

"PLAYERS WORTH WATCHING!" By JACK HOBBS.

(An Interesting Contribution by the Famous Surrey Batsman, inside.)

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Week Ending June 12th, 1926.

The Magnet 2^d

EVERY MONDAY.

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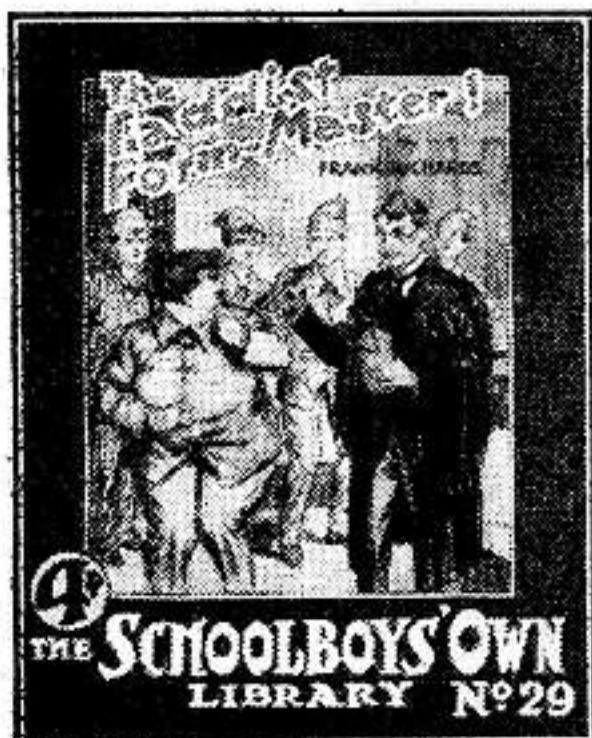


HIDE-AND-SEEK IN THE REMOVE DORMITORY!

(An amazing incident from the grand school yarn inside.)

A RED-LETTER DAY

Friday, June 4th.



No. 29.

THE FADDIST FORM MASTER!

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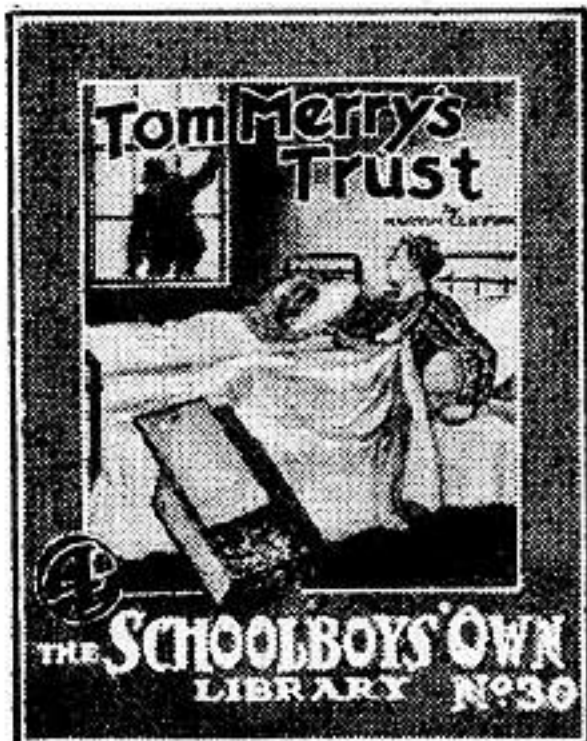
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BUILDING CASTLES!

At first glance you might be under the impression that I'm going to talk about the dreamer, the chap who builds castles in the air, but such is not the case, interesting as that subject would undoubtedly be. What I want to refer to is a letter from a chum at Northampton, who, for a living, helps in the making of our boots and shoes, and who, in his leisure time, builds plasticine models of English castles. I should say, judging by the photographs of some of these models which my Northampton chum has sent me, that he is very skilled in his hobby. I understand he obtains his plans of the castles from cigarette picture-cards. I pass on these details for the benefit of other MAGNET chums who are on the lookout for a "creative" hobby.

A. S. WINDLER!

A loyal Magnetite writes me a very long letter, in which he deplores the nasty connection his initials and surname have with a certain type of fellow who "dishes and diddles" his neighbour. Really, my chum is very sorry for himself and writes to ask me if I think it advisable that he should change his name. Well, personally, I shouldn't dream of doing so. Windler is a good name, anyway, and the "front" names of Albert and Samuel are old and well-sounding. My correspondent loses no time in telling me that he is not "a swindler." Well, I quite believe him; his manly, straightforward letter tells me that, for one thing, and, besides, he's a Magnetite—and our reader chums aren't swindlers. No, Windler, old chap, don't you worry too much about that name of yours. Doubtless the fellows will chip you about it, but, after all, we most of us go through that stage of chipping in some form or another. One of my Christian names would be enough to bring a laugh to your chivvy if you heard it, I'll bet. It's certainly brought a good many blushes to mine in the days that have gone by. But I've outlived the chipping due to that particular name, so much so that I laugh at it myself now. And that's what you'll do, take it from me. Smile, Windler, and the world will smile with you, even though you are troubled with those initials of A. S. But don't change your name. If you want to dispense with that chipping when you move to fresh quarters just drop your initial "S." That'll do the trick. Cheerio, and many thanks for your letter.

