

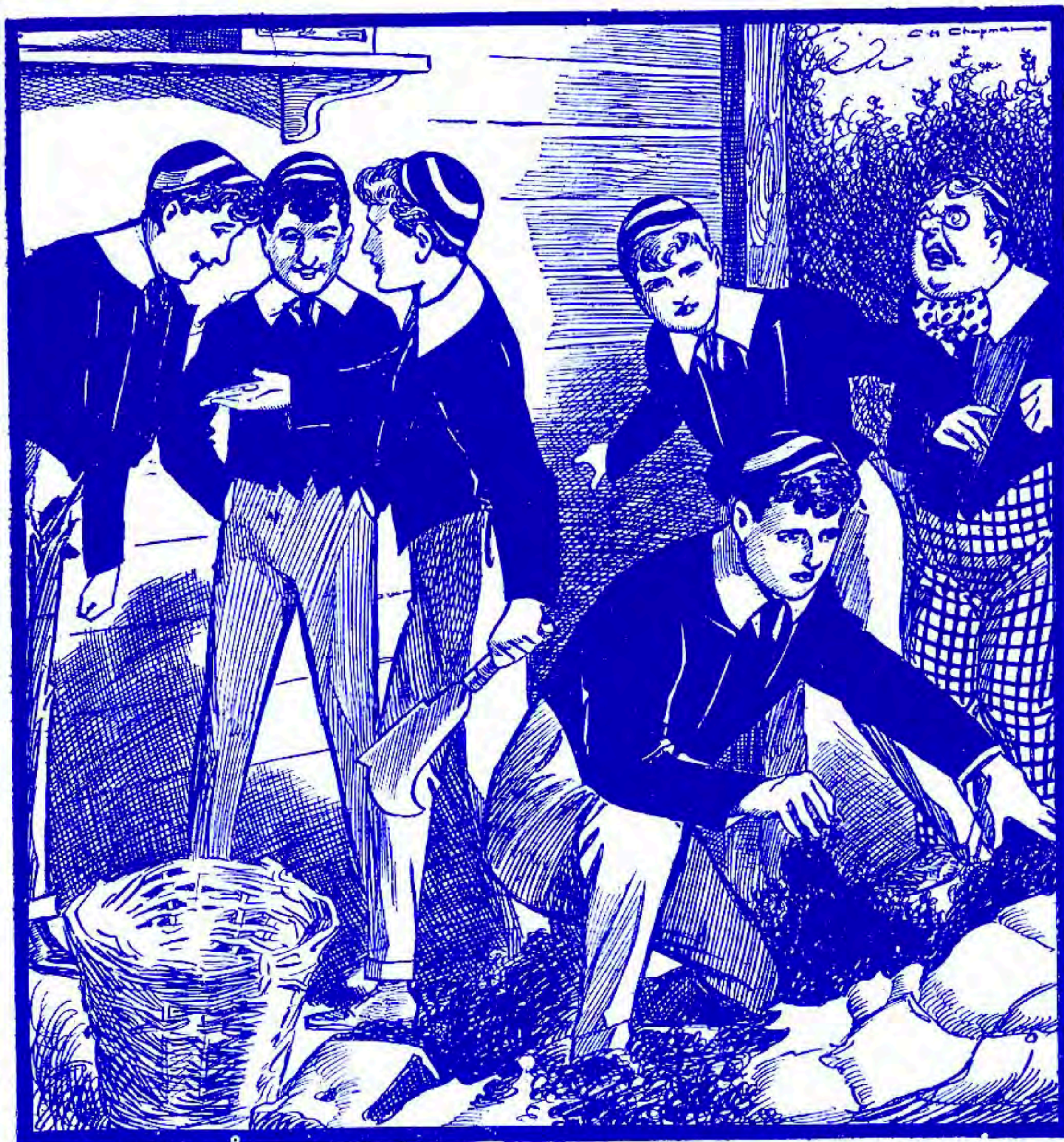
THE WORLD'S FAVOURITE SCHOOL STORY PAPER!



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Week Ending Jan. 28th, 1922.

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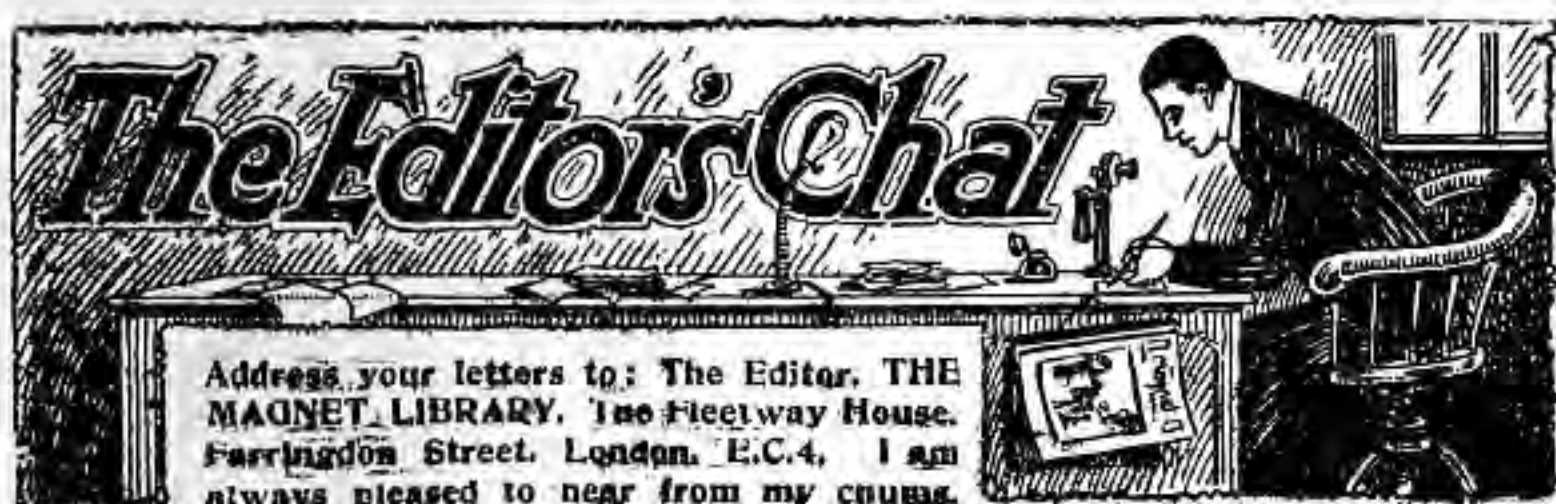


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FOR NEXT MONDAY.

"THE REMOVE RUGGER TEAM."

By Frank Richards.

That is the title of our next grand, long, complete school story of the chums of Greyfriars. Harry Wharton & Co. get the idea of forming a Remove Rugger team, a game which they have played only once or twice since they arrived at the school. Many of the juniors, in fact, forgot all they learned, and had to be taught again. Billy Bunter plays the game—he is useful on account of his weight. Of course, the fat junior makes much of the fact that he is chosen to play in the Remove's first Rugger match.

Stories of this great winter sport are so few and far between, I am sure all my readers will greatly appreciate our next issue.

There will be another splendid supplement, compiled by the chums of Greyfriars. Harry Wharton & Co. have collected a magnificent budget of stories and articles from many contributors, and

their supplement is full of fun and adventure.

I should again advise all my readers to order their copies in advance. As one friend has written to say—he has started the New Year well by ordering his copy—he had enough last year in waiting until Monday, and chancing his being able to obtain a copy of the MAGNET LIBRARY! His luck was very often like the MAGNET—out!

WATCH THE "POPULAR!"

Very soon now I shall be surprising my chums who read the "Popular." I have a great treat in store for them, and I want my MAGNET chums to share in this. So I advise you all to keep an eye on the "Popular," which is, as you know, the greatest week-end story paper published.

For the benefit of new readers—and there are many—I must tell you the nature of the stories in the "Popular." In the first place there is a grand, complete school story of Harry Wharton &

Co.; and, secondly, a complete story of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood. Billy Bunter publishes his famous "Weekly" every week, and there is a splendid serial by a favourite author—Mr. Sidney Drew. If there is one paper which comes anywhere near the MAGNET LIBRARY for excellence and value—then it is undoubtedly the "Popular." Get the issue now on sale, and see for yourself.

NOTICES.

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Your Editor.



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

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Looking for a Bargain!

"THERE'S a sale on this afternoon—"

"A sail?" repeated Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter nodded.

"Yes. Will you fellows come?"

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at Bunter. It was a keen winter's afternoon, and there was mist on the sea and over the cliffs. The proposition of going for a "sail" was not very inviting.

"Catch us going for a sail in this weather!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"The sailfulness will not be great, so far as my honourable self is concerned," said Hurree Singh, with a shake of his dusky head.

Bunter sniffed.

"Oh, don't be slackers!" he said. "If I can stand the weather, you can. I'm not soft."

"Soft!" ejaculated Bob Cherry warmly. "You fat duffer, this isn't the weather for a sail."

"But it's going to take place—"

"Well, the chaps who go sailing in this weather will be welcome to all the trouble they collect," remarked Harry Wharton. "I think we'll stick to football."

"No giddy sailing for me," assented Frank Nugent.

"You silly asses!" exclaimed Bunter, blinking impatiently at the Famous Five of the Greyfriars Remove. "When I say sale, I don't mean a sail—I mean a sale."

"Clear as mud!" said Bob Cherry. "Let's have that over again! When you say a sail, you don't mean a sail, you mean a sail? The question is, do you mean anything at all?"

"A sale!" howled Bunter. "A sale, you know! Not a sail! A sale!"

"Not a sail—a sail!" repeated Bob Cherry. "Is it a conundrum? When is a sail not a sail?"

"A sale!" shrieked Bunter. "An auction sale!"

"Oh, a sale!" said Bob. "You mean

a sale? Why couldn't you say so at first?"

"I did, didn't I?" demanded Bunter indignantly. "It's a sale, of course—not a sail. Catch me sailing in this weather! I say, you fellows, the sale's on at Grimes' Auction Rooms, at Courtfield. Lots of things! It's a place to pick up bargains. Will you fellows come?"

"Bother the sale!" said Bob Cherry.

"I prefer footer!"

"Same here," remarked Johnny Bull.

"The samefulness is terrific!"

"Oh, do come!" urged Bunter. "I'm going! I hope to pick up a few bargains. You see, a chap can make money that way. You buy something awfully cheap, you know, at the auction, and you sell it again for a lot of money. Suppose you buy a bedstead for three bob—"

"Suppose!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"And suppose you sell it again for three pounds—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"That's a clear profit of two pounds seventeen shillings!" said Billy Bunter impressively. "Sounds nice, doesn't it?"

"Sounds better than it is," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Suppose the other way round—that you buy a bedstead for three pounds, and sell it for three shillings! That's a clear profit to somebody else of two pounds seventeen."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, a chap would have to use his gumption," said Bunter. "That's where I come in strong; I've got lots of gumption. I say, you fellows, I should really like you to come. I may run short of cash—"

"Very likely, I think," grinned Bob.

"I've been disappointed about a postal-order, as it happens," said Bunter. "Otherwise, I should have plenty of cash in hand. Still, it's only delayed; and, of course, you only have to pay a deposit on the stuff you buy. You pay the rest when you take the goods away. Often and often you can sell them again on the spot to some other chap who has missed a bargain. Now, you fellows want a lot of things. That carpet in Study

No. 1 is frightfully shabby. You may pick up a splendid Persian rug, about—about seven-and-six, perhaps."

"The perhapsfulness is terrific!"

"Then your clock never goes," continued Bunter. "It's never kept time since Skinner put the gum in it. You may pick up a splendid marble clock, an ornament to any mantelpiece, for a few bob."

"And we mayn't!" remarked Nugent.

"Bikes, too," said Bunter. "I've got the auctioneer's list. There's a number of bikes, and fittings and things—pumps and lamps, and so on. Bound to go awfully cheap. Your bike-lamp has the glass cracked, Bob."

"That was after you borrowed the bike, you fat owl!"

"Well, it's cracked, anyhow," said Bunter. "You may pick up a bike-lamp worth fifteen shillings for about ninepence, if you're lucky."

"If!" said Bob Cherry.

"Look at this list," said Billy Bunter, holding up the catalogue of the enterprising Mr. Grimes, of Courtfield. "Splendid four-poster bed—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "I can see Quelch's face, if we came home with a splendid four-poster bed!"

"Canopy and brass knobs complete," said Bunter. "Splendid marble clock, strikes the hours, and chimes the quarters—mechanism a little out of order, but can easily be repaired—"

"Ring off!"

"Four safety bicycles in excellent condition, only needing new tyres and pedals and handle-bars and chain—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Lot 5, bicycle-lamps and pumps, several—"

"Well, a chap might get a new lamp cheap," said Bob Cherry, interested at last; "and money's jolly tight."

Harry Wharton considered.

Even football was not so attractive as usual in misty, drizzly weather. And there was a certain amount of entertainment to be derived from an auction sale, beside the possibility of picking up bargains.

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"Let's go!" said the captain of the Remove. "A walk down to Courtfield will do us good, anyhow."

"Let's!" assented Bob.

Billy Bunter beamed at the chums of the Remove. Evidently the fat junior had powerful reasons for wishing the Famous Five to accompany him to the auction at Courtfield.

Bunter was thinking of bagging a bargain; but, as usual, his financial resources were limited. With five companions, all more or less supplied with that useful article, cash, Bunter felt better prepared to face Mr. Grimes in his lair.

"That's right!" he said. "Trot along! I heard of a chap once who bought something and sold it on the spot for double the price. We may make a lot of money this afternoon."

The Famous Five chuckled; they did not share Billy Bunter's expectation in the least. But they were ready to walk down to Courtfield for the sale, and they went in for their coats. Billy Bunter went in, too, for a coat, but he helped himself to Vernon-Smith's coat from the lobby; it was a cold day, and Smithy's coat was a nice warm one. Fortunately, Smithy was in his study at the time. Penfold's muffler was hanging on a peg, and that came in useful, too. Bunter felt quite warm and comfortable and satisfied when he started to walk to Courtfield with the Famous Five. Herbert Vernon-Smith did not feel so satisfied, when he came down to go out, and looked for his coat. But in an imperfect universe it was impossible for everybody to be satisfied.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bunter Bids!

LOT three! This magnificent hall-stand—

The sale had commenced when Harry Wharton & Co. reached the auction-rooms at Courtfield.

Mr. Grimes, a fat and portly gentleman, with a red face and a powerful voice, presided in his rostrum, hammer in hand. There was quite a large crowd, many with catalogues in their hands. A group of three or four gentlemen with fur-collared coats and prominent noses, stood near the auctioneer, chatting merrily to one another and chaffing Mr. Grimes, and one of them, evidently a recognised humorist, raised an oily chortle every now and then among his comrades by a bid of "Half-a-thovoreign, old thon!" Billy Bunter pushed his way forward, as eager for bargains as any of the Semitic gentlemen.

"This magnificent hallstand—hold it up for the ladies and gentlemen to see, William!" said the auctioneer.

This was a joke, the magnificent hallstand requiring at least three men to move it, without holding it up on view. Mr. Grimes raised a laugh, which was good for business.

"Did I hear Mr. Isaacs say thirty pounds?" asked Mr. Grimes.

"You thertainly didn't!" answered Mr. Isaacs. "Half-a-thovoreign!"

And Mr. Isaacs' friends chortled merrily.

"Fifteen bob!" yelled Bunter.

Mr. Grimes looked at Bunter and grinned. Billy Bunter had taken Mr. Isaacs' humorous bid quite seriously, and was raising him.

"Five pounds!" came from somewhere, and the bidding went on briskly.

"Six pounds!"

"Eight!"

"Eight-ten!"

"Ten pounds!" exclaimed Bunter recklessly.

Bob Cherry grasped the fat junior by the shoulder and shook him.

"You howling ass!" whispered Bob. "What are you up to? Are you trying to buy a half-ton hallstand, you frabjous jabberwock?"

"Only helping on the bidding," said Bunter. "Putting some life into it, you know."

"Suppose it's knocked down to you?"

