

HISTORIES OF FAMOUS FOOTBALL CLUBS!

This Week: PRESTON NORTH END.



No. 765. Vol. XXII.

Week ending October 7th, 1922.

The Magnet ¹/₂ Library

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE "GREYFRIARS HERALD."



THE FINEST STORY OF SCHOOL AND SPORT EVER WRITTEN!



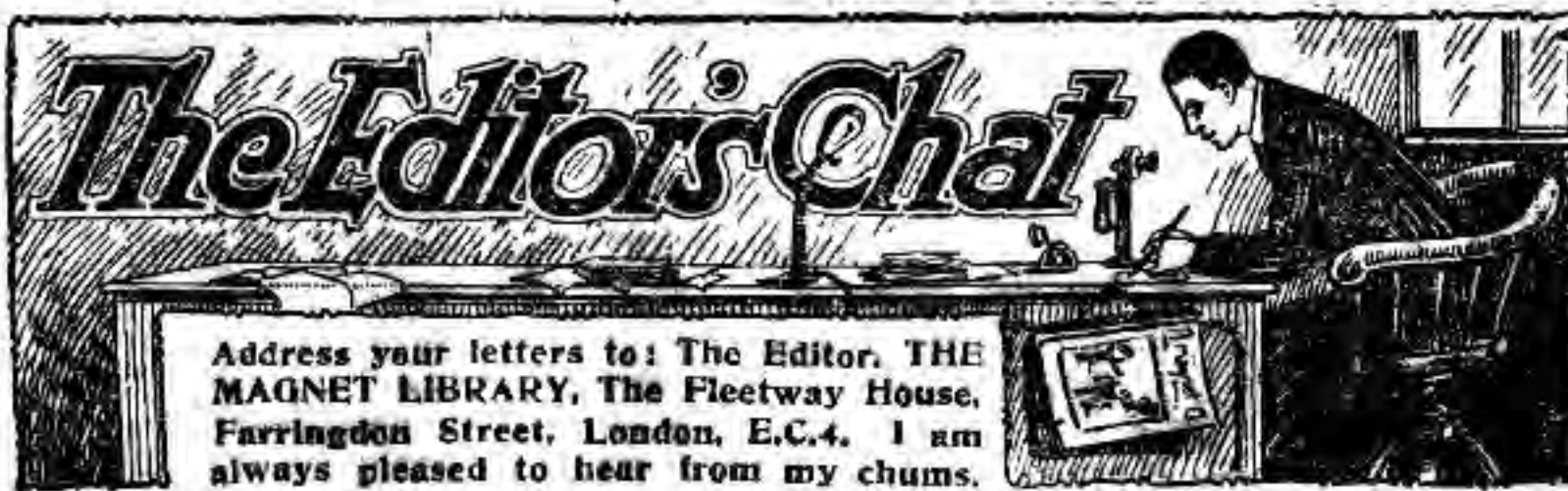
The Footballers' Foe!

BILLY BUNTER: "This is Courtenay, of Highcliffe, speaking. We're not going to play you on Wednesday—we're scratching!"

HARRY WHARTON: "Oh, my hat! If that's not the limit! Courtenay, that's too rotten—we'll never play you again, after this!"



THE MESSAGE WHICH STARTED ALL THE TROUBLE!



Address your letters to: The Editor, THE MAGNET LIBRARY, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. I am always pleased to hear from my chums.

OUR COMPANION PAPERS.

"THE BOYS' FRIEND" Every Monday
 "THE MAGNET" Every Monday
 "THE POPULAR" Every Tuesday
 "THE GEM" Every Wednesday
 "CHUCKLES" Every Thursday
 "THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL" Published Yearly

FOR NEXT MONDAY!

"LODER'S LONG TRAIL!"

By Frank Richards.

The title of our next long complete school story of Harry Wharton & Co. might be thought to suggest that Loder has gone away from Greyfriars for a time. That is not the case, however, for Loder's trail is the one which Harry Wharton & Co. are following.

Loder always had his knife into the Famous Five, and when at last he thinks he has caught them at some shady game, he marches them in triumph to Mr. Quelch. However, Mr. Quelch refuses to believe Loder, but accepts Harry Wharton's word of honour. The result is seen when Loder sets spies on to watching the Co., and more than once Loder finds a chance to run the Famous Five "on the carpet."

Unfortunately for Loder, the Famous Five are quite well aware of his little game, and they plot together to rid themselves of his obnoxious persecution.

You must not miss this grand story, my chums, for it is undoubtedly one of the funniest stories Mr. Frank Richards has given us for a long time.

THE "GREYFRIARS HERALD."

The supplement will occupy three pages in our next issue, and we shall publish some sparkling stories, articles, and poems by the Removites and their friends. There will also be another of the popular cartoons by Frank Nugent.

OUR READERS' PARLIAMENT.

I am very pleased with the way my chums have received our new feature, "The Greyfriars Parliament."

I have long felt that this was likely to be a popular feature, and now that I have been able to find room for it to appear in the MAGNET Library, my belief has been justified.

I hope every chum distinctly understands that this Parliament is for the benefit of MAGNET readers, though, of course, all readers of the Companion Papers are welcome to join, too. But I want to see MAGNET readers to the fore, and this can be assured if you send in your "speeches" to

"THE GREYFRIARS PARLIAMENT,"

c.o. The Editor,
 The "Magnet" Library,
 The Fleetway House,
 Farringdon Street, E.C. 4.

"Speeches" should not be too long, and the subject can be anything that takes the fancy. For every "speech" dealt with in "The Greyfriars Parliament" I shall award the sender a money prize.

A VERY SHORT NOTICE!

The "Holiday Annual" is selling out very quickly. Get your copy to-day. To-morrow might be too late!

THE FAME OF GREYFRIARS.

Billy Bunter the Great.

It is no exaggeration to say that Billy Bunter and the other Greyfriars boys are known in every English-speaking country, from Australia to U.S.A.; from the Canadian backwoods to the plains of South Africa.

The Companion Papers have brought pleasure to thousands, young and old, and emigrants often desire to retain a link with the Home Country by having the MAGNET or the "Popular" sent to them week by week.

Not to be acquainted with the Companion Papers is a sign of ignorance, as witness an examination paper set before several hundred London schoolboys recently. Here was one of the questions:

"Say what you know about the following: Ballantyne, Tarzan, Gill the Gunner, Nelson Lee, Talbot Baines Reed, Wycliffe, Robinson Crusoe, Peter Pan, Long John Silver, The Mad Hatter, Billy Bunter, Tom Brown, Greyfriars, G. A. Henty."

Mr. E. H. Smith, headmaster of All Saints' School, Wandsworth, S.W., who was the examiner, says that this item was very well answered, which is more than can be said of some of the other questions. Only one boy seemed to know nothing of Billy Bunter and the rest, for he grouped the names together and stated that they were all books, and all written by Ballantyne.

The examination, says Mr. Smith, was intended to test general knowledge, observation, and what is called "gumption."

I, as Editor of the Companion Papers, congratulate the headmaster of All Saints' School on the excellence of the test, and congratulate myself on having so many loyal readers among his pupils.

Correspondence.

B. Watson, 8, Mona Road, Crookes, Sheffield, Yorks., would like to hear from readers, anywhere, interested in photography and model aeroplane construction. All letters answered. Ages, 14-16.

John Paterson, 21, Leithay Road, Innerleithen, Peeblesshire, N.B., wishes to correspond with readers who are interested in photos and the cinema. All letters answered. Ages, 17-18.

J. Butler, 20, Britannia Road, Islington, London, N., wishes to correspond with readers anywhere. All letters answered. Ages, 18 upwards. Will James Senior (Bradford) please write?

A. Goodall, 29, Hartley Street, Green Street, Bethnal Green, E.2, wishes to correspond with readers overseas. Ages, 16 upwards.

Seth H. Thody, 48, Chief Street, Brompton, South Australia, wishes to correspond with readers.

Miss Lilian Tanner, c.o. Mrs. W. W. Gifford, Waterworks Road, Sandy Bay, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers.

Richard McMurray, 19, Royal Street, Gourock, N.B., wishes to hear from readers and contributors for his amateur paper, the "Advertiser."

S. MacMorran, 192, Evelyn Street, Deptford, S.E., would like to join boys' club dealing with the Companion Papers and hobbies.

Your Editor.

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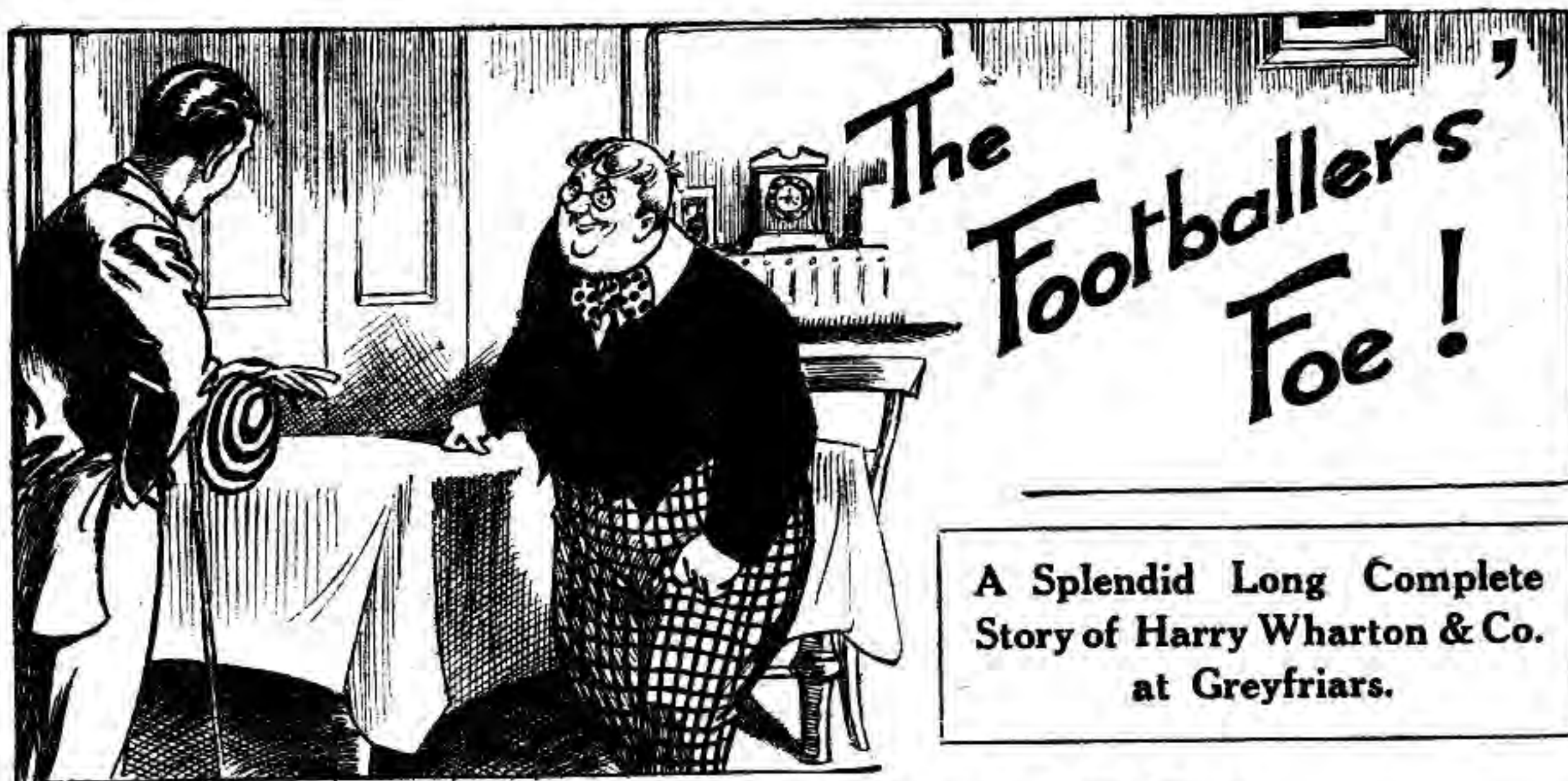
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THE MAGNET LIBRARY,—No. 765.



A Splendid Long Complete
Story of Harry Wharton & Co.
at Greyfriars.

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

(Author of the Famous Greyfriars Stories appearing in the "POPULAR.")

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter is Not Satisfied!

"MY name there, Wharton?"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
Billy Bunter asked the question in the junior Common-room at Greyfriars; and it was followed by a chortle, instead of an answer.

Harry Wharton had posted up a paper on the Common-room door; the list of players for the Greyfriars Remove in the Highcliffe match. A crowd of fellows gathered to look at it, among them William George Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove blinked up at the list through his big spectacles. Apparently he had some hope of seeing the name of W. G. Bunter in the list.

"Not a bad lot," remarked Peter Todd, as he caught sight of the name of P. Todd on the paper.

"Quite good!" said Bob Cherry, who knew that R. Cherry was there, without looking.

"The goodness is terrific," commented Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, who did not need telling that his distinguished name was there.

"Rotten!" remarked Bolsover major.

"Not so good as it might be," said Russell, shaking his head.

Harry Wharton stepped back from the door with a smile on his face. He did not expect the selection for the Highcliffe match to meet with unanimous approval. Fellows who missed their names from the list could not help feeling that Wharton's judgment was not quite so reliable in football matters as was generally supposed.

"I say, you fellows, is my name there?" persisted Bunter. "Why can't you put the paper where a chap can see it, Wharton?"

"Your name isn't there, my fat pip-pin," answered the captain of the Remove. "And if you can't see that paper, fatty, how the dickens do you think you could play Highcliffe on Wednesday? You have to see a footer before you can kick it, you know."

"Oh, really, Wharton!"
Billy Bunter blinked disparagingly at the list. It was quite a good team; and in the opinion of eleven fellows, at least, it could not possibly have been bettered.

Certainly it could not have been improved by the inclusion of the name of William George Bunter. Bunter's football was of a kind calculated to make the angels weep.

Billy Bunter jerked a chair towards the door, and mounted on it to scan the list at closer quarters.

"Squiff in goal," he said, with a sniff. "Now, I ask you fellows, what's the good of Squiff in goal?"

"Not much!" said Bolsover major, while Sampson Quincey Ifley Field, otherwise Squiff, only chuckled. The Australian junior was not perturbed by Bunter's criticism.

"Johnny Bull and Linley," said Bunter. "Now, if you ask me, I should say they were a pair of duds."

"Thanks!" said Mark Linley, laughing.

"We don't ask you!" granted Johnny Bull.

"Cherry and Brown and Toddy," continued Bunter. "What sort of a show will they put up?"

"Rotten!" said Skinner.

"Smithy and Penfold and Wharton and Inky and Redwing," went on Bunter. "Call that a team?"

Harry Wharton & Co. grinned. Billy Bunter's lofty criticism left them quite unmoved. Bunter was not really an authority on the subject.

Bunter turned round on the chair and blinked at the Famous Five.

"That's a rotten crowd to play Highcliffe, Wharton," he said.

"Go hon!"

"Courtenay's crowd will walk all over you!" said Bunter. "Don't say I didn't warn you!"

"I won't!" said Wharton, laughing.

"In the hour of defeat," said Bob Cherry, solemnly, "we will remember that the day might have been saved by playing a podgy porpoise in the team."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter blinked down at the Famous Five from his elevated position, with lofty scorn.

"Hadn't you better shift, Bunter?" inquired Frank Nugent. "If anybody opened that door from outside—"

"Your name's not in the list, Nugent," said Bunter, turning his head to give the paper another blink. "Wharton's left you out. That shows a certain amount of sense."

"Thanks!"

"It's all very well leaving out duds," said Bunter. "What I object to is leaving out really good men. Why, De Courcy, of Highcliffe, told me himself that if I played for Greyfriars the result would be a foregone conclusion. He said so in those words."

