greyfriars, but this place happens to be a public school—not a menagerie."

"Hoping to hear from you on the subject in due course,—I am, Your obedient servant,
"PETER TODD.

(Present keeper of 'Buntie'.)

EDITORIAL!

By HARRY WHARTON.

THE PASSING OF CRICKET.

King Cricket is now on his last legs, and will soon be tottering from his throne.

We have played our last cricket match in the Greyfriars Remove, and footer practice is now the order of the day. Already there has been a match between two teams representing the "Greyfriars Herald" and "Billy Bunter's Weekly," and the result of the encounter appears in another column.

Billy Bunter has a lot to learn before he can hope to call himself a footballer. His antics on the football-field were a sight for gods and man and little fishes.

By the way, Billy tells me he has stolen a march upon me by getting out a Special Football Number of his priceless "Weekly." I am not in the least dismayed. Our own Special Football Number will appear later in the season, and it will be as different from Bunter's potty perpetration as chalk from cheese. Now can Bunter possibly edit a football number, when he doesn't even know the rudiments of the game, and can't tell a goalpost from a maiden over?

FOOTBALL FEVER.

Already the big League engagements are in progress up and down the country, and this bids fair to be an even more exciting season than last.

Football enthusiasts are constantly writing to ask me who is going to win the Cup this season. He would be a very bold man who dared to pick out the probable winner at this stage. The present Cup-holders—the Spurs—are strongly fancied, and so are Aston Villa, Chelsea, and Cardiff City.

But to talk about the possible destination of the Football Cup at this period, is sheer waste of breath. Next January we shall be in a better position to prognosticate.

I hope all my footballing chums will have a happy and successful season, and that they will bag plenty of goals—if they are forwards—and prevent plenty—if they are backs or goalies. Our own prospect of a successful season, in the Remove, are distinctly rosy.

HARRY WHARTON.

Farewell to Cricket!

By DICK PENFOLD.

Willow, the dawn is waking;

Stout bat, you must not sigh.

Willow, my heart is breaking,

Calling to say good-bye!

Hark how the skipper's calling—

Calling to each brave heart:

"Say, who will come footballing?

Footer is due to start!"

Good-bye, my willow! Farewell to you!

One last fond look upon your blade as true.

'Mid shouts and screaming—'mid dash and spring,

I shall be dreaming of my Willow King!

Willow, 'tis hard to leave you;

I am oppressed with gloom!

Silently I must heave you

Into the lumber-room.

There you will lay and languish

Many a weary day.

Leaving me full of anguish

Till you return next May!

Good-bye, my willow! Farewell to you!

One last fond look upon your blade so true.

'Mid shouts and screaming—'mid dash and spring,

I shall be dreaming of my Willow King!

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Impertinent Interviews

By our Special Representative.

Dr. SHORT.

"IN ye ancient village of Friarsdale," said the editor, "thou wilt find an equally ancient apothecary, named Dr. Short. Go thou, and interview him!"

"Wish you wouldn't talk like an old buffer of the fifteenth century!" I growled. "Who is this Dr. Short, anyway?"

"You mean to say he's never attended you for measles, or mumps, or mosquito-bite?"

"Never!"

"Well, he comes to Greyfriars often enough in his yellow car."

"Rather a surly old sawbones, isn't he?"

"Oh, he's not bad, if you stroke him the right way! Run along and interview him for the 'Greyfriars Herald.'"

"But, my dear fellow," I protested, "how can I wangle an interview with the man? I can't walk boldly into his house and start asking questions at him!"

"You must make an excuse for going to see him," said the editor. "Say that you're ill, and want treatment—aren't you?"

"But I'm not ill, and I don't want treatment!"

"That doesn't matter. You can pretend to have water on the brain, or something, and he'll make you up a tonic. While he's doing it, you can ask him questions concerning his pedigree, his practice, and so forth. Or you can pretend to be mentally unbalanced—that won't require any play-acting!"

"You—you—" I spluttered wrathfully. "What do you mean by insinuating that I've got bats in my belfry?"

"It's common knowledge that you're potty," said the editor. "Now, don't waste my time. Go and see Dr. Short, and don't be long. That's the long and short of it."

Gathering up my notebook and pencil—symbols of the busy life I lead—I set off on my mission.

My long legs covered the ground at a brisk rate, and I was soon ascending the front steps of Dr. Short's residence.

I rang the bell, and a maid-servant appeared. "Doctor in?" I inquired.

"He's at dinner. Step into the waiting-room, please. He won't keep you long!"

I was ushered into a gloomy apartment, where there were stacks and stacks of books on medicine and hygiene and human ailments.

I studied one of these ponderous volumes, and by the time I had read a couple of pages I was convinced that I was suffering from epilepsy, cataplexy, locomotor-ataxy, spasms, shooting pains, and violent staggers.

The descriptions of the various maladies made me feel that I had contracted the whole lot myself.

I was feeling quite limp by the time Dr. Short came in.

The medical man glared at me as if I were some creepy, crawly creature.

"Wassermarrwillyou?" he jerked out.

"Eh?"

"Wassermarrer?"

"Ahem! I—I've got pains, sir!" I faltered.

"What sort of pains?"

"Fearful, agonising pains, sir!"

"Where?" snapped Dr. Short.

"In—in my stomach, sir!"

"Huh! You've been overfeeding, I suppose. It is not half an hour ago that that glutinous boy doctor was here, complaining of severe internal pain. I gave him a dose of physic, and sent him about his business."

"But it isn't overfeeding in my case, sir. I haven't had a meal for hours—in fact, my next meal's just due!"

"If I thought that the doctor would ring the bell, and instruct the maid to bring me in a cup of tea and a dozen jam-tarts, I was soon disillusioned."

"Lay down on that couch!" he commanded.

"Now, where exactly do you feel the pain?"

I indicated the right-hand side of my stomach. Instantly the doctor became grave.

"Have you got a temperature?" he asked.

"Yes, sir. I'm a hundred and two."

"Good gracious! Not a second must be lost. Come with me at once!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 711.

At the mention of the word stretcher I grew hot and cold by turns.

What was the doctor babbling about?

Scarcely I was not going to hospital?

A couple of attendants came up, lifted me out of the car on to a stretcher, and carried me into the building.

In the hall I saw Dr. Short in conversation with a man in white overalls—presumably a surgeon.

"I have brought you an appendicitis case," I heard him say.

I gave a wild yell, and bounded off the stretcher.

"Eats! There's nothing at all the matter with me!" I exclaimed.

Dr. Short stared at me in astonishment.

"What! How dare you presume to jest at my expense? You have brought me on a fool's errand! I will see that your head-master gets to hear of this!"

And Dr. Short kept his word.

Next morning I was summoned to appear in the Head's study, and was curtly requested to touch my toes.

The Head is an expert at laying on the rod, and I experienced a very painful five minutes.

Verily, the lot of a special representative is not one to be envied!

THE GREYFRIARS "FIELD POSTCARDS."

Invented and Sold by FISHER T. FISH.

In order to save fellows the fag of writing long letters home, a special series of postcards has been prepared by Fisher T. Fish. Selections are given below. All you have to do is to strike out the words which are not applicable.

Mater	quite well	as it leaves me
My dear Aunt	I hope you are	very ill
Cousin Bill	going strong	
at present.		
As I happen to be	on the rocks	absolutely stony
	rolling in riches	will you please send me a postal-
right away		order by return
any old time.		Ever your affectionate
		son
		nephew
		cousin.

Pater	cricket	
My dear Uncle	I played football	for my Form on
Old Ben	noughts and crosses	
Saturday, and scored quite a lot of	goals	
Just to show how you appreciate my success, will you please send me	victories.	
a sixpenny postal-order.		
message of congratulation.		
	son	
Ever your affectionate	nephew	
	Old Grape Fruit.	

URGENT MESSAGE.		
I regret to say I am in the sanmy, suffering from	a chill	
	toothache	
	scintics	
	lumbago	
	muscular rheumatism	
	mumps	
	swelled head.	
My temperature, at the moment of writing, is	99	and I shall be
Monday week	106	normal
here until Doomsday		
further orders.		

Postcards similar to the above may be obtained from F. T. Fish at tuppence each. They'll save you hours and hours of scribbling.

[Supplement II.]



Bob Cherry's Good Turn!

By DICK RUSSELL.

GOSLING, the porter, came shuffling across the Close at Greyfriars, carrying a small packing-case.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, who was strolling under the elms with the other members of the Famous Five.

"What have you got there, Gossey?"

"Which it's for Mr. Hacker!" granted the porter. "It's a typewriter, an ever was."

"A typewriter? My hat! Hacker's going to be luxurious," said Frank Nugent.

"He's following in Quelch's footsteps," said Johnny Bull. "Quelch's got a 'tapper.' Wonder if this is a better one?"