A BIG SURPRISE!

This week I want to arouse your curiosity on a trump card I have up my sleeve—a card which is due to be played very shortly. It's something good, extra good, and I can say at this stage without spoiling your curiosity that it comes under the heading of Free Gifts. Just you watch this Chat column during the next few weeks for further particulars. 'Nuff said!

For Next Monday:

"BUNTER'S BARRING-IN!"

By Frank Richards.

That's the title of the next long complete story of the chums of Greyfriars. As you can see in advance, Billy Bunter, the world's biggest laughter-maker, plays a prominent role. The story, by the way, is a sequel to the yarn you have in your hands now, so you can guess how interesting it is. Mind you read it, boys.

THE CRICKET SUPPLEMENT!

There will, of course, be another 4-page supplement dealing with King Cricket; and Maurice Tate contributes a wonderful article to it. Mind you're there when the stumps are pitched.

"THE PHANTOM OF THE DOGGER BANK!"

And, to complete this bumper programme, there is another trenchant instalment of our grand detective serial. Look out for it. Chin, chin, chums!

YOUR EDITOR.

THE MOST BACKWARD BOY IN THE FORM! That's how Mr. Quelch of the Remove 1 Greyfriars regards Billy Bunter, and feeling it to be his duty to improve Bunter's knowledge of Latin and Greek, etc., the Remove Form master decides to give Bunter an extra hour's tuition per day. But to this charitable arrangement Billy Bunter objects—strongly!



The Persecution of Billy Bunter!

An Amusing Long Complete Story of Billy Bunter and the Chums of Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Shortage of Dates!

I WANT some dates!" Billy Bunter made that statement in Study No. 1 of the Remove, rather to the surprise of Wharton and Nugent, the occupants of that celebrated apartment.

There was nothing surprising, of course, in Bunter wanting dates, or anything else in the eatable line. All was grist that came to Bunter's mill; anything of an edible nature was welcome to him.

Still, it was rather surprising that he should roll specially into Study No. 1 to make the statement. Wharton and Nugent could not be supposed to keep a supply of the succulent fruit on the premises.

"Dates?" repeated Wharton.

"Dates!" assented Bunter.

"Well, fathead, this isn't a fruiterer's shop!" said Frank Nugent, staring at him.

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"Try Mrs. Mimble's shop," suggested Wharton.

"And shut the door after you!" added Nugent.

Billy Bunter did not go. He stood his ground, and blinked at the chums of the Remove through his big spectacles.

"I must have some dates," he said.

"Try Mrs. Mimble's shop," suggested Wharton. "I believe she's got boxes of them."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Anyhow, there's nothing doing in this study. Run away and play!" said the captain of the Remove.

"I don't mean that I want dates to eat, you ass!" roared Bunter.

"What the thump do you want them for, then?"

"Quelch!"

"You want dates for Mr. Quelch?"

"That's it."

"Well, my only hat!" ejaculated Harry Wharton blankly, while Nugent stared. "You're thinking of giving your Form master dates, as if he was a greedy fag like yourself. I know Quelch has been down on you for

slacking, but that isn't the way to bring him round, you duffer."

"Form masters don't take presents from fellows," said Frank Nugent. "And do you think an old scout like Quelch would care for dates, anyhow? Are you off your rocker?"

"I say, you fellows, I really must have some dates, you know," urged Bunter, blinking at them seriously. "Quelch has been frightfully down on me in history class, and it's history again this afternoon. He's told me that he's going to give me special attention."

"You need it," said Wharton, laughing. "Didn't you tell him the other day that William of Orange came over with the Normans?"

"Well, didn't he?"

"Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's all very well to cackle," said Bunter warmly. "You're not expecting to get Quelch's pointer on your knuckles this afternoon, Wharton."

"I should be if I slacked in class as you do," answered the captain of the Remove. "Why not try a little work?" Bunter sniffed.

Obviously, the suggestion did not appeal to him. Work, from Bunter's point of view, was a last and desperate resource, only to be tried in very extreme cases.

"Look here, Wharton, be a pal," he said. "I simply must have some dates. I've got to have them all ready for this afternoon. Now you're a whale on dates, old chap."

"Oh!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nugent.