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

De Courcy's remark, evidently, had had a meaning that had not dawned upon Bunter's powerful intellect.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at," said Bunter. "I'm not satisfied with this list, Wharton."

"Now, I wonder whether I shall be able to survive that?" remarked the captain of the Remove thoughtfully.

"You can cackle, you fellows," said Bunter disdainfully. "As a matter of fact, I could win the match for Greyfriars—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's not merely kicking a ball that wins at footer," said Bunter. "It needs brains."

"Then where on earth would you come in?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, really, Smithy! What I say is this— Yaroooooop!"

That was not exactly what Bunter had meant to say.

But at that stage of the proceedings the Common-room door was opened from without, and it crashed suddenly against the chair upon which the Owl of the Remove was standing.

Crash!

The chair went spinning, and Bunter instantaneously dropped to the floor.

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"Yarooooop!"
Bump!
"Oh, crumbs! Oh! Ow! What—
Oooooch!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hazeldene came into the room and stared round. He had not expected such a catastrophe to follow the opening of the door.

"What the dickens—" he began.
"Ow! Oh! Yooop!" roared Bunter.
"Beast! You did that on purpose! Oh, my hat! My spine's broken!"

"Not your neck?" asked Bob Cherry sympathetically. "What a pity it wasn't your neck, old scout!"

"Ow, ow, ow!" roared Bunter.
"Can't you help a fellow up? Can't you give a pal a hand, Toddy, instead of standing there grinning like a Cheshire cheese—I mean cat? Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Certainly, old top!" said Toddy. Peter Todd gave Bunter a hand up, but as he fastened his grasp upon one of Bunter's fat ears for the purpose, his help was not received with gratitude.

"Yow-ow! Leggo, you beast!" roared Bunter.

"Some people are never pleased," remarked Toddy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rubbed his injuries, and glared at the grinning Removites.

"Now, look here, Wharton, about that football list—don't walk away while I'm talking to you, you beast! Do you hear?"

But Harry Wharton & Co. did walk away, apparently not being deeply interested in Bunter's conversation. William George Bunter was left to waste his sweetness on the desert air.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Buttering Bunter!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! It's jolly old Pon!"

Bob Cherry made that remark the following day, after lessons. A slim and elegant junior in a Highcliffe cap walked in at the gates of Greyfriars. His manner indicated that the earth was not quite good enough for him to walk on. That was one of Cecil Ponsonby's little ways. Pon lived, moved, and had his being in swank.

He glanced at Harry Wharton & Co., who were sauntering in the quadrangle, and gave them a lofty nod. The Famous Five of the Remove returned his salutation distantly enough. They were on the worst of terms with Ponsonby personally; but as they were on the best of terms with Courtenay, the junior captain of Highcliffe, they did not want trouble with Pon, and preferred to keep civil if possible. Ponsonby could be civil when it suited his purpose, even to fellows whom he disliked as intensely as he did the Famous Five of Greyfriars.

He paused as he was passing the Co. and gave them an agreeable smile.

"Looks like bein' jolly good weather for the match to-morrow, you fellows," he said.

"Looks like it," agreed Wharton.

"My friends and I are thinkin' of comin' over with the team," said Ponsonby. "No objection, I hope?"

"Not in the least."

"Any Highcliffe chap is welcome to come over with the team," said Bob Cherry.

"Well, we've had our little rows and rags, you know," said Ponsonby, with a

smile. "I thought I'd mention it. No raggin' on match days, what?"

"Certainly not," said Harry. "You're very welcome to come over. I didn't know you were specially interested in football, though."

Ponsonby smiled genially.

"Well, you remember that I was junior captain of Highcliffe before Courtenay came," he remarked. "The fellows seem to think Courtenay more useful as a football skipper. I've let the game alone for a bit; but, naturally, I want to see my school win. Fact is, the Highcliffe eleven this time is hot stuff, and we expect to walk all over you, if you don't mind my sayin' so."

The Famous Five laughed.

"Not at all," said Harry. "We have just the same expectation on this side. Let the best team win."

"You expect to win, then?"

"We hope so, at any rate," said Johnny Bull.

"The match was postponed from last Saturday," remarked Ponsonby. "I



thought that might mean that there was something awry with your team, Wharton."

"Oh, no," said Harry. "We asked Courtenay to put off the match from Saturday for quite a different reason. The team's all right, as you'll see if you watch the game to-morrow."

"I shall certainly do that," said Ponsonby. "It will be worth watchin'. Is Skinner about?"

"In the House somewhere."

"Thanks."

Cecil Ponsonby walked on towards the School House. Harry glanced after him rather curiously, and there was a grunt from Johnny Bull.

"Jolly civil all of a sudden!" said Bob Cherry.

"Well, civility costs nothing," remarked Nugent.

"Pon doesn't waste it on us, all the same, as a rule," grinned Bob. "Still, I'm glad to see him taking a decent interest in footer, even if he doesn't play himself."

Another grunt from Johnny Bull.

"Well, what's the matter with you, Johnny?" asked Bob.

"He's come over to see Skinner!" grunted Johnny. "Ten to one he's going to make some of his rotten bets on the match."

"Oh!" said Bob, and he whistled.

"The rotten betfulness of the disgusting Pon is terrific," observed the Nabob of Bhanipur. "But the mindfulness of our own business is the proper caper."

"Oh, bother Pon!" said Bob. "Let's go and get some footer. A bit more practice won't hurt us."

"Good!" said Harry.

And the Famous Five went down to Little Side to punt the ball about, and forgot the existence of the dandy of Highcliffe.

Meanwhile, Ponsonby had entered the School House. He nodded to two or three fellows in the hall, and coolly walked up the big staircase. Pon had a cool and cheery way of making himself at home.

He had mentioned Skinner to the Famous Five, but it was not to Skinner's study that he proceeded. He stopped at the door of Study No. 7, which belonged to Bunter, Todd, and Tom Dutton. He had seen Toddy in the lower passage, and Tom Dutton in the quadrangle, so apparently it was William George Bunter that Pon had come to the study to see.

He tapped at the door and opened it.

Billy Bunter was there, and he blinked in surprise through his big spectacles at the Highcliffe junior. Sometimes it had pleased the lordly Pon to take Bunter up, for his own reasons, and then to drop him again without ceremony. Bunter was a fellow who could be treated in that manner by a wealthy and highly-connected youth like Pon. Bunter did not look amicable now. The last time he had seen Pon, that cheery youth, with Gadsby and Monson, had chased the Owl of the Remove, bumped him, and stuffed his cap down his back. So Bunter's blink was wrathful and threatening.

"What do you want, you Highcliffe cad?" was his polite greeting.

"Anythin' wrong, old chap?" asked Ponsonby, looking surprised and pained.

"Yah! Rotter! I'll jolly well call some of the fellows, and—"

"Dash it all, Bunter, you might be civil when a fellow's come over specially to see you," said Ponsonby reproachfully. "I don't see why we shouldn't be friends."

"Oh!" said Bunter.

"You're not bearin' malice for that little joke the other day, I'm sure," said Ponsonby blandly. "Still, if you won't come over to a spread in my study at Highcliffe, I suppose you won't."

Bunter's expression changed at once.

"Oh, it's a spread?" he asked.

"That's it! The fact is, I want you to do me a favour, Bunter," said the dandy of Highcliffe. "I've heard about that wonderful gift of yours—"

"Eh?"

"In fact, I've heard you do your ventriloquism," said Ponsonby. "It's simply marvellous."

Bunter beamed.

"I've told the chaps about it at Highcliffe," continued Ponsonby. "Some of them won't believe it. Now, I want you to come over and show them how you do it, Bunter. There's goin' to be a ripplin' spread in my study, and, if you'd be so good, we'd like you to show us some of your ventriloquism afterwards. Will you, old fellow?"

Billy Bunter jumped up.

"I'm your man, old chap!" he exclaimed.

"Could you come now?" asked Ponsonby. "I know what a lot of engagements you have, Bunter, and how fellows run after your society. I know it's a cheek to drop on you suddenly like this. But if you could manage to fix it up—"

Bunter assumed an air of consideration. "Well, Lord Mauleverer very specially asked me to tea," he remarked. "I gave him a sort of half-promise. Still, I can go to tea with Mauly any time."

"Good!" said Ponsonby solemnly.

"Then Coker of the Fifth wants me after tea. Still, I can put Coker off!" said Bunter thoughtfully.

"Do!" urged Ponsonby.

"And some of the Sixth have asked me to come to their debating meeting," said Bunter. "Still, I don't see why I should let myself be bored at a Sixth Form meeting, when it's a question of going out to tea with an old pal."

"You're awfully good, Bunter," said Ponsonby. "Come along, then, old fellow. I sha'n't forget this, Bunter."

And Billy Bunter rolled out of the study and walked down to the gates with Ponsonby in high feather. The prospect of a feed in Pon's study, added to Pon's flattery, transferred Bunter to the seventh heaven. Peter Todd met them near the gates.

"Nearly tea-time, Bunter," he said.

Bunter gave him a lofty blink.

"I sha'n't be in to tea, Toddy!" he answered. "You can keep your mouldy old sardines! Yab!"

And Bunter walked on arm-in-arm with the dandy of Highcliffe, leaving Peter with an extraordinary expression on his face.



Suddenly the Common-room door was opened from without, and it crashed against the chair upon which Billy Bunter was standing. The chair went spinning, and the Owl of the Remove instantaneously dropped on to the floor. "Yarroooop!" (See Chapter I.)

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Caterpillar Wants to Know!

"TEA'S ready, Caterpillar!"

De Courcy, of the Highcliffe Fourth, did not answer. He was standing at the window of his study, his hands in his pockets, looking out into the Highcliffe quad.

Frank Courtenay glanced across the study at him. Courtenay, the junior captain of Highcliffe, was looking very fit and well and cheerful. He had bright anticipations for the morrow. It was his ambition to beat Greyfriars on the football-field, and he had worked hard to get his team into top form, and he considered the prospects of success very bright. So he was very cheerful just now, a cheerfulness that was not wholly shared by his study-mate and chum. To the Caterpillar, the morrow's footer match was an ordeal that he had to go through for the sake of friendship, and he groaned inwardly at the prospect.

"Getting deaf, old chap?" asked Courtenay, with a smile. "Don't you want your tea, Rupert?"

"Oh, yes!" said the Caterpillar without turning his head. "But I'm rather interested in this, Franky."

"In what?"

"Dear old Pon."

"Oh, bother Pon!" said Courtenay.

"Certainly! But come an' look."

Courtenay joined his chum at the study window. The Caterpillar's sleepy eyes were fixed on two figures that had entered at the school gates. One was the slim, elegant figure of Cecil Ponsonby, the glass of fashion and the mould of form in the Fourth at Highcliffe. The other was the ample figure of William George Bunter, the Owl of Greyfriars. The two juniors, so utterly unlike one another, were sauntering

across the quad together, apparently on terms of the most complete amity.

"Jolly odd, ain't it?" yawned the Caterpillar. "Pon must be hard up for merry society, when he takes the trouble to dig up Bunter, what?"

"What does it matter?" asked Courtenay, who felt a supreme indifference to the proceedings of Ponsonby & Co., his rivals and enemies in the Highcliffe Fourth.

"Nothin' at all," answered the Caterpillar. "But little things please little minds, you know. That's why I'm interested."

"Ass!" said Courtenay, laughing.

"Look at Bunter's chivvy!" continued the Caterpillar. "It's beamin' like a harvest moon. Is Bunter goin' to a spread? Nothin' else could account for that effulgent beam."

"Looks like it," said Courtenay.

"How jolly odd for Pon to bring that fat boulder in to a spread!" mused the Caterpillar. "It's all very well for the jolly old lion to get on pally terms with the lamb. But—" De Courcy shook his head. "Have they brought that fat boulder here to rag him, Franky? They couldn't possibly want him for any other reason, could they?"

Courtenay frowned.

"Dash it all, Caterpillar, even Pon would draw the line at that!" he said. "He wouldn't ask a fellow here in a friendly way with the idea of ragging him."

"I wonder!" said the Caterpillar. "I suppose Pon has a limit. If he has, it's a jolly wide one. He's like the bloke in the story, Franky, who never did anythin' against his conscience, havin' such a jolly old accommodatin' conscience

that it never worried him. If Pon found his limit in his way he would push it out a little wider."

Courtenay laughed.

"I know Pon would do anything he could to stir up trouble between us and Greyfriars," he said; "but ragging Bunter wouldn't do that."

"No." The Caterpillar nodded thoughtfully. "Pon was no end bucked when the football match was put off last Saturday. He hoped that there was some trouble goin'. Fixin' it for Wednesday can't hav' pleased him. The dear man thrives on trouble—for others. I wonder why he's bringin' Bunter here? Look at the other merry nuts! They're greetin' Bunter like a long-lost brother."

Courtenay could not help feeling surprised as he looked from the window. Gadsby and Monson and Vavasour had joined Ponsonby, and all of them were treating Bunter with quite distinguished politeness. Obviously the nuts of the Fourth had some object in pulling Bunter's fat leg. Otherwise they certainly would not have wasted their valuable time on him. It was rather difficult to guess what their object could be.

"Well, the tea's getting cold," said Courtenay, at length.

The Caterpillar smiled. Ponsonby and his companions disappeared into the House.

"You don't think it's your duty to chip in, Franky?" asked the Caterpillar.

"How do you mean?"

"You're such a stickler for duty, as a rule," smiled the Caterpillar. "If that fat idiot has been brought like a giddy lamb to the slaughter—"

Courtenay knitted his brows.

NEXT
MONDAY!

"LODER'S LONG TRAIL!"

A SPLENDID STORY OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS.
By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 765.

"I suppose they must have some reason," he said. "They generally rag Bunter when they come across him, as he's too fat and funky to be able to take care of himself. If it's a rag I'll chip in fast enough. Perhaps I'd better speak a word."

"Go it, old scout!"

Frank Courtenay left the study, and the Caterpillar smiled, and lounged after him. They were in time to meet

have taken no heed of his proceedings, but the Caterpillar's eyes, sleepy as they were, were sometimes very keen. The Caterpillar was curious now, and when he was curious he wanted to know. His distrust of Ponsonby was deep, and he was quite well aware that Pon had never forgiven Courtenay for putting him in the background. Courtenay was aware of it, too, for that matter; but he returned Pon's enmity only with scornful

"And that's all?"

"I don't know what you're drivin' at, Caterpillar. I suppose I can ask Bunter to tea if I like in my own study?"

"I should think so," remarked Gadsby.

"Absolutely!" said Vavasour.

"I say, you fellows—" began Bunter. Courtenay broke in.

"If this is a rag, Ponsonby, you'd better chuck it. You're not friendly with Bunter. If you've got him here to rag

Histories of Famous Football Clubs.

No. 2.—Preston North End F.C.

ANOTHER SPLENDID FOOTER ARTICLE BY OUR EXPERT.

I VERY much doubt, when it comes to analysing facts, that one can find a club with a past such as Preston North End can boast of.

There were days when they swept all before them, like corn beneath the sickle. Those days, however, belong to the dim past, and, as we all know, the Prestonians have of recent years been struggling valiantly to present to the public a shadow of their former selves. They are a vastly improved team now, and with the courage, esprit de corps, and the men to do it with, they may even yet surprise the football world with another performance similar to the 1887-8 season.

It was in 1875 that Preston North End took over their headquarters at Deepdale, and the man to whom they owe their creation is the late William Sudell, who was one of the pioneers of professionalism.

In the beginning, Preston North End were a cricket club, and when a football club was formed there was so little support to the venture that it was found impossible to carry on; hence the Soccer club made way for the more powerful Rugger club.

But Soccer was destined to pave its way in the North, so again, in 1881, Preston North End tackled the Association game, this time with success.

In 1883 Sudell began importing players from over the border. The inducement in those days did not lie in the percentage of a big transfer fee, so other means were adopted.