"The name on the packing-case is 'Fritzerder,'" said Harry Wharton. "Must be a German make."

Bob Cherry gave a sport.

"If Hacker wants to buy a typewriter, why can't he get an English or an American make?" he growled.

"Trust Herr von Hacker to get a German one!" said Nugent, with a sniff.

Gosling passed on with the packing-case. He took it along to the study which was occupied by Mr. Hacker, the master of the Shell.

Evidently Mr. Hacker was not expecting a typewriter.

"Are you quite sure there is no mistake, Gosling?" he asked, as the porter placed the packing-case on the floor.

"Which it's addressed to you, sir," said Gosling.

"So it is—so it is! I wonder where it has come from? Would you be good enough to prise open the lid of the packing-case, Gosling?"

Gosling obeyed. He prised open the lid, using Mr. Hacker's poker as a lever, and a large and cumbersome machine was revealed.

It looked as if it had been manufactured in the time of the Flood.

A note accompanied the machine. Mr. Hacker picked it up and read it. It was from his elder brother on the London Stock Exchange, and ran as follows:

"My Dear Horace,—When we were fishing on the Norfolk Broads in the summer, I promised to make you a present of a typewriter. I am sending the machine herewith, and trust it will be a source of assistance and pleasure to you. Do not forget to keep it well oiled and cleaned, because, although it looks a massive machine, it is really a very delicate contrivance, and, if neglected, it might easily go wrong.

"Trusting your indignation is better,—
Yours ever,
CARL."

"Dear me! This is very good of my brother—very good indeed!" murmured Mr. Hacker. "In future, when I want any thing done, I shall not need to borrow Quelch's machine. Lift this typewriter on to the table, Gosling. I am anxious to see how it works."

Gosling lifted the heavy "Fritzerder," and set it down on the table.

During the next two hours Mr. Hacker spent a very strenuous time. But at the end of the two hours he was no wiser than when he had started. He had discovered how to fix the paper into the machine, and that was all. He could not understand what all the levers were for.

"Really, this is a most perplexing business!" he muttered. "It would take a very skilled operator to work this extraordinary machine. I cannot make head or tail of it!"

The master of the Shell grew more and more exasperated.

Mr. Quelch's typewriter was quite straightforward. A child could have manipulated it. You simply touched a key, and you got the letter you wanted.

But the "Fritzerder" was the last word. When Mr. Hacker wanted a full stop, he got a note of interrogation. When he wanted a comma, he got the "per cent." mark.

Supplement [il.]

After spoiling about a dozen sheets of paper, Mr. Hacker gave it up. He was in such a rage that he felt like hurling the "Fritzerder" out of the window.

With a final glare at the typewriter, he strode out of the study, shutting the door behind him with a slam which echoed the length of the passage. A moment later he was making his way across the Close with rapid strides.

"Good!" murmured Bob Cherry. "The coast is clear!"

"What do you mean, Bob?" asked Wharton.

"I've been waiting for a chance to use Hacker's machine. I want to type an article for the 'Herald.' Hacker's gone out, and the opportunity's too good to miss."

So saying, Bob nodded to his chums, and hurried along to Mr. Hacker's study.

He was running a big risk, for at any moment another master might come in. But Bob Cherry was always taking risks, and the bigger the risk, the greater the enjoyment.

Like Mr. Hacker, Bob couldn't make head or tail of the "Fritzerder." It fairly baffled him.

But he was determined not to be beaten. He examined the machine all over to see if he could discover what the various contraptions were for.

Bob turned the "Fritzerder" upside down, and then—
Crash!

In the midst of the chaos stood Bob Cherry, stroking his chin in perplexity.

"Great Scott, Bob!" exclaimed Wharton. "What have you been doing?"

The typewriter descended to the floor with an impact which made Bob shudder.

"My hat! Hope I haven't busted it!" he muttered.

Not, alas! for his hopes.

The carriage of the machine was battered and bent, and one of the strikers, containing the letter "e," was out of action.

Bob proceeded to type a verse of poetry, in order to see the extent of the damage.

As the letter "e" was hors de combat, Bob was obliged to put an "x" in place of it.

The result was that the verse of poetry came out like this:

"Mary had a little lamb,
Its fleckx was whittx as snow,
And everywherx that Mary went,
That lamb was sure to go!"

"Great Christopher Columbus!" gasped Bob, surveying his handiwork with dismay. "What will Hacker say?"

He attempted to mend the typewriter, and in doing so made it a dozen times worse. That is usually the way when an unskilled mechanic starts tinkering with typewriters.

With the aid of his pocket-knife, which contained a screwdriver and other implements, Bob succeeded in taking the typewriter to pieces. This was easy enough, but

when it came to putting the machine together again, Bob was completely baffled. The more he tried, the bigger the muddle he got into.

Bob was feeling thoroughly alarmed by this time. He bitterly regretted having tampered with Mr. Hacker's "Fritzerder."

There was a gentle tap on the floor of the study, and Bob's chums peeped in.

They stared in astonishment at the strange scene.

The table was strewn with portions of typewriter. Screws, nuts, and spare parts were littered about the floor.

In the midst of the chaos stood Bob Cherry, stroking his chin in perplexity.

"Great Scott, Bob!" ejaculated Harry Wharton. "What have you been doing?"

"I've taken this headstly thing to pieces, and I can't put it together again!" growled Bob.

"Oh, my hat! Hacker will eat your head off for this!" said Nugent. "It was a new typewriter!"

"Instead of standing there jawing, I wish you fellows would give me a hand," said Bob Cherry.

"Well, we'll do our best," said Wharton, "but we're mechanics!"

The Famous Five applied themselves to the task of putting the typewriter together again. But it proved altogether beyond their powers. They tried to straighten out the parts which were bent, with the result that they made them more bent than ever.

The "Fritzerder" was utterly ruined. There could be no question about that.

Bob Cherry crossed to the window, and to his dismay he saw Mr. Hacker returning through the Close.

"Oh, crumble! Here comes Hacker!" he groaned. "Fare away, you fellows, and I'll stay and face the music!"

Bob's chums hurriedly left the study, and a moment later footsteps sounded in the passage.

Bob Cherry stood stock-still, with a fast-heating heart, as Mr. Hacker came into the study.

He expected the master of the Shell to fly into a fury—to grasp him by the collar and march him away to the Head's study.

Mr. Hacker, however, did nothing of the sort. He looked surprised—that was only natural, in the circumstances—but he also looked pleased.

"Are you responsible for having completely wrecked my machine, Cherry?" he inquired.

"Y-e-e-s, sir" faltered Bob.

"Thank you very much!"

"Kht" gasped Bob, in amazement.

"I am greatly obliged to you, Cherry. The machine is of no use to me at all. It was of an obsolete pattern, and it would not work. I hardly cared to throw it on the scrap-heap, as it was a present from my brother. Now that you have smashed it up, however, I can consign it to the scrap-heap with a safe conscience!"

"You had no right to enter my study without permission, Cherry," Mr. Hacker went on, "and you will take fifty lines. Now you may go!"

Like a fellow in a dream, Bob Cherry staggered out of the study. He found his chums awaiting him in the passage.

"What happened, Bob?"

"Did you get licked?"

Bob Cherry shook his head in a dazed sort of way.

"You—you mean to say Hacker didn't lay his hands for smashing up his typewriter?" exclaimed Wharton.

"No. He—he thanked me very much!"

"Oh, my stars!"

"He wanted to get rid of the old creak without offending his brother, who gave it to him," said Bob. "He couldn't very well hand it to an old iron merchant while it was intact, but now that I've pulled it to pieces and dented it in about a dozen places, it gives Hacker an excuse for getting rid of it—"

PULLING QUELCHY'S LEG!

By S. Q. I. FIELD.

"I THINK most of us have pulled Quelchy's leg at some time or other," remarked Bob Cherry, in the Remove dorm, one evening. "I only know one fellow that hasn't, and that's Alonso Todd."

"Poor old Lonny!" said Nugent. "He hasn't the nerve to touch anybody's leg, least of all Quelchy's."

Alonso Todd sat up in bed. "Really, my dear Nugent," he protested, "I have quite sufficient courage to pull Mr. Quelchy's leg."

"Go and do it, then!" said Johnny Bull. Alonso promptly stepped out of bed and left the dorm in his pyjamas.

There was quite a babel of voices when he had gone.

"Good old Lonny!"

"He's got some nerve, after all!"

"Wonder what form his leg-pulling will take!" mused Bob Cherry. "Will he get himself up as a ghost, and give Quelchy a scare?"

"Or will he spoof Quelchy that the school's on fire?" said Tom Brown. "That's rather a good stunt, but the consequences would be a trifle warm—for Lonny!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Meanwhile, Alonso Todd went gaily on his mission.