There had been a little misunderstanding.

It was not the edible date that Bunter was speaking of. The dates he needed were not found in boxes, but in books. For once the fat junior was not thinking about eating.

"You're really the cleverest chap in the Remove at this sort of thing, Wharton," said Bunter. "I don't mean to flatter you just because I want something out of you."

"Don't you?" grinned Wharton. "It sounds to me as if you do."

"Not at all, old fellow! You know all about dates and things. I dare say

you could tell me off-hand the date of the Conquest."

"I should deserve to be licked if I couldn't."

"And the date of the Spanish Armada?"

"Of course, ass!"

"Well, I never can remember all that rubbish," said Bunter. "All very well for chaps like you, of course. But a fellow with a real intellect can't bother about silly trifles like that."

"Oh!"

"But what's a fellow to do?" asked Bunter. "Quelch thinks that I ought to know these things, just like a commonplace fellow of your sort."

"Thanks!"

"It's rot, of course, but there it is," said Bunter. "I don't want to be licked this afternoon. And I could see it in Quelch's eye that he's going to lick me if I don't satisfy him. He's going to spin me a lot of questions in English history, and catch me out if he can. Mean, you know! Well, I've got to have some dates ready for him."

Harry Wharton laughed.

He was occupied at the moment in oiling a cricket bat, but he was good-naturedly prepared to put that occupation aside and give William George Bunter a little instruction in "dates."

"I'm your man," he said. "I can give you a ton of dates, if you like, if you can remember them."

"I can't," said Bunter.

"What's the good, then? You can't take written notes into class. Quelch would spot you at once."

"I know. That's not the idea."

"Well, what the thump is the idea, then?" asked the captain of the Remove.

"I've thought it out," said Bunter. "My idea is for you to arrange somehow to sit beside me—see? Then when Quelch asks me a question——"

"Whisper the answer—what?" grinned Nugent. "Quelch's gimlet-eye would be on it at once."

"I know that, Nugent; that's not the wheeze. I've tried that game before, and it was a frost."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"It's better than that," said Bunter. "Wharton will have his book open before him—nothing suspicious in that. Quelch's warned me that he's going to ask me a series of historical dates, and I'm to have the answers ready. Wharton could give the answers on his head. All you've got to do, Wharton, old chap, is to pencil the date on your book as soon as Quelch asks, and I shall see it—see?—and answer."

Wharton stared at him.

"And suppose Quelch spots me, as is pretty certain?" he asked.

"Oh, it will be all right! Even if he spots you, it's only a licking, you know," said Bunter encouragingly.

"Only a licking?" repeated Harry.

"That's all, old chap! Be a man, you know! What's a licking?"

"Oh, a licking isn't much, isn't it?"

"Oh, no!"

Wharton chuckled.

"Well, if a licking isn't much, you needn't mind getting one for getting your dates wrong," he said.

"Eh?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nugent, greatly entertained by the expression on Billy Bunter's fat countenance.

Evidently, in Bunter's estimation, a licking received by another fellow was a trifle light as air, while a licking of which he was himself the recipient was quite another matter.

"So that's settled," said Harry laughing. "Now roll along, Bunter, and the best thing you can do is to mug up some dates before class."

"So you're going to let me down, are you, just because you funk a licking?" demanded Bunter scornfully.

"Yah!"

"Good-bye, Bunter!"

"Funk!" said Bunter.

Harry Wharton still had the cricket bat in his hands. The business end of it suddenly dropped to the floor, just where one of Billy Bunter's extensive feet was planted.

"Whooooop!"

Billy Bunter gave a sudden jump, and almost leaped into the air. Then he hopped on one leg, clasping a foot with both hands.

"Ow! Ow! Wow!"

"Have another?" asked the captain of the Remove, lifting the cricket bat again. "You've only got to say some more nice polite things."

"Ow! Wow! Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled out of the study without waiting for another. One was enough. He rolled out, and paused a moment in the doorway to shake a fat fist at the captain of the Remove.

Wharton made a motion with the cricket bat, and William George Bunter promptly vanished.

There was "nothing doing" in No. 1 Study, and the Owl of the Remove had to seek further for help in his remarkable scheme for supplying Mr. Quelch with dates.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Skinner is Too Funny!

"YOU rotters can go and eat coke." Thus W. G. Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co., coming along to the Remove Form-room for class that afternoon, found the doorway adorned by the ample figure of William George Bunter.

Bunter was talking with Skinner of the Remove, and Skinner—not usually a good-tempered or genial fellow—was smiling very kindly at Bunter. Harold

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Skinner's chums, Snoop and Stott, stood by grinning.