In the season of 1883-4 Preston North End played 44 matches, winning 33 of them; and it was during this season that they first came up against it. They had reached the third round of the Cup and had drawn a game with Upton Park, which club complained to the F.A. that Preston North End paid their players. The result was that Preston

North End were expelled from the competition.

In the season of 1885-6 they contested 64 games, winning 59, losing 2, and drawing 3, with a goal average of 318 against 60.

Colossal figures these, and it can easily be seen how this huge aggregate was obtained when I say that on a few occasions their score ran into double figures.



Joe McCall, of Preston North End.

For instance, Earlestown Wanderers had 19 goals scored against them without reply, and Darwen suffered a similar defeat to the tune of 16.

From this time onward, until Preston North End won the Cup in 1889, they suffered few defeats, and those that did occur came as a great surprise.

They reached the semi-final of the Cup in 1887, when West Bromwich Albion defeated them; and, strangely enough, the following year the Throstles beat them in the final stage. They were so confident of winning this final that it was suggested that the team should be photographed with the Cup before the game. This wish was not gratified. Previous to this defeat they had played 43 games without being beaten, and in the Cup competition they started off with a 26-0 victory over Hyde, following this up by accounting for Everton 6-1 and Bolton 9-1.

During the six seasons 1883-9, their record reads: matches played, 366; won 294; lost 35; drew 37; goals for 1,502, and against 385.

In 1888-9 season they carried all before them, winning both the Cup and the League; and the following season they again captured the League championship. After this they figured as runners-up for three successive seasons.

But their brilliance died out very quickly. In 1894 they were struggling to avoid relegation. Seven years later they descended into the Second Division, but again figured in the First Division in 1904.

Since then fortune has been fickle for them, for they have twice been relegated, but have heroically won their way back to the First Division again.

Last season they reached the Final for the Cup, only to lose to Huddersfield by a penalty goal, which point is hotly disputed even to-day; and as regards the League campaign, they finished seventh from the bottom.

With Joe McCall to lead them again this season, a distinct revival is to be expected.

(There will be another splendid football article next week, entitled "The History of Aston Villa F.C.")

Ponsonby & Co. as the nuts arrived in the passage and stopped at Pon's door.

Billy Bunter gave them a genial blink.

"Anythin' on, Pon, dear man?" asked the Caterpillar.

Ponsonby looked uneasy for a moment. For reasons best known to himself he had wished to get Bunter to his study unobserved. Certainly Courtenay would

indifference, and disdained to keep a watchful eye upon his enemy.

"Anythin' on?" repeated Ponsonby.

"What do you mean, Caterpillar? Nothin's on but a feed in my study."

"With a specially distinguished guest?" remarked the Caterpillar, bowing gracefully to Bunter.

"Bunter's come over to tea, if that's what you mean."

him you're going to chuck it. Otherwise I shall chip in as captain of the Form!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove gave Ponsonby a startled, suspicious blink.

Cecil Ponsonby shrugged his shoulders.

"Thanks for the tip!" he said urbanely. "As a matter of fact, I've

asked Bunter to tea, and it's not a rag. Anythin' more you want to say?"

"That's all!" said Courtenay.

"Thank goodness! You're a bit of a bore, Courtenay, especially when you're on the high horse," said Ponsonby affably.

Courtenay made no reply to that. He went back to his study. But the Caterpillar lingered.

"All my fault, Pon," he said. "I saw you comin' in, and, do you know, it never occurred to me that you'd brought Bunter over simply because he's such a fascinating company. My mistake."

"Oh, go an' eat coke!" said Ponsonby. "Come in, Bunter, old fellow!"

"Old fellow!" murmured the Caterpillar. "My hat!"

"I say, Pon," said Bunter, "perhaps De Courcy would like to hear the show, too?"

"Oh, come in!" exclaimed Ponsonby hastily.

"The show?" repeated the Caterpillar quickly. "Why, what's on, Bunter, old top? You might tell a pal."

"I'm going to show these chaps some ventriloquism after tea," explained Bunter. "My wonderful gift, you know. Oh, all right, I'm coming Pon, old chap!"

Bunter had to come, for Ponsonby grabbed his fat arm, and fairly jerked him into the study. Gadsby and Monson and Vavasour followed, and the study door was closed. Evidently Pon & Co. did not want the Caterpillar's company.

De Courcy stood for a moment or two, staring at the closed door, and then he returned to his own study thoughtfully. He dropped into a chair at the tea-table, still thoughtful.

"Bunter's explained the giddy mystery, Franky," he said. "He's come over to give a ventriloquial show to amuse the children."

Courtenay raised his eyebrows. "Is that so? I shouldn't have thought that Pon and his friends would be interested in Bunter's ventriloquism," he said.

"Quite so! I shouldn't, either—and I don't!" said the Caterpillar. "Pon's pullin' Bunter's leg; but why he's doin' it beats me! Only, dear old Pon never does anythin' without a reason. And if dear old Pon could muck up our match with Greyfriars, dear old Pon would be no end bucked! Dear old Pon is always worth watchin', Franky!"

"Oh, rot!" said Courtenay. "Of course, if that match didn't come off, it would be no end of a joyful occasion," said the Caterpillar thoughtfully. "I should feel inclined to pass a vote of thanks to Pon. Save no end of horrid exertion."

"Pon can't be thinking of anything of the kind," said Courtenay, "and Bunter couldn't help him if he did."

"I suppose not," assented the Caterpillar.

"Not worth thinking about," said Courtenay carelessly.

"I agree," said the Caterpillar cheerily. "And for that precise reason, old scout, I'm goin' to think about it! Little things please little minds, as I believe I've remarked before. Pass the jam, dear boy."

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Comes in Useful!

BILLY BUNTER was enjoying himself.

The spread in Ponsonby's study was, as Pon had said it would be, ripping.

Bunter surveyed the well-spread table

with great satisfaction, and proceeded to deal with the comestibles in his usual masterly manner.

The Highcliffe nuts kept up a cheery buzz of conversation; but for some time the Owl of Greyfriars hardly joined in it. Bunter generally had plenty to say; in fact, too much. But now his jaws were too busy.

It was not till after he had distinguished himself as a trencherman that he gave his fat chin its accustomed exercise.

He was in a state of fat satisfaction. A good spread always appealed to Bunter; he would have forgiven anybody anything for a handsome spread. And next to a spread Bunter liked flattery; and the flattery in Pon's study was as liberal as the spread. If Bunter had been a little less obtuse, he would have guessed that the Highcliffe nuts had an axe to grind. But Bunter was quite prepared to attribute his warm welcome in Pon's study to his own fascinating qualities. Pon & Co. had realised what a splendid chap he really was; that was all.

"Now, about that giddy ventriloquism," said Ponsonby, with a wink at his comrades. "I can tell you fellows it's something marvellous!"

"I'll believe it when I hear it," said Monson.

"Oh, it's all right!" said Ponsonby. "Why, Bunter can imitate any chap's voice after hearing him once or twice! Can't you, Bunter?"

"Easy as winking!" said Bunter. "You see, it's a gift—a wonderful gift! It's easier still if there's anything special about the voice—suppose a chap

had a squeaky voice like yours, Vavasour, for instance—"

"Wha-at?" exclaimed Vavasour.

Vavasour was not at all aware that his voice was squeaky.

"You see, that makes it easier," said Bunter.

"You fat ass!"

"Eh, what?"

"Dry up, Vav!" said Ponsonby, with a warning look. "Bunter's goin' to show us what he can do! Make a dog growl under the table, Bunter."

Gr-r-r-r-r!

That growl, which appeared to come from under the study table, was so life-like that the juniors jumped, and Vavasour hastily drew his legs away.

"Oh, gad!" ejaculated Vavasour. "I—I say! That—that's really a dog! That's not Bunter!"

"He, he, he!"

Vavasour peeped under the table. Certainly there was no dog there. But, as Vavasour stooped, there came a sharp yapping behind him, and the junior jumped and spun round in alarm.

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter. "It's all right—only little me! He, he!"

"Oh, gad!" murmured Vavasour.

"Jolly good!" said Ponsonby heartily. "Blessed if I knew what a clever chap you were, Bunter!"

"Nothing to what I can do, old chap!" grinned Bunter complacently.

"Look here, Pon, you're a silly ass!"

"What?" Ponsonby swung round on Vavasour angrily. "What the thump do you mean, Vavasour? Do you want a thick ear?"



Peter Todd met Bunter and Ponsonby near the school gates. Bunter gave him a lofty blink. "I sha'n't be in to tea, Toddy!" he said. "You can keep your mouldy sardines! Yah!" And he walked on arm in arm with the dandy of Highcliffe. (See Chapter 2.)

NEXT
MONDAY!

"LODER'S LONG TRAIL!"

A SPLENDID STORY OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS.
By FRANK RICHARDS.
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 765.

"Wha-a-t? What's the row, Pon?" asked Vavasour, in astonishment.

"What do you mean, you dummy? What are you slangin' me for?"

"I! I didn't speak!"

"Ha, ha! It was Bunter!" roared Gadsby.

"Oh, my hat! Was—was that you, Bunter?" exclaimed Ponsonby. "Why, you fat rotter—I—I—I mean, was that you imitatin' Vav's voice?"

"He, he, he! Of course it was!" chuckled Bunter. "Didn't I tell you I could do his squeak easily?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gadsby and Monson.

Ponsonby glared at Bunter. He wanted very particularly a demonstration of Bunter's peculiar powers for reasons of his own; but he was greatly inclined just then to take the Owl by the scruff of the neck and shake him. Pon did not like his own lordly leg being pulled. But he contrived to control his wrath and smile.

"Jolly, clever!" he gasped. "It's really 'it,' you fellows! Bunter, old top, could you do Courtenay's voice as easily as that?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Make Courtenay speak at the door, then," said Gadsby, "if you can do it."

Bunter gave his fat little cough,

"Ponsonby!"

The nuts of the Fourth started. Certainly that word seemed to come from the direction of the door upon which their eyes were fixed. And the tones were exactly those of Frank Courtenay.

"That's not Bunter," said Gadsby; "I didn't see his lips move. That's Courtenay!"

"He, he, he!"

"Ponsonby!" came, apparently, from the passage again.

"Hallo!" called out Ponsonby, more than half convinced that the captain of the Fourth had come along to his door just in time to help Bunter unconsciously to gain a little cheap credit.

"Let me in, will you?"

"You can come in!" answered Ponsonby.

"The door's locked!"

"It isn't!"

"Liar!"

"Why, you cheeky rotter!" roared Ponsonby, quite convinced now that it was Courtenay at the door.

He bounded to the door and threw it wide open, and glared into the passage.

Then he turned back, with quite a peculiar expression on his face. For the passage was vacant.

"Was it—" began Monson.

"Nobody's there," said Ponsonby.

"He, he, he!"

The Highcliffe nuts looked at Bunter. Their surprise, mingled with anger, was a compliment to the Greyfriars ventriloquist's weird powers.

"I say, you fellows, that's nothing to me," said Bunter airily. "Like me to play some tricks on the chaps while I'm here? I'll imitate Mr. Mobbs' voice, if you like, and shout through the keyhole of the Head's study. I'll make Dr. Voysey believe Mobbs has called him an old donkey! What?"

"Great Scott!" gasped Monson.

"You young villain!"

"Eh?"

"I—I mean, better let the masters alone," said Monson hastily. "You're awfully clever, Bunter! Blessed if I'd have believed this without hearing it!"

Ponsonby gave a nod of satisfaction.

"You're the genuine article, Bunter," he said. "I suppose you could imitate a voice just as well speaking on the telephone?"

"Of course I could."

The nuts exchanged looks of satisfaction. Cecil Ponsonby was coming to business at last!

"You're not in the Remove eleven for the match to-morrow, I understand, Bunter?" Ponsonby remarked.

"No; Wharton's left me out."

"You wouldn't play for him, I suppose?" said Gadsby solemnly.

"The fact is, I offered my services."

"Then how is it you're not in the team?" asked Ponsonby, with a puzzled air.

Bunter sniffed.

"Jealousy!" he explained.

"I see," assented Ponsonby. "Wharton's afraid of being put into the back-ground by a really good player."

"That's it," assented Bunter.

"There's a lot of jealousy in football!" said Monson, shaking his head seriously. "I call it rotten!"

"Sickening!" said Bunter.

"It's a bit hard on the Remove, having their best man left out," said Gadsby. "It may cost them the match."

"Serve 'em right!" said Bunter.

"Quite true!" exclaimed Ponsonby.

"It would serve them right if the match was stopped, and never came off at all, Bunter."

"Absolutely!" said Vavasour.

"It would be rather a lark on them," remarked Gadsby. "A fellow like Bunter could manage it."

"Eh! How could I?" asked Bunter, blinking at the Highcliffe nuts in astonishment.

"A clever chap like you," said Ponsonby. "It would be easy for you, Bunter. It would serve them right, too, wouldn't it?"

"Yes, rather! But how—"

"The match was postponed from last Saturday, you know. Well, suppose Courtenay telephoned to Wharton, saying that as the match had been put off, he didn't care to play it."

"But he won't, will he?" asked Bunter.

"That's where you come in, old fellow, with your clever ventriloquism," explained Ponsonby genially. "You imitate Courtenay's voice on the telephone."

"Oh!" exclaimed Bunter.

"What a rippin' good jape!" exclaimed Gadsby. "I'd never have thought of that in a month of Sundays."

"It takes a fellow like Bunter to think of these good things," said Ponsonby.

"It does!" agreed Monson. "Bunter's all there."

"Absolutely!"

Billy Bunter grinned with fat satisfaction. It was not quite clear to him how that great idea had originated with him, but he was quite willing to accept the credit of it.

"I'm pretty wide, you know," he remarked, with a fat smirk. "I know a thing or two, you know."

"You do, and no mistake," said Ponsonby heartily. "Your idea of japing Wharton in this way is a real corker! Serve him right for keeping you out of the football!"

"Yes, rather!"

"But I say, that telephone message won't be enough," said Gadsby.

"Courtenay will go over all the same to-morrow, and then they'll know—"

"You don't quite see Bunter's idea," explained Ponsonby. "Bunter's wheeze is to telephone from here as Courtenay, and afterwards to telephone from Greyfriars as Wharton. Isn't that it, Bunter?"

"Oh, I see!" said Gadsby. "Blessed if I'd have thought of it! I say, I wish Bunter was at Highcliffe instead of Greyfriars. We'd soon be top study if we had Bunter here."

"Absolutely!"

Billy Bunter smirked. He could swallow any amount of "soft sawder," and the thicker it was laid on, the better Bunter liked it. Certainly Pon & Co. were laying it on thickly enough.

By this time Bunter was almost convinced that the great idea had originated with him; at all events, he was willing to let it go at that.

"Well, I think Bunter will take a rise out of them this time," said Ponsonby. "Bunter's a chap with ideas, and no mistake! I say, Bunter, are you engaged for next Saturday? We're makin' up a little party for a motor run, and a feed at a seaside hotel, and if you'd come, we'd be delighted."

"Absolutely!"

"Do come, old chap!" pleaded Gadsby.

"My dear fellows, I'll come with pleasure!" said Bunter. "Lord Mauleverer wants me to go out with him, and there's that chap D'Arcy of St. Jim's has begged me to see him at the week-end—but dash it all, you're my pals! I'll come!"

"That's settled, then," said Ponsonby. "We're countin' on you for Saturday, Bunter. Now, about that little trick on those cads who've injured you—"

"Eh! Who's injured me?" asked Bunter.

"Wharton and his lot, you know, leaving you out of the footer out of rotten jealousy!"

"Oh, yes!"

"We're backin' you up," said Ponsonby. "It will be no end of a joke, and we want you to tell us about it afterwards. Suppose you come over to tea to-morrow and tell us how it's gone."

"Rely on me!" said Bunter.

"Good man!" said Ponsonby.