"Oh, rot! It won't go for ten quid!"

"Dry up, Bunter!" said Harry Wharton. "You'll get landed with something."

"Oh, rats!" said Bunter. "I know my way about! Don't you fellows worry about me! I can look after Number One!"

"Fathead!"

"Ten pounds I am offered!" said Mr. Grimes, with a curious glance at William George Bunter. "Ten pounds for this magnificent hallstand—ten pounds—going at ten pounds—"

Billy Bunter felt a cold shiver.

If that hallstand was knocked down to him at ten pounds—when his capital amounted to something under tenpence—

Fortunately, there was another bid.

"Guineas!"

"Ten guineas for this handsome hallstand, an ornament to any gentleman's mansion!" said Mr. Grimes. "Come, come; we are not here entirely for pleasure, gentlemen—business first! This magnificent hallstand is going for the laughable sum of ten guineas. Going—going—" The hammer rapped. "Gone!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove had had a narrow escape.

The lesson was not lost on Bunter—for a while. He contrived to remain silent while the sale proceeded—though silence was a state in which Bunter was never really happy.

Lot after lot was disposed of, till the "several bike lamps" came on, and then Bob Cherry began to bid. Bob had the satisfaction of securing three bike lamps, which certainly wanted cleaning, but were otherwise quite all right for seven-and-six. Bob paid the auctioneer's assistant, and secured his "lot" on the spot. Billy Bunter blinked at his prize.

"They'll want cleaning a lot," he said.

"Well, I'm going to clean them," said Bob. "I don't mind putting in a little work to save money."

"You really owe that bargain to me," remarked Bunter. "I brought you here, you know. I shall expect one of those lamps—after you've cleaned them."

"You can expect!" said Bob cheerily. "Expect anything you like, old top. If I find you bagging any of these lamps, you can also expect a thick ear. And you won't be disappointed."

"Yah!"

Billy Bunter turned his attention to the sale again.

Lot 25 was now going. Mr. Grimes described it as a magnificent, and indeed, unequalled, four-poster bed—bedstead, with brass knobs, and bed complete. The ponderous article was in a corner of the big room, and it was pointed out by the auctioneer's man to all who cared to look at it. There was plenty of it, certainly; but enormous bedsteads seemed to be at a discount. Mr. Isaacs humorously started the bidding with "half-a-thovoreign." Billy

Bunter was tired of keeping silent, and he yelled out:

"A pound!"

Every eye turned on Bunter.

The sight of a schoolboy in Etons bidding for a four-poster bedstead was rather an unusual one in the auction-room. Billy Bunter always enjoyed the limelight, and he assumed an air of importance at once.

"Shut up, you young ass!" whispered Johnny Bull.

"Rats!"

"Thirty shillings!" came from another bidder.

"Thirty-five!" yelled Bunter.

"Two pounds!"

"Two-ten!" said Bunter, who was fairly going strong now.

The general attention of the auction-room had got into his head, as it were, and Billy Bunter intended to run up the bidding, and make himself more conspicuous than ever.

"Three pounds!" said Mr. Isaacs.

"Four!" said Bunter.

"Four-ten!"

"Five!" howled Bunter.

Billy Bunter fully expected "five-ten" to follow.

But it didn't!

Having forgotten his lesson already, Bunter had landed himself again, and this time there was no rescue. Nobody wanted to give more than five pounds for that magnificent four-poster bedstead.

"Five pounds I am offered!" said Mr. Grimes. "Gentlemen, this unequalled bedstead is going at five pounds—five pounds! Did any gentleman say six?"

No gentleman did.

Bunter felt a shiver run down his back! He had done it again! He blinked round anxiously through his big spectacles.

"Going—going at five pounds!" said Mr. Grimes. "This magnificent bedstead with mattress complete, brass knobs, and—and— Going—going—"

Bunter trembled.

Rap!

"Gone!"

The bedstead was Bunter's!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter's Bargain!

BILLY BUNTER blinked at the auctioneer. Mr. Grimes gave him a cheery nod and a smile.

Why on earth a schoolboy wanted to buy an enormous, old-fashioned bedstead, Mr. Grimes did not know, and he did not care in the least. It did not occur to Mr. Grimes that the fat youth did not want to buy the bedstead at all, and had only been "talking out of his hat." But if Mr. Grimes had known it, it would not have made any difference. He was there to knock down the goods to the highest bidder. And William George Bunter was the highest bidder.

Bunter tried to speak. He was there in search of a bargain; but this was certainly not the bargain he was in search of.

"I—I—I—" he stuttered.

"Lot 26," said Mr. Grimes, utterly unheeding Bunter now that Lot 25 was disposed of. "A splendid dining-room suite—"

"I—I—" gasped Bunter. "I—I don't—"

"Six chairs, two armchairs, upholstered in morocco leather—" continued Mr. Grimes.

"Half-a-thovoreign!" said Mr. Isaacs; and there was a laugh. Mr. Isaacs' humour seemed limited, but it was sure of success.

NEXT
MONDAY!

"THE REMOVE RUGGER TEAM!"

A SPLENDID TALE OF THE JUNIORS OF GREY-FRIARS. :: :: By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 729.

"I—I—I say, Mr. Grimes—" spluttered Bunter.

"Five pounds!" came from a bidder.

"Six!"

"Six-ten!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter. "Mr. Grimes, I—I don't—"

"Don't interrupt the sale, young gentleman!" snapped Mr. Grimes.

"Six-pounds-ten I am offered for this splendid dining-room suite—"

"But—but—"

"Seven!"

"Seven-ten!"

"Seven-fifteen!"

"Eight!"

"Look here—" yelled Bunter.

"Don't interrupt the sale, young man! Speak to my assistant about your lot!" rapped out Mr. Grimes. "Eight pounds I am offered—"

"Oh crumbs!" mumbled Bunter.

"You've done it now!" said Johnny Bull consolingly.

"You asked for it, Bunter!" grinned Nugent.

"Oh dear!"

The bidding for Lot 26 went on briskly, and it was disposed of. But there was no pause in which Bunter could have explained matters to Mr. Grimes—Lot 27 came on the tapis at once. Not that Mr. Grimes would have listened to any explanation. Lot 25 had been disposed of, and it was already ancient history to Mr. Grimes.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I am offered three pounds for this magnificent solid mahogany dining-table!"

Billy Bunter backed out of the crowd. His only hope now was in flight. But as he rolled towards the door, William, the auctioneer's man, tapped him on the shoulder. Bunter jumped. A policeman's tap on the shoulder could not have startled him more.

"Lot 25's yours, sir," said William. "Did you say cash? Or are you leaving a deposit on it?"

"Oh dear!"

William looked at him with beery eyes.

"You'll want it moved," he said. "Everything has to be moved before ten to-morrow morning, to make room for the next sale. P'raps you ain't used to auctions, sir."

"Ow!"

Harry Wharton & Co. looked on. Exactly what was to be done they did not know. The bedstead was Bunter's, whether he wanted it or not. He could not go back on his bargain. Possibly William, among his other duties, had to keep an eye on bidders who made thoughtless bids and then attempted a strategic retreat. At all events, he evidently had an eye on Bunter, and there was no escape for the Owl of the Remove.

"The—the fact is—" gasped Bunter. William interrupted.

"Come, sir! Can't waste time—busy day!"

"I—I've left my money at the school!" gasped Bunter.

"That's all right, sir! Name and address, and a pound deposit—that will do," said William briskly.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Name?"

"Jones!" gasped Bunter. "John Jones. Address—lemme see! 101, Grosvenor Square, London!"

"You fat idiot!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

Bunter's tortuous mind had taken refuge at once in a false name and address, as if by instinct.

But the chums of the Remove were

not likely to back the fat junior up in a fraud.

"His name's Bunter!" said Bob Cherry, in a growl. "Address: Greyfriars School!"

"Oh, you beast!" gasped Bunter.

William gave Bunter a look of beery suspicion.

"Deposit!" he snapped.

"I—I forgot to bring my purse!" stammered Bunter. "I—I mean, I—I've been disappointed about a postal-order!"

"Wot?"

Bunter cast a helpless blink at his companions.

"One of you lend me a pound, for goodness' sake!" he stuttered.

"You fat idiot!" growled Harry.

"Oh, really, Wharton!"

Very reluctantly, but feeling that there was nothing else to be done, the chums of the Remove sorted out their cash, and subscribed a pound. This was handed over to William, who gave Bunter a receipt. Then his manner became more genial.

"You'll want that there delivered," he said. "A young gentleman like you can't see to it. I know a man with a 'orse and van what'll do it cheap. Say ten bob—wot?"

"Oh! Ah! Yes! Anything!" mumbled Bunter, only anxious to escape from the auction-room.

"Pay on delivery?" asked William.

"Yes, yes! Good-afternoon!" mumbled Bunter.

"Arternon, sir!" said William, quite genially.

Billy Bunter rolled out of the auction-room. Harry Wharton & Co. followed him out with rather grim faces. Money was not plentiful with the Famous Five;

and a pound was a pound, even when subscribed among five. In the street Bunter blinked pathetically at the Famous Five, while they told him what they thought of him.

"You frabjous ass!"

"You burbling chump!"

"You spluttering jabberwock!"

"You frumptions idiot!"

"You fatheaded bandersnatch!"

"I—I say, you fellows," mumbled Bunter feebly. "I—I never meant to buy the beastly thing, you know! Of course, I'll square up that pound!"

"How?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Out of my next postal-order."

"Shut up!" roared Bob ferociously.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"The frumptions idiot has done us out of a quid," said Bob, "and there's four more to pay somehow. Bunter can see to that."

"Yes, rather."

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

"And ten bob for delivery," said Frank Nugent. "And what the deuce is going to be done with the dashed thing when it gets to Greyfriars to-morrow morning?"

"Bunter can have it in his study!" grinned Johnny Bull. "There's just about room in Study No. 7 for that bedstead!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say, you fellows, there's nothing to cackle at! I—I—"

"If the dashed thing isn't claimed, I think they'll sell it again in the next auction," said Harry. "That's the simplest way out!"

"But I've paid a pound on it!" exclaimed Bunter.



Harry Wharton counted out five pounds ten shillings and handed the money to the carter. The man took the money, searched in his pocket and pulled out a receipt, which he handed over to the captain of the Remove. "Thank you kindly, young gents!" he said, "Awful trouble I 'ad getting that bedstead over!" (See Chapter 6.)

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"You have?" yelled Bob. "We have, you mean!"

"I owe you the pound," said Bunter. "If I owe you the pound, I've paid the pound—you can't have it both ways! I can't afford to lose a pound!"

"Why, you—you—"

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said Bunter. "That bedstead is a jolly good big one, worth more than five pounds, really! You could send it home to Wharton Lodge, Harry, as a present for your uncle or aunt."

"Catch me!" said Harry.

"Or Bull could send it to Miss Bull."

"Fathead!"

"Or—or Nugent could give it to his father as—as a valentine."

"You fat chump!"

"It's worth a lot," urged Bunter, "and I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll let you fellows have it for four pounds."

"What?"

"Then I lose the pound I've paid," said Bunter. "I don't mind that! I'm not mean about money! You fellows give me the four pounds."

Harry Wharton & Co. did not give Billy Bunter the four pounds. They seemed to come to the end of their patience all of a sudden. Five pairs of hands were laid on Billy Bunter, and he was sat down on the pavement forcibly with a loud bump.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter.

The Famous Five walked away, leaving him sitting. They had had enough of Billy Bunter for one afternoon.

"Ow! Beasts!"

Bunter scrambled up, and rolled home to Greyfriars in a dismal mood. He had gone to the auction in the hope of bagging a bargain. He had bagged one—a big one. But he did not seem to be pleased. Four pounds remained to be paid on the bedstead—with mattress and brass knobs complete—and Bunter, when he counted his cash, found that he possessed a total sum of fivepence-halfpenny. Of which one of the pennies was a French one—and the halfpenny a bad one! How he was to meet his liabilities, with such limited cash resources, was a problem far beyond Bunter's mental powers.

He thought it out all the way back to Greyfriars without finding a solution. But evidently fivepence-halfpenny was not of much use towards his liabilities; so Bunter rolled into the school shop, and there disposed of his limited financial resources. Which was some comfort to the inner Bunter—but left the problem quite unsolved.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Generous!

PETER TODD jumped.

He was startled.

Peter was scribbling lines at the study table in Study No. 7 in the Remove, when the door flew suddenly open.

A fat figure came in like a bullet and spun half across the study before it collapsed on the carpet. And there was a roar that rang the length of the Remove passage.

"What the thump!" ejaculated Peter.

Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, grinned in at the doorway. It was Smithy's boot that had propelled Bunter into the study with such startling suddenness.

"Made you jump?" asked the Bounder. "Sorry! Bunter borrowed my coat, so I lent him my boot!"

And the Bounder walked up the

Remove passage. Billy Bunter sat up on the carpet and roared.

"Yow-ow-ow-wooop! Peter, you beast, why don't you lick him? Can't you stand by a fellow in your own study? Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Serve you right!" said Peter unfeelingly.

"Yah! Beast! Yow-ow-ow!"

"Did Smithy kick you hard?"

"Yow-ow! Yes! Wow!"

"Do you want me to kick you harder?"

"Eh? No! Wow!"

"Then shut up that row," said Peter.

Which was all the sympathy Billy Bunter received from his study-mate. The fat junior scrambled up, and collapsed again into the arm-chair. He turned his big spectacles on Peter with a ferocious blink.

"That's what you call gratitude, I suppose, after all I've done for you!" he said bitterly.

"Dry up!"

"After I've walked all the way to Courtfield and back, to do you a favour, Peter," said Bunter reproachfully.

Peter stared at him.

"What's that?" he inquired. "You don't mean to say you've been to the bun-shop and brought back something for tea? If you have, you've scoffed it on the way home. I know you!"

"I've done more than that! I went to the auction at Courtfield, thinking I might be able to buy you something you would like, Peter!"

"My only hat!"

"And I bought it," said Bunter. "What do you think of a magnificent four-poster bedstead, jewelled in every hole?"

"What?"

"I—I mean with brass knobs complete!"

"Are you wandering in your mind, Bunter?" inquired Peter Todd.

"Oh, really, Peter! It isn't every chap who buys a five-pound bedstead for a pal, and pays a pound on it out of his own pocket. That's what I've done. The moment I saw that bedstead I said to myself, 'That's what old Toddy would like—to send as a present to his—his people. So I—I bought it!'"

"Great Scott!"

"It's yours, Peter," said Bunter generously.

Peter Todd gazed at his fat study-mate. He was too astounded to speak. Often and often Peter had suspected the Owl of the Remove of suffering from fatty degeneration of the brain. Now it really looked as if the blow had fallen at last!

"You've b-b-bought a b-b-bedstead?" gasped Peter, finding his voice at last.

"A magnificent bedstead!"

"For—for me?"

"For you, Peter! Because we're pals, you know," said Bunter affectionately.

"Great Christopher Columbus! And what am I to do with a four-poster bedstead?" shrieked Peter Todd.

"You can send it to your people as a present, you know. Or—or you can give it to the Head as a—a mark of respect. Or—or to Mr. Quelch!"

"You howling ass!"

"Oh, really, Peter!"

"It's softening of the brain," said Toddy, shaking his head.

"I've paid a pound on it, with my own money," said Bunter with dignity.

"You hadn't a pound."

"I borrowed it from some friends, for your sake. That bags nearly all my next postal order. All you'll have to do is to pay the man ten shillings for delivering it!"

"Oh!"

"And—and the balance of four pounds at the auction rooms!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"And the bedstead's yours," said Bunter. "I lose my pound. A pound's a lot of money, Peter. But I don't mind—for your sake. I never was a mean fellow with money!"

"I—I'm to pay a man ten bob, and some other men four pounds, and—and then I'm landed with a—a thundering bedstead!" gasped Peter Todd. "You frabjous idiot!"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"You can keep your magnificent gifts, Bunter," said Peter Todd. "If you want to spread yourself in the generosity line, you can stand your whack at tea. Or you can square the bob you borrowed yesterday. Or the eightpence you borrowed the day before. Keep your bedsteads!"