One glance at them was enough to show that Skinner & Co. had some little scheme on for pulling Bunter's fat leg. Skinner was a great humorist, and his jests were not always good-natured—in fact, they seldom were. But Bunter evidently had no suspicion. He had found the help he needed; and as Wharton and his friends came up, Bunter gave them a contemptuous blink, his very spectacles-gleaming with scorn.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the row?" asked Bob Cherry. "What have we done to displease your serene highness, Bunter?"

"Skinner's going to help me out," said Bunter. "Skinner's a pal!"

"Is he?" said Wharton, with a very doubtful glance at Skinner. He would not have trusted Skinner very far himself.

"Well, why shouldn't a fellow help old Bunter?" said Skinner blandly. "He's for it if he doesn't get some help. Quelch has been frightfully down on him for slacking. Of course, Bunter is a dunce—"

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"And a lazy slacker," said Skinner. "Biggest fathead in the Remove—if you come to that—"

"Look here—"

"But Quelch has got a down on him, and it's up to a fellow to lend a hand," said Skinner virtuously. "Quelch was telling us himself the other day that it's a fellow's duty to help another fellow in adversity. Well, I'm taking Quelch's tip."

Snoop and Stott chuckled.

"You let me down, Wharton!" said Bunter. "After all I've done for you, you let me down, because you funk a licking. Skinner's standing by me like a pal. If I don't get through all right this afternoon, I may get extra toot—Quelch's threatened it. Think of that!"

"It would do you good," said Harry. Bunter blinked at him in almost speechless indignation. Extra toot—that is, extra tuition—was never welcome to any fellow; to Bunter it was more than unwelcome; he had had some, so to speak, and the more he had had, the less he had liked it. Mr. Quelch, a dutiful form-master, believed it to be his duty to give special attention to a backward boy—and there was no doubt that Bunter was backward. But the Owl of the Remove would have been satisfied with a much less dutiful form-master.

Mr. Quelch appeared at the other end of the form-room passage, and the juniors hurried in to take their places.

Skinner dropped into the place beside Bunter, still with a genial expression on his face. Snoop and Stott looked as if they were going to enjoy their afternoon—an unaccustomed experience in the Remove room. Indeed, to anyone but the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove, it would have been clear that Skinner was planning a jape, and that the fat junior had only Punic faith to expect from the fellow who had so suddenly become "pally."

But Bunter was quite at his ease. He knew that Skinner could give him the assistance he required, if Skinner liked. Skinner was a good deal of a slacker, but he was very keen and had a good memory; and indeed, Bunter's problems would not have been problems at all to any fellow less obtuse than Bunter. Obtuseness combined with unlimited laziness had been Bunter's undoing. Skinner could do what was needed, and he had generously offered

so to do; and that was enough for Bunter. He was looking forward to the class with contented confidence now.

Mr. Quelch came rustling into the form-room, and his keen eye—often likened by his pupils to a gimlet—singled out Bunter. Bunter was going through it this time; he was going to be made to understand that fellows came to Greyfriars to learn things. That was Mr. Quelch's fixed opinion. It was not Bunter's. But Mr. Quelch being a form-master, had to be given his head.

English history was the subject, not an unpopular subject in the Remove. It was easier—therefore better—than Latin or maths, and no worse than geography. Sometimes, too, Mr. Quelch made the lesson quite interesting, by a little dissertation of his own, which made some ancient period live again to the eyes of his class, and made them realise that William the Conqueror, and Henry the Eighth, and the Four Georges, really were human beings in their time, and not merely names in school books.

When Mr. Quelch got away from the dry bones of his subject in this way, the Remove found him quite entertaining, and even Lord Mauleverer would sit up and take notice.

After such an entertainment, however, Mr. Quelch would come back to his mutton, so to speak, and rap out a series of questions on the lesson, and then the slackers of the class would vie with one another in attempts to avoid catching his eye.

Billy Bunter would have been content to doze through every single class at Greyfriars, and ultimately leave school knowing exactly as much as when he had entered it. Indeed, on such terms Bunter would have considered school life a really enjoyable institution. It seemed to him very hard cheese, that an interfering old gentleman should insist upon cramming into his head things he did not want to know.

But Mr. Quelch did so insist; and he was now so thoroughly fed up with Bunter's idleness, that he was making a special mark of him. All the Remove fellows knew it, and they were expecting to see Bunter scarified—not knowing the precautions he had taken.

So there was a general stir of interest when Mr. Quelch said: "I shall now ask you some questions?" Everybody knew that Bunter was "for it!"

Bunter gave Skinner a sidelong blink from behind his spectacles. Skinner gave him a reassuring wink.

Skinner held his book closed, in such a way as to conceal a sheet of paper against the cover. On that paper he was to scribble the answers Bunter had to give, and he contrived to hold the book so that Bunter should see the paper, without Mr. Quelch seeing it. He sat with his shoulder turned to Bunter, looking away from him, apparently thinking of anything but communication with the fat junior.