And for the next half-hour Ponsonby & Co., and William George Bunter, were discussing the details of that "joke" on the football skippers of Highcliffe and Greyfriars. And when Billy Bunter left Pon's study, Pon accompanied him, and they proceeded to Mr. Mobbs' room, to use Mr. Mobbs' telephone; Gadsby having scouted to make sure that Mr. Mobbs was out. Billy Bunter, with his obtuse head fairly turned by flattery, and by the prospect of unlimited feeds and magnificent motor-runs, was like clay in the hands of the potter. It did not even occur to his fat brain that Ponsonby, after making use of him, was likely to throw him aside unrewarded. Bunter, for the moment, was Pon's dearest pal; and by means of the peculiar gift of the Owl of Greyfriars, Ponsonby saw a certain prospect ahead of gratifying to the full his old grudge against Courtenay and Harry Wharton.

(Continued on page 13.)

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2s

NEXT
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EDITORIAL!

By Mrs. Mimble.
(Proprietress of the School Tuckshop.)

MASTER WHARTON fairly took the wind out of my sails, so to speak, when he came into my shop the other day and said, "Look here, Mrs. Mimble, I want you to edit a number of the GREYFRIARS HERALD."

"But, my dear Master Wharton," I protested, "I've never done that sort of thing in my life!"

"Then it will be a new experience for you, ma'am," was the reply. "I'm certain our readers would love you to edit a special number. You're a very popular personage at Greyfriars, you know. The proprietress of a tuckshop always has a sort of halo round her head."

This was sheer flattery, of course. But I never mind a little flattery now and again. I used to get lots of it when I was a handsome girl in my teens. But it is only on rare occasions that I receive flattery now, and I rather like it.

"I'll do my best, Master Wharton," I said. "But I'm a better cook than an editress."

"I'm sure your number will be a big success, ma'am," said Master Wharton. "Dash it all, if a brainless old jossler like Gosling can edit the GREYFRIARS HERALD, I'm jolly certain you can!"

"How shall I go about it?" I asked.

Master Wharton gave me the necessary instructions, and I promised to set to work as soon as I had closed my shop, and Mr. Mimble had had his supper.

My task is now finished, and it is in fear and trembling that I launch this number. I am so afraid that everybody will laugh at my first flight in journalism.

My best thanks are due to the young gentlemen who have helped me to compile this number.

Master Penfold has written rather a good song about me, and I have given him a bag of doughnuts as a mark of appreciation.

Of course, this issue would not be complete without a contribution from the leaky fountain-pen of Master Bunter, who haunts my shop on every possible occasion.

As a matter of fact, Master Bunter wanted to take the entire job off my hands, and edit this number for me. But I refused.

I do hope you will all enjoy this issue. As somebody once said, "It is a poor thing, but mine own."

JESSIE MIMBLE.

QUEEN OF THE TUCKSHOP!

Written by Dick Penfold.
Sung by Mrs. Mimble.

My name is Jessie Mimble,
I'm active, gay, and nimble.
I'm hustling, bustling all the day,
To serve the gents that come my way.
They stand inside my shop and shout,
"Now, Mrs. Mimble, buzz about!"

Bless their hearts! I sell them tarts
And doughnuts by the score.
Like Oliver Twist, they all persist
In coming up for more!
And every rush, and every crush,
Finds Bunter to the fore!

I work until I'm dizzy.
My patrons keep me busy.
From daybreak until set of sun
I am the slave of everyone.
And one of these fine days, perhaps,
You'll see me suddenly collapse!

Bless their souls! I sell them rolls
And buttered scones galore.
With steady nerve I stand and serve
The crowd inside my door.
And every rush, and every crush,
Finds Bunter to the fore!

I hurry and I scurry,
I never whine or worry.
A merry heart goes all the day,
And I'll keep going, anyway!
I sell my tuck—the young gents scoff it,
And thus I reap a handsome profit!

Bless the boys! Each one enjoys
The things I have in store.
The cakes and tarts delight their hearts,
They simply howl for more!
And every rush, and every crush,
Finds Bunter to the fore!

TUCKSHOP TOPICS!

By Tom Brown.

The Greyfriars tuckshop was established in the year 1888. Prior to that year, we presume that thirsty sportsmen used to have to tramp down to the village when they wanted a ginger-pop!

Mrs. Mimble, who runs the tuckshop, is a charming soul. Although she must be quite fifty years of age, she only looks about twenty-five. She is a really wonderful woman in every respect, and I have nothing but admiration for her.

(It is no use, Master Brown. You can flatter me as much as you like, but I am not giving anything away!—Mrs. M.)

One of the stools in the tuckshop is in a state of collapse. It appears that Billy Bunter sat on it. A weight of fourteen stone is enough to break the heart of any long-suffering stool. My own opinion is that Bunter wants "sitting on" as well!

Mrs. Mimble informed me the other day that she had some good lines. Amateur anglers, please note!

I overheard Alonzo Todd asking Mrs. Mimble to serve him with "a modicum of acidulated tablets." Why could not he have said "an ounce of acid-drops," and have done with it?

It is rumoured that Tubb of the Third purchased a packet of cream-crackers, and applied a match to them. Probably he mistook them for crackers of the jumping variety! We would remind Master Tubb that firework-day does not fall until November 5th!

HOW I SEE OTHER FELLOWS!

By Frank Nugent.



LANGE ARNOLD LAWRENCE,
The Inventor, of the Greyfriars Shell Form.

Another Batch of Ripping Stories and Articles in Next Week's Bumper Issue!

Supplement i.]

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 765.



Some Queer Customers!

By
MRS. MIBLE.

It was many years ago—during the reign of Queen Victoria—that I became the proprietress of the Greyfriars tuckshop.

I have had heaps of funny experiences, and some tragic ones as well. And I will try to set down, to the best of my memory, a few of the things that have happened.

My best customer is undoubtedly Lord Mauleverer, of the Remove Form.

His lordship drops in every day, and gives orders on a lavish scale. He leans lazily upon the counter, and drawls:

"Have you a chicken, ma'am?"

"No, sir," I reply. "But I can get you one, and prepare it for you."

"Thanks, awfully! Have you any maids of honour?"

"Yes, sir. I've got six dozen in stock."

"Then I'll take the lot, ma'am. I'm holdin' a little tea-party this afternoon in my study. I shall also be wantin' a couple of sultana cakes an' a couple of Madeira ditto."

"Very good, sir."

His lordship then points to a number of good things in the window.

"I'll take a dozen of this, an' a dozen of that, an' a dozen of the other," he drawls.

And by the time he has completed his morning shopping he doesn't see much change out of a five-pound note.

Customers like Lord Mauleverer are few and far between. If I had many more like him I should be a wealthy woman.

I can picture some of you asking, who is my worst customer?

The reply is, Master Bunter.

This plump young gentleman spends far more time in my shop than anyone else. But he hardly ever spends a penny. He is always on the look-out for a chance of getting something for nothing. Time and again I have told him that I do not allow credit. But sometimes he catches me in a weak moment, and I supply him with free doughnuts or cream ices. Master Bunter is continually saying that he doesn't get enough to eat in Hall, and he plays on my sympathy.

One of my queerest customers is Master Hurree Singh. He has quite a passion for bananas, and he rarely buys anything else.

"My esteemed and ludicrous dame," he will say, "I wish to purchasefully buy six dozen luscious bananas."

An order of this magnitude takes my breath away.

"Why, I've only half a dozen bananas left, Master Singh!" I exclaim. "But I will get some more from the fruiterer's in Friardale."

"Worthy madam, the thankfulness is terrific!"

I verily believe that Master Singh consumes two dozen bananas a day. Whenever he comes into my shop with his friends he always has bananas, while they consume jam-tarts and doughnuts.

Master Temple, of the Upper Fourth, has a craving for chocolate eclairs. If I should happen to tell him I am sold out, he stamps out of the shop in a fury. But if I have plenty in stock he gives me a beaming smile.

"Your chocolate eclairs are wonderful, Mrs. Mible!" he will say. "There's nothing like them at the bunshops in Courtfield and Friardale. They fairly melt in the mouth!"

Master Coker, of the Fifth, is not at all fastidious. I rather like him as a customer. He will cheerfully consume anything I have in stock, and he has nothing but praise for everything, from my plain scones to my rich ice cake.

Master Vernon-Smith is quite an excellent

customer, but not quite so good as Lord Mauleverer.

Speaking of Master Vernon-Smith, I am reminded of a millionaire's son who used to be at the school. His name was Arbuthnot. He used to spend two pounds a day in my shop, and I fancy this is a record. But he was not nearly such a nice, gentlemanly boy as Lord Mauleverer, and I should never call him my "best" customer, in the strict sense of the word.

Many years ago there was a very plump boy at Greyfriars who was known as "Fatty" Fullerton. This young gentleman had a mania for boiled puddings. He got plenty of them in Hall, but he always declared that the helpings weren't plentiful enough. So he used to come to me nearly every day, and plead with me to make him a jam roly-poly, or a boiled currant pudding.

I never used to make a profit on these puddings, because I knew that Master Fullerton was not so well off as the other boys, and I didn't want to take all his pocket-money.

Master Fullerton was always very grateful for the services I rendered him. He was a vastly different boy from Master Bunter. I believe he shared his boiled pudding with his chums—a thing which Master Bunter would never dream of doing.



The boy disposed of five ginger-beers in succession, and I stood waiting for him to go off pop!

Have I had any mean customers? Oh, yes; scores of them. I remember a boy who used to receive a colossal amount of pocket-money every week. Yet he seldom parted with a penny. When he did, it was like having a tooth out. He used to come into my shop, and haggle over the price of toffee until I felt as if I could shake him. On one occasion he asked me to cut a whipped cream walnut in half, and sell him one half of it, because he thought the whole was too expensive!

I recall a customer who suffered from a perpetual thirst, which he never seemed to be able to slake. The amount of lemonade and ginger-beer that boy used to consume was staggering! One hot summer day he disposed of five ginger-beers in succession, and I stood waiting for him to go off pop! But he never did. He strolled out of my shop without turning a hair.

On the whole, I have a splendid lot of customers, and the majority of them are easy to please.

THE DIARY OF A DOUGHNUT!

Specially contributed to the
"Greyfriars Herald" by
BILLY BUNTER.

MONDAY.

I first saw the light of day in Mrs. Mible's shop window. I was a very hansom fellow, with plenty of jooey jam inside me, and a thick layer of sugar over my coat. I was bigger than all the other doughnuts on the dish, and crowds of fellows paused to survey my plump figger. But noboddy bought me, because there was a grate shortage of pocket-munney at the time.

TUESDAY.

Lord Mauleverer had a remittance from his guardian, and he lounged into the tuckshop and purchased two duzen doughnuts. I happened to be one of them. Mauly was much impressed with my size and jennereel appearanse. "You are a beauty, and no mistake," he said. "I'll eat you for tea." When tea-time came, however, his lordship was asleep on the studdy sofa, and he forgot all about me. I stayed in his cubberd with my fellow doughnuts.

WEDNESDAY.

I felt a bit stale on rising this morning. When a doughnut is three days old, he begins to feel out of condition. I rather hoped that Lord Mauleverer would consume me for brekker, as I was growing tired of inactivvity. But his lordship again forgot all about me, and I stayed in the cubberd all day, abandoned and neglected.

THURSDAY.

Despair—black despair! This afternoon, Lord Mauleverer came to the cubberd and devoured one of my companions, but left me severely alone. I fancy he found my companion a bit tuff. Anyway, I heard him remark, "No more of these stale doughnuts for me!" I continued to lay in the cubberd, despised and rejected.

FRIDAY.

This is a terribly lonely life. Robinson Crusoe on his desert island couldn't have found it worse. I am now as hard as a brick, and if anyboddy wants to dissect me he'll have to get a pickaxe! Soft as a pillow on Monday—hard as a bullet on Friday. Such is life!

SATURDAY.

A welcome release! Bunter miner rolled into Lord Mauleverer's studdy when there was noboddy about, and he stole me. I was dropped into a paper bag, and stowed away in Bunter miner's pocket. He then carried me off to a lonely spot, and started to devour me. At least, he started to try! I loosened three of his teeth, and gave him a terrible time. At last, he gave me up in disgussed. "This is the hardest and tuffest doughnut I've ever sampled!" he eggscclaimed. And he hurled me into a ditch, where I shall spend the evening of my days in peace—if not in pieces!

Every reader of the GREYFRIARS HERALD can thank his lucky stars that he wasn't born a doughnut!



Tuckshop Dialogues!

By BOB CHERRY.

(Editress' Note.—I hope my readers will not take Master Cherry too seriously. There was no tuckshop at Greyfriars in the olden times, so the first dialogue, at any rate, is all wrong! Still, Master Cherry will have his little joke!)

FIRST DIALOGUE.

Which took place during the reign of Queen Anne, between Porker minor of Greyfriars and the tuckshop dame.

"HAST any tarts of jam, good dame?"
 "Yea, sire."
 "Then I would fain purchase a score of them, forsooth. Hast any nuts of dough?"
 "Yea, verily."
 "Od's bodikins! I could do with a dozen thereof! And how much dost thou want for yonder pie of rabbit?"
 "A crown-piece, sire."
 "Alack-a-day! I am stony broke!"
 "Then get thee gone, thou saucy varlet! I permit no tick in this establishment!"
 "By my halidom, but I am expecting a remittance from one of my titled relations—Lord Stoney de Broke, to wit!"
 "That tale cutteth no ice with me, Master Porker! Again I say, get thee gone!"
 "Stay, good dame! I am athirst. I would fain imbibe the juice of the lemon."
 "Thou shalt have neither food nor drink until thou showest me the colour of thy money! Thou art an impudent rascalion, and for two pence I would report thee unto thine headmaster!"
 "Nay! I implore thee to minister unto my needs—"
 "I will minister unto thee with a rolling-pin, and drive thee from my shop, if thou dost not obey my command! Begone!"
 "Woe is me! I am undone! I will get me hence; but if it should come to pass that I swoon in the Form-room owing to lack of nourishment, it will be laid at thy door! Good-morrow, cruel dame!"
 "Good riddance unto thee, Master Porker!"
 Exit Porker minor, with an aching void in his interior.

SECOND DIALOGUE.

Which took place quite recently between Tom Dutton, the deaf junior of the Remove, and Mrs. Mimble.

"GOOD-MORNING, Mrs. Mimble!"
 "Good-morning, Master Dutton!"
 "Eh? I don't want any mutton! I should go to the butcher's for that, not to the school tuckshop!"
 "Pardon me, Master Dutton, but I said nothing about meat—"
 "Eat? Of course I want something to eat! That's what I came here for! You don't suppose I came to get a haircut or to have a tooth drawn, do you?"
 "Really, Master Dutton, your deafness is provoking—"
 "Joking? I can assure you I'm doing nothing of the sort! I want something to eat, and I want it right now! What have you got?"
 "There's a jam-sponge—"
 "A damp sponge? What do I want with a damp sponge? I've already washed twice to-day!"
 "You misunderstand me, Master Dutton.

You'll hear what I'm saying presently, I hope."

"Soap? Why should I want soap?"
 "Oh dear! This is too dreadful for words! In a minute I shall howl!"
 "A towel? My hat! You'll be offering me a complete toilet outfit soon! I don't want a sponge, and I don't want any soap, and I don't want a towel, so there! I want something decent to eat!"
 "Morey! You'll be the death of me, Master Dutton! I have some nice toast—"
 "How can I eat a ghost?"
 "And there's a jam sandwich—"
 "Eh? What's wrong with my language?"
 "I can do you some grilled kippers—"
 "Don't be absurd, Mrs. Mimble! How can a fellow possibly eat slippers?"
 "And I have all sorts of fruits—"
 "Boots? Great Scott! Have pity on my digestion!"
 "Oh dear, dear, dear! This is really more than I can bear! I must ask you to leave my shop, Master Dutton! I have been shouting at you for five minutes, but I can't seem to make you understand! This deafness is not only an affliction to you, but an affliction to everybody else! If I continue to shout at you I shall burst a



"I would fain purchase a score of jam tarts, forsooth!" said Master Porker. "But I am stony broke!" "Get thee gone, thou saucy varlet!" said the good dame "I permit no tick!"

blood-vessel. It is really appalling!"
 "Bawling? There's no need to bawl, ma'am, I assure you! I can hear perfectly well if only you articulate distinctly. I'm not deaf—just a trifle hard of hearing!"
 "Ah! Here comes Master Todd with a megaphone! At last I shall be able to make myself understood!"
 Mrs. Mimble addresses Tom Dutton through the megaphone, and harmony is restored at last.