The Duffer of the Remove was intent upon pulling Mr. Quelchy's leg. He did not understand the term "leg-pulling." He thought it meant grabbing hold of a person's leg and giving it a tug. And it was with this object in view that Alonso made his way to Mr. Quelchy's bed-room.

Usually, the master of the Remove retired late. But on this occasion he had turned in early. He was already asleep, as Alonso gathered on listening at the keyhole, for the sound of a gentle snore came to the junior's ear.

"Ah, the coast is clear!" murmured Alonso. "I shall have no difficulty in carrying out my plan!"

He softly opened the door of the master's bed-room, and stole barefooted into the apartment.

A shaft of moonlight from the window revealed the recumbent form of Mr. Quelchy. Alonso paused for a moment. His heart was thumping against his ribs. He realised that his task was one of extreme peril.

But Alonso was not going to have it said that he was the only fellow in the Remove who had never pulled Mr. Quelchy's leg. He would show that he had as much nerve as anybody.

The thing to do was to get it over quickly—to pull the Form-master's leg, and then scuttle away into safety.

Alonso moved towards the foot of the bed, and with a quick movement he wrenched away the bedclothes.

A couple of bare legs lay revealed. Alonso seized one of them, and gave it a violent pull, as if it were a bed-rope.

"Yaroooooh!"

A wild yell of anguish rang out on the night air.

Mr. Quelchy shot up in bed like a jack-in-the-box. He groined for the electric-torch which was under his pillow.

At the same moment, Alonso Todd plunged wildly from the scene of his leg-pulling.

Alas for Alonso!

A water-jug stood in his path, and the Duffer of the Remove tripped over it and went sprawling. He landed on the floor with a crash which shook every bone in his body.

"Ow! Wow!"

There was a sharp click, and Mr. Quelchy switched on his electric-torch. He gave a gasp when he saw who the intruder was.

"Todd! Boy! What are you doing in your Form-master's bed-room?"

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"Oh, crums! I—I—"

"Answer me, boy!"

"I came here to pull your leg, sir—"

"What?"

"And I hoped to get away without causing any distressing scene like this," said Alonso, slowly picking himself up. "But for my regrettable collision with this water-jug, sir, I should have got away without my identity being discovered."

Mr. Quelchy fairly gasped.

"But—why should you wish to pull my leg, Todd?" he stammered.

"Because everybody else in the Form has done it, sir, and I didn't want to be the only failure."

"You utterly stupid boy! Do you imagine that every boy in the Form has entered my bed-room by stealth, and wrenched my leg almost out of its socket? You—you must be mentally unbalanced! Go back to your dormitory at once, and wait upon me in my study after breakfast to-morrow morning!"

Alonso Todd retraced his steps to the Remove dorm. A volley of questions was fired at him as he entered.



Alonso seized one of the bare legs revealed, and gave it a violent pull. Mr. Quelchy sat up in bed like a jack-in-the-box. "Yarooo!" he yelled.

"What happened, Lonny?"

"Did you pull Quelchy's leg?"

"Yes."

"How?"

Alonso looked surprised.

"There is only one way of pulling anybody's leg," he said. "You simply grasp the member in question, and give it a violent tug."

"Oh, my hat!"

"And in that what you did to Quelchy?" gasped Wharton.

"Yes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Did he wake up?" gurgled Bob Cherry.

"Yes; and he was most rude—not to say aggressive!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fellow simply roared. Alonso Todd's amazing simplicity sent them almost into hysterics.

"Oh, Lonny—Lonny, you'll be the death of me!" sobbed Bob Cherry. "I'm certain I shall beat a boiler in a jiffy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Next morning, after breakfast, Alonso called on Mr. Quelchy. He entered the study quite naturally; he came out limping, and doubled up like a decrepit old man.

"How many?" asked Nugent.

"Ow! Three on each hand! And I shall never pull Quelchy's leg again—never! Yow-ow-ow!"

And Alonso Todd limped sorrowfully away.

AN AMAZING FOOTBALL MATCH.

"G.H." v. "B.B.W."

A SPECIAL REPORT.

ALL Greyfriars turned out on Saturday afternoon to see the match between the "Herald" and the "Weekly."

The teams lined out as under:

"Greyfriars Herald": Bulstrode; Bull and Brown; Cherry, F. Todd, and Lanley; Wharton, Penfold, Vernon-Smith, Harrie Singh, and Nugent.

"Billy Bunter's Weekly": Wynn; G. A. Grundy and F. T. Fish; Tubb, A. Todd, and Nugent; minor: Wun Lang, B. Bunter, W. G. Bunter, Trimble, and Madsen.

There was some delay at the outset, owing to the fact that Billy Bunter could not get a jersey to fit him. He burst three, but managed to squeeze into the fourth without damage.

Billy Bunter won the toss, and kicked with the wind—*or*, rather, with the "wind-up!"

In the first minute the Heraldites attacked, and Grundy, in attempting to clear, scored a clever goal against his own side, Fatty Wynn being powerless to save.

Two minutes later the ball again went into the net off Grundy's head. The game was suspended for two minutes whilst Fatty Wynn addressed Grundy with his fist!

On the resumption, Billy Bunter broke away, but was penalised for carrying the ball.

Then the Heraldites returned to the attack with vigour, and Fatty Wynn was bombarded with shots. He gave a masterly exhibition of goalkeeping, but was beaten by Wharton and Nugent.

Then, from a sudden break away, Sammy Bunter found himself with an empty net to shoot into, Bulstrode having left his goal under the impression that it would be perfectly safe to do so. And so it was, for Sammy kicked the ball high over the bar. Whereupon, his major soundly boxed his ears, and told him to learn how to play football.

The Heraldites again attacked, and Grundy handled the ball in the penalty area. From the resultant penalty, Dick Penfold scored easily.

Half-time arrived with the score:

Greyfriars Herald ... 5

Billy Bunter's Weekly ... 0

When the game was resumed, the Heraldites fairly ran riot. They swarmed round their opponents' goal like flies round a honey-pot. Fatty Wynn played like a Trojan, but he had no chance with the shots which rained in upon him.

Wharton kicked three goals in as many minutes, and Vernon-Smith and Harrie Singh bagged a couple apiece.

Billy Bunter then announced that his team was fed-up, and that they would abandon the match and call it a draw. Harry Wharton replied that there was nothing doing. So the game went on, and further goals were scored for the Heraldites by Don Cutty and Penfold.

In the last minute of the match the obliging Grundy again put the ball through his own goal, and the game came to an end with the score:

Greyfriars Herald ... 13

Billy Bunter's Weekly ... 0

Fisher T. Fish was absent from the field in the second half. It was subsequently discovered that he had sloped off with the gate-money!

[Supplement to.

"BUNTER, THE BARD!"

(Continued from page 8.)

"Looks like it," said Harry Wharton. "We went downstairs at one o'clock this morning, and found Bunter at work in his study. He seems to know the contents of the giddy rhyming dictionary by heart!"

"He can't open his mouth without talking in rhyme," said Nugent. "It's a disease."

"But, as I said last night, it isn't an incurable disease," said Bob Cherry. "The next time you talk in rhyme, my pippin, you'll be badly bumped!"

Billy Bunter stepped out of bed. "Don't threaten me like that, Bob Cherry! I think it's beastly of you, very!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "You'll think it beastlier still, my friend, when to the floorboards you descend!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Let's bump this tomy-rot out of him, you chaps!"

Billy Bunter was promptly subjected to a severe bumping. He landed on the floor with an impact which shook every bone in his body.

"Yow-ow! Oh, help! Oh, crumms! Yarcnooh! Stoppit, or I'll be black and blue!"

"Not cured yet," said Johnny Bull. "Give him another dose!"

Bump!

Billy Bunter continued to squeal; but he was careful not to speak in rhyme. And after the ordeal was over he refrained from opening his mouth. It was the safest plan!

The Owl of the Remove sat tongue-tied during breakfast. As a rule, he chatted to the fellow next to him concerning the inferior quality and quantity of the eggs and bacon. But on this occasion he spoke not a word.

Harry Wharton & Co. began to hope that Billy Bunter was really cured of the habit of speaking in rhyme. But they were swiftly disillusioned.

In the Form-room that morning, Bunter again devoted his attention to the rhyming dictionary instead of to the lesson. He was deeply engrossed in the dictionary, when he heard his name called.

"Bunter!"

Mr. Quelch's voice resembled the detonation of a bomb.

"Yes, sir? You wish to speak to me? I'm all attention, as you see."

The Remove-master gave a gasp.

"Bunter, are you aware of the fact that you are making observations in rhyme?"

"I am not aware of it at all, sir. No observation could be faler!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a ripple of laughter from the class. Mr. Quelch checked it instantly by rapping on the desk with his pointer.