"Bunter!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"I trust you have been paying attention, Bunter?"

"Oh, yes, sir," said Bunter, "I always do, sir! It—it's such a pleasure to listen to you, sir!"

A soft answer is said to turn away wrath. But it did not produce that effect upon Mr. Quelch. He frowned.

"Very well, Bunter," he said grimly. "I shall now ask you to give a few dates."

"Certainly, sir!"

"In what year did the Norman Conquest take place?"

Any other fellow in the Remove, even Lord Mauleverer, who was very hazy in such matters, would have answered at once "1066." But Bunter was more than hazy in such matters—his fat mind was a beautiful blank.

But a sidelong glance at Skinner's book helped him out.

"1923, sir!" he answered.

"Wha-a-t?"

"Nineteen-twenty-three!" said Bunter, surprised by the expression that came over Mr. Quelch's face.

Skinner knew—he knew that Skinner knew. And Skinner had scribbled "1923" on his paper. So what could Bunter do? Even Bunter would have realised, on a little reflection, that Norman William must have arrived much earlier than 1923. But Bunter was not given to reflection; neither had he any time to reflect.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh whispered to Nugent that the wrathfulness of the esteemed Quelch was terrific. The Nabob of Bhanipur was right. Wrath gathered like a thundercloud on the Remove master's brow.

"Bunter!" he stuttered.

"That's right, sir, isn't it?" gasped Bunter.

"Right!" exclaimed the Remove master. "Bunter, is this unexampled stupidity, or is it impertinence?"

"Oh, sir! Yes, sir! No, sir!"

"Do you suppose, Bunter, that the Norman Conquest took place in our own lifetimes?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! No, sir! Certainly not!"

"Then what do you mean, Bunter?"

"N-n-nothing, sir!"

"Bless my soul, this boy is beyond me!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Never, in all my experience as a schoolmaster, have I encountered such stupidity! I will give you another chance, Bunter."

"T-t-thank you, sir!"

"Under which king was Magna Charta signed?"

Johnny Bull, at a little distance from Bunter, formed the words "King John" with his lips, as a hint to the unfortunate Owl of the Remove. But Bunter did not heed his sign—he was blinking at Skinner's paper, whence he derived information—really startling information.

"Julius Cæsar, sir!"

Mr. Quelch jumped.

Such an answer might have made the most sedate Form master jump.

There was a howl from the Remove.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" hooted Mr. Quelch. "This boy's obtuse impertinence is not a subject for laughter."

"Isn't it?" murmured Vernon-Smith, but he took care that the murmur did not reach Mr. Quelch's ears.

"Did you—did you say Julius Cæsar, Bunter?" exclaimed the Remove master.

"Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Are you under the impression that Julius Cæsar was a King of England, Bunter?"

"W-w-wasn't he, sir?"

"Bless my soul! Boy, do you not know who Julius Cæsar was?"

Bunter blinked at Skinner's paper again, and derived more information from it. Skinner, undoubtedly, had a pretty wit.

"Yes, sir. He—he was—was the discoverer of America, sir!"

"The discoverer of America!" said Mr. Quelch dazedly. "Is it possible, Bunter, that you do not know that Christopher Columbus was the discoverer of America?"

Bunter started. Now that Mr. Quelch reminded him, he fancied that he had indeed heard something of the sort.

"Yes, sir!" he gasped. "Of—of course, sir!"

"I begin to think that you are scarcely in your right senses, Bunter. You will write out 'King John signed Magna Charta' five hundred times!"

"I—I don't mind, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Whether you mind or not, Bunter, is a matter of very little moment," said Mr. Quelch. "Bring your imposition to me this evening. I can give you no further attention now, Bunter—it is wasting the time of the class."

Bunter's heavy impot did not worry Skinner—he was not given to worrying about the troubles of others.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Punching Skinner!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

"Poor old Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! It's all your fault, you know. If you'd helped me instead of that other beast—"

"That what?" ejaculated Wharton.

"That other beast. Then it would



"In what year did the Norman Conquest take place?" asked Mr. Quelch. Any other fellow would have answered at once: "1066." But Bunter was more than hazy in such matters. His fat mind was a beautiful blank. But a sidelong glance at Skinner's book helped him out. "Nineteen twenty-three, sir!" he answered. (See Chapter 2.)

Bunter gasped with relief. He was only too glad to hear that Mr. Quelch could give him no further attention just then. The look in Mr. Quelch's eye hinted that he was to get further attention later on. But for the moment there was deep relief.