"I say, Peter!"

"Keep 'em!" said Peter Todd. "If you've been swanking at an auction, and got landed with something you can't pay for, old bean, you can't pass it on to me!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Of—of course, I—I wasn't thinking of anything of the kind. How did you guess? I—I mean what makes you think—"

Peter Todd chuckled.

"Go and offer it in some other study, my fat tulip," he said. "Try next door! Try the youngest fag in the Second Form! Try somebody who's never construed 'Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes!'"

"Oh, really, Peter!"

"And now shut up!" said Peter Todd. "I've got lines to do, and shall have to deny myself the pleasure of your conversation, Bunter."

"I say, Peter—"

"Shut up!" roared Toddy.

"But, I say—"

Peter Todd clutched the inkpot and turned a ferocious eye on Bunter. The Owl of the Remove rose hastily and departed from No. 7.

Peter chuckled and resumed his lines. Bunter did not chuckle. His fat face was dismal as he rolled into the Remove passage. His generous offer had been refused—his magnificent gift was going begging! On the morrow-morning Bunter's bargain was coming home to roost, as it were. How to get rid of it before it came was now Bunter's pressing problem.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

"Timeo Danaos!"

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were at tea in No. 1 Study as William George Bunter passed the door of that celebrated apartment. Bunter paused and looked in, but did not enter. Bob Cherry picked up a loaf and took aim, and his intention was so evident that Bunter merely ejaculated "Beast!" and rolled on without bestowing the honour of his company on the Famous Five.

On the Remove landing he found Skinner and Snoop and Stott of the Remove in conversation. Skinner called to him as he passed.

"Seen Penfold, Bunter?"

"Penfold?" repeated Bunter, full of his own problems. "What's the good of seeing him? He got's no money."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner. "That's candid anyhow. But it's about the muffler."

"Muffler! What muffler?"

"Pen says that somebody borrowed

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his muffler from the lobby this afternoon. He couldn't find it when he went for it.

"Bless Penfold, and blow his muffler," said Bunter crossly. "I've got no time to worry over Penfold's cheap mufflers. Penfold can go and eat coke."

"He was looking as if he was going to eat you!" chuckled Skinner.

"Blow Penfold!" snapped Bunter. "I—I say, you fellows." Bunter paused and blinked at Skinner & Co. through his big spectacles. "I say, I was at the auction in Courtfield to-day."

"Spent all your last postal-order?" asked Skinner humorously. "Bought the whole show?"

"I landed a big bargain," said Bunter. "A bedstead worth thirty pounds! I gave five pounds for it."

"Whose liver?"

"Mine!" howled Bunter. "But the fact is, Skinner, I'd rather have the ready money. You could sell that bedstead for fifteen pounds anywhere, as it's worth forty. I'm willing to let you have it, if you like, for five pounds ten shillings!"

"Go hon!"

"I'll take five guineas," said Bunter. Skinner & Co. chortled.

"Make it five farthings," suggested Skinner. "Then we might begin to think about it."

"It's a big bargain—well worth fifty pounds!"

"And that's why Bunter wants to pass it on to us," said Skinner, grinning at his comrades. "Jevver hear of such a generous chap?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The fact is, I mean to be generous," said Bunter. "A keen fellow like you, Skinner, could make a lot of profit selling that splendid bedstead. It's really magnificent. Jewelled in every—I—I mean iron frame and check action!"

"What?"

"I—I mean all wool and double-width—that is, I—I mean—" Bunter was getting a little confused.

"I know what you mean," assented Skinner. "You've been playing the goat at an auction, and got nobbled, and now you want to land the goods on a mug. Try Lord Mauleverer. He's the biggest mug in the Remove."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Snoop and Stott.

Bunter turned back into the Remove passage. There was obviously "nothing doing" with Skinner & Co. But Skinner's suggestion might come in useful. Lord Mauleverer had plenty of money, and he was not supposed to be very clever. Possibly he had not, as Peter Todd put it, construed "Times Danaos."

Bunter tapped at Study No. 12. To his annoyance, the door was locked. He rapped with his fat knuckles.

"You in Mauly?" he shouted.

"Yaas," came the sleepy voice of his lordship from within.

"Open the door!"

"Can't be did!"

"Why not, you ass?"

"Spotted you comin' up the passage," chuckled his lordship. "Locked the door just in time."

"You silly owl!" roared Bunter. "I want to speak to you very particularly, Mauly."

"Oh, gad! Can't you go and speak to some other chap very particularly, instead?"

"You silly ass!"

"Thanks!"

"I've bought a bedstead for you, Mauly," said Bunter, through the keyhole. "I thought it would do splendidly



Billy Bunter blinked at the Remove Form-master. "I—I—excuse me, sir—lemme explain. I—I—brought that—that splendid bedstead, sir, as a present for you. I hope you will accept it with my—my kind regards!" he said. Mr. Quelch looked dazed. (See Chapter 7.)

for the best bed room at Mauleverer Towers."

"Oh great gad!"

"It's coming to-morrow morning. You'll only have to pay a balance of four pounds on it, and ten bob for the man."

"Is that all?"

"That's all, old fellow."

"Go away, then!"

"You're going to take the bedstead?"

"Oh, no!"

"You—you—you chump! It's a magnificent bedstead! Brass knobs complete. First-class in every respect. As supplied to the troops. I—I mean, as supplied to first-class mansions—"

"Send it home to Bunter Court, then," suggested Lord Mauleverer. "It will be rippin' for some of the distinguished guests you have there, Bunter. I'm sure some of your ducal friends would appreciate it."

"Look here, Mauly—"

"Good-bye!"

"Will you open the door?"

"No fear."

"Yah! Beast!"

Billy Bunter bestowed a ferocious kick on the door, and rolled away. He left Lord Mauleverer chuckling, and rolled on to Study No. 13. That study belonged to Bob Cherry, Wun Lung, Mark Linley, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. Bob and Hurree Singh had gone to Study No. 1 to tea, but Bunter found Linley and the Chinese there. He did not even look at Mark Linley. The scholarship junior was poor, and, therefore, not worth Bunter's lofty notice. But Wun Lung had plenty of money, and Bunter bestowed his most friendly and ingratiating smile upon the heathen.

"Wun Lung, old chap—" he began. The "old chap" put the heathen Chinese upon his guard at once. He grinned.

"Buntee wantee bollow monee?" he asked.

"Oh, no; nothing of the sort! I'm giving something away," said Bunter. "I've got a receipt here for a pound. It's yours if you like, old fellow. You'll have to pay the balance of four pounds and—"

"No savvy."

"And ten bob for the man—"

"No savvy."

"Then you become the owner of a fine, splendid, magnificent four-poster bedstead in solid oak with gilt edges complete—"

"No savvy."

"Look here, old fellow—"

"No savvy."

"You fatheaded heathen!" roared Bunter.

The heathen Chinese chuckled.

"No savvy!" he answered again.

Bunter shook a fat fist at the grinning heathen, and rolled disconsolately out. It really was an extraordinary state of affairs, for the lucky man at an auction to be offering his great bargain dirt cheap, and finding no takers. Bunter began to wish that he had never heard of Mr. Grimes, auctioneer, of Courtfield. Hoping against hope, as it were, he rolled into Study No. 14, where he found Fisher T. Fish. Fisher T. Fish was reputed a keen youth, with a very sharp eye for a bargain. The Owl of the Remove hoped that he would have a sharp eye for his—Bunter's—bargain.

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"Fishy, old man," said Bunter, "I've been to an auction—"

Fisher T. Fish waved a stump of pencil impatiently. He was deep in an abstruse calculation. Fishy had lent half-a-crown to Tubb of the Third a few weeks before. Tubb had repaid him four shillings so far, and Fishy was working out exactly how much Tubb still owed him. Naturally, he did not want to be interrupted while engaged upon matters of high finance.

"I've bagged a huge bargain, Fishy, old—"

"Go away!"

"Thinking that you might like to take it on—"

"Think again!"

"By paying four pounds—"

"Vamoose the ranch, for goodness' sake!"

"You secure a magnificent Government bedstead—"

"Absquatulate!"

"You're an awfully keen chap, Fishy, and you could make a lot of profit on that bedstead—"

"Fairly keen," agreed Fisher T. Fish. "Too keen, I guess, to get landed with your pesky bargains, Bunter. Shut the door after you!"

"But I say—"

"Git!" roared Fisher T. Fish.

And Bunter, in the lowest of spirits, "got."

One more effort remained to be made. He drifted downstairs, and made his way to the Second Form room, in search of his minor. Brotherly affection did not often take William George to the quarters of Sammy Bunter. But at the present moment he was full of brotherly affection, and ready to let brotherly love continue till he had landed Sammy with the bedstead. He found Bunter minor in the Form-room, helping Dicky Nugent and Gatty and Myers to roast chestnuts. He was also helping to dispose of them, to judge by the remark Dicky Nugent was making as the Owl of the Remove entered.

"You fat, guzzling boulder, let those chestnuts alone! You've scoffed about half already!"

"Sammy, old fellow!" said Billy Bunter.

Sammy blinked round as his major entered. Perhaps he hoped, for a moment, that a remittance had arrived, and that Billy had come to bring him his "whack." But at "old fellow" Sammy's hopes died on the spot, and he gave only an unbrotherly grunt.

"Stony!"

"I've come here to do you a favour, Sammy."

"Can it?" said Sammy.

Billy Bunter breathed hard. Sammy was evidently sceptical. And, besides, Bunter major's remarks were not worthy of being canned. But William George kept his temper. He had no hope that Sammy would be able to pay for the unhappy bedstead. But he hoped, at least, to land his minor with the responsibility for it. That would be something attempted, something done, to earn a night's repose.

"A great favour, Sammy," he said. "I've paid a pound on a wonderful bedstead I've bought at an auction—"

"Well, you idiot!" said Sammy.

"I'm going to give you the receipt."

"You're jolly well not!"

"Look here, Sammy—"

"Anything more to pay on it?" grinned Sammy.

"Only four pounds."

"He, he, he! You've been done!"

"Not at all. It's an amazing bargain. The bedstead belonged to a duke, and was sold to—to pay the death duties," said Bunter. "My idea is that you could make a profit by selling it again. I'm too busy to bother over it, but I want to keep the—the profit in the family, so I'm offering you—"

"Can it!" advised Sammy again.

"You cheeky young waster!" roared Bunter.

Sammy, evidently, was not "taking any"; and the Owl of the Remove advanced upon him, to obtain what solace he could by bestowing a brotherly cuff.

Bunter minor jumped up.

"Here, hands off!" he yelled. "Back up, you fellows—"

"Turn that Remove cad out!" shouted Nugent minor.

"Kick him out!" shouted Myers.

"Here, I—I say, you fellows—" stammered Bunter. He beat a rapid retreat to the door. Sammy Bunter sat down and grinned. His major retreated in a great hurry before five or six belligerent fags. They did not care twopence for Sammy; but they were not going to have their Form-room invaded by a Removeite. So they laid violent hands on Billy Bunter, and ejected him into the passage. They followed him out and kicked him with cheerful vigour. Billy Bunter was the only fellow in the Remove whom the Second Form fags could venture to kick; so, as it was a rare sport, they enjoyed it all the more.

Bunter did not enjoy it. He scrambled away, picked himself up, and fled ingloriously, followed by yells and hoots from the fags.

In a dismal mood, Billy Bunter ambled back to the Remove passage. His last hope had failed him. He made one or two more feeble attempts to palm off his great bargain in the Remove. But the story of the auction and of Bunter's big bargain was common property now, up and down the Remove passage, and all the Form were chortling over it. Bunter's offers were received with howls of laughter.

Bunter gave it up at last. He rolled dismally into No. 7, to begin his prep—rather late. Peter Todd greeted him with a grin.

"I say, Peter—" murmured Bunter feebly.

"Timeo Danaos!" grinned Peter.

"Look here—"

"Et dona ferentes," as merry old Laocoon remarked to the Trojans," said Peter Todd. "I fear the Greeks when they bring gifts! Old Laocoon knew something! So do I! Can it, Bunt, can it!"

Billy Bunter went to bed that night, wondering what on earth was going to happen when that miserable bedstead arrived at Greyfriars in the morning. Most of the other Removeites wondered, too, and they chuckled as they wondered, apparently regarding the matter in a comic light. But William George Bunter could see nothing comic in it. He was so worried that it was five minutes at least before his snore resounded through the Remove dormitory.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Delivering the Goods!

MR. QUELCH had something to say to Bunter in the Form-room the next morning.

In the first place, with the worry of that wretched bedstead on his mind, Billy Bunter had been able to give little attention to prep. His construe was even worse than usual—which is saying a great deal. It was Bunter who was celebrated for construing "Est in conspectu Tenedos." "He was expecting a tenner." On this particular morning Bunter outdid even that brilliant effort; at which Mr. Quelch could not be expected to be grateful or comforted.

In the second place, Bunter wasn't able to give much attention to Mr. Quelch. He was wondering whether that dreadful bedstead would arrive during lessons. His unhappy mind was haunted by the thought of his big bargain. Too late, he realised that he would have done more wisely to make no arrangements for the delivery of the fearsome article. He had consented to anything to get out of the auction-room. And he reflected bitterly that the bedstead couldn't possibly have been delivered, if Harry Wharton & Co. had allowed him to give a false name and address. It was all their fault really; yet the disastrous consequences fell on Bunter. The Owl of the Remove felt that it was most unfair. It occurred to him suddenly that he might telephone to the auctioneer and ask him to delay the delivery of the bedstead. Unfortunately, this did not occur to him till he was in the Remove-room at lessons. He wondered whether he could venture to ask Mr. Quelch for leave, and whether it would be any good if he did. With such weighty problems on his fat brain, Bunter was not likely to take a deep interest in the "pius Æneas" and his rather dismal adventures. He resolved to put it to the touch at last, and jumped up.

"Please—"

"You may sit down, Bunter!"

"May I use the telephone, sir?"

"What!"

"I—I want to telephone home, and—ask my father how he is, sir," stammered Bunter.

Mr. Quelch gave him a steely look.

"Is your father ill, Bunter?"

"Yes, sir—awfully—"

"What is the matter with him?"

"Smallpox, sir," said Bunter—"galloping smallpox, sir."

"Bunter!"

"I—I mean, plumbago, sir—that is, lumbago—"

"You will take a hundred lines for telling falsehoods, Bunter!"

"Oh!"

"You need not speak again. If you do, I shall cane you!"

Bunter did not speak again. It was evidently useless. He sat in quaking fear of hearing the arrival of the magnificent four-poster bedstead. Fortunately, it did not arrive during lessons.

When the Remove were dismissed at last, Bunter wandered out into the quad, still occupied with his problem. He shuddered as he caught sight of a van at the school-gates. Whether telephoning to the auction-rooms would have done any good, he was not sure; but evidently it was too late now. The big bargain had arrived!

Outside Gosling's lodge, there was a stack of furniture. At least, that was what it looked like. Never had a bedstead looked so large and imposing, even taken to pieces and packed. Brass knobs

(Continued on page 13.)