THIRD DIALOGUE.

Which takes place almost daily between Billy Bunter of Greyfriars and Mrs. Mimble.

"I SAY, Mrs. Mimble—"
 "Well, Master Bunter?"
 "How are you feeling to-day, ma'am?"
 "Not in the mood to be trifled with, Master Bunter!"
 "Oh, really, ma'am! Don't look so grim!

How much is that rabbit-pie in the window?"

"Three-and-sixpence, Master Bunter."
 "Oh, I say! That's a bit steep, isn't it?"
 "It is a reasonable charge for an excellent pie."
 "Can I sample the pie, just to see what it tastes like?"
 "Certainly not!"
 "Can I have the pie for half-a-crown, then?"
 "I refuse to make any reduction in price."
 "Well, look here, ma'am. You say the price of the pie is three-and-six. Can I pay for it at the rate of threepence a week for fourteen weeks?"
 "You can do nothing of the sort, Master Bunter!"

"You want cash down?"
 "Certainly!"
 "Ahem! That's rather unfortunate. The fact is, I'm expecting a titled order from my postal-relations—I mean, a postal-order from my titled relations. There's been a bit of a delay in the post, but as soon as the postal-order comes to hand I'll pay you for the pie."

"Utterly impossible, Master Bunter!"
 "Oh, really! Isn't there anything here that I can have on tick?"

"Nothing!"
 "Not even a bullseye?"
 "Not even a tiny cachou?"

"Well, ma'am, all I can say is this. You're as mean as they make 'em!"
 "Don't you dare to insult me, Master Bunter! Ah, here comes Master Bull! And he carries a cricket-stump in his hand! I will ask him to eject you from my premises!"
 "Oh crumbs! A thousand apologies, Mrs. Mimble! I didn't mean to be rude to you—honest Injun! Let me off this time, and don't set that hefty hooligan Bull on to me!"

"Too late! You have insulted me, and now you must take the consequences! Kindly remove this young rascal from my shop, Master Bull!"

"With pleasure, ma'am!"
 Exit Billy Bunter in a cloud of dust, with a cricket-stump singing through the air behind him!

FOURTH DIALOGUE.

Which might take place one day—and might not!

"GOOD-MORNING, Master Fish!"
 "'Morning, ma'am!"
 "Quite a crowd of young gentlemen with you this morning, Master Fish!"

"Waal, I guess it's up to me to dish out the spondulicks sometimes. Give the crowd everything they want, ma'am!"

"Goodness! Such a crowd of your Form-fellows will eat me out of house and home, Master Fish. Do you mean they are each to have, say, a couple of cakes and a bottle of ginger-beer?"

"Nope! I guess I tootled correctly in the first place. I don't care if they eat the tuckshop as well. I'm willing to pay your own price. I guess we don't study prices in Noo Yark—that's where I come from!"

"Bless my soul! I have never had the pleasure of serving your friends, Master Fish—you always look into the shop to see that there is no one else here. However, I will serve them as quickly as I can!"

"Waal—go ahead, ma'am! My treat!"
 (Oh, Master Cherry! Master Fish will be so cross when he sees this, because you know he never spends more than three-halfpence a day here!—Mrs. M.)

A Great Feast of Fun Every Week!

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The Greyfriars Parliament.



THE Speaker took the chair at eight o'clock on Monday evening, when there was a fairly large attendance, for the subject up for discussion was play-acting, and how to run a theatrical company.

Mr. Wibley, M.P., rose to make a few opening remarks. His right to inaugurate the proceedings was sharply challenged by W. G. Bunter.

The Speaker: "Mr. Bunter shall have his chance later on. It is the wish of the House to hear Mr. Wibley, a man who has done more to further theatrical enterprise than anybody at Greyfriars."

W. G. Bunter: "Wibley's no actor. I consider I ought to have first word. Who is it that figures in all the Greyfriars plays given outside Greyfriars? I ask you, who is it? Answer there is none, except that it is I, William George Bunter! They all want to see me on the boards."

The Speaker: "I have already told the member for Pufftown that his views shall be heard later on in the debate. He is, of course, entitled to his opinions, but I deprecate his argument that Greyfriars is represented solely by himself. There are others. Mr. Bunter will be so good as to permit Mr. Wibley to proceed."

The Pufftown representative resumed his place with a bad grace, and Mr. Wibley started to make his speech. There were several interruptions from Bunter, who had to be called to order several times, and threatened with expulsion.

Mr. Wibley: "It is not my intention to detain you long, but, speaking as one who has dabbled no end in theatrical ventures of one sort and another, I will say this, that there is nothing better calculated to provide amusement in the winter evenings than getting up a play. (Hear, hear!) Of course, there are lots of difficulties. Most chaps are chumps, and worse, when it comes to acting. Mr. Bunter—"

W. G. Bunter: "I am not going to sit here and be criticised!"

Several Members: "You can stand it!" (A laugh.)

Bunter: "I'm a better actor than anybody. You can't cast nasturtiums at me!"

(There were shouts of derision and a cry: "Who said it?")

Bunter: "I said it myself. I won't stand being mocked at."

The Nabob of Bhanipur: "Mr. Bunter can sitfully be resigned to it."

The Speaker: "Order, order! I must ask members to restrain themselves. The member for Pufftown will be named if he interrupts again."

Mr. Wibley: "It's just like this. You must go slow with theatrical shows. I am quite willing to admit that the member for Pufftown is good as a stunt player, but when he tried to play the part of Ophelia in 'Hamlet' he was stumped at his first wicket. He was no good at all. What I want to impress upon the House is the need for simplicity, and for getting the likeliest fellows to come forward. You want to be careful, and to play suitable pieces—pieces which do not want a lot of scenery. I tell you straight that there is far more fun to be got out of a play which has some wit in it, or tragedy, so far as that goes, and where you can get all the costumes needful out of the old clothes-basket, than some big, pretentious affair with a heap of purple robes."

"What I say is this, don't run into money. It isn't necessary. Your play doesn't go any

better. The audience would rather an actor hung a card round his neck with the words 'I am a tinker,' or a soldier, or a villain, or all three for that matter, than have a lot of expensive fuss. Look at the old burlesque, the 'Pantomime Rehearsal.' Look at 'Ici On Parle Français.' The last-named piece might suit my honourable friend, the member for Pufftown, for he landed in France during his cruise when he was in command of Sir Reginald Brooke's yacht, the Silver Scud."

Lord Mauleverer: "Bunter was no skipper, begad!"

Mr. Wibley: "I beg his lordship's pardon. I have evidently been misinformed. Mr. Bunter showed me what purported to be the log-book and general daily chronicle of the Silver Scud, from which record it was made plain that he (Bunter) was not merely in command, but that he, single-handed, arrested Gideon Gaunt, otherwise the mean catiff, Poynings."

W. G. Bunter: "I did, too."

The Speaker: "Order, order!"

Mr. Wibley: "I will continue. I should like to urge the cause of simplicity in regard to the stage settings. I have always managed to get along with very few properties. There is as much imagination at Greyfriars as there is in the rest of the world. The magic illumination of the foot-lights covers a multitude of shortcomings. You hardly need a coloured back cloth—it is as superfluous as back chat from actors. Then as to studying parts. We hear too much of chaps running in gags. Certainly that is infinitely better than stage-fright, but a fellow ought to know his part. Let us take the business seriously, or else leave it alone. I am an enthusiast for amateur theatricals. They help a chap to be self-possessed. They make him take notice of plays, and very often he would never read Shakespeare at all if he did not have to learn a few lines of the text from 'Hamlet,' say, or 'Romeo and Juliet,' and declaim it before a crowd of people. But nobody wants the whole thing rendered ridiculous by fat lumps insisting upon playing Juliet or Romeo, or the Ghost, and giving what they are pleased to call a humorous interpretation of such serious roles."

W. G. Bunter: "I never played Ophelia."

Mr. Wibley: "It is just as well. What I wished to point out is this: Any number of good shows are ruined entirely by the players not being in dead earnest. If there is a comic character in a play, let the actor work it up, let him put all he knows into the meaning of it. Then again, so many performances are wrecked by talking behind. Whispering should not be allowed. The audience is critical. Take waits, for instance. No house will stand it. Think of your audience all the time, and while you are engaged on the show live for it. That is the only way. I have played in numerous pieces, as my property-box will show, and I have nearly always been discouraged by the perfunctory work of some of the players. They were just crazy to be included in the programme, but, once there, they strutted round the stage behind the curtain, talked, insulted the stage-manager, fell foul of the prompter, and ended it all by a pitiable exhibition of nerves when the curtain went up. You may be disposed to say that my experience has been unfortunate, but I fancy many others have found the same thing."

The Speaker: "What sort of play does Mr. Wibley recommend?"

Mr. Wibley: "That depends on your

material—your possible cast. I am now looking at the amateur theatrical show as something to provide amusement—nothing very ambitious like the Westminster Play. I have played the heavy father in low comedy and the comic relief in a farce. Such pieces always tell. A shabby old tweed coat and a little make-up will always succeed. There has been some prejudice against theatrical shows because fellows start asking for subscriptions. There is no need for subscriptions. We all have old clothes. Know your lines, and if they are funny ones, and have point in them, you can go on in a turned coat and be sure of a rousing reception. But you asked me, sir, to deal with plays. I firmly believe that you cannot beat many of Mr. Frank Richards' yarns. There you have pots of fun, and, if you feel inclined, you can pick drama. There need be no difficulty about finding something suitable to act. Samuel French, 26, Southampton Street, Strand, London, sells plays of all kinds. In conclusion, I should like to say that amateur acting is the best fun out. We are not all of us going into the profession for keeps. We shall not be Macreadys or Irvings, but we can amuse crowds of people. You all know how it is during the holidays. Acting interests everybody, and if carried on in the right way you may enjoy amateur theatricals practically free of cost."

W. G. Bunter rose at once. He said: "I was hoping to hear something from Wibley about my talent. He has forgotten all I have done for the stage. Whenever I go on people roar with laughter. If I chose to leave Greyfriars this very instant there isn't a theatre manager who would not jump at me." (Laughter.)

The Speaker: "The discussion deals with the practical side of amateur theatricals. We do not wish to listen to praise of individual acting. I suggest that a cordial vote of thanks be given Mr. Wibley for his entertaining address."

This was agreed to with only one dissentient—i.e., the member for Pufftown.

Despite a vehement protest from W. G. Bunter, the House passed on to the consideration of "Wit in Amateur Magazines."

Mr. Peter Todd: "I shall only keep you a minute. I want to suggest that during the present publishing season editors of amateur magazines should make it their business to devote a few pages of their periodicals to humour—I mean natural humour—things fellows have seen during the holidays, not mere paragraphs about what Pat said to the pig, or why the old lady missed the train to Peebles. Chaps on their holidays must have seen crowds of comic incidents. Pithy descriptions of such matters are what editors want. My Uncle Benjamin—"

The speaker was not allowed to proceed owing to shouts of impatience.

Mr. Alonzo Todd: "I may say that I am not in entire agreement with my cousin. I have hopes of getting a long book I have written published. I know the world is eagerly waiting for it, but, in the main, editors are foolish folk who never see merit. They ought to be panting for such a work as mine. It is very long and extremely beautiful. I have not forgotten the Einstein theory."

The Speaker: "I hardly consider Einstein is suitable for a light and breezy amateur magazine."

The debate drifted on for half an hour, and the House nearly emptied; but rapidly filled when Bob Cherry was on his feet with a reference to football as a spectacle.

Join To-day—and send in your "Speech."

THE FOOTBALLERS' FOE!

(Continued from page 8.)

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Scratched!

"CHERRY!" Wingate of the Sixth stood at the door of the prefects' room at Greyfriars and called. Bob Cherry was passing along the passage, and he stopped at once.

"Yes, Wingate." "Young Courtenay's rung up from Highcliffe on the telephone," said Wingate. "As it's something about your match to-morrow, I've told him he can speak to Wharton. Send Wharton here at once, will you?"

"Right-ho!" said Bob. He scudded away to Study No. 1 in the Remove, where he found Wharton and Nugent at tea.

"Wanted on the phone," said Bob. "It's Courtenay. Wingate says you can take the call."

"Something about the match," said Harry. "Right-ho!"

He hurried downstairs. Bob Cherry went with him. There was a second receiver on the telephone, and Bob wanted to hear what the Highcliffe junior skipper had to say.

Wharton was very quickly at the telephone, and he picked up one receiver, Bob taking the other. Wharton spoke into the transmitter.

"Hallo! Is that you, Courtenay?"

"Yes. Is that Wharton?"

"Little me," said Harry. "What's on?"

"It's about the match," came Courtenay's voice. Harry Wharton had no doubt about that voice; he knew it well enough.

"Go ahead!" said the captain of the Remove cheerily.

"The match ought to have taken place last Saturday."

"Eh! Yes," said Harry, a little surprised. "It was put off till Wednesday. You agreed to that when I asked you last week."

"That's so; but you did not give any special reason, and the fact is, some of my men have got their backs up about it."

"Oh!" said Harry.

"If there'd been a good reason, like illness, or anything of that sort, it would have been different. But I've had to tell the fellows that it was just a caprice on your part—"

"It wasn't exactly that," said Wharton, a little nettled. "We had a good reason for postponing the match, and I asked your consent."

"Yes, yes; I know. That's all very well; but the Caterpillar was going home to see his people on Wednesday, and he doesn't see why he should put it off."

"It's rather late in the day to tell me that," said Wharton, while Bob Cherry frowned. "Do you mean to say that you don't want to play the match?"

"It isn't what I want; but several of the fellows had engagements for the half-holiday, and they've been ragging me about it. Don't blame me, Wharton. I told them plainly that I'd agreed to postponing the match till Wednesday, and that I'd do as I jolly well chose."

"Oh!" said Harry.

"To cut it short, there's been a row," went on the voice from Highcliffe.

"Smithson said that if you postponed the match without a good reason, we could postpone it, too."

"Well, I shouldn't mind. We shouldn't object."

"Let me finish. I told the fellows plainly that we'd play the match on Wednesday, as arranged, or else not at all. And seven members of the team refused to play if I did. I'm sticking to what I said. I can't give in."

"Oh!" said Wharton again.

"It's awkward, I know," went on the voice. "I hope the fellows will come round. Could you keep the afternoon open for us? If the fellows come round, I'll bring over my team as arranged. If they don't, the match is off."

Wharton frowned.

He was very friendly with Courtenay, but there was a limit to the concessions that could be made.

"Well, that's a bit awkward," he said. "I can't ask eleven fellows to stand about all the afternoon, kicking their heels, on the chance that a team may turn up to play us."

"I should jolly well think not!" breathed Bob Cherry.

"I suppose it's asking a lot," went on the voice from Highcliffe. "But that's the best I can offer. I don't want to scratch the match, as you fellows are so keen on it."

"I don't know that we're specially keen on it," said Wharton, his temper beginning to rise. "It's a regular fixture we're ready to play. That's all."

"Quite all!" grunted Bob Cherry.

"I hope you're not getting ratty, Wharton. That's no use."

"I'm not ratty, but—"

"You must admit that it was really your fault, postponing the match in the first place without a good reason. It wasn't quite sportsmanlike, was it?"

"Oh! Wasn't it?" gasped Wharton.

"Well, some of the fellows here are saying so."