Mr. Quelch turned his attention to other fellows in the Remove, and Bunter was left in peace. He had time now to reflect, and to work out in his fat brain why Mr. Quelch had been so annoyed, and he grasped at last the fact that Skinner had been pulling his leg. Obviously, the answers so generously supplied by Skinner had been all wrong, and Bunter, when he realised it, bestowed an infuriated blink upon Harold Skinner. Skinner gave him a genial smile in return. He had quite enjoyed the jest at Bunter's expense; and

have been all right. I say, it's rather thick, isn't it, a fellow getting a fellow into a row like that!" exclaimed Billy Bunter indignantly. "I'd jolly well punch Skinner, only—only—"

"Only there'd be a dead porpoise lying about soon afterwards," chuckled Skinner.

"Beast!"

The Remove had been dismissed, and Billy Bunter, in the Form-room passage, was airing his grievances. For once, there was sympathy for William George Bunter.

Pulling his fat leg was all very well, but bringing down upon him the vials of his Form master's wrath was quite another. There was a limit, which Harold Skinner had forgotten.

"It's too rotten," said Bob Cherry.

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"Bunter's got a whacking impot, and Quelch's more down on him than ever. Of course, he's a dunce and a slacker, but—"

"Oh, really, Cherry!"

"But there was no need for Skinner to make matters worse for him," said Harry Wharton.

"Dear man, it was no end of a jest," said Skinner with a chuckle.

"I say, you fellows, it's not playing the game to get a fellow into a row with a Form-master," said Bunter. "Skinner offered to help me out, you know, and I trusted him."

"And he let you down," said Harry Wharton. "Quite so. I think you ought to punch Skinner's head, Bunter."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner. "Go it, Bunter! Better make your will first, or sign the 'Daily Mail' insurance coupon."

Billy Bunter gave him a ferocious blink. He would have given a great deal to punch Skinner's head, as Skinner undoubtedly deserved. But the Owl of the Remove was not a great fighting-man.

"In the circumstances," continued Harry Wharton, "I think you're entitled to ask somebody to punch Skinner's head for you, Bunter."

"Good wheeze," concurred Bob Cherry.

Bunter brightened up.

Skinner, on the other hand, suddenly ceased to chuckle. He was quite prepared to deal with the fat junior, with or without gloves. But if Bunter punched his head by proxy, so to speak, it was quite a different matter.

Skinner made a hurried movement along the passage. Immediately five or six juniors closed round him.

"Don't cut off, old scout," grinned Vernon-Smith. "We haven't got to the end of the joke yet."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let me pass!" growled Skinner, scowling round at the grinning juniors.

"Stay where you are!" chuckled Johnny Bull. "Now, then, Bunter, pick your man!"

"We're all at your service, Bunter," said Frank Nugent, laughing.

"I'm your man, if you like," said Peter Todd.

It was Bunter's turn to chuckle now. Skinner, edging away uneasily, was surrounded by the grinning Removites, and quite unable to escape. He began to wish that he had not been quite so funny at Bunter's expense. The great jest was taking on a more serious aspect now.

"Look here, chuck this rot!" growled Skinner. "I'm getting fed-up with this. It was only a joke!"

"Bunter's impot isn't a joke," said Peter Todd. "He will be bothering every fellow in the Remove to help him with his lines."

"Name your man, Bunter," said Bob Cherry.

"I'd jolly well thrash him myself," said Bunter, "only—only the fact is, I—I— You punch his head for me, Bob."

"Done!"

Bob Cherry pushed back his cuffs, put up his hands, and advanced upon Skinner.

Skinner promptly backed away, but he backed against a wall of Removites, and they stood firm. He had to stop.

"Put up your paws, old man," said Bob cheerfully. "You've asked for it, you know, and it's coming along."

"You silly ass!" howled Skinner.

"Look out for your nose!"

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Bob Cherry made a pass at Skinner's nose, and Skinner put up his hands in a great hurry.

"That's better," said Bob. "Now come on."

"Give him a jolly good hiding!" chortled Bunter. "Give him a black eye, old chap! Squash his nose, old fellow! He, he, he!"

Bob Cherry came at Skinner with left and right. As a matter of fact, he was not attacking very seriously, and he only intended to give Skinner a tap or two. Still, Bob Cherry's "taps" were fairly hefty, and Skinner did not want any of them.

Skinner defended himself frantically, amid shouts of laughter from the Remove fellows. In the midst of the scene Mr. Quelch came out of the Remove Form room. He started.

"What—what is this? Have I, or have I not, forbidden horseplay in the corridors?" he boomed.

The Removites did not stop to answer Mr. Quelch's question. They scudded away, and vanished.

Mr. Quelch, with a frowning brow pursued his way to his study. The Remove fellows scattered in the quadrangle—much to Skinner's relief. He had had quite enough of the outcome of his little joke on Bunter.