ANSWERS
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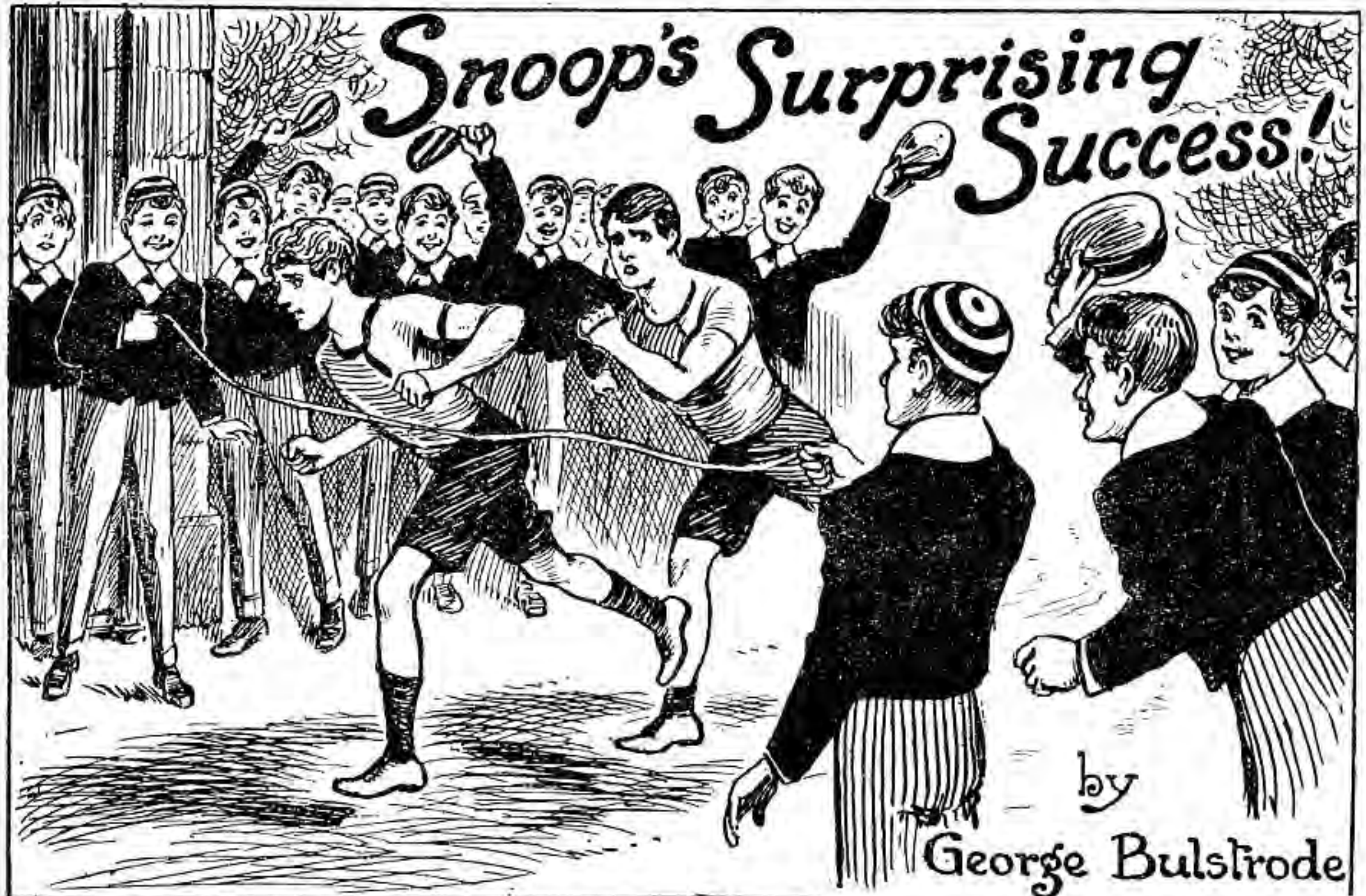


The GREYFRIARS HERALD



Supplement No. 57.

Week Ending January 28th, 1922.



AT THE END OF THE RACE! At last Snoop saw his chance. Running his hardest he got to the outstretched tape just before Vernon-Smith could breast it. There was a cheer from the crowd in the gateway.

"I'M sorry for Snoopey," said Harry Wharton thoughtfully. "He's fallen on hard times."

The other members of the Famous Five nodded sympathetically.

It was seldom that the chums of the Remove felt any sorrow for Sidney James Snoop. He was not a fellow with whom they had a great deal to do. He belonged to that dingy society of ends of which Skinner and Stott were prominent members. He was weedy and pale and anaemic-looking. He never played games. He was a slacker, and, in many respects, a waster. Yet Snoop had his good points. Occasionally, he gave glimpses of a higher and better nature.

Only the previous evening he had behaved like a Good Samaritan. He had been coming home from Courtfield, when he had encountered on the highway a ragged and half-starved woman, who was wandering, homeless and helpless, with her child.

Skinner would probably have walked on. So would Stott. But Snoop's heart was touched. He had twelve-and-sixpence on him, and he gave the entire sum to the destitute woman, bidding her go and seek a night's lodging in Courtfield, and get some food for herself and the child.

The poor creature had thanked him profusely, her eyes shining with gratitude and a new hope.

Snoop tramped on to Greyfriars with that glowing feeling of satisfaction which is inseparable from a kindly and unselfish action.

Supplement i.]

On reaching the school, he found that a calamity had occurred in his absence.

Billy Bunter had wanted to go into Friar-dale, and for that purpose he had coolly borrowed Snoop's bike.

In the darkness of the winter evening, the short-sighted Owl of the Remove had ridden into some railings. He had escaped injury by a miracle; but the bicycle was badly battered, and no longer rideable.

Snoop was simply furious. Although not a fighting man, he squared up to Billy Bunter, and smote him with great violence on the nose. Then he punched him in the chest. After which, by way of variety, he got in an upper-cut, which caused Billy Bunter to roll over on the flagstones in the Close, groaning feebly.

"You fat villain!" panted Snoop. "You've smashed my jigger beyond recognition!"

"Ow!"

"It'll cost me a couple of quids to get it properly repaired!"

"Yow!"

"It would serve you right if I sneaked on you, and the Head wrote to your pater and made him pay!"

"Groo!"

Billy Bunter's conversation consisted solely of grunts and groans. As he lay there on the flagstones, he resembled a punctured balloon.

Snoop was very upset about his bike. He knew that Billy Bunter would not and could not pay for the damage. He himself would have to get the machine repaired, and he had not a penny in his pocket. The

twelve-and-six he had just given away would have enabled him to pay for certain repairs, and he could have done the rest himself. But now he was penniless.

Harry Wharton & Co. had found out what had happened—not from Snoop's lips—and they were genuinely sorry for the junior. They would have had a "whip round" in order to pay for the repair of Snoop's bike; but it so happened that funds were scarce. Johnny Bull's supply of pocket money had been delayed in the post, and the others could only muster a shilling between them.

"Wish we could help Snoopey in some way!" said Nugent.

"We can do nothing," said Wharton, shaking his head.

"Afraid not."

And the juniors ceased to discuss Snoop and his affairs, and talked about the Marathon race which was to be run on the morrow.

The race was open to Removites only. Mr. Larry Lascelles had promoted it, and he was awarding a prize of two guineas to the winner.

Speculation was rife as to whom the winner would be. There were several splendid long-distance runners in the Remove, and Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Mark Linley, and Vernon-Smith were all fancied.

Harry Wharton & Co. had a big surprise next day when they assembled in the school gateway in their running shorts.

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For among the runners was Sidney Snoop! The juniors could not help smiling.

Snoop was no runner, long-distance or otherwise. Nor did he look one. His calves were woefully thin (Bob Cherry likened them unto match-sticks) and he possessed neither speed nor stamina. It was extremely doubtful if he would be able to complete the distance.

"Hallo, Snoopey!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Going in for the Marathon?"

Snoop flushed.

"Yes," he replied. "I haven't a dog's chance, I know. But I'm going to have a shot."

"But what's the idea of competing?" asked Wharton.

"I've got my eye on that two guineas," said Snoop, with a faint smile. "If I win it—there's always a remote possibility, you know—I shall be able to get my bike repaired. Don't laugh at me, you fellows, if I break down on the road."

Snoop turned away with a quivering lip. He half-regretted having turned out for the race. What chance had he against such sterling runners as Wharton and Cherry and Linley?

Just before the start, Harry Wharton & Co. stood together in a group, chatting confidentially. Snoop knew nothing of what they were discussing; and he did not care.

Crack!

Mr. Lascelles fired the pistol. The runners started off with long, easy strides.

There were ten competitors. Each had a number on his chest, and Snoop was No. 10.

"The last number," he reflected. "Is that an omen that I shall finish last, I wonder?"

And then he recalled a saying he had seen somewhere that the last should be first and the first last. It heartened him a little. He ran quite well for the first mile. And then he was obliged to drop behind the others. He had not trained for the event. Already he was flushed and perspiring and scanty of breath.

"But I'll stick it out!" he muttered. "I'll finish the course, even if I'm the last one home!"

Snoop ran on steadily.

The other runners were lost to sight. But when Snoop rounded a bend in the road, he came upon two of them. They were Bob Cherry and Mark Linley. Both were seated on the bank, and Bob was rubbing Linley's ankle.

"My hat!" ejaculated Snoop, as he drew level with them. "What's happened, you fellows?"

"Can't you see?" said Bob Cherry, looking as solemn as an owl. "He's had to retire from the race."

"And you?"

"I'm going to help him back to Greyfriars. But don't waste your time, Snoopey. Go right ahead!"

Snoop ran on in a state of wonder.

Now that two of the best runners had retired, his chances of winning, almost negative though they were, had improved. He seemed to get his second wind, and he covered the next mile at quite a useful pace.

At the end of that mile he overtook four runners.

Johnny Bull, Frank Nugent, Hurree Singh, and Tom Brown were plodding along together in a leisurely manner. They seemed to be trying hard, but it was as if they had run themselves to a standstill. Snoop gave a queer little chuckle of triumph as he overhauled them.

There were now only three runners ahead of him—Harry Wharton, Vernon-Smith, and Peter Todd. If only he could pass them!

Snoop ran with renewed energy. He covered the next mile and a half without incident, and without passing anybody.

And then he came upon Harry Wharton. The captain of the Remove was resting on a stile by the roadside. His face had the drawn expression of one who is in pain.

"Wharton!" panted Snoop. "Why have you dropped out?"

"Stitch," explained Wharton briefly. "In my side. But don't worry about me. Carry on!"

With the knowledge that only two fellows were in front of him, Snoop summoned all the energy that was in him and ran on.

His face was turned towards Greyfriars now. The race had entered on its final stage. Two miles of twisting road, and the school gates would come into view.

Snoop became unutterably weary. His legs were aching, and it was soon as much as

he could do to drag one after the other. He limped on painfully. The next mile seemed more like five. And there was no sign of either Vernon-Smith or Peter Todd.

"They may be home by now," Snoop thought. "Still, I shall finish third. And I fancy there's a third prize of five bob."

He flogged his way slowly along the hard road, and toiled up a steep hill. As he came over the brow of it and looked down, he saw Vernon-Smith and Peter Todd, running side by side. They were running very slowly—simply crawling along. To all appearances they were "whacked."

They looked round over their shoulders and saw that Snoop was in pursuit. And they seemed to try to pull themselves together and quicken their pace.

And presently the familiar gateway of Greyfriars came into sight.

Snoop gave a groan. It seemed impossible that he would secure the lead in time.

A dozen yards from home, however, a startling thing happened.

Peter Todd collapsed completely. And Vernon-Smith, utterly exhausted, it appeared, had dropped into a walk.

This was Snoop's great chance. He embraced it. Running his hardest, he got to the outstretched tape just before Vernon-Smith could breast it.

There was an astonished cheer from the crowd in the gateway.

"What duffer said the age of miracles was past?" remarked Dick Russell to his chum Ogilvy. "Snoop's won the Marathon!"

To which Ogilvy responded faintly:

"Carry me home to die, somebody!"

Yes! Sidney James Snoop had won the Marathon, and, incidentally, the two guineas. He did not know—and nobody ever enlightened him—that the crack runners of the Remove had plotted a plot beforehand, and allowed him to win.

Snoop was able to get his bicycle repaired, and he had some cash over for other purposes. He had helped a needy woman in her hour of distress; and his action had not gone unrewarded. Such actions never do. Sidney James Snoop had cast his bread upon the waters, and it had returned to him, not after many days, but after a short interval.

EDITORIAL!

By H. VERNON-SMITH.

Of course, I knew it would have to come, sooner or later. My editing an issue of the "Greyfriars Herald," I mean. Bob Cherry and others have tried their hand, and I knew it would be only a matter of time before Wharton entrusted me with the task of bringing out a number of my own.

Am I pleased? Well, to tell the truth, I am. I frankly confess, at the risk of being dubbed selfish, that I am fond of the lime-light. I like to wake people up, every now and again, and show them that such a person as Herbert Vernon-Smith still exists. I am no modest, blushing young hero that hides his light under a bushel.

Further, I have complete confidence in my ability to successfully edit a paper for one week. I shouldn't like to have to do it always. It would bore me. Variety is the spice of life, and I don't believe in settling down in one fixed groove.

As I happen to be the Sports Editor of the "Greyfriars Herald," and contribute sporting features from time to time, as the spirit moves me, I suppose I had better infuse plenty of sport into this issue. Most fellows are keen on sport. An overwhelming percentage prefer sport to swotting, anyway.

There may be a few readers who have heard but little about me and my Greyfriars history. They wonder what manner of fellow I am. I will tell them. I used to be a gay dog, and a blade, and a goer; but I have now chucked that sort of existence. I stopped myself from going to the dogs, because I found that it wasn't at all an exciting experience. It was dull and sordid. I exhausted all the so-called joys of what is known as "a gay time," and I'm jolly glad I reformed. There's nothing like playing with a straight bat.

Well, dear readers, I will "cut the cackle," and leave you to enjoy the number which I have been at great pains to produce. Jolly good wishes to you all!

H. VERNON-SMITH.

LATEST REMOVE MATCHES!

By Our Special Reporter.

GREYFRIARS REMOVE

v. HIGHCLIFFE.

Played at Greyfriars. The Remove attacked strongly in the opening stages, and scored three times through Wharton, Nugent, and Vernon-Smith. Highcliffe took a long time to settle down, and the Remove forwards led them a rare dance. But there was no further scoring before the interval, when Greyfriars led 3-0. In the second half Highcliffe, aided by the wind, played with great dash and determination, and Frank Courtenay scored two goals in quick succession. Try as they would, however, the visitors could not obtain the equaliser. Shortly before the finish Wharton scored again for the Remove, who ran out winners by 4-2.

ST. JIM'S JUNIORS

v. GREYFRIARS REMOVE.

At St. Jim's, in wet weather. The Remove could not adapt themselves to the heavy ground, whereas the St. Jim's players quickly got into their stride. All through the first half they bombarded the Greyfriars goal, but Bulstrode made some capital saves. There was no score at the interval. In the second half St. Jim's maintained strong pressure, and Tom Merry scored from a pass by Talbot. Blake added to the home side's lead, and although the Remove struggled desperately to better their position, their efforts proved unavailing, and the final whistle sounded with the score: St. Jim's, 2; Greyfriars Remove, 0.

GREYFRIARS REMOVE

v. ROOKWOOD.

At Greyfriars. The visitors went off with a rush, and played surprisingly well, Lovell scoring a grand goal after three minutes. The Remove retaliated strongly, Bob Cherry scoring with a great shot from twenty yards range. Rookwood, however, continued to play dashing football, and put on two more goals through Jimmy Silver. Half-time: Rookwood, 3; Greyfriars, 1. The second half was packed with thrills, and the Remove gave a vastly improved display. Twenty minutes from the end their efforts were rewarded, Vernon-Smith netting. In the last minute, following a desperate struggle in the Rookwood goal-mouth, Penfold headed a smart goal. Result: Greyfriars, 3; Rookwood, 3.

GREYFRIARS REMOVE

v. BILLY BUNTER'S XI.

This was a farcical game throughout, even though Billy Bunter had the assistance of a couple of useful players in Bolsover and Morgan. The regular Remove team did all the attacking, and goals came in profusion. At half-time the Remove led by five goals to nil. Early in the second half, Bolsover was sent off the field for deliberately tripping an opponent. After Bolsover's departure, the Remove forwards ran riot, scoring no less than ten goals! Billy Bunter was weeping as he left the field. Result: Greyfriars Remove, 15; Billy Bunter's XI, 0.

[Supplement ii.]



Mr Prout goes Golfing!

By Tom Brown



BROWN!" said Mr. Prout, bearing down upon me in the Close, on the last half-holiday. "Have you anything on this afternoon?"

"Of course, sir!"

"Anything special, my boy?"

"A fancy waistcoat and a new pair of silk spats, sir!" I said.

Mr. Prout frowned.

"Do not jest with me, Brown! You know perfectly well what I meant. Have you an important engagement?"

"No, sir."