"Bunter!" he exclaimed. "You—you must be ill, boy!"

"Nunno, sir. I am far from ailing—although my appetite is failing!"

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"If you persist in making your remarks in the form of absurd jingles, Bunter, I shall cane you!"

"Oh, really, sir, my constitution won't stand that sort of execution!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Even Mr. Quelch was powerless to stifle the burst of laughter which followed Billy Bunter's statement.

The fat junior stood blinking sheepishly at the Form-master. He was speaking in rhyme quite unintentionally, and without malice aforethought. He had been sweating up rhymes so persistently that he spoke in verse without being aware of it.

A few days before, Billy Bunter could not have constructed a rhyme to save his life. He had been the most unpoetical fellow in the Remove. Now, he could not open his mouth without making a rhyme.

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"You will take a hundred lines, Bunter, for inattention in class, and a further hundred for speaking in such a ridiculous manner!"

"Oh, really, sir, it's not a crime for anyone to talk in rhyme. Besides, sir, I was not aware of making rhymes, I do declare!"

Mr. Quelch's store of patience, which had been rapidly diminishing for some time, was now completely exhausted.

"Stand out before the class, Bunter!" he thundered.

Very reluctantly Billy Bunter obeyed. "I hope, sir, you're not going to cane me? Such treatment at your hands would pain me!"

"Boy! Hold out your hand!"

"Which hand, sir, please—the left or right? And please don't hit with all your might!"

This was too much for the Removeites. They simply roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If this fat duffer persists in talking in rhyme," murmured Monks Newland, "he'll finish up in the sanny!"

"Quelch! will strew the hungry churchyard with his bones!" whispered Bob Cherry.

"Be silent!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "You will extend your left hand, Bunter!"

The fat junior obeyed.

Swish, swish swish!

"Yooooooop!"

"Now the right hand, Bunter!"

The dose was repeated, and the victim, whose palms had not yet recovered from the licking he had received on the previous day, gave vent to wild yells of anguish.

"Reminds you of pig-killing, doesn't it?" murmured Nugent.

"Well, Bunter can't say he didn't ask for it," chuckled Bob Cherry. "I reckon this will cure him!"

But Bob was out in his reckoning. Although he tried his hardest to refrain from expressing himself in rhyme, Billy Bunter continued to fall into the trap.

When Mr. Quelch asked him who Henry the Eighth was, he replied:

"The monarch, sir, who had nine wives, got tired of them, and took their lives!"

Later on, Bunter was asked to name the famous warrior who was exiled at St. Helena. He answered as follows:

"It was Napoleon Bonaparte. He had to mope and moan apart from all the people that he loved. To St. Helena he was shored!"

By the time lessons came to an end Mr. Quelch was beginning to entertain grave doubts as to Billy Bunter's sanity.

"Your conduct is amazing, Bunter!" he said. "I have known you to behave strangely on previous occasions, but never so strangely as this! You cannot frame a single sentence without putting it into rhyme. If you do not break yourself of the habit, I shall have to call the doctor in. Pray do not laugh, Cherry. This is a very serious matter."

Can anybody account for Bunter being in this condition?

"It's the poetry competition, sir," explained Wharton.

"The—what?"

"There's a poetry competition in 'Answers,' sir, open to fellows under sixteen. The prize is fifty pounds, and nearly every fellow in the Remove means to have a shot at it."

Mr. Quelch nodded.

"That is a very commendable desire, Wharton," he said. "Nothing would delight me more than if one of my pupils carried off the prize. But you do not seriously mean to tell me that Bunter intends to enter for his competition?"

"Of course, sir, I shall make a bid to win the sum of fifty quid!" chimed in Billy Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"I think I can now understand how you have come to develop this unfortunate habit, Bunter. You have been studying a rhyming dictionary, with the result that your head is full of rhymes."

"I always thought it was full of sand!" murmured Bob Cherry.

And there was a fresh titter from the class.

"When I gave you permission to work late last night, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch, "I was under the impression that you were engaged in getting out the weekly journal which you edit. Instead of which you were absorbed in the study of versification. This has had the disastrous effect of making you speak in rhyme on all occasions. I warn you not to pursue your studies too closely, or it may lead to brain-fever."

"Impossible!" murmured Archie Howell. "Where there's no brain there can be no brain-fever."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" commanded Mr. Quelch sternly. "There has been more than enough merriment in the Form-room this morning. You will do well, Bunter, to follow my advice, and study less persistently."

"Oh, crumms, sir! Don't you realise I want to carry off the prize?"

Mr. Quelch's stern countenance relaxed into a smile.

"I fear that your entry into the competition, Bunter, can only be regarded in a humorous light. You are totally incapable of composing a poem—let alone a poem sufficiently meritorious to gain you a reward of fifty pounds. Take my advice and abandon this absurd ambition of yours, which cannot possibly be realised."

Perhaps Billy Bunter would have been wise to follow the Form-master's advice, which was sincere and well-meant. But he didn't.

No sooner was the class dismissed than he was "at it again."

For the second day in succession he "cut" dinner in Hall, and remained behind the locked door of Study No. 7, sweating at the rhyming dictionary.

Billy Bunter could be very determined on occasion. And he was determined now. He meant to win that handsome cash prize, or perish in the attempt.

The probabilities were that he would perish!

In the first place, Bunter could not spell. In the second place, he could not write legibly. In the third place, he could not write poetry.

So it was extremely unlikely that Billy Bunter's dream of the previous night would come true!

OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS.
FRANK RICHARDS.



Bunter executed a sort of jig as he waved the telegram in the Removites' faces. "I knew that I should bag the prize and make you open wide your eyes!" he exclaimed. But the juniors were too daunted to reply. (See Chapter 7.)

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

In Suspense!

"FINISHED!"
Harry Wharton rose to his feet with a sigh of satisfaction. Although the editor of that flourishing organ, "The Greyfriars Herald," Wharton had no pretensions to being a poet. The task of composing a poem for the "Answers" competition had proved a very laborious one, so far as he was concerned.

But at last the poem was finished, and Wharton folded it and sealed it in an envelope. He had sufficient sense not to recite it aloud, as others had done!

"I'm through with my poem, too," said Frank Nugent. "You fellows care to hear it?"
"No!"

Four voices roared out the negative. And Frank Nugent hastily bundled his effusion into an envelope.

Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull followed suit. But Hurree Singh hesitated. "Anything wrong, Inky?" inquired Wharton.

"I should like you to hear my humble and ludicrous effort, my worthy chums," said the Nabob. "I want you to informally tell me if I have clothed it in elegant and correctful English language."

"My hat!"
"I hope you've clothed it in something," said Bob Cherry, "or it'll be getting pneumonia!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hurree Singh picked up his manuscript, and leaned back in his chair, with his feet resting on the table. His chums were attentive, yet there was something threatening in their attitude. If Hurree Singh's poem happened to annoy them in any way, the life of the writer would scarcely be worth a groat!

"I have called my poem 'An Ode to the Esteemed and Ludicrous Season of Summer,'" explained the Nabob.

Bob Cherry grunted.

"Title seems rather top-heavy," he observed. "Can't you shorten it a bit?"

"Knock out that part about the season of summer, and call it 'An Esteemed and Ludicrous Ode,'" suggested Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"I think the title is all right, my worthy chums," said Hurree Singh. "We now come to the esteemed poem itself. Listen!"

"I sing the praise of summer days,
Of sunshine's searching flameness;
Of river trips, and cooling dips;
And cricket's mazy gamefulness.
I sing the praise of summer days,
With every gladful joyfulness;
Sweet summer days, your charming ways
Delight each youthful boyfulness!"

Hurree Singh paused, in much the same way as an actor pauses when he expects bouquets to be thrown at his head.

In Inky's case, however, cushions were thrown, and with deadly velocity.

The chair tilted suddenly backwards, and the Nabob of Bhanipur was precipitated into the fireplace.

"Ow! What have I done to deserve this, my chums?" groaned Hurree Singh, struggling to sort himself out.

"That verse of yours," said Johnny Bull ferociously, "is about the most appalling drive I've ever struck!"

"Hear, hear!"
Hurree Singh staggered to his feet. He looked the picture of dismay.

"What is wrong with my esteemed poetical effusion?" he demanded.

"The difficulty is," said Wharton, "to discover anything that's right with it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is not the phraseology wonderful?"
"It is!" agreed Bob Cherry solemnly.

"And will not the worthy editor of 'Answers' be overcome when he reads it?"

"He will! In fact, he'll collapse altogether!" said Bob.

Hurree Singh looked thoughtful.

"Perhaps my verses could do with a little more fire!" he suggested.

"That's precisely what they do want," said Nugent. "Shall I put a match to them?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It pleases you to mockfully sneer at my humble efforts," said Hurree Singh. "But perhaps the second verse will appeal to you more. I will respectfully declaim it to you."