Skinner was not seen again till tea-time. Harry Wharton & Co. were at tea in Study No. 1, with the door wide open, and when Skinner came up to the Remove passage he was spotted passing the open door of No. 1. Bob Cherry's voice shouted out to him:

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Stop a minute, Skinner! I haven't punched your head yet."

Skinner dashed along to his study, No. 11, without replying. A shout of laughter followed him from Study No. 1.

"I'll drop in on Skinner after tea," chuckled Bob. "He's such a giddy humorist, you know, he's bound to enjoy the joke."

"I don't think," said Wharton, laughing.

After tea, Bob Cherry strolled along to Study No. 11, which belonged to Skinner, Snoop, and Stott. Several fellows followed him there, and looked in when Bob hurled the door open.

The three black sheep of the Remove had finished tea, and were smoking cigarettes—a little custom in Study

No. 11. Skinner stared in angry alarm at Bob. Snoop and Stott grinned.

"Ready?" asked Bob cheerily.

"Ready for what, you silly ass?" snapped Skinner.

"I haven't punched your head yet, you know."

"Look here, you silly chump—"

"Coming!" said Bob.

Skinner jumped as Bob came into the study, and dodged round the table.

"Keep off, you silly owl!" he yelled.

"Collar him!"

Skinner made a desperate rush for the doorway. Half a dozen Removites blocked his way there, and Skinner was stopped. He dodged round the study again, with Bob Cherry on his track. A chair went spinning, and then another chair, and the table rocked as Skinner collided with it.

"Here, don't wreck the blessed study!" exclaimed Snoop.

Skinner made another dash for the door, and again was headed off by the grinning juniors. Again he fled round the study, amid yells of laughter. This time he was cornered, and in a corner of the room he turned desperately at bay.

"Ow! You—you rotter! Keep off!" he gasped, sinking against the wall, and panting for breath.

"Put up your paws, old scout!"

"I—I won't!"

"Then here goes!"

Bob Cherry drew back his right arm, and aimed a terrific drive at Skinner's nose.

Skinner, in sheer terror, closed his eyes.

But that terrific drive slowed down as it approached Skinner's sharp nose, and Bob Cherry's knuckles landed only with a gentle tap. Skinner opened his eyes again and blinked.

"That's done!" said Bob.

Skinner blinked at Bob Cherry, understanding at last that Bob had only been pulling his leg. As an inveterate leg-puller himself, Skinner ought really to have been entertained by the little joke. But he did not seem to be. Like many other humorists, Skinner found it difficult to take a joke against himself.

Bob Cherry tramped out of the study, and Skinner savagely slammed the door after him. Billy Bunter came rolling up the Remove passage, and he caught Bob Cherry by the sleeve as he was leaving Study No. 11.

"Have you punched him?" he asked eagerly.

"Certainly!"

"Hard?" asked Bunter.

"The hardness was not terrific," grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Look here, Cherry—"

"I'll show you just how hard it was, Bunter," said Bob, swinging back his powerful right arm. "You stand there, and— Why, he's gone!"

Bunter departed without making further inquiries.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Just a Line from Bunter!

"WHAT about your lines, Bunter?"

Peter Todd asked the question in Study No. 7 after tea was finished.

Billy Bunter was reposing in the study armchair, with his fat little legs stretched out, when Peter Todd and Tom Dutton came in for prep. Bunter did not look like a fellow who had been given an impot of five hundred lines to take in before bed-time. Five hundred lines was an exceedingly heavy imposition, and it meant hard work to get it

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done in time. And it was quite obvious that the Remove master was not to be trifled with. But William George Bunter was taking his ease in the armchair, as if he had no troubles at all on his fat mind.

Peter was a little concerned about his fat study-mate. Mr. Quelch had only too much cause to be down on the slacker, and at the present time he was very much down on him indeed. It behoved Bunter to be wary, until something else came along to take up his Form master's attention. Certainly it was no time for slacking in the study armchair.

"You'd better hustle a bit, fatty," said Peter kindly. "Quelch will make you sit up, you know, if the lines aren't done."

"The lines?" repeated Bunter.

"Yes, ass! Look here! I'll help you out with about fifty," said Peter generously. "It was that cad Skinner's fault you got them really. I can work in fifty without Quelch spotting them. But get going, you duffer! You've left it jolly late!"

"I don't catch on," said Bunter. "I've done my line."

"Your line?"

"Yes," said Bunter, blinking at him, "Quelch gave me only one line to write, you know."

Peter stared.

"Wandering in your mind?" he asked.

"Oh, really, Peter—"

"Quelch gave you five hundred lines."

Bunter shook his head.

"Nothing of the sort. He gave me one line," he answered. "I've got ears, I suppose. I heard what Quelch said."