"Then perhaps you would like to accompany me to the golf-links, and carry my clubs for me?"

I made a grimace.

"Aren't there any caddies on the links, sir?"

"Yes; but I cannot tolerate them!" said Mr. Prout. "They are impudent and impertinent to a degree. If it should happen—and it does not very often happen—that I miss the ball, my caddy invariably sniggers, and puts me off my game. You, Brown, would not be so rude as to titter at me. That is why I am asking you to come. I will, of course, provide you with tea at the golf-house."

Having nothing special to do that afternoon, I fell in with Mr. Prout's wishes.

I hoped that the master of the Fifth would telephone for a taxi to come and pick us up at Greyfriars, and convey us to the golf-links. But Mr. Prout didn't believe in luxuries.

"We will proceed on foot, Brown," he said, handing me his bag of clubs.

It was a long way to the links. When at last we arrived, I was perspiring profusely, despite the fact that it was a bitterly cold day.

"I suggest, sir, that we have tea first, and that you go round the links afterwards," I murmured.

Mr. Prout turned to me with a snarl.

"When I stand in need of your suggestions, Brown, I will ask you for them! Meanwhile, be good enough to hold your tongue!"

My companion made his way to the first tee. He had two golf-balls in his possession. They were known as "Dimple" and "Pimple." Dimple had dents in its surface, and Pimple had humps.

Mr. Prout was at great pains to explain that these golf-balls had cost him two shillings apiece.

"On no account are they to be lost, Brown," he said. "Each time I make a stroke, follow the flight of the ball with your eye. Then run after it, and stand beside it, so that I shall know just where it has fallen."

"Very good, sir!"

Mr. Prout placed Pimple upon a little mound of earth. He then helped himself to a driver from the bag I carried, and proceeded to chastise the ball, just as he might have chastised an erring pupil.

Pimple was a very obstinate ball. When it was struck it rolled stupidly for about two yards, and stopped dead.

"Perdition!" said Mr. Prout.

"If at first you don't succeed—" I began.

Mr. Prout spun round, flourishing his club dangerously near to my head.

"Pray refrain from quoting moth-eaten maxims!" he snapped. "You really are a most trying boy, Brown! Replace that ball on the mound, and I will address it again."

Prout's next shot caused an avalanche of dirt to shoot into my face, almost choking me. The Form-master had removed not only the ball, but the mound on which it had rested.

"Follow its flight—quickly!" he panted.

"How can I follow the flight of the ball when I'm blinded?" I growled.

"You should not have got in the way!" said Prout. "I fancy I have cleared the bunker!"

Supplement iii.]

"Talking about bunkers," I said, "I feel like doing a bunk myself!"

"Be silent, boy. Go and ascertain where the ball fell!"

I then spent the best part of an hour searching for Pimple. But the wretched ball refused to show itself. It was hiding probably, in some tuft of grass, or was peeping out at me from beneath some stone.

I was obliged to give up the search at length, and I reported to Mr. Prout that Pimple, like the lady in the song, was lost and gone for ever.

"You should have noted the direction it took!" said Prout. "Really, Brown, you are a most incompetent caddy! Your negligence has cost me the sum of two shillings. I shall now have to use Dimple!"

Mr. Prout seized the sole surviving ball, placed it on a mound, and attacked it savagely.

More by accident than design, he made a wonderful drive. Dimple went careering into space.

Mr. Prout puffed out his chest with pride.

"There would be a fuss about that stroke had it been made by Braid or Vardon!" he said.



Mr. Prout's next shot caused an avalanche of dirt to shoot into my face, almost choking me.

"There'll be a fuss about it now, sir," I said, with a chuckle. "It's hit Major Thresher on the head!"

"What!"

Mr. Prout saw that I spoke correctly.

Major Thresher, the retired Army officer, who lived near Greyfriars, happened to be walking across the course, right in the line of fire. Fortunately, the ball was somewhat spent when it got to him; but it gave him a nasty crack on the head, all the same.

Spluttering with fury, the major came striding towards Mr. Prout.

"You have done me a serious injury, begad!" he thundered. "I shall have a hump the size of a pigeon's egg where your confounded ball struck me! Dash it, sir, you might have killed me!"

Mr. Prout was equally wrathful.

"You spoilt my stroke!" he said. "The ball would have travelled another dozen yards at least, had you not got in the way. You are a clumsy intruder, sir!"

"And you, sir," thundered the major, "are a public danger! You ought to be chained up!"

"You—you—" Mr. Prout was almost foaming at the mouth. "Where is my ball? What happened to it after it struck you?"

"I put it in my pocket," said the major—"and there it is going to remain!"

"But it is the only golf-ball left in my possession—"

"So much the better! You won't be able to do any more damage!"

Mr. Prout glared fiercely at the major. The major glared fiercely in return.

"Give me back my golf-ball!" spluttered Mr. Prout.

"I refuse, sir! The public must be protected!"

"Were I a younger man," said Mr. Prout, "I should recover the ball by force!"

The major snorted contemptuously.

"Bah! Do you suppose you would stand the slightest chance of overcoming a seasoned warrior like myself? You flatter yourself, sir!"

"Until you return my ball, I shall be unable to proceed with my game!" said Mr. Prout.

"And a good job, too, begad!" said the major.

And he turned on his heel and strode away. Mr. Prout looked as if he would follow. But he thought better of it.

"Come, Brown," he said, turning to me. "we will go and refresh ourselves!"

I brightened up considerably at this.

Mr. Prout's ideas of a good tea, however, did not coincide with my own.

"I have lost golf-balls to the value of four shillings this afternoon," he said, "and I must be economical. I will merely order you a cup of tea, Brown. Are you hungry?"

"Ravenous, sir!"

"Then you may have a modicum of shortbread with your tea. It will cost me an extra penny; but I promised you a tea, and I must keep my word."

I have had some disappointing teas in my time; but the tea I had that afternoon at the golf-house was the limit!

One cup of lukewarm tea, one small piece of shortbread!

When I thought of my cosy study at Greyfriars, and of the choice array of tuck set out on the table, I could have hurled the piece of shortbread at Mr. Prout.

"A meal like this, Brown, is far better for you than a miscellaneous assortment of indigestible and messy compounds!" said Prout. "This cup of tea will fortify you for your journey back to school!"

I emitted a deep and hollow groan. And I resolved that never again, under any circumstances, would I act as caddy to Mr. Prout. He may get hold of some guileless youth on the next half-holiday. But the name of that youth won't be Thomas Brown!

HOW I SEE OTHER FELLOWS!

By Frank Nugent.



HARRY WHARTON.
THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 729.



THE story I have to tell is a pathetic one.

I have had a long and varied career as a football; but instead of starting at the bottom of the ladder and working my way up, as it were, I started at the top, and am finishing at the bottom.

I was made by hand in Birmingham, not many years ago. Everybody remarked what a splendid ball I was—just the right size and weight, and awfully good-looking.

I was purchased by the Aston Villa Football Club, and when only a week old I made my first public appearance.

How proud I was as I stood in the centre of the playing-pitch at Villa Park, with a crowd of thirty thousand people gazing at me! I felt that I should simply burst with pride.

It was an eventful afternoon. From the time that the referee blew his whistle for the start, up to the time when the final whistle sounded, I was booted by the backs, hacked by the half-backs, fastened upon by the forwards, and punched by the goal-keepers.

However, I had a thick hide, and I withstood the treatment well. The ground was nice and dry, and I was almost as clean at the end of the match as at the beginning.

The Aston Villa players were very pleased with me, for their forwards had kicked me into the net no less than five times.

The visiting eleven, however, were furious with me. They said I was full of bounce.

Unfortunately, that was my only appearance on the Villa ground. Having once been played with I was no longer classed as a new ball. One of the minor clubs bought me, and I led a very strenuous existence for the next few weeks.

It had always been my ambition to figure in the Cup Final, but this fond dream was speedily shattered. I was given to understand that a brand-new ball would be required on that eventful Saturday in April.

After doing duty with my club for about a month, I became badly punctured.

A full-back gave me such a savage kick that I struck a corner of the grand-stand roof.

I fell to earth with a sickening thud. The game was suspended, and a group of players stood gazing down at me.

"Dented out of shape!" said one.

"All the air's escaping!" added another.

"Fairly done for, by Jove!" said the brutal back who was responsible for my condition.

"Take it away to the dressing-room," said the skipper of the side, "and fetch a new ball!"

For some weeks I was out of action. And my next recollection was of being sent away by train to a saddler in Courtfield. Here I was thoroughly overhauled and patched up, and blown out again to my natural size. I was then placed in the shop window, and the following words appeared on a small sheet of cardboard which stood in front of me:

"SPLENDID MATCH FOOTBALL!"

As used by the celebrated Aston Villa Club.
Price 15s."

I did not remain long unsold.

Every day dozens of Greyfriars fellows flocked in to examine me. Many of them tried to induce my owner to lower the price of me; but this he stubbornly refused to do.

I was purchased at length by Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove Eleven.

I liked Wharton. He did not play with me on the way back to school and kick me into ditches and puddles. He carried me very carefully by my laces.

I looked forward to remaining in the service of the Remove team for a long time. But, alas! my service was restricted to one match only.

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It happened to be a wet day, and I became very heavy and depressed. I lacked all my former bounce and vitality.

Bob Cherry gave me a mighty kick but I refused to lift myself from the ground.

"Call this a football, Harry?" said Bob, in disgust. "Why, it's a blessed pudding!"

"It's certainly on the stodgy side!" said Wharton. "But the ground's like a quagmire. It's enough to take the heart out of any football!"

My heart went out to Wharton for those sympathetic words. One fellow, at any rate, understood me.

Towards the end of the game Vernon-Smith gave me a fierce kick, which flattened me against the crossbar.

I was knocked hopelessly out of shape, and resembled a Rugby ball or a miniature Zeppelin.

"Another fifteen bob gone west, Harry!" said Frank Nugent. "We must give this one away, and get a new ball."

Billy Bunter begged to be allowed to have me, and, after many entreaties on his part I



I fell to the ground with a sickening thud. The game was suspended, and a group of players stood gazing down at me.

was handed over to him, and his fat face was beaming with delight as he took me away in his arms.

I was in a sorry plight, but Bunter did his best for me. He blew me up with a bicycle-pump, while several juniors stood looking on.

"How long do you think it will stay up, you fellows?" asked Bunter, referring to me.

"Oh, about five minutes!" said Bolsover major.

"That ball's seen its best days, if you ask me," said Skinner.

"With a bit of luck," said Stott hopefully, "it'll keep its shape for twenty-four hours."

Alas for Stott's prediction!

The fellows started playing with me in the Close, and Billy Bunter, in attempting to kick me, lost his balance, and sat on me instead.

I can stand a good deal, but when it comes to being sat on by a fellow whose weight is fourteen stone, I confess I am not equal to the ordeal.

With a resounding report, I burst!

"Good-bye for ever!" said Skinner.

"You've fairly done it in now, Bunter!"

Skinner was right.

After that terrible experience, I was no longer fit for active service. I was consigned to the lumber-room, where, I suppose, I shall spend the rest of my days.

It's jolly hard lines, of course! But, then, a football must always expect more kicks than pence!

A TRIBUTE TO SMITHY!

By DICK PENFOLD.

Smithy's a player of dash and skill,
A ripping forward he.
Rushes and rallies with a will,
And gives the lookers-on a thrill,
For when he shoots, he shoots to kill—
Oh, a gallant forward he!

High shots, low shots,
It's Smithy who fires them in.
Swift shots, slow shots,
He takes with a cheery grin.
Scorching shots and dropping shots,
Teasing shots and topping shots,
And the sort-that-take-some-stopping
shots,
It's Smithy who fires them in!

Smithy's a player we all admire,
A valiant forward he.
His efforts never seem to tire,
He always shows a keen desire
To wrest the game from out the fire—
Oh, a splendid forward he!

Strong shots, sound shots,
It's Smithy who fires them in.
Grand shots, ground shots,
He takes with a cheery grin.
Flashing shots and furious shots,
Curling shots and curious shots,
And the deadly but non-injurious shots,
It's Smithy who fires them in!

(Many thanks, Pen! Next time you have occasion to call at the editorial sanctum, help yourself liberally from the cashbox—VERNON-SMITH.)

FOOTBALL FLASHES!

By BOB CHERRY.

Why is it never safe for our opponents to play in red?
Because there's a "Bull" in the Remove eleven!

Why is Peter Todd a generous half-back?
Because he's constantly "feeding" his forwards.

What happens near the Remove goal?
The crowd bawls "Save!" and Bulstrode saves ball!

What do the angry spectators do when the Remove team is off colour?
Pick up pebbles, and stone a Cherry!

Why is Billy Bunter an obstruction on the football-field?
Because he's too plump to "pass."

What is the essential difference between Bolsover major and Billy Bunter?
One always "squares up"; the other doesn't!

What song did Harry Wharton sing when he bought some new football gear?
"Three 'Fishers' went sailing."

What is the difference between a clever Wharton and Harold Skinner?
One runs down the field—the other "runs down" football.

What is the difference between a clever forward and Gosling, the porter?
The former takes a shot; the latter shakes a "tot."

[Supplement iv.]

"Billy Bunter's Big Bargain!"

(Continued from page 8.)

glimmered in the sun. The mattress made a huge roll. Bunter blinked at the stack from a distance, and turned to flee. He gave the problem up; and could only think of being undiscoverable when he was inquired after. But Gosling had seen him, and Gosling bore down on him, shouting.

"Master Bunter! Master Bunter!" "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "You're wanted, Bunter!"

"Roll up, Bunter!" yelled Skinner. "Ha, ha, ha!" "The man's waiting for the money!" howled Gosling. "Says he's brought that there vanload for you, Master Bunter!"

"Oh dear!" "Pay up, Bunter!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "It's a wonderful bargain, you know!"

"Beast!" "Better get rid of it before Quelch sees it," advised Vernon-Smith. "There may be a row!"

"All Greyfriars will see it soon!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Bunter, you frabjous ass—"

"Tell him I'm not at home, Gosling!" gasped Bunter. "Say—say I've been suddenly called to—London—"

"What am I to do with that there bedstead?"

"Anything you like—"

"You come and tork to the man, Master Bunter—"

"I—I—I've got nothing to say to the man—"

"Then I'd better go to the 'Ead, and see what's to be done."

"Hold on!" howled Bunter. "I—I—I'll see the beast!"

Gosling grunted, and strode back to his lodge. Gosling was amazed and astounded by the arrival of such an article for a Remove fellow; and his opinion was that these were precious "goings-hon." Billy Bunter followed him, and nearly all the Remove followed Bunter—as well as a contingent of the Third, the Fourth, and the Shell. The story of Bunter's bargain had spread, and there was general interest in the magnificent bedstead. But for once, William George Bunter did not enjoy the limelight.

A gentleman with a blue chin, a pug-nose, and a red-spotted muffer, was in charge of the horse and van, and he seemed, by his looks, to be getting impatient.

"Where's this 'ere Bunter?" he demanded. "Which of you is Bunter? I've got to get back to dinner, I 'ave! Four quid to collect for Mr. Grimes, and 'ere's the receipt ready made out, and ten bob for delivery. And I'll thank you to 'and it out!"

"The—the fact is—" stuttered Bunter.

"You Bunter?"

"Ye-e-e-es! The fact is—"

"'Ere's the receipt. Where's the dibs?"

"The—the what?"

"Spondulies—dibs—money!" snorted the blue-chinned gentleman. "Don't you hunderstand Henglish at this 'ere school? Strike me pink! 'Ave I mentioned that I want to get 'ome to my dinner, or 'ave I not?"

"Well, Bunter's done it now!" remarked Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Owl of the Remove cast a piteous

blink around. It was only too evident that the blue-chinned gentleman was not to be argued with. He had no sympathy whatever for a hapless bargainer who had got more than he had bargained for. All his consideration seemed to be concentrated upon his dinner—which he wanted to get home to! Bunter's look might have melted the heart of a Hun.