"Spare us!" implored Bob Cherry.
But Inky had already proceeded with his fell work.

"In summer's heat, my dainty feet
Trip lightly to the shopfulness;
And there I sink, and take a drink
Of cooling ginger-popfulness.
Beneath the shade I've often strayed,
And rested on the bankfulness—"

"And for that rhyme, which is a crime, you now deserve the spankfulness!" concluded Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hurree Singh endeavoured to continue his recitation, but his chums would have none of it. They had already listened to the agonising perpetrations of Billy Bunter and Alouzo Todd; and Hurree Singh's effort was even more painful than those.

"If you dare to breathe another word of that atrocious puff, Inky," said Johnny Bull, "we'll throttle you!"

Hurree Singh looked quite bewildered. He had expected praise for his efforts; he had received ridicule. He could not understand why other people should throw stones at his brilliant poem, which he felt certain would find favour in the sight of the editor of "Answers."

Finally, Inky came to the conclusion that the other fellows must be jealous of his wonderful composition. He sighed as he placed the poem in an envelope; which he added to the pile on the table.

Bob Cherry went to the door and looked out.

Skinner of the Remove was coming along the passage, with a grin on his face and a bundle of letters in his hand.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Doing the postman stunt, Skinner?"

"Yes. I've been collecting all the poems to send off. Bunter's is here, and Lindsey's, and Penfold's—in fact, a score of 'em, all tucked away safely in the envelopes."

"I've got five you can add to the collection," said Bob.

"All serene!"

Bob Cherry popped back into the study, and returned with the five envelopes, which he handed to Skinner.

The amateur postman strolled away with the letters, chuckling softly to himself, as if in enjoyment of a good joke.

The task of writing poems for the competition was now completed.

Over forty efforts were being submitted from Greyfriars. The majority of them came from the Remove, but a few of the fags had competed also; and Sammy Bunter, of the Second, was already trying to borrow money on the strength of his expectations of winning the fifty pounds. Needless to state, his efforts to raise the wind met with scant success. Sammy's schoolfellows wanted to see the cheque for fifty pounds before they started lending any money on it.

Then followed a long period of waiting. Everybody hoped that the prize would find its way to Greyfriars.

"THE ISLAND RAIDERS!"

A SPLENDID TALE

OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS.
By FRANK RICHARDS.

"I don't mind who bags it, so long as it's somebody in the Remove," said Harry Wharton.

"Well, it won't be Bunter, and it won't be Alonso Todd, and it won't be Inky," said Bob Cherry. "Those three are out of the running, to begin with."

"I cannot agree with you, my worthy chum," said Hurree Singh. "My poem may be a trifle inferior to those of the esteemed Shakespeare—"

"A trifle inferior!" gasped Johnny Bull. "Oh, my hat!"

"But when the editor smih of 'Answers' perusefully reads it—"

"He'll issue a warrant for your arrest!" said Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

In spite of Nugent's chaffing remark, Hurree Singh was confident of success.

So were several more competitors, including, of course, Billy Bunter.

The fat junior, having despatched his poem, could talk of nothing else.

He continued to speak in rhyme, to the intense annoyance of his schoolfellows. But they could not break him of the habit. Nothing could. Even Mr. Quelch gave it up as a bad job.

The Remove-master was growing rather alarmed. He was seriously considering the advisability of persuading the Head to get a mental specialist down from London so that Billy Bunter could be examined.

Everybody agreed that Bunter's weird antics entitled him to a place in Colney Hatch.

As the days passed, the suspense became more and more acute.

Every time the postman or the telegraph boy came to the school, they were assailed by a clamorous crowd of fellows, who were anxious to know if there was a letter or a telegram from the editor of "Answers."

Billy Bunter grew quite fretful with waiting. But he had recovered his appetite by this time, now that there was no longer any need for him to sit in his study and snot.

For a fortnight there was no news, and most of the fellows began to lose hope.

Just as they had despaired of any announcement of the result coming to Greyfriars, however, it came.

The Removees had just been released from morning lessons, and were streaming out into the September sunshine, when the fateful telegram arrived!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Winner!

"TELEGRAM for Master Bunter!" No sooner were the words uttered by the telegraph-boy than Billy Bunter snatched at the buff-coloured envelope. He opened it, drew out the shiny sheet, and uttered a wild whoop of delight.

"Hooray! Who said 'It can't be done! I've been and won the fifty quid!'"

Billy Bunter was promptly hemmed in by an excited crowd.

"Gummon!"

"Impossible!"

"You're kidding!"

Bunter handed over the telegram for his schoolfellows' inspection.

There seemed to be no doubt that it was genuine. It bore the stamp of the Lodgegate Circus post-office, and it was worded as follows:

"W. G. BUNTER, Greyfriars School, Friarale.—You have won first prize in 'ANSWERS' poetry contest. Cheque will arrive Saturday. Hearty congratulations.—EDITOR."

For a moment there was a dazed silence.

It seemed impossible—utterly incredible—that Billy Bunter had outstripped all rival competitors, and secured the prize of fifty pounds.

Bob Cherry was the first to find his voice.

"Bunter, the giddy prize-winner!" he gasped.

"He—he's won fifty quid!" said Peter Todd, in awed tones. "What fathead said the age of miracles was past!"

The juniors were fairly overcome.

As for Billy Bunter, his joy knew no bounds. His plump face was beaming like a full moon. He executed a sort of triumphal jig.

"I knew that I should bag the prize, and make you open wide your eyes!" he exclaimed. "The task was hard, but I have done it. The prize was big, and I have won it!"

The juniors were so dazed that they forgot to remonstrate with Bunter for talking in rhyme.

"It's—it's amazing!" stammered Harry Wharton. "There's no other word for it."

Dick Penfold gave a dissatisfied grunt.

"Well, if Bunter's poem was considered the best, it doesn't say much for my little effort," he said.

"Or mine."

"Faith, an' we're out of the runnin' entirely!" said Micky Desmond.

The juniors exchanged dismayed glances. It nettled them to think that Billy Bunter's poem had been given pride of place.

What of their own effusions?

What had been the fate of the really good poems which had been submitted? Were they reclining in the depths of the editor's wastepaper basket?

"You chaps have got it in the neck. It's I who will receive the cheque!" said Billy Bunter.

The fat junior was swelling with pride—so much so that he seemed in danger of sharing the fate of the frog in the fable.

"On Saturday it will arrive. Hooray! It's good to be alive!" he chortled.

"Dry up, porpoise!"

"I can't help thinking there's a mistake somewhere," said Harry Wharton. "This telegram might be a spoof, after all. It would be perfectly easy for a Greyfriars fellow, who had a pal in London, to get that pal to send Bunter a spoof telegram."

"Yes, rather!"

Billy Bunter chuckled.

"This wire is genuine enough. I am the winner; that's the stuff!"

"We shall see on Saturday morning whether it's a hoax or not," said Vernon-Smith. "Meanwhile, if anybody lends Bunter any tin on the strength of his expectations, he'll be a dashed idiot!"

"Oh, really, Smithy, you've no right to put the matter in that light!"

Billy Bunter had been hoping to raise quite a useful sum of money from his schoolfellows, to be refunded out of the cheque for fifty pounds—when it came. But he found no willing moneylenders in the Remove.

The cheque had not yet arrived, and, as Peter Todd remarked, seeing was believing.

When Saturday morning came, the postman, trudging leisurely through the Close, was waylaid by the Remove Form in a body.

"Letter for Bunter!" interrogated half a dozen voices.

"Yes, young gent."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Trot it out!"

Billy Bunter jostled his way through the crowd as if he were taking part in a Rugby scrum. He managed to secure the letter, and he uttered a cry of exultation as he glanced at it. For on the back of the envelope appeared the words, "The Fleetway House."

"It's the cheque, right enough," said Frank Nugent. "The Fleetway House is the home of 'Answers.'"

"Open the letter, Bunter!"

"Don't keep us in suspense!"

Billy Bunter ripped open the envelope,



Skinner was on his back, and being dragged along the floor by the legs. Mr. Quelch frowned. "Boys! What is the meaning of this hoodl-ganism?" he demanded. (See Chapter 9.)

and produced therefrom an imposing-looking document.

It was the cheque!

There could be no doubt about it. It was a Bank of England cheque for fifty pounds, made payable to William George Bunter. And the words "Answers' Prize Poem" were written on the back of the cheque.

"That disposal of the theory that the telegram was a spoof," said Peter Todd. "Here's the cheque, and it's perfectly genuine. But I'm not going to congratulate you, Bunter. I still maintain that your poem was the most appalling balderdash."

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry.

"The rules of the competition didn't state that the prize would be given to the most farcical effort," said Harry Wharton. "If they had done so, I could quite understand Bunter winning."