"They can say what they like!" breathed Wharton, his eyes gleaming over the transmitter. "I asked you as a favour to postpone the match, and you agreed at once. Nothing unsportsmanlike in that, that I can see. As for kicking our heels on Wednesday afternoon, waiting for you, without knowing whether you'll turn up or not, that's out of the question."

"I'm sorry! The only alternative is to scratch."

"Scratch, then!" snapped Wharton.

"Look here, Wharton, if you want to quarrel—"

"I don't care a rap whether we quarrel or not!"

"That's enough! The match is off, then."

"Quite off!" rapped out Wharton; "and I can't say I'm sorry to have done with Highcliffe, either."

"I'd better say out plainly, Wharton, that if this match is scratched in this way I shall have to consider pretty seriously about keeping on the fixture at all."

"That's easily settled. Scratch it for good."

"Do you mean that?"

"Yes, I do!"

"That's enough, then!"

Wharton put up the receiver with a crimson face. Bob Cherry followed his example.

"Well, my hat!" said Bob, with a deep breath. "I'd never have expected that of Courtenay!"

"Nor I," said Harry. "Why, it's utterly rotten! He agreed at once when I asked him to put the match off till Wednesday. He said plainly that it made no difference whatever. It's simply caddish to take this line now."

"I should jolly well think so!"

The two juniors left the prefects' room, both of them angry and excited. In a few minutes the Remove football eleven were acquainted with the new state of affairs.

There were angry exclamations on all sides.

Only Vernon-Smith looked very thoughtful.

"You're sure it was Courtenay speaking on the telephone, Wharton?" he asked.

"Eh? Yes. Of course!"

"Tricks have been played on the telephone before now," said the Bounder sagely.

"This wasn't a trick. I knew his voice. Bob heard him too."

"Well, if you're sure—"

"Quite sure."

"Then the fellow's a cad, and the less we have to do with him in the future the better."

"Yes, rather!" said Peter Todd.

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

There was not a dissentient voice. The Highcliffe fixture was scratched by common consent; and that evening the Famous Five made quite other arrangements for the half-holiday on the morrow. They were discussing their plans in Study No. 1 when a fat face, adorned by a large pair of spectacles, looked in.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Roll away, Tubby!" said Wharton crossly.

"Have you decided whether you're going to play me to-morrow, Wharton?" inquired Bunter, with a grin.

"Fathead! The match isn't coming off, after all, as it happens."

"Postponing it again!" ejaculated Bunter.

"It's off for good."

"He, he, he!"

"Oh, kick him out!" exclaimed Nugent.

Billy Bunter retired before he could be kicked out. He rolled away down the Remove passage with a fat grin on his face. At prep that evening, in Study No. 7, Billy Bunter surprised Toddy by bursting into frequent unmusical cachinnations, as if he were enjoying some mysterious joke known only to himself.

"Serves him right!" Bunter remarked.



NEXT MONDAY:

"LODER'S LONG TRAIL!"

A SPLENDID STORY OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS. BY FRANK RICHARDS.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 765.

presently, apropos, apparently, of nothing.
 "Eh? What? Who?" asked Peter.
 "He shouldn't have refused to play me, should he?"
 "What are you driving at, fatty?"
 "Oh, nothing!"
 And Bunter said no more; but at intervals, until bedtime, his unmusical cachinnation was heard.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Scratched Again!

"WHAT a happy family!"
 The Caterpillar was sauntering in the Highcliffe quad, in the interval between the close of lessons and dinner, with Frank Courtenay. Courtenay was talking, on the subject of the afternoon's match. He was not absolutely certain whether he ought to play Smithson in goal, or Benson, and he had asked De Courcy his opinion.

De Courcy's answer had no reference to the question of goalkeeper. The Caterpillar was glancing towards Ponsonby & Co., who were walking in the quad in a merry crowd. Undoubtedly Pon & Co. looked very cheery and contented.

"Eh? What?" said Courtenay. "I was asking you—" He paused, and followed the Caterpillar's glance. "What, bothering again about Pon, Rupert? He seems to interest you a lot."

"He's an interestin' chap," said the Caterpillar gravely. "I've often wondered how Pon will end—whether he'll be hanged, Franky, or only sent to choky when he grows up. Which do you think is the more likely of the two?"

"Hallo! Talkin' about me?" asked Ponsonby, coming by with his friends. The Caterpillar nodded.

"Somethin' nice, I hope?" asked Pon, with a sneer.

"I was just askin' Franky whether you were more likely to be hanged—"

"What?"

"Or only sent to choky, when you grow up, Pon. What's your opinion?"

"You silly ass!" roared Ponsonby.

"If I were a bettin' chap, as I used to be in my bad old days," said the Caterpillar. "I'd put two to one on choky. You'd have to do somethin' risky to get hanged, Pon, an' you'd never do that, would you?"

"Go and eat coke!" snapped Ponsonby savagely, and he walked on with his nutty friends, who were all grinning.

The Caterpillar sighed.

"Now, dear old Pon's got his rag out because a chap asked him a civil question," he said. "And I haven't learned yet why he had Bunter to tea yesterday."

"What does it matter?"

"Nothin' at all. What does anythin' matter?" yawned the Caterpillar. "You were askin' me somethin', weren't you, Franky, about Smithson as wicket-keeper—"

"What?"

"I mean as goalkeeper," said the Caterpillar hastily. "I—I say, Franky, I'm lookin' forward to the match no end."

"Are you?" said Courtenay, a little doubtfully.

"Yeearnin' for it," said the Caterpillar. "I wish the kick-off was sooner than three o'clock."

"Honest Injun?" asked Courtenay.

"Yaas. Sooner it begins, sooner it'll finish. I—I mean— Hallo, here's jolly old Mobby!"

Mr. Mobbs looked out of the School House doorway, and beckoned to the captain of the Fourth. Courtenay hurried up, the Caterpillar following him more slowly.

"You are asked for on my telephone, Courtenay," said Mr. Mobbs. "Wharton is speaking from Greyfriars." He pursed his lips. "As Master Wharton says he wishes to speak concerning a football match to take place this afternoon, I have told him that you may take the call."

"Thank you, sir!" said Courtenay.

"Not at all," said Mr. Mobbs graciously.

Courtenay went into the House, to Mr. Mobbs' study. The receiver was standing beside the telephone, and the captain of the Highcliffe Fourth picked it up.

"Hallo! That you, Wharton?" he asked cheerily.

"Yes. Wharton speaking," came the familiar tones of the captain of the Remove.

"Go ahead!"

"About the match this afternoon, Courtenay. We've had to postpone it once already—"

"You don't want to postpone it again, surely?" asked the Highcliffe junior.

"That's exactly what I do want."

Courtenay frowned a little.

"It's been put off once," he said. "It's rather awkward, Wharton. This is rather late to tell me, isn't it?"

"I'm afraid so, but there's no help for it," said the voice from Greyfriars.

"Nobody ill, I hope?" asked Courtenay.

"Oh, no!"

"Is anything the matter?"

"Not that I know of."

Courtenay compressed his lips. He was a good-tempered and patient fellow, but he did not like being treated in this cavalier way.

"You don't mean to tell me that you want the match put off for no especial reason?" he asked.

"Well, some of us have arranged for a bike-spin this afternoon, as the weather's so good," said the Greyfriars voice. "We're going on a run, and dropping in for tea at Cliff House. That's how it is. I hope you don't mind."

"Really, Wharton, do you think that's a sufficient reason for putting off a football match at the last minute?"

Courtenay still spoke patiently, though his eyes were beginning to gleam. But for the fact that he recognised Wharton's voice—or believed that he did—he would have fancied that somebody was attempting to trick him over the wires. It was utterly unlike Harry Wharton to treat anyone like this—so far as Courtenay knew him, at all events. And he had thought that he knew Wharton pretty well.

"Well, you see, we don't want to play this afternoon," said the voice from Greyfriars. "We've got the St. Jude's match on Saturday, so we couldn't go over to Cliff House then. It's to-day or never!"

"Then the match couldn't be played this week at all?"

"Well, no. We could find a vacant date later."

"I hardly think that's good enough, Wharton," said Frank Courtenay very quietly. "This is not exactly what I expected of you, I am bound to say."

"Sorry! I know it's rather awkward, but I really think it was a bit of a mistake on our part renewing the Highcliffe fixture at all after it had once fallen through. You see, most of our

dates are full up, and it rather rushes us."

"Oh!" exclaimed Courtenay.

"No offence, of course," went on the Greyfriars voice. "I'm just saying how the matter stands. As we renewed the fixture to please you, Courtenay, I think you might give us a little rope. That's what I mean. We'll give you a date as soon as we can fix one. Isn't that good enough?"

"No," said Courtenay very quietly, "that is not good enough, Wharton."

"Then I don't see what's to be done."

"That's quite easy. Scratch the match," said the Highcliffe junior, his voice trembling with suppressed anger.

"Of course we could do that. But I don't want you fellows to think that we've thrown you over."

"You needn't trouble about that. You will not see us at Greyfriars this afternoon, anyhow," said Courtenay, "or at any other time either, for that matter. I'm surprised at your treating me like this, Harry Wharton, but I shall not give you a chance to do so again. Good-bye!"

Courtenay rang off, and left Mr. Mobbs' study with a heightened colour.

The dinner-bell rang as he came into the corridor, and the Caterpillar joined him, and walked with him to the dining-hall.

De Courcy eyed his chum rather curiously.

"Nothin' wrong about the match, Franky?" he asked.

Courtenay forced a smile.

"Good news for you, Rupert. You won't have to exert yourself this afternoon."

"How's that?"

"The match is off."

"Oh gad! You don't mean to say that Wharton's scratched?"

"Yes."

"My only hat!"

And the Caterpillar sat down to dinner in great astonishment.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Caterpillar is Not Satisfied!

"ROTTEN!"

"The cheeky cad!"

"Greyfriars swank!"

"We'll jolly well give them a miss after this!"

"You bet!"

There were a good many angry exclamations among the Highcliffe footballers when Frank Courtenay explained the situation after dinner. Every member of the Highcliffe junior eleven was excited and angry, with the exception of the Caterpillar, whose philosophic calm remained unruffled.

Courtenay's face was dark. He was troubled as well as angry.

It had been a triumph to Frank Courtenay to renew the fixture with Greyfriars, which had been dropped at the time when Ponsonby was junior captain. Pon's foul play had "fed up" the Greyfriars juniors, and they had cut the fixture. It was their friendship with Courtenay that had caused it to be renewed. Courtenay had believed that Harry Wharton & Co. were as keen on the match as he himself was. The enlightenment he had received on the telephone wires had been painful and humiliating. His cheeks flushed as he recalled what had been said to him.

"Well, that fixture's off," said Benson. "I shouldn't care to renew it after this."

Courtenay shook his head.

"Never!" he said curtly.
 "It's rotten, though," said Smithson rather dismally. "We've been looking forward to the game. We've got a blank afternoon now."

"We can fix up a practice match," said Courtenay, as cheerfully as he could. "I'd rather rag those Greyfriars cads," said Benson savagely. "They're utter ratters to let us down like this."

Courtenay walked away without replying. He was deeply wounded, and he could hardly help showing it. The talk on the telephone had cut him to the quick.

He passed Ponsonby in the quad, and Pon called to him.

"What time kick-off, Courtenay? We're comin' down to give you a cheer, you know."

"The match is off," answered Courtenay, with a visible effort. He hated having to tell Ponsonby; well he knew how the cad of Highcliffe would rejoice in trouble between him and his friends at Greyfriars.

Cecil Ponsonby raised his eyebrows.

"Off!" he repeated.

"Yes," answered Courtenay, and he turned away.

"Hold on a minute!" said Ponsonby. "I don't quite catch on. Have Greyfriars postponed again?"

"Cheek, I call it, if they have!" said Gadsby.

"The fixture's dropped, if you want to know," said Courtenay. "We sha'n't be playing Greyfriars again—not so long as I'm captain, at all events."

And he walked away with the Caterpillar, who was silent, but whose sleepy eyes rested very keenly and curiously on Pon & Co. As soon as their backs were turned, the Highcliffe nuts exchanged a beatific grin.

"Worked like a charm, begad!" murmured Ponsonby. "That fat scoundrel Bunter is worth his weight in gold."

And the nuts chuckled joyously.

"We've got to pay the piper, though, in havin' that podgy beast landed on us on Saturday in the car," said Monson.

Ponsonby laughed contemptuously.

"No fear!" he answered. "I was pullin' the fat fool's leg. He can roll over here on Saturday, if he likes; he'll find us gone."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I say, won't he give the show away if he finds that he's been diddled?" asked Vavasour.

"If he does, I fancy the Remove fellows will skin him—an' I know Courtenay would," said Ponsonby coolly. "I fancy Bunter's got too much regard for his fat hide to tell either party that he's dished them over a football match."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Safe as houses!" said Gadsby. "I say, Courtenay was lookin' awfully down in the mouth. It's rather a shame."

"Oh, cut that out!" sneered Ponsonby. "Now, then, who's for a game of banker?"

"Hear, hear!"

Ponsonby & Co. proceeded to Pon's study to enjoy banker and cigarettes—one of their pleasant little ways. Ponsonby was looking in high feather. Again and again he had striven to break up the friendship between his rival at Highcliffe and his old foe at Greyfriars, and luck had never come his way. Now he had succeeded, by making use of Billy Bunter, with almost ridiculous ease.

Cecil Ponsonby felt that he had reason



"I'm going to show these chaps some ventriloquism after tea," explained Bunter. "My wonderful gift, you know. Eh? All right—I'm coming, Pon, old chap!" Bunter had to come, for Ponsonby grabbed his fat arm, and fairly jerked him into the study. (See Chapter 3.)

to be satisfied with himself, and with things generally; and he smiled as he lighted his cigarette and blew out a cloud of smoke.

Meanwhile, Courtenay was feeling anything but cheerful. He had been looking forward keenly to the football match, and the scratching was a disappointment; but worse than that was the break with his friends at Greyfriars. And the worst of that was the feeling that he had been deceived in them, otherwise the break could not have occurred in such a way.

"Well, I'd better telephone about the brake," he said, after a long silence.

"What's that?" asked the Caterpillar.

"We sha'n't want the brake as we're not going over to Greyfriars," said Courtenay.

"N-n-no!" said De Courcy slowly.

He eyed his chum curiously.

"This is a jolly queer bizney, Franky," he said.

"Yes; and rotten!"

"Do you think that Pon is a prophet?" asked the Caterpillar.

Courtenay started, and stared at him.

"What do you mean, Rupert?"

"Why, old duck, you know that nothin' could have pleased dear old Pon so much as a row between us and Greyfriars," drawled the Caterpillar. "And Pon has been lookin' so pleased to-day—an' the other merry nuts, too. Pon must have a prophetic gift—must have known that this was goin' to happen, by gad, an' was happy in advance."

Courtenay smiled faintly.

"Ponsonby has nothing to do with this, Caterpillar. Wharton himself spoke to me."

"Sure it was his voice?"

"Quite!"

The Caterpillar was silent for some minutes.

"Didn't I tell you yesterday how little things please little minds," he murmured. "I was wonderin' why Pon had that fat duffer Bunter to tea. Wonderin' like anything'."

"What has that to do with it?"

"Blessed if I know," said the Caterpillar frankly. "Only that Pon wanted an ally at Greyfriars, for some reason; and for that giddy reason took the trouble to butter up Bunter. It's a merry coincidence that it happened just about this time—when Wharton makes up his mind to scratch the match in an insultin' way. I hate such coincidences. It looks to me as if there's more in them than meets the eye. Somebody has been makin' mischief, Franky."

Courtenay shook his head.

"There's no room for that, Caterpillar. Wharton had nothing to complain of. He just scratched in an off-hand, insulting way, as if he was dealing with fellows who could be treated anyhow." Courtenay's eyes burned.

"Then you don't feel inclined to bike over to Greyfriars and see the chap?"

"What? After what he's said! Certainly not!"

"Not even if mischief has been made somehow?"

"Wharton could have told me, if he had anything to complain of. It was not that—nothing of the kind."