Harry Wharton exchanged a glance with his comrades. Bunter was a most exasperating duffer; but the captain of the Remove felt that it was up to him to help a lame dog over a stile. The blue-chinned gentleman looked as if he were capable of assault and battery if his claims were not settled in time for him to get home to his dinner. And at any moment the scene at the school gates might draw a master to the spot. Something, evidently, had to be done.

"You crass ass!" said Wharton. "I suppose we've got to get you out of this somehow."

"You—you can have the bedstead," said Bunter feebly.

"Fat lot of good that is to anybody!" growled Bob Cherry.

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"I say, Smithy, lend me four pounds ten!" mumbled Bunter.

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

Apparently he took that modest request as an effort of humour.

"Look 'ere—" began the owner of the blue chin.

"It's all right, my man," said Harry Wharton. "We'll arrange it somehow. Hold on a bit."

"I've got to get 'ome to my dinner."

"Shell out, you fellows," said Harry.

"We can sell the dashed thing for something, I hope, so it won't be all loss. I can put up ten bob."

"Mine's a tanner," said Bob Cherry.

"Same here!" said Nugent, with a grimace; "and the last!"

"Fifteen bob!" grunted Johnny Bull, with a savage glare at Bunter.

He followed his leader's lead, but he did not pretend that he liked it.

"Oh, my hat! What about you, Inky?"

"An esteemed pound, and an excellent ten-shilling note, my dear Wharton," said the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"That's better. You contributing, Smithy?"

"Catch me!"

"You, Skinner?"

"Ask me again after the vac," said Skinner cheerily.

"Two pounds sixteen," said Harry Wharton, counting up the collection. "That won't meet the bill. Have you got anything, Bunter?"

"I'm expecting a postal-order—"

"Have you got any money?" howled Wharton.

"Nunno!"

"Nice goings hon!" Gosling contributed to the discussion. "Wot I says is this 'ere—"

"Shut up, Gosling!" said Wharton irritably. "We want another thirty-four shillings. Smithy, lend me one pound fourteen. We'll settle it somehow on Saturday."

The Bounder nodded.

"I'll lend it to you with pleasure," he said.

"You won't lend it to me!" hooted Bunter.

"No fear!"

"Beast!"

Vernon-Smith opened a little leather purse in which there was a roll of currency notes. The Bounder had plenty of money; also plenty of ability to take care of it. He handed one pound fourteen to Wharton willingly enough.

"That does it," said Harry. "You know I'll square, Smithy, though that fat rotter will never stump up a sixpence towards it. Here you are, my man—here's the money."

The blue-chinned gentleman took the money, and handed over the receipt signed in advance by Mr. Grimes. Then he waited. But there was no tip to be had; the Famous Five's finances were exhausted to the last sixpence. So the mottled gentleman grunted, and returned to his van and drove away, still grunting.

The bedstead remained.

"What's going to be done with this 'ere?" demanded Gosling.

"Goodness knows! I suppose it can be shoved into the wood-shed for the present," said Harry Wharton.

"I s'pose it can," said Gosling, with a grunt. "I shall 'ave to get Mr. Mumble to lend me a 'and with it."

"I say, you fellows, mind where you shove my bedstead," said Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove seemed to have recovered quite suddenly since the departure of the blue-chinned gentleman.

"Your bedstead!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Yes. It's valuable; I don't want it spoiled," said Bunter. "If it's taken proper care of, I may be able to sell it and get the money back."

The Famous Five stared at Bunter blankly. As they had paid for the bedstead, and the carriage of it, very much against the grain, they had naturally supposed that the article was theirs, to be disposed of for what it would fetch. Apparently it wasn't!

"Your bedstead!" said Harry. "You fat rascal—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"That rotten rubbish will be sold for whatever it will fetch, and we shall get back as much of our money as we can!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove indignantly. "I shall offer it to the first ragsman who comes along the road."

"You jolly well won't!" roared Bunter. "I owe you fellows four pound ten. I'll settle when I've sold the bedstead at a profit. That's fair."

"Kill him, somebody!" said Bob Cherry.

NEXT MONDAY!

"THE REMOVE RUGGER TEAM!"

A SPLENDID TALE OF THE JUNIORS OF GREY-FRIARS. By FRANK RICHARDS. THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 729.

The Bounder chuckled.

"Serve you jolly well right, for lending him a hand!" he said. "Catch me doing it!"

"Get it into the wood-shed, Gosling."

"It's 'ard work, 'eaving about a 'efty thing like that there," said Gosling. "It ain't part of my dooties."

"We'll stand you half-a-crown," said Harry. "For goodness' sake get the rotten thing out of sight!"

"Too late!" grinned Skinner. "Here comes Quelch!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Billy Bunter beat a strategic retreat. Whether it was still his bedstead or not, evidently he did not want to face the Remove master in the presence of his wonderful bargain. The Owl of the Remove disappeared in one direction as Mr. Quelch approached from the other, and Harry Wharton & Co. were left to face the music.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Waxy!

MR. QUELCH blinked at the stacked-up bedstead. The juniors stared at Mr. Quelch. Bunter's bargain was so extraordinary a sight at the school gates that its effect on Mr. Quelch was certain to be startling. The Remove master did not seem to be able quite to believe his eyes. He gazed at the big bedstead as if it fascinated him. Evidently a storm was going to burst—and the juniors waited for it.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch at last. "What—what—what is this?"

"A—a bedstead, sir!" murmured Harry Wharton.

"I can see that it is a bedstead, Wharton—a huge bedstead. In the name of all that is absurd, what is that enormous bedstead doing here?"

"It's—it's been delivered, sir."

"Does it belong to anyone at Greyfriars?"

"Ye-es, sir."

"Gosling!"

"Sir?" said Gosling.

"Who brought this—this astounding article to the school?"

"Man in a 'orse and cart, sir," said Gosling. "Covey of the name of Wilkins, sir."

"Why did you allow him to leave it here?"

"He wouldn't take no for an answer, sir—said it was for Master Bunter."

"Bunter!" Mr. Quelch looked round. "Where is Bunter?"

Billy Bunter by that time had faded over the horizon. Mr. Quelch fixed his gimlet eyes on the captain of the Remove.

"Wharton, do you know what this means?"

"Ye-es, sir."

"Explain at once, then."

Harry Wharton stammered out an explanation. Mr. Quelch listened with great severity of countenance. He seemed hardly able to credit his ears when he heard of Bunter's big bargain. But, to the relief of the Famous Five, his severe countenance relaxed a little when he learned of how the bedstead had been settled for.

"You acted very foolishly, Wharton," he said.

"Oh, sir!"

"It was, however, very kind of you and your friends to extricate Bunter from the trouble he brought upon himself by his incredible folly," said Mr. Quelch. "I have no doubt you meant

well, and I shall not reprove you for having acted with kind intentions, however thoughtlessly. But this—this—this absurd thing cannot remain here. What is it that you are thinking of doing with it, Wharton?"

"I—I thought of stacking it in the wood-shed, sir, and selling it to the first ragman that came along," mumbled Harry.

Mr. Quelch nodded.

"A most absurd and disagreeable state of affairs," he said. "But doubtless it is the best thing that can be done, in the—the circumstances. I should be sorry indeed if you should lose all the money you have paid to save Bunter from the results of his folly."

"Thank you, sir!" said Harry, very much relieved to find Mr. Quelch taking that kind and reasonable view of the matter.

"Gosling, ask Mr. Mumble to help you, and get this—this bedstead stacked out of sight as quickly as possible."

"Yessir!" grumbled Gosling.

"Todd! Find Bunter as quickly as possible, and send him to my study."

Mr. Quelch stalked away, with rustling gown and frowning brow. Evidently he was very much annoyed and perturbed, though, being a just old gentleman, he had not visited his wrath upon innocent heads. Nobody envied Bunter his forthcoming visit to the Form-master's study.

Mr. Mumble, the gardener, was called on to assist, and the big bargain was slowly but surely conveyed to the wood-shed, in sections, and there stacked. Meanwhile, Peter Todd looked for Bunter, and after a long search discovered that fat youth skulking in a dusky corner at the end of the cloisters.

"I—I say, has he gone?" asked Bunter, blinking uneasily at Peter as the latter came up.

"You fat duffer, Quelch wants you!"

"Is he waxy?"

"Yes," said Peter ruthlessly.

"Oh dear!"

"I've been twenty minutes hunting for you, you fat bounder! Quelch always gets into a bigger bait, if he has to wait. You know that! Cut off at once!"

Bunter did not seem in a hurry to cut off.

"I—I say, Peter, couldn't you go—"

"Quelch doesn't want me; he wants you!"

"Tell him I'm ill. Say I'm in a—sinking state—"

Peter Todd took the fat junior by the collar, and marched him out of the cloisters. Words were wasted on William George Bunter; so Peter proceeded to actions.

Bunter was led to the School House; and there, feeling that he was in for it, he rolled disconsolately into Mr. Quelch's study.

His Form-master greeted him with a frown that made the Owl of the Remove quake.

"Bunter!"

"Oh dear! Yes, sir!" mumbled Bunter.

"You have acted in a silly, foolish, and reckless manner, Bunter, and plunged several of your Form-fellows into an expense that they can ill afford," said Mr. Quelch, in a terrifying voice.

"Oh, sir!"

"If you should ever enter an auction-room again, Bunter, and make bids for any article there exposed for sale, I shall punish you most severely!"

"I—I—I—"

"You have caused a ridiculous scene to take place at the school gates, Bunter. You have acted with foolish thoughtlessness, and, I fear, very great selfishness, showing a truly reprehensible want of consideration for others."

"Oh!"

"For that I shall cane you, Bunter."

"Ow!"

"You may hold out your hand, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch, taking up his cane.

Billy Bunter blinked at him, evidently very unwilling to hold out his fat hand.

"I—I—excuse me, sir—lemme explain, sir—you—see—"

"There is nothing to explain, Bunter."

"Oh, yes, sir! You—you see, sir, I—I bought that—that splendid bedstead, sir, as a present for you, sir," said Bunter desperately.

"What?"

"I—I hope you'll accept it, sir, with my—my kind regards, and—and wishes for many happy returns of the day, sir," stammered Bunter.

Mr. Quelch looked quite dazed.

"Is it possible, Bunter, that you are speaking seriously?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, yes, sir!" said Bunter eagerly. He thought that Mr. Quelch was overwhelmed by his generosity, and he hastened to make it quite clear. "It's a present for you, sir. Really, so long as you're pleased, sir, I don't care how much I pay—"

"You have paid nothing, Bunter! Wharton and his friends have paid."

"Hem! I—I'm going to square those chaps next week, sir. I'm expecting a postal-order shortly."

"I regard it as being very doubtful, Bunter, whether you will discharge this liability incurred on your behalf by your Form-fellows."

"Not at all, sir! I—"

"And still more doubtful, Bunter, whether you have any intention whatever of discharging it," rumbled Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, sir!"

"As for your suggestion of making me, your Form-master, so absurd and ridiculous a present, Bunter—"

"I—I—"

"In the first place, my position here does not allow me to accept presents from boys in my Form, as you know very well. In the second place, only a boy of deficient intellect could possibly think of purchasing such a useless and cumbersome article as a present. In the third place, Bunter, I do not believe your statement."

"Oh!"

"I think, sir," thundered Mr. Quelch, "that you have told the first foolish falsehood that came into your foolish head!"

Bunter quaked.

"I was going to correct you, Bunter, with one stroke of the cane. Now I shall not do so."

Bunter brightened.

"I deem it my duty to give you six strokes," said Mr. Quelch.

Bunter's brightness faded on the spot.

"Now you will hold out your hand, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch, wishing his cane in a businesslike manner.

"I—I—I—"

"If you say anything more, Bunter, I shall double your punishment."

Billy Bunter suppressed his eloquence. He could have said a great deal more; but not at that price. He held out his fat hand, and then the other, and so on alternately; while Mr. Quelch's cane swished rhythmically.

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Swish, swish, swish! Swish, swish, swish!

"Now you may go, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch, laying down his cane. "I trust that this will be a lesson to you."

Billy Bunter limped from the study. For a considerable time afterwards Bunter was not thinking of magnificent bedsteads with brass knobs complete, or of wonderful bargains, or of the question of the ownership of property. He sat in his study with his fat hands tucked under his podgy arms, and rocked himself to and fro, and poured out a stream of incessant ejaculations. And the burden of his song was:

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow! Beast! Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

No Trade!

FOR the remainder of that day, the wood-shed was a sort of Mecca to the Greyfriars juniors. Everybody seemed interested in the stacked bedstead, and the rolled-up mattress that sprawled on it. Fellows came to stare at it, and to crack jokes about it. They chipped Bunter on the topic of his wonderful nose for bargains; and they chipped the Famous Five for expending their cash in rescuing Bunter from his scrape. But interest in the affair died away at last, and on the following day, the magnificent bedstead, with brass knobs complete, lay unheeded and unobserved in the wood-shed.

But it was still of deep import to six juniors—Bunter and the Famous Five. Notwithstanding the cash transactions that had taken place, Billy Bunter still regarded it as "his" bedstead, and he was moved to hot indignation by the bare idea of a ragman being called in to take it away. While the Famous Five, having spent all their ready cash, and being in debt to the tune of one pound fourteen shillings, were anxious to get the wretched thing disposed of, hoping that it would at least realise enough to "square" Smithy.

A generous impulse had caused Wharton to come to the rescue of the Owl of the Remove, and his chums had followed his lead; but it was not long before they felt rather inclined to kick themselves. Billy Bunter really was not worth rescuing.

It was not pleasant to be "stony," and the chums of the Remove were feeling the draught, as it were. Bunter's greedy ingratitude was more than usually offensive, in the circumstances.

The Famous Five had a very kind offer to relieve them of the difficulty they had brought on themselves. Lord Mauleverer ambled amiably into Study No. 1 at tea-time, and nodded pleasantly, and in rather an embarrassed manner, to Wharton and Nugent. He coughed several times before making a remark, and the chums of the Remove smiled, wondering what great thoughts were working in the brain of the schoolboy earl.

"Cough it up, Mauly!" said Frank Nugent encouragingly.

"Get it off your chest!" said Wharton. His lordship coughed again.

"The fact is, I've got something to say to you chaps," he said.

"Say on, old scout!" said Harry, laughing. "Say anything except that you're stony! Just now this study is hard up."

"Not at all, dear boy! Quite the reverse," said Lord Mauleverer.

"Lucky bargee!"



"I will give you one pound for it," said the Jew. "The bedstead is not worth more." "Make it two, and it's a trade!" said Wharton. "Look here," cried Billy Bunter, struggling in the grasp of Johnny Bull, "I won't have my bedstead sold under five pounds!" (See Chapter 9.)

"I want to buy somethin'—"

"Eh?"

"A—a—a bedstead!" said Lord Mauleverer, getting it out at last.

Wharton and Nugent blinked at him.

"You want to buy a bedstead!" ejaculated the captain of the Remove.

"Exactly." Lord Mauleverer seemed relieved now that he had got it out. "I—I rather think I can find room for a—a big bedstead at—at home, you know."

"Does your giddy guardian let you furnish the happy home?" asked Nugent.

"Well, perhaps not as a rule," said Lord Mauleverer cautiously. "But on an exceptional occasion—ahem! The fact is, I'm prepared to take that bedstead off your hands! You've been stuck to the tune of five pounds ten, I understand."

"Just that!"

"Well, I'm your man!" said Lord Mauleverer. "There's no end of old rooms at the Towers where the dashed thing can be put. Is it a sale?"

"You frabjous ass!" said Harry. "Do you think we're going to stick you for the money because Bunter stuck us?"

"Well, I hear that it's no end of a magnificent thing!" said Lord Mauleverer feebly. "Worth no end of money, and all that. And—and I shouldn't miss the fiver."

"Scat!"

"I—I really want to buy that bedstead, you know."

The chums of the Remove chuckled. They fully appreciated the kindness of Mauly's offer; but they had no intention whatever of passing on their bad bargain to Mauly.

"You're a good old ass, Mauly," said Harry Wharton. "But you needn't try to humbug us, you know. You want to get us out of the scrape, and you're as transparent as a sheet of glass. Nothing doing."

"Begad! Really, you know—"

"Much obliged!" said Nugent. "But we're going to stand it somehow."