"Yes, rather."

"I'm disgusted with the whole thing!" said Dick Penfold savagely. "I've a good mind to give up writing poetry, and start keeping rabbits!"

The majority of the juniors strode away in high dudgeon. They were utterly at a loss to understand why the fifty pounds had been awarded to an ignoramus like Billy Bunter.

A few fellows, however, remained with the prize-winner, and they were almost affectionate in their congratulations.

"Well played, dear old man!" said Skinner, patting Billy Bunter on the back. "I'm as delighted as if I'd won the prize myself!"

"Same here," said Bolsover major. "Let's come along to the tuckshop, and get Mrs. Mumble to cash the cheque," suggested Stott.

Before Billy Bunter could reply, Skinner took one of his arms, and Bolsover major the other. And together they led him away to the school shop. Stott and Trevor and Treble brought up the rear.

Skinner & Co. were looking forward to a royal repast at Billy Bunter's expense. But they were destined to be disappointed.

Mrs. Mumble, the tuckshop dame, looked askance at the cheque which Billy Bunter produced.

"I can't possibly change a cheque for fifty pounds, Master Bunter," she said.

"Well, give us cake and ginger-ale. I'll pay to-morrow without fail," said the fat junior.

Mrs. Mumble shook her head.

"You know perfectly well, Master Bunter, that I never allow you credit."

"Can't you make an exception this time, ma'am?" urged Bolsover major. "Bunter will pay you the moment he's cashed the cheque."

"Yes, rather!" said Skinner.

But the tuckshop dame was adamant.

The cheque was genuine enough; she did not doubt that. But she knew that Billy Bunter had a conventionally short memory, and that if she allowed him to have things on credit he would forget to come in and pay for them later.

"Nothing doing in this establishment!" growled Trevor. "You'll have to get Quelch to cash the cheque for you, Billy."

"That's the idea," said Stott. "Quelch will be able to manage it all right. He's got a banking account."

Billy Bunter rolled out of the tuckshop, and the rest of the juniors followed him in procession to Mr. Quelch's study.

The Remove-master looked up in astonishment when Bunter entered, after a preliminary tap on the door.

The fat junior's face was flushed. He was almost beside himself with excitement. He flourished the cheque under Mr. Quelch's nose.

"Bless my soul! What is the meaning of this intrusion, Bunter?"

"Please, sir, I mean to cut a dash, if this fat cheque you'll kindly cash!"

Mr. Quelch took the cheque, and glanced at it keenly.

"Why, this—is this the first prize in the 'Answers' poetry competition?" he said, like a man dazed.

"Of course! I told you long ago I meant to win it, sir, you know."

Mr. Quelch blinked at Billy Bunter in amazement.

The Remove-master was knocked all of a heap. He had advised Bunter, in public, not to enter the competition. He had told the fat junior, in effect, that he would not have the ghost of a chance.

Billy Bunter had ignored this advice, and had submitted a poem. And that poem had proved to be the winning one!

Small wonder that Mr. Quelch was flabbergasted.

"I am amazed beyond measure!" said the Form-master. And he certainly looked it. "I little thought that you, Bunter, of all people, had the necessary qualifications for composing a poem—and a prize-winning poem at that!"

Billy Bunter gave a chuckle.

"Sir, I'm a sort of modern Shelley. I licked the others to a jelly!"

Mr. Quelch sighed.

"I wish you would try to break yourself of that ridiculous habit of speaking in rhyme, Bunter. Canings and impositions have failed to do it, and it is left for you to apply the remedy."

"I'm sorry, sir, I speak in rhyme. I fight against it every time. But such a habit can't be broken. The fatal words are swiftly spoken!"

Mr. Quelch sighed again. Evidently Billy Bunter was a hopeless case.

"With regard to this cheque, Bunter," he said, "I cannot cash it for you at the moment. It is Saturday, and the bank in Courtfield closes early. However, you shall have the money on Monday."

This arrangement was not very satisfactory to Billy Bunter, who was pining for a feed at the tuckshop. Still, it was hardly likely that anybody else at Greyfriars would be able to cash a cheque for fifty pounds on the spur of the moment,

and Bunter had to possess his soul in patience until Monday.

"I thank you very much indeed, sir. On Monday we shall have a feed, sir," said the fat junior.

"You will be wiser to put this money in the bank, Bunter. I hope you are not going to squander it on indigestible compounds at the school shop."

"So great, sir, is my jubilation, I'll have to hold a celebration. I'll blue a tinner, to be frank. The rest will go into the bank."

"Meanwhile, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch, "I should like to see the poetic effusion which secured you such a handsome prize. You have a copy of it, I take it?"

Billy Bunter nodded, and withdrew. He explained to Skinner & Co., who were waiting without, that his cheque could not be cashed until Monday. Then he went along to Study No. 7, rummaged in his desk for a copy of the poem. Having unearthed it, he strutted proudly back to Mr. Quelch's study.

"Here, sir, is my delightful ditty, so bright, intelligent, and witty!" he announced.

Mr. Quelch took the manuscript and perused it. His eyes opened wider and wider as he did so.

The first four verses—which were all that Mr. Quelch could stand—ran as follows:

"When first I came to Greyfriars Skool,
I was a litle boy;
The apple of my master's eye,
My mater's pride and joy!

At cricket I was simply grate!
I batted with such vigour,
Fare maidens walked for miles to see
My plump and hansom finger!

I fort like fury in the Jim,
And he who fell a victim,
To that most mity punch of mine,
Confessed that I had licked him!

In class, my progress was so swift
In French and Greek and Latin,
The fellows gazed with envy at
The eggshatd place I sat in!"

That was enough for Mr. Quelch. It was, in fact, too much!

There were a dozen verses in Billy Bunter's poem. Mr. Quelch only survived four.

A poem, forsooth! Even the term "doggerel" was rank flattery when applied to Billy Bunter's effort.

The handwriting was shocking; the spelling was equally appalling. The statements contained in the poem were utterly false.

Billy Bunter had never, on any occasion, "fort like fury in the Jim." He was one of the poorest fighting-men—and not the poorest—in the Remove.

Moreover, Bunter's progress in class was anything but swift. He occupied the lowest place; he was an arrant duffer in every respect.

"My poem's grand, sir—what! Not half! I notice though, you do not laugh," said Billy Bunter.

"Laugh!" echoed Mr. Quelch, sinking back in his chair. "This is not a matter for merriment, Bunter. On the contrary, it is a subject for tears. Do you seriously mean to tell me that this is the poem which you submitted in connection with the competition?"

Billy Bunter answered in the affirmative.

"Then there must be some mistake!" said Mr. Quelch, with conviction. "No

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editor would award a prize—unless it were a booby prize—for an effort of this sort."

"Oh, really, sir, you must admit that poem's absolutely 'IT'!"

But Mr. Quelch declined to make any such admission. He handed the appealing document back to Billy Bunter, and remained for some moments in deep reflection.

"I am positive there is a mistake!" he said at length. "It stands to reason that an ill-spelt, ill-written effort of that sort would not be in the running for a prize."

Billy Bunter's jaw dropped.

He had not expected this. He had anticipated that Mr. Quelch would land his poem to the skies.

The fat junior stood blinking at the Remove-master in bewilderment.

"I shall write to the editor of 'Answers' for an explanation," said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh crumbs!"

"Doubtless some clerical error has been made, in which event the award will have to be amended."

This was not very cheering news for Billy Bunter.

What if he were to lose the fifty pounds, after all? He shuddered at the thought.

It was quite possible, now he came to think of it, that the telegram announcing the award, and the award itself, had been sent to him in error. Even a large publishing house, whose system of despatching cheques was almost perfect, was not infallible. Mistakes sometimes cropped up.

Had a mistake been made in the case of Billy Bunter?

"You may go, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch. "I will send for you as soon as I have heard from the editor of 'Answers.'"

It was in rather a subdued mood that Billy Bunter rolled out of the Form-master's study.

Was he to be bitterly disappointed in the hour of triumph? Was the cup of joy to be snatched from his lips?

These questions would soon be answered. And, meanwhile, there was consciousness in the breast of Bunter, the prizewinner!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Firm Friends!

"**S**HOWN Quelch your winning poem, Bunt?!" inquired Skinner.

The fat junior nodded.

"What did he think of it?"

"He said that it was simply fine—a winner all along the line!" said Billy Bunter.

"Good!" said Bolsover major. "I don't see how he could have said otherwise, though. We all know what a ripping poet you are, Bunt. Your verse is simply stunning!"

Bolsover was nearer the truth than he imagined. Billy Bunter's poem had certainly stunned Mr. Quelch!

"You'll get your cheque cashed on Monday, old chap," said Skinner, "and then everything in the garden will be lively!"