The Caterpillar nodded slowly.

"Dear old Franky," he said, "there's more in this than meets the eye. Coincidences ought not to happen

in this disquietin' way. You're too proud to speak a word to Wharton after this, I suppose?"

"I hope so!" said Courtenay, frowning.

"Exactly! Now, I'm not proud," said the Caterpillar urbanely. "I'm goin' to take a run on my bike, Franky."

"Not to Greyfriars?"

"Yaas!"

"Nonsense, Caterpillar!" exclaimed Courtenay, almost angrily. "It's—it's humiliating. Really, old fellow—"

"Dear old man, I'm not askin' you to put your pride in your pocket. Besides, I'm goin' on the jolly old warpath. If Wharton can explain, you'd like to hear it."

"Yes; but—"

"And if he can't, you'd like me to punch his nose?"

"No, no, no!"

"Well, I won't then," said the Caterpillar. "But I'm goin' over. I'm not satisfied, Franky. Pon's giddy glee was too prophetic. I'm not satisfied, an' I'm goin' to be satisfied. If Elijah's mantle has fallen on Pon, enablin' him to chuckle in advance over good things, it's all right. But if it hasn't, Franky, this wants lookin' into, and I'm the innocent infant that's goin' to look into it."

"I wish you wouldn't go, Caterpillar!" exclaimed Courtenay.

"For the first time in my life, Franky, I'm going to refuse a request from my guide, philosopher, an' friend," said the Caterpillar. "Ta-ta, old bean!"

And a few minutes later Courtenay, with a black brow, watched the Caterpillar wheeling out his bike—for the first time angry with his chum.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Caterpillar Looks In!

"WELL, what about this giddy afternoon?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Fine afternoon for biking!" said Nugent.

"We could fix up a football match," said Wharton. "It's rotten to be left in the lurch at the last minute. We could fix up a match with the Fourth."

"We could drop in to tea at Cliff House!" murmured Bob. "Hazel can come with us, and I'm sure Marjorie would be pleased to see us."

"What about a rag on Highcliffe?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Oh, blow Highcliffe! I'm fed up with Highcliffe!"

"They all seem to be birds of a feather, after all," said Frank Nugent. "I'm surprised at Courtenay acting like this."

"Just what we might have expected of Pon; but it is a surprise from Courtenay," said Wharton. "Anyhow, that's off! Now, what's it going to be for the half-holiday—footer or bikes?"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Bob Cherry uttered that exclamation in tones of surprise. He was staring towards the gates.

The elegant figure of Rupert de Courcy appeared there. The Famous Five stared at him in amazement. After the supposed message from Frank Courtenay on the telephone the day before, they certainly had not expected a visit from Courtenay's best chum.

The Caterpillar left his bike at Gosling's lodge and strolled into the quadrangle. A good many Removites in the quad gave him rather dark looks.

The Caterpillar did not fail to observe that circumstance, but he sauntered on

carelessly and easily towards the School House.

"Shall we bump the cheeky rotter?" muttered Johnny Bull.

"No, no!" exclaimed Wharton. "De Courcy had nothing to do with Courtenay's talking to me—probably never had a hand in it. He's a decent chap."

"We thought Courtenay was a decent chap."

"Anyhow, keep the peace," said Harry. "No need to speak to the fellow, if you come to that."

But there was need to speak to the Caterpillar; for as he spotted the Famous Five in a group by the School House steps he bore down on them at once. Billy Bunter rolled hastily in his way with a bright and beaming smile. Bunter was glad to see the Caterpillar in the Greyfriars quad. Bunter was booked for tea with Ponsonby & Co. that afternoon; but tea-time was as yet afar off, and Bunter had room for a series of substantial snacks before tea—if the little difficulty of want of cash could be overcome.

"Jolly glad to see you, old top!" said Bunter affably. "I'll walk back to Highcliffe with you if you like."

"Dear old fat bean!" said the Caterpillar. "I wouldn't give you the trouble for worlds!"

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"No trouble at all, old chap; I'm going there, you know. Pon's asked me to tea."

The Caterpillar looked at him oddly.

"Again?" he murmured. "Dear old Bunter, what a fascinatin' chap you are! Pon doesn't seem to be able to live without you, these days."

Bunter grinned complacently.

"I'm going on a motor run with Pon on Saturday, too!" he said. "Look here, De Courcy, if you like I'll put in a word for you, and you can come, too. Pon will do anything for a friend of mine."

"You're awfully good, Bunter!"

"Well, we're pals, ain't we?" said Bunter.

"Are we, by gad?"

"Yes, old chap. I say, De Courcy," said Bunter confidentially. "I've been disappointed about a postal-order—"

"You don't say so?"

"I do, really! I suppose you couldn't lend me the ten bob—"

"Your perspicacity does your credit, Bunter!" said the Caterpillar gravely.

"I couldn't!"

And he walked on, leaving Billy Bunter blinking.

The Famous Five gave De Courcy rather grim looks as he came up to them. But the Caterpillar, urbane as usual, did not seem to observe it.

"Surprised to see me—what?" he asked amiably.

"Well, yes, a little, in the circumstances," said Wharton. "You're welcome, though."

"Thanks!"

"That's right enough!" said Bob Cherry. "We don't blame you, De Courcy!"

"You're very good!" said the Caterpillar, eyeing Bob very oddly. "May I ask what you don't blame me for?"

"Well, I suppose you know how matters stand?"

The Caterpillar shook his head.

"That's just what I don't know," he answered gently. "I've taken the terrific trouble of biken' over here to learn how they stand. That's how it is."

Bob Cherry whistled.

"My hat! Do you mean to say that Courtenay acted quite on his own, without telling the rest of the team?"

"Dashed if it doesn't look like it!" said Wharton, in wonder. "To be quite plain, De Courcy, has Courtenay told you he's scratched the match?"

The Caterpillar fairly jumped.

He had had a vague sense that something was wrong—that somehow, he could not tell how, Pon was at the bottom of the trouble that evidently had arisen. Vaguely he had suspected that Pon's sudden friendship for Bunter had something to do with it. Pon had a motive in that—and the motive was unknown; and it was a coincidence, at least, that this queer trouble had arisen at the same time. Somehow Wharton had been influenced into insulting Courtenay on the telephone—that was as far as the Caterpillar's suspicions went—and if Wharton had been deceived he could be pardoned when explanations were made. That was how the Caterpillar had looked at it.

But Wharton's words almost dumfounded him.

He realised at once that he was in deeper water than he had supposed.

"Franky scratched the match!" said the Caterpillar, with a deep breath.

"You're not wanderin' in your mind, by any chance, Wharton?"

"What the thump do you mean?" demanded the captain of the Remove.

"Hasn't Courtenay told you?"

"Hardly!"

"What a rotten trick!" said Bob indignantly. "Is he letting the Highcliffe chaps suppose that it's our fault the match is off?"

"The Highcliffe chaps certainly suppose that," agreed the Caterpillar.

"Then Courtenay is a—"

"Hold on a minute!" said the Caterpillar urbanely. "If you say anythin' against my pal Franky I shall be bound to dot you on the nose, an' that would interrupt the merry explanation we're gettin' at so nicely. Let's preserve the beautiful politeness of our best polished manners while we get at the jolly old facts—what?"

Bob Cherry laughed.

"I don't want to say anything against your pal," he said. "If you think what he's done is playing the game, you're welcome to your opinion."

"Wharton says that Franky scratched the match," said the Caterpillar. "Now, as Franky is feelin' at this merry moment an extremely injured party, because Wharton has scratched the match, it's pretty clear that there's somethin' wrong somewhere. Somethin' rotten in the state of Denmark, as jolly old Shakespeare would say."

"Well, I suppose it could be said that I scratched," said Wharton. "But it comes to the same thing—I couldn't do anything else after what Courtenay said to me on the telephone."

"On the telephone?" repeated the Caterpillar, with a start. "Great invention, the telephone. No end of spoofin' can be done on that jolly old instrument. It looks to me as if some merry misapprehension cropped up while you were talkin' to Franky on the telephone. Certainly right up to midday to-day Franky supposed that we were comin' over here to play."

Wharton stared.
"You're dreamin'!" he said.
"I had an impression that I was wide awake," remarked the Caterpillar. "My mistake, perhaps."

"It was yesterday afternoon that Courtenay telephoned me, and put matters in such a way that the match had to be dropped," said Wharton. "I can hardly say whether he scratched or I scratched, but it comes to the same thing. He wanted the match off, and I did not need telling twice."

"Proud as Punch—what?" smiled the Caterpillar. "Same with Franky. He was near to punchin' his old pal for coming over here this afternoon for an explanation. You say Franky telephoned you yesterday afternoon. I can answer for it that he didn't."

"What!" ejaculated the Famous Five, in astonishment.

"You see, I honoured Franky with my company after lessons, right up to evenin' prep!" yawned the Caterpillar. "He couldn't have used the phone without my knowin' it. An' I know he didn't."

"My only hat!"

There was a long silence.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Light at Last!

THE Caterpillar smiled benignantly. The Famous Five were staring at him in blank astonishment.

"Got that?" asked the Caterpillar pleasantly. "Now, after hearin' that Franky telephoned to you yesterday—when he didn't—I shall not be surprised to hear that you didn't telephone to him to-day—when you did. Sounds like a jolly old riddle, doesn't it?"

"What do you mean?" said Harry. "I haven't telephoned to anyone to-day."

"Not to Highcliffe?"

"Certainly not!"

"Scratchin' the match?"

"What? What on earth—?"

The Caterpillar laughed softly.

"Franky didn't telephone to you yesterday," he said, "and you didn't telephone to him to-day. Now we want to find the merry third party who telephoned on both occasions, first to set you against Franky, and then to set Franky against you."

"But—but—" said Wharton blankly.

"It was Courtenay!" said Bob decidedly. "I was at the phone, too, and I know his voice well enough."

"Franky knows your voice, Wharton, and he's convinced that you phoned him to-day just before dinner, scratching the match."

"I did not!" roared Wharton.

"Calmly, old bean—calmly. I know you didn't, as you say so. And you know Franky didn't, as I say so. There's a wonderful merchant somewhere with a gift for imitatin' voices, and he's done the jolly old trick, an' we've got to find him."

"Great Scott!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Tricked!" said Wharton blankly.

"But—but I knew his voice! If I hadn't known his voice, I should have

thought it was some dirty trick of Ponsonby's. But I knew it—"

"He knew yours to-day!" said the Caterpillar. "He was called into Mobby's study to answer the phone just before dinner, and he came out awfully knocked over."

Bob Cherry drew a deep breath.

"My hat!" he said, "If it's a trick at both ends—"

"That's just what it is; and we want to find a merchant who can imitate another chap's voice—"

"Imitate a voice!" repeated Wharton dazedly. "Bunter! Billy Bunter, you know; he's the only chap who can do that kind of thing."

"Bunter!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"That fat villain!"

The Caterpillar smiled.

"Dear old Bunter was at Highcliffe yesterday," he said. "Pon was makin' much of him. I wondered why. I figured it out that Pon and Bunter were mixed up in this somehow. So Bunter's got that weird and wonderful gift, has he? I remember he said he'd come over to show Pon & Co. some of his giddy ventriloquism."

Wharton's face was dark with rage.

He understood now.

He understood why Ponsonby had come to Greyfriars the previous day. Pon's remark about Skinner had been to mislead the Famous Five, not that they were likely to suspect his rascality. It was Bunter he had come to see—with this intention.

"We'll have the truth out of the fat villain!" gasped Wharton. "Come with me, you fellows!"

The Famous Five and the Caterpillar bore down on Billy Bunter, who was

standing outside the school shop, eyeing the good things there with a hungry and greedy eye.

"Bunter!" panted Wharton.

The Owl of the Remove blinked round.

"I say, you fellows," he began hopefully. "I've been disappointed about a postal-order. Could you— Here, leggo! Wharrer you up to? Leggo my collar, Wharton! Yo-ow-ow!"

"You fat rotter!" panted Wharton. "Did you telephone to Courtenay at Highcliffe to-day, and imitate my voice?"

Bunter jumped.

"Eh? Certainly not!"

"Did you telephone to me from Highcliffe yesterday, imitating Courtenay's voice?" hissed the captain of the Remove.

"Nothing of the sort! I wasn't at Highcliffe yesterday."

"Dear man!" murmured the Caterpillar.

"De Courcy saw you there!" shouted Johnny Bull.

"I—I mean, I was there! I went to tea with my old pal Ponsonby," said Bunter. "I gave them some ventriloquism. Some fellows know how to appreciate a fellow's wonderful gifts."

"And you telephoned—"

"Certainly not! I never went near Mobby's telephone."

"Yaas, that's the one they'd use," said the Caterpillar, with a nod. "Mobby was out yesterday afternoon."

"And I suppose he used the prefects' telephone here?" said Johnny Bull. "There'd be no one in the room just before dinner."

"I didn't!" howled Bunter. "I—I



The Caterpillar, who looked like anything but a slacker at that moment, came on the ball with a lightning spring, and drove it into the goalmouth again with a shot that beat even Squiff. There was a gasp from the Highcliffians. "Goal!" (See Chapter 10.)

don't know how to use a telephone. Besides, it was all Wharton's fault!"

"What?"

"You left me out of the team," said Bunter. "Ponsonby said it would serve you right, for leaving out your best man out of sheer jealousy. Pon knows a fellow's value."

"So you played this dirty trick for that reason, you fat idiot?"

"Certainly not! I never played a trick at all," said Bunter. "Don't I keep on telling you that I don't know anything about it? I never was in the prefects' room just before dinner to-day. You can ask Loder of the Sixth. He came in while I was there."

"What?" gasped Wharton.

"If you think that Loder saw me at the phone, and told me to clear off, and gave me fifty lines, you're making a mistake," said Bunter, blinking at the Famous Five with owlish seriousness. "I can give you my word of honour that nothing of the kind occurred!"

"Well, my only hat!" said Bob Cherry.

"What is that chap doin' outside a museum?" asked the Caterpillar, addressing space.

"As for telephoning from Highcliffe on Mobby's telephone," said Bunter, "I didn't! Besides, it was impossible! Mr. Mobbs was there all the time; sitting at his desk, you know."

"You fat rascal—"

"I hope you're satisfied now, Wharton. Especially as it's all your own fault!" said Bunter warmly.

"Oh, gad!" said the Caterpillar.

"As for De Courcy, he knows nothing at all about it," said Bunter. "He was in his study when I went downstairs with Pon. Gaddy scouted to see."

"It's clear enough!" said Harry Wharton, with a deep breath.

"I'm glad you're satisfied," said Bunter, with dignity. "I must say that this suspiciousness is rather low, Wharton! After this, the least you can do is to lend me ten bob till my postal-order comes."

Wharton turned to the Caterpillar.

"Get back on your bike, and tell Courtney how the matter stands," he said. "We've both been taken in. But Pon's worse than this fat fool. He put Bunter up to it, and arranged the whole thing. Bunter hasn't brains enough to think of such a thing himself."

"That's clear enough," assented the Caterpillar.

"Oh, is it?" exclaimed Bunter warmly. "I can jolly well tell you that it was my idea from start to finish. Even Pon admitted that. I—I—I mean—"

"You can leave Pon to Franky and little me," drawled the Caterpillar. "I'll leave Bunter to you. Expect us at three."

"Right-ho!"

The Caterpillar walked away to the gates with a cheery smile on his face. Bunter blinked at the Famous Five.

"Now, about that ten bob," he began. "Here, I say, you fellows— Yaroooh! Wharrer you up to? Yooop! Oh crumbs!"

It seemed to the Owl of the Remove that a cyclone had struck him, as the indignant juniors laid hands upon his fat person.

The fact that Billy Bunter was more fool than rogue made the Remove fellows "go easy" with him, as a rule. But there was a limit, and on this occasion Bunter had far exceeded it. It was necessary to impress upon Bunter's fat

mind that it would be judicious to keep on the safe side of the limit.