Lord Mauleverer sighed.

"I'd really like to help!" he said. "It's not up to you chaps specially to see that born idiot through his idiotic troubles."

"Well, it's our own fault—or, rather, my fault," said Harry. "Give it a miss, Mauly—we're not taking your money."

Lord Mauleverer nodded, and ambled out of the study again. He was replaced by a much less welcome visitor—William George Bunter. The Owl of the Remove rolled in, and blinked suspiciously at Wharton and Nugent.

"What did Mauly want?" he asked.

"He's offered us five pound ten for the dashed white elephant," said Frank Nugent.

Bunter jumped.

"My hat! Did you agree?"

"No, ass!"

"Well, of course, the transaction ought to show a profit," said Bunter thoughtfully. "Five pounds ten is only the out-of-pocket expenses. Mauly can easily afford six ten if he wants the bedstead."

"If he wants it!" repeated Wharton. "You frabjous barrel of kerd, he doesn't want it!"

"Rot! What did he offer to buy it for if he doesn't want it?"

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By FRANK RICHARDS.

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"To get us out of the scrape you've landed us in, you owl!"

Bunter sniffed.

"You're pretti green!" he said.

"What?"

"Mauly knows that that magnificent bedstead is worth ten pounds at least," said Bunter scoffingly. "He's on the make, of course!"

"You fat rotter!" roared Wharton.

"Leave it to me," said Bunter. "The thing isn't yours to sell, anyhow. I'll see Mauly about it. Leave it to me."

"Stop!" howled Nugent, as the Owl of the Remove rolled out of Study No. 1. But Bunter did not stop.

Bunter knew what he was about, or he thought he did. Heedless of the wrathful voices from Study No. 1, Bunter rolled hurriedly along to No. 12, where he found Lord Mauleverer sitting down to tea with his study-mate, Sir Jimmy Vivian.

"Here you are, Mauly!" exclaimed Bunter breathlessly. "It's all right, old fellow!"

"Eh?"

"You can have that bedstead."

"What?"

"It's going fairly cheap," said Bunter, blinking at the astonished Mauly. "Of course, you can't have it for five ten. That's not reasonable. I put it to you as a fair-minded chap."

"Begad!"

"It cost five quids, and ten bob for bringing it here," said Bunter. "Of course, I didn't buy that bedstead to part with it simply for out-of-pocket expenses. You can't expect to come it over me to that extent, Mauly."

Lord Mauleverer gazed at Bunter, seemingly dazed.

"But I'll tell you what I'll do," said Bunter. "I'll let you have that splendid bedstead for seven ten, Mauly."

"Eh?"

"Seven pounds ten shillings, and it's a trade."

"You fat idiot!"

"Oh, really, Mauly—"

"Get out!"

"I'll make it seven pounds," said Bunter. "Seven pounds in cash, and the bedstead's yours. How's that?"

Lord Mauleverer looked across the table at his study-mate, who was grinning.

"Jimmy, old scout," he said, "you're more active an' strenuous than I am. Would you mind kicking Bunter out of the study?"

"Not at all," said Vivian, jumping up.

"Here, hold on!" shouted Bunter. "What's the row? Look here, Mauly, if you're going to be mean, I'll let you have it for six ten—not a penny less."

Possibly Bunter would have lowered the price still further, to tempt his lordship to close on the bargain. But he had no time. Sir Jimmy Vivian rushed at him, only too willing to oblige his noble chum by kicking Bunter out of the study.

Bunter turned to flee, and inadvertently placed himself in an excellent posture for Vivian to carry out Mauly's request.

Crash!

"Yaroooooop!"

Sir Jimmy's boot came on Bunter like a battering-ram. The Owl of the Remove fairly flew through the doorway.

He landed on his hands and knees, roaring.

"Come and have another!" chortled Sir Jimmy.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Kick him along the passage, Jimmy!" yelled Lord Mauleverer.

"Any old thing," said the obliging baronet.

He rushed out into the Remove passage. But Bunter did not wait for him. He fled along the passage as fast as his fat legs would carry him, and went down the Remove staircase three steps at a time. Pursued and pursuer passed the open door of Study No. 1, both going strong; and Wharton and Nugent chuckled. Evidently Bunter had not succeeded in his negotiations with Lord Mauleverer.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Sold Again!

"BUNTY!"

Skinner called to Billy Bunter, on Saturday afternoon, and the Owl of the Remove, who was loafing in the Remove passage, blinked round at him. Bunter had been trying to raise a little loan that day, to advertise his big bargain in the local paper for sale. He had not succeeded in raising the loan, and he was feeling very morose.

"Well?" he snapped.

"They're selling your bedstead!" grinned Skinner.

"What?"

"They've got Old Clo' in the woodshed, and they're selling your giddy bedstead!" chortled Skinner.

Billy Bunter gazed at Skinner, dumb-founded, for a moment. His wrath and indignation were too great for words.

"Selling my bedstead!" he ejaculated at last.

Bunter broke into a run. He negotiated the Remove passage as if it had been the cinder-path; he did the staircase as if it had been a toboggan. He rushed out of the School House like a Red Indian on the warpath. Breathless, gasping, and spluttering, he arrived at the woodshed.

It was only too true.

The Famous Five were there, and with them was a gentleman who was generally known in the district as Old Clo'. His name was Abrahams, and he sometimes called on Gosling and Mr. Mumble to purchase what he described as ladies' and gents' left-off wearing apparel. Bob Cherry had spotted him interviewing Gosling, and had captured him at once, and the Famous Five escorted Mr. Abrahams to the woodshed to view the famous bedstead, with a view to purchasing the same.

Mr. Abrahams was a gentleman with a keen eye to bargains, but he did not seem very happy as he viewed the gigantic bedstead.

He was formulating a refusal to purchase in the politest language possible, when Billy Bunter burst in, breathless with exertion and indignation.

"My bedstead!" gasped Bunter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Get out, Bunter!"

"You're not selling my bedstead!" yelled Bunter.

The chums of the Remove did not argue the question of ownership. They collared Bunter, and flattened him down on the brick floor.

"Sit on him, Johnny!" said Wharton.

"You're the heaviest."

"Right-ho!" said Johnny Bull.

He sat on Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove squirmed and yelled.

"Yah! You awful rotters! Selling a

chap's bedstead! I'll complain to the Head! I'll—I'll—Yaroop! Oooooo-ooooch!"

Bunter's eloquence was suddenly cut off, as if a tap had been turned. Johnny Bull effected it, by the simple process of jamming his cap into Bunter's wide-open mouth.

The Owl of the Remove gurgled and gasped and spluttered, but Johnny held the twisted cap firmly planted in his mouth with a hand of iron, and Bunter was only able to gurgle and gasp and splutter. Speech was denied him.

Mr. Abrahams witnessed that scene with astonishment. The ways of the Greyfriars Remove wanted getting used to.

"My cootness!" murmured Mr. Abrahams.

"Keep that fat fool quiet, Johnny!"

"You bet!" said Johnny Bull grimly.

"Grooogh! Oooooch!"

"Now, Mr. Abrahams, about that bedstead!" said Harry persuasively. "It's a jolly big one, you know—"

"Tremendous!" said Bob Cherry.

"Unusual size!" urged Nugent.

"Brass knobs, too!" said Bob Cherry.

"Big bedsteads are a drag in ze market," said Mr. Abrahams regretfully.

"It would not be worth ze trouble of taking away."

"Oh dear!"

"Nobody buys second-hand mattresses," said Mr. Abrahams. "I would not giff him room in mine shop!"

"Well, we could chuck the dashed old mattress away!" said Harry. "But you would like to buy that—that magnificent bedstead—"

"Say a couple of pounds!" said Johnny Bull.

Mr. Abrahams held up his hands in horror.

"What about a pound?" said Wharton desperately.

"My tear Master Wharton, I would give a pound wif pleasure—"

"Good!"

"If I could afford it—"

"Oh!"

"But it would cost me feefteen sheeling to have dot bedstead taken away!"

"Great Scott!"

The chums of the Remove looked at one another. How much the huge article was worth, and whether it was worth anything, they did not know. Probably it was worth five or ten pounds to anybody who wanted such an article. But it was pretty certain that few people were likely to want it. The cost of transport was a consideration. Mr. Abrahams explained that he might keep it in his shop, taking up valuable space, for years, before he found a customer reckless enough to load himself with such an article. The juniors had to admit that this was reasonable.

"I tell you vat," said Mr. Abrahams.

"You vant to get rid of him?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Sick of the sight of it!"

"Vell, I giff you ten shilling, and I pays meinself for him to be taken away!" said Mr. Abrahams in a burst of generosity.

The chums of the Remove exchanged glances. They were more than fed up with Bunter's bargain, and they had expected to net a loss on the transaction. But the loss was a heavy one.

Bunter could not contribute to the discussion—he was forcibly dumb. There was a long hesitation.

"Dash it all, we could get more than that if we managed to get it put up at

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auction somehow!" said Bob at last. "There was somebody in Grimes' sale-room offering four-ten, before that idiot Bunter offered five! It's worth something as firewood!"

"I make him one pound!" said Mr. Abrahams.

"Make it two, and it's a trade!" said Bob.

Mr. Abrahams shook his head. He almost wept as he protested that he could not do such a thing without imminent danger of finding himself in the bankruptcy court. But he came up, by slow stages and with evident painful efforts, to thirty-five shillings, which really looked as if the big bedstead was not quite so valueless as Mr. Abrahams had at first inferred. At thirty-five shillings the "lot" was knocked down to Mr. Abrahams, it being understood that he was to remove it at his own expense. The purchase did not include the ancient mattress, which Mr. Abrahams positively declared he would not take as a gift.

"Done!" said Harry Wharton. And Mr. Abrahams counted out thirty-five shillings in a greasy pound-note, a greasier ten-shilling note, and five oily shillings.

It transpired that Mr. Abrahams' cart was "round the corner," and the Famous Five left him to negotiate with Gosling for help to remove the purchase. Billy Bunter's feelings, as he saw "his" property thus disposed of, may be better imagined than described. What measures Bunter would have taken cannot be known with any certainty, for the reason that he was not allowed to take any. When Harry Wharton & Co. left the woodshed they took Bunter with them—and Bob Cherry had a grip on his collar, and Bob's knuckles ground into the back of his neck whenever he tried to make a remark.

Billy Bunter had the pleasure of a pleasant walk with the Co. until Mr. Abrahams and the bedstead were well off the premises. Then he was released.

He spluttered for breath, and glared at the Famous Five with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

"You awful beasts——"

"Clear off!"

"You've sold my bedstead——"

"Dry up!"

"Hand me over my money!" roared Bunter.

"Thirty-five bob off five pounds ten," said Harry: "You owe us three pounds fifteen, Bunter, you fat rascal!"

"Gimme me thirty-five bob!" roared Bunter. "I'm going to settle that other matter out of my next postal-order. I told you so. Lots of fellows heard me."

"We can settle with Smithy with this," said Wharton, unheeding Bunter. "That leaves a bob over."

"Well, it's something to get clear of what we owe Smithy on that fat rotter's account," said Bob. "But if ever I think of helping Bunter out of a scrape again, I hope somebody will kick me—hard!"

"Better kick Bunter," said Johnny Bull.

"Hear, hear!"

There was some solace in kicking Bunter, so the chums of the Remove kicked him hard. They then went in search of Vernon-Smith, and the Bounder was repaid his one pound fourteen, which left the Famous Five with a shilling to share among them. They were three pounds fifteen to the bad, and there were short commons in Study No. 1. So it was rather natural that

when Billy Bunter rolled in that evening to demand "his" money the Owl of the Remove collected more kicks than half-pence.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Hard Times!

"IT'S simply rotten!" said Bob Cherry.

"The rottenfulness is terrific, my esteemed chum!"

"Inky's most out of pocket," said Bob. "But I think we had better whack the loss round equally, and make it up that way."

The Nabob of Bhanipur shook his head.

"My esteemed and cashful resources are more extantful than those of my worthy chums," he remarked. "That is all right, my esteemed Bob."

Harry Wharton frowned.

"It's really up to me," he said. "It was my idea to see Bunter through, and you fellows only backed me up."

"Oh, that's rot!" said Nugent. "Sink or swim together."

"Ye-es; but——"

"We're going to whack it out equally," said Bob. "As soon as I get my next allowance, it's going to Inky."

"The rotfulness is great!"

"I'd rather stand the lot myself, if you fellows don't mind," said the captain of the Remove.

"But we do mind!" said Bob.

"Fair play's a jewel," said Johnny Bull. "I don't mind saying I was

against shelling out for that fat bounder. But we're all in it equally, and we stand equal whacks!"

"My excellent Johnny——"

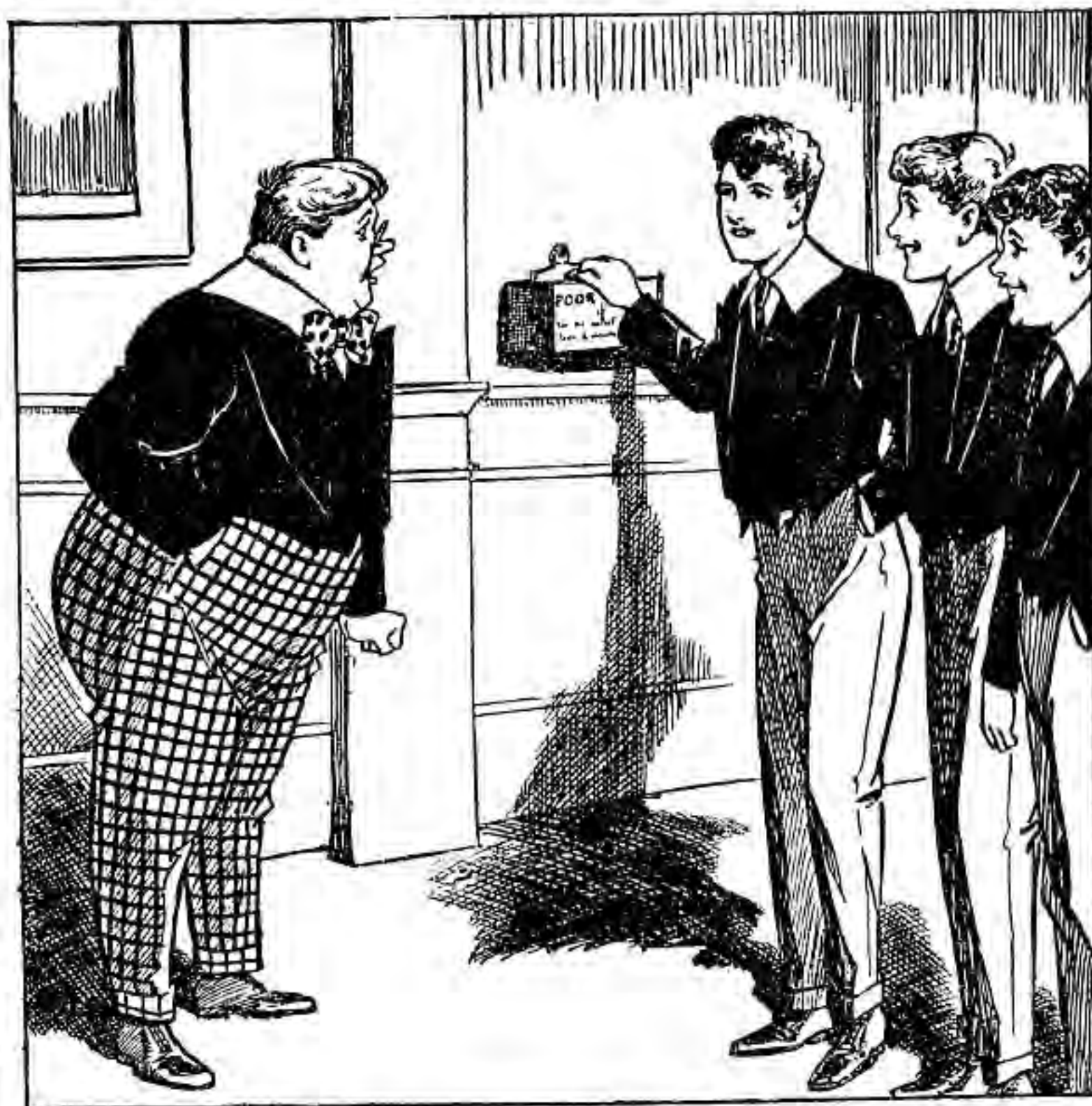
"That's settled," said Bob. "Shut up, Inky, old chap!"