"Yes, rather!" purred Stott.

From that time onwards Skinner & Co. did not allow Billy Bunter out of their sight. Like the poor, they were

with him always. For the poverty-stricken Bunter had nothing but abuse; for the prosperous Bunter they had nothing but praise.

The fat junior was careful to say nothing concerning the possibility of a mistake having been made. Nor did he tell Skinner & Co. that Mr. Quelch was writing to the editor of "Answers" for an explanation.

"Come along to the tuckshop, old fellow!" said Skinner affectionately. "We'll stand you a feed, and you can pay us back on Monday, when your cheque's cashed."

Billy Bunter had no objection to this arrangement. He accompanied Skinner & Co. to the school shop, and he consumed nearly ten shillings' worth of pastries and ices, at the expense of his newly-found friends. The latter consoled themselves with the reflection that they would get their money back on Monday—with interest.

Bunter would have gone on eating until the cove came home, so to speak; but his hosts knew where to draw the line.

"Nothing more now, Billy!" said Skinner in tones of mild reproval. "You've already eaten enough for three, you know."

Billy Bunter's arms were seized affectionately, yet firmly, and he was marched out of the shop.

There was a look of dejection on his plump face. He had just been getting into his stride.

"I say, you chaps, it breaks my heart to think I can't have one more tart!" he exclaimed.

"My dear old chap," said Trevor, "as pals of yours it's our duty to see that you don't overeat."

"We're going to look after you," said Skinner soothingly. "Your happiness will be our special study."

"Very nicely put!" murmured Bolsover.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, coming along with the other members of the Famous Five. "Got your cheque cashed yet, Bunt?"

"On Monday Quelch's going to do it. But you're not going to help me blue it!" said Bunter. "The fifty quid is all for me. And you can keep your distance. See?"

"Why, you—you burbling great bladder of lard!" roared Johnny Bull. "If you think we're after your money you're jolly well mistaken. We wouldn't touch it with a barge-pole!"

"No jolly fear!" said Nugent.

Skinner gave Billy Bunter's arm a tug.

"Come along, old man!" he said. "Don't stop jawing to these rotters! They're preening not to be after your cash, but when Monday comes they'll fairly lick your boots!"

Bob Cherry advanced towards Skinner with clenched fists.

"I'm not in the habit of licking boots," he said. "but I don't mind licking a cad when the occasion demands it. Take that!"

Bob's fist shot out, and Skinner went down as if a cannon-ball had struck him.

"Yaroooooh!" he roared.

"Get up and have some more!" said Bob Cherry.

Skinner declined the invitation. He had no desire to renew his acquaintance with Bob's fist, which resembled a battering-ram.

The Famous Five passed on, leaving the cad of the Remove to sort himself out.

For the rest of the day Skinner & Co. remained in Billy Bunter's company. They stuck to him like leeches. In dozens of little ways they showed him favours.

Billy Bunter didn't mind. It was a great pleasure to be waited on hand and foot.

He had tea in Skinner's study, and a very excellent tea it was.

In the evening he was taken over to the theatre at Courtfield.

Skinner & Co. chubbed together and took a box. It suited Billy Bunter down to the ground to lounge in the box, nibbling chocolates and imbibing lemonade through a straw, whilst dozens of envious eyes were upturned to him from the body of the theatre.

When the play was over, and the audience began to stream out, Billy Bunter yawned portentously.

"I'm much too fagged and much too full to walk the distance back to school," he said.

"Oh, rats!" said Skinner. "Pull yourself together, Billy!"

Bunter yawned again.

"Yaw-aw! The distance is too far, I'd much prefer to have a car," he murmured.

Skinner and his companions exchanged glances.

"Better humour him," muttered Stott. "After all, we shall get our money back on Monday."

Skinner headed towards a garage, outside which was an announcement, "Cars for hire." He chartered a car, and the party of juniors clambered in.

"Greyfriars, please!" said Skinner.

The driver nodded and started up the car.

Billy Bunter spread himself out, giving nobody else room to breathe. Then he heaved a sigh of contentment.

"I love to get about like this! It's unadulterated bliss!" he said poetically.

Skinner & Co. said nothing. They were reflecting gloomily that this would cost them a further seven-and-six.

The car covered the distance in great style. The juniors slighted, and Skinner settled with the driver. Then they handed in their late passes, and went up to the Remove dormitory.

"The return of the revellers, begad!" said Archie Howell, sitting up in bed.

"Was it a good show, yot fellows?"

"Simply topping!" said Skinner, with an air of forced gaiety.

"You chaps have got jolly pally with Bunter all of a sudden," said Vernon-Smith. "Wonder if that fifty quid has got anything to do with it?"

"Of course not!" said Bolsover major indignantly. "We've been pals with Bunter from the beginning—ch, Billy?"

Billy Bunter seated himself heavily on his bed.

"Stop jawing, and come and take my boots off!" he said, with a yawn.

Bolsover was about to make an angry retort, when he happened to catch Skinner's eye.

Skinner's expression said as plainly as words:

"Do everything he asks you. We shall be in clover on Monday!"

Accordingly, Bolsover major dropped on to one knee in front of Billy Bunter and unlaced his boots.

The rest of the juniors chuckled as they watched this performance.

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"Aren't you going to undress him, Boley?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With a crimson face, Boleover pulled off Billy Bunter's boots. Then he assisted the fat junior to remove his jacket and waistcoat.

Meanwhile, Skinner set out Bunter's pyjamas in readiness, and Stott arranged the pillows. Trevor and Trelove were "standing by," ready to tuck Billy Bunter in.

This sort of thing was continued next day.

Never was duke or millionaire waited on so assiduously as Billy Bunter was waited on that day.

It was Sunday, and Skinner & Co. helped Billy Bunter to dress for chapel.

In the afternoon they went for a stroll with him, in all the glory of their spotless flannels and shiny silk-toppers. They took him to tea at an old-fashioned farmhouse, they ministered to his comfort in a score of ways.

And all the while they were thinking of the morrow, when Billy Bunter would be the recipient of fifty pounds in cash. Then they would claim a large sum for services rendered. Skinner & Co. had not been looking after Bunter for sheer love of the thing.

That day was one of the most enjoyable in Billy Bunter's school career. He revelled in the luxury of being waited on hand and foot. It was a unique experience for a fellow usually without friends.

In the back of his mind, Billy Bunter still harboured Mr. Quelch's words:

"I will write to the editor of 'Answers' for an explanation."

When that explanation arrived, the result might be disastrous for Bunter.

But the fat junior decided to take no thought for the morrow, but to bask in the enjoyment of the present, on the principle that one crowded hour of glorious life was worth an ago without a name!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Thunderbolt!

EARLY on Monday morning, Billy Bunter presented himself at Mr. Quelch's study.

"Good morning, sir! Don't think me rash! I've come to ask you for my cash."

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"Your common-sense ought to tell you, Bunter, that I have not yet had an opportunity of going to the bank," he said. "You shall have your money this evening—unless, in the meantime, I discover that you are not entitled to it."

"Oh, really, sir, what do you mean? I've won the first prize, all serene."

Mr. Quelch pointed to the door.

"Go!" he thundered. "I am not in the mood to listen to your absurd babbling, Bunter! I shall really have to persuade Dr. Locke to have you examined by a specialist. I feel sure there is some mental aberration. For weeks, now, you have been talking in rhyme. It is nerve-racking—it is distracting!"

"Oh, crumbs! I—"

"Go! And do not worry me again until this evening."

Billy Bunter rolled out of the study. Scarcely had he departed, when the telephone-bell rang loudly.

Mr. Quelch picked up the receiver.

"Yes?" he interrogated.

"There's a call coming through from London, sir," said the operator. "Hold on a minute!"

Mr. Quelch held on for several minutes—for a quarter of an hour, in fact—before the call came through.

"Is that Mr. Quelch of Greyfriars?" inquired a voice.

"Yes, yes!"

"I am speaking on behalf of the editor of 'Answers.' You have written to ask if a mistake has been made in awarding the poetry prize to W. G. Bunter, of your school?"

"That is so," said Mr. Quelch.

"Well, I can assure you, sir, that no mistake has been made. The poems were judged on their merits, and Bunter's was considered the best."

"I cannot congratulate the adjudicators on their selection!" said Mr. Quelch drily. "I have seen a copy of Bunter's poem, and I may say that I have never read anything so utterly undeserving of a prize! I have the copy beside me at this moment. It is called 'The Pride of the School,' and it commences:

'When I first came to Greyfriars School I was a little boy.'

"Do you call that poetry, sir?"

There was a gasp at the other end of the wires.

"Pardon me, Mr. Quelch, but Bunter's poem does not commence like that. It is entitled 'The Joy of Youth,' and it is an excellently conceived piece of work. The adjudicators had no hesitation in placing it at the top."