Which the Famous Five proceeded to do.

"Yooop! Help! Fire!" roared Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I didn't do it! Besides, Pon put me up to it! Yow-ow-ow! Help! I say, old chaps, that awful cad Pon stood at my elbow all the time, you know, telling me what to say. Yooop! It was only a lark! Help! And—and I was going to tell you, too. And I don't know anything—yaroooh!—about it! Oh, crumbs!"

Billy Bunter was reposing on the cold, unsympathetic earth when the chums of the Remove left him, in a sad and parlous state. He felt as if he had been under a runaway motor-car, and for a good ten minutes he sprawled and gasped, and gasped and sprawled, wondering whether he was still all in one piece.

When he crawled away at last, dolafully and dismally, he felt that the life of a really clever ventriloquist was not worth living.

Harry Wharton & Co., having finished with Bunter, proceeded to acquaint the Removites with the state of affairs, and the Remove eleven prepared for the match, which was coming off, after all. Wharton explained that Bunter had been punished; but most of the eleven thought that he could do with a little more, and they looked for Bunter to give him some more. The hapless Owl of the Remove locked himself in Study No. 1, and, while he gasped and groaned in the armchair, he listened to bloodcurdling threats breathed through the keyhole. It was not William George Bunter's happy day.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Highcliffe Match!

"PONSONBY—you cad!"

Frank Courtenay hurled open the door of Ponsonby's study, and strode in, with blazing eyes.

Ponsonby & Co. were deep in the delights of banter and smokes. They jumped up in alarm as the captain of the Fourth strode in.

Ponsonby, with a cigarette in his mouth and cards in his hand, stared at Courtenay in angry surprise and alarm.

The other members of the merry party exchanged alarmed glances. There was no doubting that Courtenay—usually so quiet and self-controlled—was in a towering rage, and on the war-path. And it came into the minds of the nutty company that Pon's trick, cunning as it was, had somehow failed, after all, and that the facts had come to light. Ponsonby realised it, and his face paled a little. But he was quite cool.

"Hallo! Don't stand on ceremony!" he remarked, with a sneer. "Don't they knock at a fellow's door, Courtenay, in the stuff you were brought up in?"

"You rotter!" shouted Courtenay. "You're found out!"

"Oh, gad!" murmured Monson.

Ponsonby shrugged his shoulders.

"Anythin' up?" he drawled.

"You had Bunter here yesterday!" exclaimed Courtenay. "You put him up to imitating my voice on the telephone."

"What an idea!" yawned Ponsonby.

"And the telephone call I had from Greyfriars to-day was from Bunter, not from Wharton."

"Did you have a telephone call?" yawned Pon.

"You know I did."

"I know now you tell me, of course,"

assented Ponsonby coolly. "No need to shout it! All Highcliffe doesn't want to know."

Courtenay panted.

"Do you deny that you made use of that fat fool Bunter to break off the football fixture with Greyfriars?"

"Yaas," drawled Ponsonby.

"Bunter has admitted it all," chimed in the cool voice of the Caterpillar from the doorway.

Ponsonby's heart was beating faster; but he kept cool. Outside the study half a dozen members of the Highcliffe junior eleven could be seen, evidently only awaiting a word from their captain to rush in and "mop up" the gathering of nuts. There was fury in every face. Pon's nutty comrades backed away to the farther wall in great alarm.

"You deny it?" exclaimed Courtenay, taken aback by the effrontery of the cad of Highcliffe.

"Oh, yaas!"

"Dear old Pon!" murmured the Caterpillar. "What's a lie more or less to dear old Pon? Better own up, Pon. You're goin' to be ragged, anyhow, so it will cost nothin' to tell the truth."

"Hang you! Get out of my study!" shouted Ponsonby.

"All the merry gang were in it, of course," smiled the Caterpillar. "We may as well mop up the study while we're here!"

"Yes, rather!" roared Smithson.

"Go for the cads!" hooted Benson.

"I—I say, we—we were against it!" stammered Vavasour. "We—I—really, you know, absolutely—"

"Shut up!" hissed Ponsonby.

"You shouldn't land us like this, Pon, you fool!" snapped Vavasour. "You said it was quite safe."

"Do you still deny it, Ponsonby?" asked Frank Courtenay, with bitter scorn.

Ponsonby bit his lip hard. Denial was not of much use, in any case, and after what Vavasour had said it was still more futile.

"It—it was only a—a—a jape!" murmured Gadsby.

"One of Bunter's tricks, you know," said Monson.

"That's enough!" said Courtenay grimly. "Caterpillar, will you deal with Gadsby, while I deal with Ponsonby?"

"Any old thing!"

"It's not a fight, it's a ragging!" shouted Smithson. "Come in, you fellows, and mop up the study!"

"Yes, rather!"

There was a rush of the Highcliffe footballers. In a moment more the study was swarming with indignant juniors.

Ponsonby & Co. had the time of their lives during the next five minutes.

Pon's luxurious study, the most elegantly appointed in the Fourth Form at Highcliffe, was a wreck when the footballers had finished.

Pon & Co., thrashed and ragged till they had hardly an ounce of breath left in their hapless bodies, sprawled among the overturned furniture, howling with anguish.

"That will do!" said Frank Courtenay curtly; and he walked away, and the grinning footballers followed him.

The Caterpillar lingered in the doorway, with a gentle smile on his face.

"Dear old Pon!" he said. "Always buttin' in, and always slippin' up on it! Why not try honesty for a change, Pon? Haven't you heard that jolly old proverb, that honesty is the best policy? Take my tip, old bean, and give it a trial!"

And the Caterpillar sauntered elegantly away.

Ponsonby & Co. sat up amid the wreck. Vavasour, groaning feebly, gouged ashes and cinders from his hair and his neck. Monson dabbed at the black ink that soaked him and covered his face and hair. Gadsby held his hand to a blackening eye, and Ponsonby held a handkerchief to a nose that streamed crimson.

Never had Pon's study presented so deplorable a scene; and perhaps it was borne in upon Pon's mind just then that honesty was, after all, the best policy, as the Caterpillar advised him.

When Pon dragged himself wearily to his feet, he had the comfort of seeing, from the study window, the brake starting for Greyfriars, crowded with merry footballers. And he did not seem to derive much comfort from the sight.

Courtenay & Co., in the brake, were in the best of spirits. Ponsonby's plot, which had come so near to success, had failed, owing to the sagacious intervention of the Caterpillar. And the Caterpillar's success in frustrating the knavish tricks of Pon & Co. quite "bucked" him, and consoled him for the strenuous exertions he was called upon to put up at Greyfriars that afternoon.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here we are again!" roared Bob Cherry, as the brake arrived at Greyfriars.

And the meeting was very cordial on both sides.

Harry Wharton shook hands warmly with Courtenay, and the Highcliffe captain returned his grip with equal warmth. Both were aware how near their friendship had come to a break that would probably never have been healed, and both were feeling a deep relief that the clouds had rolled by.

"All serene now," said Wharton. "Thank goodness the Caterpillar came over, Courtenay!"

Courtenay nodded.

"I can't be glad enough that he came," he said. "And—and I didn't want him to. Thank goodness, he knew better!"

"The sagacious perspicacity of the esteemed and ridiculous Caterpillar is terrific!" remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh, and the juniors chuckled.

There was a crowd round the football-field to watch the kick-off. Billy Bunter was not in the crowd. He was still locked up in his study, groaning over his punishment, and in haunting dread of further trouble to come. But nobody wasted a thought on Billy Bunter. The ball rolled from Harry Wharton's foot, and the game started.

It was a great game.

The Remove eleven were at the top of their form, and Courtenay's merry men were likewise in great fettle. The game swayed to and fro, and in the first half there were narrow escapes on both sides, but no score for either.

In the second half the struggle was renewed with great determination on both sides. But the minutes ticked away, and neither side broke its duck. It was within ten minutes of time that there was a hot attack on the home goal, and the Highcliffe forwards got through, and Courtenay drove the ball in. But Squiff, in goal, fisted it out again. And it was then that the Caterpillar—who looked like anything but a slacker at that moment—came on the ball with a lightning spring, and drove it in again with a shot that beat even Squiff, watchful as he was.

There was a gasp from the Highcliffians.

"Goal!"

Goal it was. Squiff threw out the ball rather ruefully. Harry Wharton & Co. lined up grimly for a final struggle, but

(Continued on page 20.)

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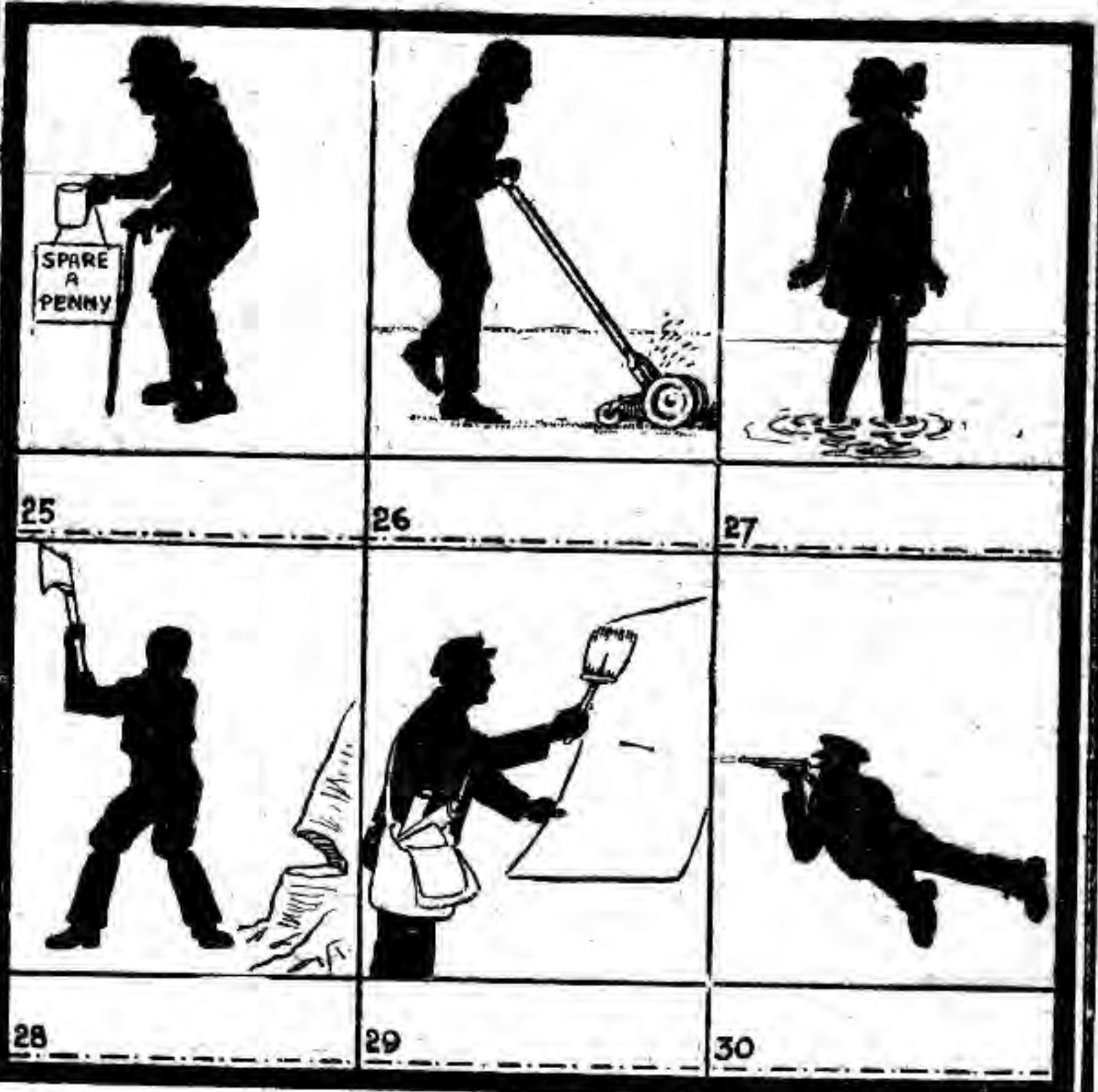
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It must be distinctly understood that the decision of the Editor is final and binding.

THE FOOTBALLERS' FOE!

(Continued from page 19.)

time was against them. They were attacking hotly, and the attack looked like materialising, when Potter of the Fifth, the referee, blew the whistle.

"Highcliffe wins!" granted Bolsover major. "This is what comes of leaving good men out of the team!"

The players came off, most of them breathless after a gruelling game.

Highcliffe had won, but it had been touch and go, and a good game on both sides. Frank Courtenay's face was very bright, and he squeezed the Caterpillar's arm as they walked off.

"Your game, Caterpillar!" he said. "Rippin', isn't it?" yawned the Caterpillar. "Pon will be so pleased when we tell him—what? That's a consolation for these terrific exertions—the happy thought of conferrin' pleasure on Pon when we get home!"

And the Caterpillar chuckled.

Billy Bunter did not go to tea in Ponsonby's study that afternoon. He did

not feel equal to the exertion, neither was he sure of what kind of a welcome he would receive. And when Saturday came round, Bunter decided that, upon the whole, he would not claim that motor run the dandy of Highcliffe had promised him. Which showed unusual wisdom on Bunter's part, for certainly it would have been something much less agreeable than a motor run that he would have received if he had turned up at Highcliffe.

THE END.

(There will be another long complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled "Loder's Long Trail" in next week's number!)

12/9 Monthly

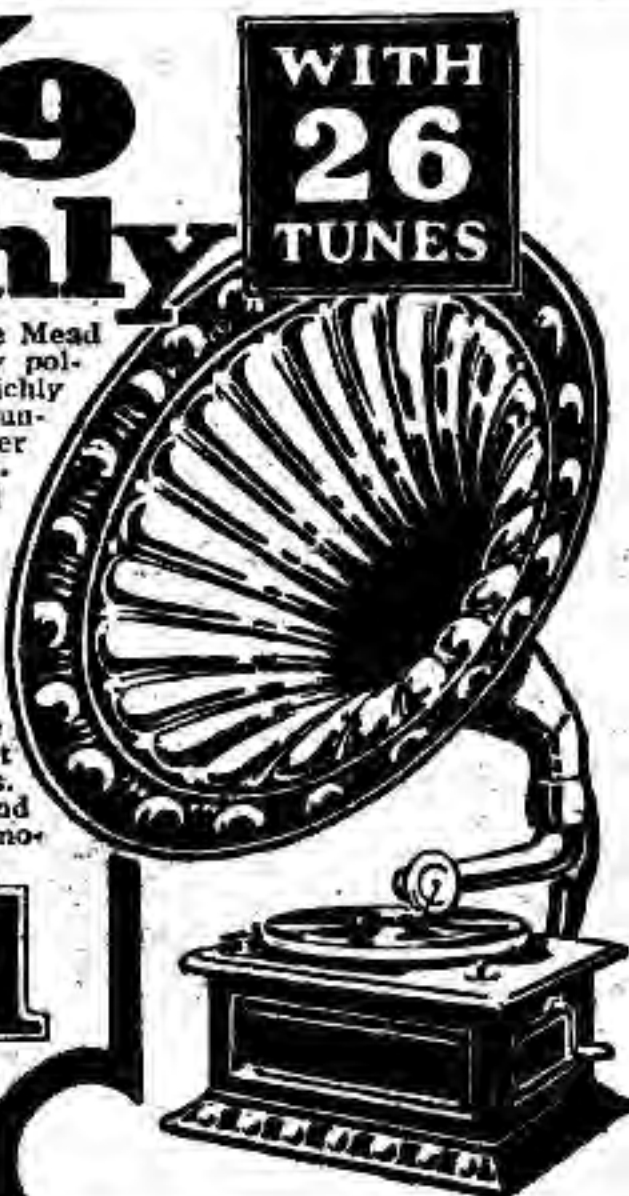
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