The Nabob of Bhanipur gracefully yielded the point. The chums of the Remove were discussing the matter a few days after the disposal of the bedstead. Shortness of cash reigned supreme.

There were many little calls that the chums of the Remove had been unable to meet, owing to the depletion of their cash resources by Bunter's big bargain. Had Bunter taken the affair in a different spirit, it would not have been so painful. But Bunter took the view that he had been "done"; and as the Co. had actually been "done," the whole affair was quite annoying.

Short commons in their studies, owing to Bunter, were not nice, and still less nice when Bunter was posing as an injured party. Anybody in the Remove would have lent the Co. money, but they had a natural dislike of indebtedness. They preferred to "stand it" until things came round; but it was not nice. Moreover, though the Co. agreed that the expense should be "whacked out" in equal proportions, that came harder on some than on others, especially Bob Cherry, who was not overburdened with wealth. But Bob was determined to stand his share, and there was no gain-saying him. It was likely to make him hard up for some weeks.

Billy Bunter looked into Study No. 1, where the Famous Five were holding their discussion over a very frugal tea.



The juniors proceeded to the poor-box in the hall, with Bunter almost racing on their track. "Hold on, Wharton——" Click! A sovereign dropped through the slit in the box. "I say——" Click! Click! Click! Five shillings followed the sovereign. (See Chapter 12.)

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Bunter glanced at the tea-table, and sniffed. For once the Owl of the Remove had no desire to ask himself to tea.

"I say, you fellows—" he began.

"Get out!" growled Bob Cherry.

"You've sold my bedstead," said Bunter, blinking at them. "It was like your cheek. But you've done it. After all my trouble in securing that big bargain, and paying a pound deposit, you've sold it over my head. Now, I owe you chaps five pounds ten, and you owe me thirty-five bob. I'm going to write to my pater for a cheque in settlement. I shall ask him to make it payable to you, Wharton—five pounds ten!"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"I want you to write to your uncle at the same time," said Bunter firmly. "Old Colonel Wharton doesn't shell out handsome tips like my pater; but he would part, on a special occasion like this. Tell him you owe the money, and you're in honour bound to pay it. Then you hand me the thirty-five bob, and I hand you the five pound ten. That's fair!"

"Why not deduct the thirty-five bob from the five pound ten, and you hand over the balance?" inquired Johnny Bull sarcastically.

Bunter coughed.

"That's not business," he said. "The remittances mayn't arrive just at the same time. Wharton may get his remittance from his uncle before I get a cheque from my pater."

"Very likely, I think!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"A thing like this ought to be settled on business lines," said Bunter. "Will

you write to your uncle to-night, Wharton?"

"No."

"I'll write to my pater at the same time—"

"For goodness' sake shut up and clear out, Bunter!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove impatiently.

"I'm not going to be diddled!" roared Bunter.

Wharton looked round for a fives-bat.

"Well, look here," said Bunter, calming down a little, "the bedstead's gone—my magnificent bedstead. But there's the mattress. That ought to fetch something."

"Old Clo' refused to take it as a gift!" growled Bob.

"Oh, he's an old duffer! Besides, he's so jolly sharp!" said Bunter. "My idea is to advertise it in the 'Friar-dale Gazette,' as a new mattress and a great bargain. When people come after it, we can say it's one the Head has used, and discarded for some reason. See?"

"Why, you fat rogue—"

"Oh, really, Wharton! But I don't want to argue about it! What I want is eighteenpence to pay for the advertisement in the local paper. Under the circumstances, seeing that you've got thirty-five bob of my money, I think you fellows ought to stand that. What do you say?"

"Kill him," said Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

Nugent minor, of the Second Form, put his head into the study.

"That fat pig here?" he asked. "Oh, here he is! Bunter, Quelchy wants you."

"Oh, blow Quelchy!" growled Bunter. "What does he want?"

"You!" grinned Dicky Nugent. "He looked waxy. He's just been speaking to Gosling at the wood-shed, Gatty says. Something about that frowsy old rag you're keeping there, I suppose."

And Nugent minor walked away.

Bunter blinked suspiciously at the Famous Five.

"I suppose you fellows have been laying claim to that mattress," he said. "My belief is that it's worth money. That mattress is mine. You're not going to diddle me out of it as well as the rest of the bargain. Oh! Ah! Yah! Yooooop!"

Bunter flew into the passage. Once more he had exhausted the patience of the Famous Five.

Feeling an extremely injured youth, William George Bunter picked himself up, and rolled away to Mr. Quelch's study. If there was going to be any dispute about the remnant of Bunter's big bargain, Bunter was prepared to asseverate his claim to it. Harry Wharton & Co. were left to finish their frugal tea, and to discuss ways and means to tide over the lean period till cash came in again.

It was decided—after much thoughtful discussion—that the bike lamps Bob Cherry had secured at the auction should be sold—there being several fellows in the Lower School willing to purchase the same. So the juniors proceeded to draw up a sale notice to be stuck on the board downstairs, dismissing Bunter from their minds; but they were soon to be reminded of that fascinating youth.

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THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Golden Quids!

BUNTER!"

"Yes, sir!"

"There remains in the woodshed," said Mr. Quelch, "an old—indeed, very disreputable-looking—mattress—"

Billy Bunter was about to voice his claim to that valuable property. But he refrained. Mr. Quelch's look did not encourage him.

"Gosling has drawn my attention to it," said Mr. Quelch. "I understand that the bedstead has been sold, and that Wharton and his friend have been partly indemnified for the expense they incurred on your account, Bunter. I trust, Bunter, that you have properly testified your gratitude to your Form-fellows for having acted in this generous manner towards you."

Bunter suppressed his indignation.

It was evident that Mr. Quelch would never comprehend what an injured youth he was.

"Now, Gosling tells me that he has asked a rag-and-bone merchant to take away the mattress, and that the man has declined to do so, as it is valueless," said Mr. Quelch.

Bunter's fat face lengthened.

It was not much use insisting upon a claim to an article that was disdained by a rag-and-bone merchant.

"The article cannot, however, remain in the precincts of the school," said Mr. Quelch. "It must be disposed of. It can be taken into an obscure corner of the gardens, and there burnt. That will be the best plan, as it is very dirty, and possibly infected. If this mattress is your property, Bunter, you will kindly see to this without delay."

"It isn't, sir!" said Bunter promptly.

The claim to ownership quite disappeared from Billy Bunter's fat mind now. If ownership meant a laborious and unpleasant task for no reward, Bunter preferred not to be owner.

"It is not your property, Bunter?"

"Not at all, sir. It's Wharton's."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Shall I tell Wharton it's got to be taken away and burnt, sir?" asked Bunter, suppressing a grin.

"Most decidedly, if it is his property," said Mr. Quelch. "Tell him it must be done before dark this evening."

"Very well, sir."

Billy Bunter rolled out of the study, and took his way back to Study No. 1 in the Remove. His fat face wore a derisive grin as he looked into Harry Wharton's room, where the five juniors were bending their heads together over the sale notice.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Buzz off!"

"Message from Quelch!" hooted Bunter.

"Get it out, and cut!" growled Johnny Bull.

"That old mattress——"

"Confound the mattress!" roared Harry Wharton. "You fat idiot, you can have it if you want it! Do you think we want it?"

Bunter chuckled.

"But, you see, I don't want it," he answered coolly. "You've bagged the bedstead, and you can bag the mattress, too. Quelch says it's got to be burnt before dark this evening, in some corner of the garden. He won't have your rotten, smelly rubbish lying about the place any longer. I've told him it's your property, Wharton. He, he, he! You've got to get it burned!"

And the Owl of the Remove rolled away, chuckling.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Bob

Cherry. "Another job for us! That fat boulder ought to do it——"

"Of course he ought. But we've got the job," said Harry. "Let's go and see to it now. It won't take long for the lot of us. We can rip it in pieces in the shed, and borrow Gosling's barrow to run it into the garden."

"Right ho!"

Leaving the sale notice unfinished, the Famous Five quitted Study No. 1, to set about the task that William George Bunter had so cunningly landed on their shoulders.

They found the ancient mattress lying in a corner of the woodshed, and set about their task at once.

It was not a nice mattress. It was old, and it was rather damp, and it seemed a little smelly, and it was patched in several places, and some of the patches were loose, letting out the stuffing. Perhaps it was not surprising that Gosling was tired of seeing it about his woodshed. Bob Cherry secured a billhook belonging to the gardener, and started ripping up the mattress, preparatory to the burning thereof.

"He, he, he!"

Billy Bunter grinned in at the doorway.

"Come and lend a hand, you fat boulder!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Bring that barrow over here!"

"He, he, he! I'm not handling the filthy old rag!" said Bunter cheerfully.

"It's yours, you know. He, he, he!"

"Bit smelly, isn't it?" said Skinner, looking in over Bunter's shoulder. "Shouldn't wonder if there's lots of diseases bottled up in that old rag. Hadn't you better put on gas-masks?"

"He, he, he!" cachinnated Bunter.

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Bob.

Bob Cherry plied the billhook, and his comrades dragged the ancient mattress into sections. There was a sudden clink of metal on the brick floor of the woodshed.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry, in amazement. "What's that?"

"A quid!"

"An esteemed sovereign!"

"My only hat!"

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at it in amazement. There it was, that rare and refreshing sight, a real sovereign.

The coin had evidently rolled out of the torn mattress.

Harry picked it up, and it passed from hand to hand among the Famous Five. Once in a blue moon, so to speak, the juniors saw a real sovereign. But they knew one when they saw it! It was a real, genuine quid, a relic of the days when money was money, and governments had not learned to produce valueless wealth by means of the printing-press!

"Great Christopher Columbus!" ejaculated Skinner. "That's a sovereign! I say, there may be some more in that old rag!"

"It's mine!" yelled Bunter.

"What?"

"That mattress is mine! Anything in it is mine!" Once more the Owl of the Remove fluctuated on the subject of ownership. "You fellows let it alone! It's mine! Yaroooh!"

Bunter sat down on the brick floor with a lump that exhausted his breath.

Then the chums of the Remove turned their attention to the mattress again. The amazing find had excited them.

Evidently some former owner of the mattress had sewn up savings in it for security. Probably half a century ago, to judge by the look of the mattress.

With eager hands the juniors tore the ragged old article apart, and turned out the stuffing and searched it.

Clink, clink!

Another and another golden sovereign dropped into view, and were promptly secured.

Then another, and another!

"Five quids—real quids!" said Bob Cherry.

That was all.

Every rag was carefully searched, but no more sovereigns came to light. Five was the total.

Harry Wharton held the five sovereigns in the palm of his hand, and his chums regarded them admiringly.

"Now, the question is, whom do these quids belong to?" said the captain of the Remove.

"Me!" yelled Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry, greatly tickled. "Didn't you tell Quelch that the mattress was Wharton's, Bunter?"

"I—I—I——"

"Good old porpoise!" chuckled Nugent. "You landed this job on us, Bunt, and you landed the quids, too."

"I—I—I'll get the dashed rubbish burned!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I meant to all along."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, you hand over those quids!" roared Bunter. "I'll go to Mr. Quelch! I'll go to the Head! I'll go——"

"You'll go!" agreed Bob Cherry. "There's my boot to help you, old bean!"

"Yooop!"

Bunter went.

"I think we're entitled to these quids," said Harry Wharton. "But we'll take them to Mr. Quelch, and see what he says. He can decide."

"That's a good idea. Let's get this dashed old rag done with first, and get rid of it."

"Yes, rather!"

The fragments of the ancient mattress were stacked in the barrow, and trundled away to an obscure corner of the gardens, where Mr. Nimble had been burning brushwood. The bonfire was duly made, and watched to burn out, and the last remnant of Bunter's big bargain vanished in smoke. Billy Bunter eyed the chums from a distance with wolfish eyes. Five golden quids quite dazzled Bunter. The thought of being parted from them made him feel like a tigress robbed of her young. When the bonfire was done with, Harry Wharton & Co. proceeded to Mr. Quelch's study with their prize, and the Owl of the Remove followed.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

All Serene!

MR. QUELCH'S glasses almost dropped off as Harry Wharton laid the five sovereigns, in a glistening pile on his table.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated the Remove master. "What—what—what is this, Wharton?"

Harry Wharton explained.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Quelch, when the captain of the Remove had finished. "What a very singular occurrence!"

"We should like you to decide what's to be done with the quids, sir—I mean, the sovereigns," said Harry.

Mr. Quelch reflected. He examined the coins.

"They are all Queen Victoria coins, and the latest date on any of them is 1860," he said. "It is clear that they have lain in concealment for a very long time, and do not belong to the latest owner of the—mattress. The original owner is probably long since dead;

(Continued on page 20.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 729.

"Billy Bunter's Big Bargain!"

(Continued from page 19.)

indeed, nothing else can account for the coins being left in their hiding-place. Undoubtedly any contents of the mattress were sold along with the article itself. I should, however, recommend money obtained in this singular way being placed in the school poor-box—"

"It's mine, sir!" howled Bunter.

"You told me the mattress belonged to Wharton," said Mr. Quelch sternly.

"That—that was a—a mistake, sir!"

"Silence! If the mattress was your property, Bunter, you evidently disclaimed ownership in order to escape the task of destroying it and you are properly punished for your mendacity."

"I—I—"

"If the money were yours, Bunter, I should command you to repay these boys the amount they have spent in extricating you from the position your absurd folly brought you into," said Mr. Quelch. "But it is not yours, and you will kindly remain silent. Wharton, I understand that you and your friends are out of pocket over this ridiculous affair?"

"Three pounds fifteen shillings, sir."

"That is a large sum for junior school-

boys to lose. Perhaps you will not be so thoughtless on another occasion."

"No jolly fear!" said Bob Cherry emphatically. And then he coloured and added: "I—I beg your pardon, sir!"

"With regard to the disposal of this money," said Mr. Quelch, "I suggest that you boys should take the amount you have expended—three pounds fifteen shillings—and that the balance—twenty-five shillings—should be placed in the school poor-box."

"I—I—" began Bunter.

"Silence, Bunter! Is that proposition agreeable to you, Wharton?"

"Quite, sir!" said Harry at once.

The chums of the Remove left Mr. Quelch's study quite satisfied. The "stony" period was over. Owing to that lucky find, the dearth of cash caused by Bunter's big bargain had come to a happy end. The juniors proceeded to the poor-box in the hall, with Bunter almost raging on their track.

"Hold on, Wharton!"

Clink!

A sovereign dropped through the slit in the box.

"I say—"

Clink, clink, clink, clink, clink! Five shillings followed the sovereign, one after another. To judge by Bunter's expression, each clink might have been a death-knell.

The "balance" having been thus satisfactorily disposed of, Wharton

& Co. proceeded to Study No. 1 to whack out the three pounds fifteen shillings among its various owners.

"And now," said Bob Cherry, "we're in funds again, I vote that we blue a whole merry quid on a tiptop spread to celebrate the occasion."

"Hear, hear!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's Bunter again! Buzz off, Bunter!"

"I say, you fellows, don't change those quids at the tuckshop!" gasped Bunter. "Golden sovereigns are worth more than pound notes. You can sell them at twenty-five shillings each. I'll do it for you—"

"Why, you fat villain, it's against the law!"

"But lemme have the quids to sell at a profit, and I'll hand you the three-fifteen, and keep the rest—"

All that Bunter received was a boot—and he did not seem very willing to receive that. But he received it, all the same.

In Study No. 1 that evening there was a record spread, to which nearly half the Remove came. It was a great occasion, and greatly enjoyed, which was, after all, a happy ending to the affair of Bunter's Big Bargain.

THE END.

(See Chat Page for next week's programme).



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