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Quelch. "There is something wrong here. Was there a letter accompanying the poem?"

"There was. Curiously enough, the letter was badly written and badly spelt; but the poem itself was perfect as regards spelling, punctuation, and so forth."

"I see. It seems to me that somebody else's poem must have got into Bunter's envelope. The covering letter was Bunter's, but the poem was the work of another. For Bunter could not possibly write a poem that was perfect in spelling, and so on."

"There is something wrong, obviously," said the "Answers" representative. "Just now, Mr. Quelch, you mentioned a poem called 'The Pride of the School,' and commencing:

'When I first came to Greyfriars School I was a little boy.'

That particular poem was sent in under the name of R. Penfold, of Greyfriars."

"Indeed!"

"And in this case, the poem itself was shockingly written, but the covering letter was a perfect piece of composition."

"Then it is only too apparent what has happened," said Mr. Quelch. "By some means or other, Bunter's poem got into Penfold's envelope, and vice versa. It may have been an accident; it may have been a practical joke on the part of a third person."

"Then you think, sir, that the winning poem was written by Penfold?"

"Undoubtedly!"

"In that case we must amend our published reward. Would you be good enough to investigate the matter, Mr. Quelch, and let us know the result?"

"Certainly," said the Remove-master. "I will telephone you later."

And he rang off.

No sooner had Mr. Quelch replaced the receiver on its hooks, than he became aware of a loud commotion in the passage.

There were sounds of a scuffle, and voices were raised in anger.

"Leggo, you rotters!"

It was Skinner who was squealing. He was evidently being dragged along the passage by an irate party of Removers.

"Bring him along!"

"Make him run the gauntlet!"

"Give him a Form-kicking!"

Mr. Quelch looked grim as he listened to these warlike injunctions. He stopped to the door, and threw it open.

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Skinner was on his back, and he was being dragged along by the legs. Bob Cherry had charge of one leg, and Johnny Bull wrenched at the other.

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"Boys, what is the meaning of this noisification?" he demanded.

Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull released Skinner's legs as if they had suddenly become red hot.

"Get up, Skinner!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "Now, Wharton, perhaps you will favour me with an explanation!"

"I think Skinner had better explain, sir," said the captain of the Remove.

Mr. Quelch turned to Skinner.

"What have you done, that your schoolfellows should treat you in this way?" he demanded.

"Ahem! It—it was only a joke, sir!" faltered Skinner. "These fellows have taken it seriously. They haven't a sense of humour, sir."

"What was only a joke, Skinner?"

"Well—it was like this, sir. I had to post the competition entries—for answers, you know—and just for fun I swapped Penfold's poem with Bunter's."

"Ah, that explains everything!" said Mr. Quelch. "But I quite fail to see where the fun comes in, Skinner. To my mind, that was a despicable trick to play upon your schoolfellows. Do you not see what the upshot of it is? Bunter has been awarded a prize to which he is not entitled, while Penfold has been balked of the honours. However, it is not too late to set matters right. How did you discover what Skinner had done, Wharton?"

"He was overheard boasting about it to Stott and Bolsover, sir."

"It is not a thing to boast about, Skinner," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "I shall punish you severely for your base action. You will step into my study."

Mr. Quelch led the way to his study, and the next moment, sounds of steady swishing could be heard, whilst the victim rendered a song and dance. And with each stroke, he sang louder and danced more quickly.

"Serve the cad jolly well, right!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Yes, rather!"

"He nearly did good Pen out of fifty quid!" said Nugent indignantly. "But Pen will get the prize all right now. Quelch will hand over the cheque."

"Does Bunter know about this yet?" asked Archie Howell.

"No."

"Well, we shall have to break it gently, or he'll be expired of shock!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But it was Mr. Quelch who broke the tragic news to Bunter. He summoned the fat junior to his presence and addressed him as follows:

"With regard to the 'Answers' poetry competition, Bunter, I find that a mistake has been made in awarding you the prize."

Billy Bunter was so stunned that he could not speak. His worst fears were confirmed.

"It appears that Skinner played a practical joke by placing your poem in Penfold's envelope, and Penfold's poem in yours," Mr. Quelch went on.

"Penfold's poem was adjudged to be the best, but as it was submitted in your name the prize naturally came to you. I have caned Skinner severely, and have communicated the facts to the editor of 'Answers'. The award is to be amended, and I have been instructed to hand over the sum of fifty pounds to Penfold."

Still Bunter did not speak.

The fat junior stood blinking in a stupefied manner through his big spectacles. He was overcome.

"I expect this is a big shock to you, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch, not unkindly. "But you must realise that the poem which you wrote was utterly worthless and undeserving of recognition. I can only exhort you to improve your knowledge of the English language, and of versification, so that when the next poetry contest appears you will be better qualified to enter for it. That is all, Bunter. You may go."

Like a fellow in a dream Billy Bunter tottered out of the Form-master's study.

He found a crowd of his schoolfellows waiting without.

"Poor old Bunter!"

"Hard lines, porpoise!"

"Have you said good-bye to the fifty quid?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

For some moments Billy Bunter stood struggling for speech. And when at last he found his voice he went off into a fierce tirade against Form-masters, poetry competitions, practical jokes—in fact, everybody and everything.

And the amazing part of it was this. The tirade was not in rhyme!

The shock he had just received had effectively cured Billy Bunter of his habit of rhyming every phrase he uttered. He ceased to be poetical, and relapsed into very satrage prose.

"It's a rotten shame! I'll never go in for another poetry competition again—never!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter had no sympathisers with him in his misfortune—save one.

That was Dick Penfold.

Mr. Quelch sent the poet laureate of the Remove, and duly handed over the sum of fifty pounds.

When Billy Bunter saw Penfold emerging from the Form-master's study with the coveted prize it was more than he could bear.

The fat junior fairly broke down.

But he recovered instantly when Dick Penfold, clapping him on the back, said:

"Rough luck, Billy! But you sha'n't be left absolutely in the cold. Come along to the tuckshop, and I'll stand you the biggest spread you've had this term."

Billy Bunter grasped the speaker's hand.

"You're a brick, Pen!" he exclaimed.

And he repeated that remark a few moments later, when he found himself surrounded by pastries and strawberry ices and everything that delighted the heart of man—and of prize porpoises.

When the next issue of "Answers" appeared, it contained the following announcement:

"Owing to an inadvertence, the prize poem in our recent competition was ascribed to William George Bunter, of Greyfriars School, Friarale, Kent. The writer of the poem in question was Richard Penfold, of the same school. The matter has now been rectified, and we tender the winner our hearty congratulations."

And, needless to state, these congratulations were echoed by all Greyfriars!

THE END.

(Another magnificent, long, complete story of the chums of Greyfriars will be published in next Monday's issue of the MAGNET LIBRARY, entitled "The Island Raiders". By Frank Richards. Order your copy to-day and get the "Popular" when you are in the shop!)

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Miss Dorothy Mills, 21, Robert's Road, Pokesdown, Bournemouth, wishes to correspond with readers, ages 15-17.

J. Jarrett, 26, Stenson Street, St. James, Northampton, wishes to hear from readers on the subject of wireless telegraphy. All letters answered—also on photography.

A. Frankland, 75, Boothtown Road, Halifax, wishes to hear from readers.

B. G. Crick, 34, St. James' Square, Wolverhampton, wishes to correspond with readers, ages 15-16, interested in motor-bikes.

Abdulla J. Rahimtoola, Poddar Road, Chumballa Hill, Bombay, India, wishes to hear from readers on the subject of the old stories.

James Slade, 67, Crawthorpe Grove, East Dulwich, S.E. 22, wishes to hear from readers interested in pigeons and pigeon-keeping.

Miss Doris Talbot, Denison Street, Mudgee, N.S.W., Australia, wishes to correspond with readers, ages 14-15, interested in football, nature, poetry, cave exploring, or scenery postcards.

Morris Malik, 1549, St. Lawrence Boulevard, Montreal, Canada, wishes to correspond with readers.

Wm. Visser, 16, Arnold Street, Observatory, Cape Town, South Africa, would like to correspond with readers, 17 years and over, especially those interested in photography.

H. Berman, 9, Rose Hill Street, Derby, wishes to correspond with readers overseas.

Mark Wade, 71, Upper Hill Street, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers interested in picture postcards of steamers.

A. Stone, 25, Frederick Street, Mansfield, Notts, wishes to hear from readers anywhere.

Cyril Patterson, 54, Wellington Road, Dunston-on-Tyne, wants members for the National Companion Papers Club. Pass round magazine. Correspondence, hobbies, etc.

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Miss Marie Holdaway, Bradley, Wroxall, Isle of Wight, wishes to correspond with Companion Paper readers in Canada and the other British Dominions.

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