"You thumping ass!" exclaimed Peter. "We all heard him tell you to write 'King John signed Magna Charta' five hundred times."

"Well, I've done it," said Bunter.

"You've done it?"

"Yes; there it is, on the table. That didn't take me long," said the Owl of the Remove.

Peter, in utter amazement, blinked at a sheet of impot paper on the study table. On that sheet was written, in Bunter's sprawling hand, and in Bunter's special variety of spelling:

"King John sined Magna Carter five hundred times."

Peter Todd gazed at it, then gazed again, and then gazed at Bunter. He seemed unable to believe his eyes.

"You—you—you frabjous cuckoo!" he gasped at last. "Are you really going to work that off on Quelch?"

"Certainly!" said Bunter. "That's what he told me to write, isn't it?"

"He told you to write 'King John signed Magna Charta' five hundred times!" roared Peter.

"That's what I've written—King John signed Magna Charta five hundred times," said Bunter. "I don't believe he did, really. Why should King John or anybody else sign anything five hundred times? But Mr. Quelch says he did, and I suppose he knows."

Peter stared at him. Certainly, the Owl of the Remove was obtuse; the things that Bunter could not or would not understand would have filled whole libraries to overflowing. But it was a little difficult to believe that Bunter was quite so obtuse as this.

"You frabjous, burbling ass!" said Peter Todd at last.

"Oh, really, Peter—"

"Quelch meant, as you jolly well know, that you were to write the sentence five hundred times—'King John signed Magna Charta.'"

"Rot!" said Bunter, with another

"MAGNET" PORTRAIT GALLERY.

No. 35.—Claude Hoskins (of the Shell).



Hoskins of the Shell is the musical genius of Greyfriars—at least, his Form fellows don't mind admitting that so long as Hoskins and his endless enthusiasm for chords in "C major and F minor," etc., remain locked up with Hoskins. But seriously, Hoskins is certainly a clever fellow in the musical line, and composes marches, songs, sonatas, etc., with wonderful ease. It is true that when Hobson, his study mate, listens to these musical outbursts he shoves some cotton wool in his ears beforehand, and that other fellows—not quite so polite—walk away at the mere mention of the word music. Hoskins lives in hopes of being acclaimed the world's greatest musician. Already Bach, Beethoven, Wagner, etc., are small fry as against the youthful genius of Hoskins—in Hoskins' opinion, of course! Only the future can prove how much of a genius Hoskins really is—and Greyfriars isn't concerned with the future.

shake of the head. "If he'd meant that he would have said it. I'm doing what he said I was to do. It's not for me to disobey my Form master, Peter Todd. I'm bound to do exactly as he tells me. Besides, it saves time."

"It won't save your hide when you take that little joke to Quelch," said Peter.

"It isn't a joke, you ass! No joke in doing exactly what a Form master tells you, is there?"

"You—you—you babbling bandersnatch!" ejaculated Peter. "Do you really think that King John put his signature five hundred times at the tail of Magna Charta?"

"Well, it seems jolly unlikely," admitted Bunter. "I don't see why he should, you know, but Quelch says he did."

"He didn't!" yelled Peter. "He said that—"

"I know what he said, Toddy, and you needn't yell at me. I've done exactly what Quelch told me," said Bunter. "A fellow can't do more. I can't go behind what he said, when his meaning was quite plain. I suppose Quelch knows English, doesn't he?"

"Oh, my hat!" said Peter Todd. And he shrugged his shoulders and gave it up.

Prep was going on in Study No. 7 when Harry Wharton looked in. The

captain of the Remove, too, was taking a kindly interest in Bunter's impot.

"Done your lines, Bunter?" he asked. "I've finished prep. and I don't mind lending you a hand if you're pressed."

"Thanks, old chap, but it's all right," said Bunter. "I've done the line. There it is."

"Look at it!" grinned Peter Todd.

Harry Wharton looked—and jumped. He gave William George Bunter a blank stare.

"Bunter!" he exclaimed. "You—you're not really thinking of taking that in to Mr. Quelch?"

"Why not?"

"Why not?" exclaimed Wharton. "You awful ass! You can pull Monsieur Charpentier's leg in that style, but not Quelch's. He will be wild."

"What rot!" said Bunter. "That's what Quelch told me to write, and I've written it. I suppose he's just a man, isn't he?"

"Oh, my hat!"

Wharton retired from the study, a little perplexed, like Toddy, to guess how much of Bunter's obtuseness was genuine, and how much was spoof. After that there were several more visitors to Study No. 7. Bunter's remarkable impot was talked of up and down the Remove passage, and fellows came in to look at it. They chortled as they looked.

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"It's a topping joke," said Vernon-Smith. "But you'll never have the nerve to land it on Quelch, Bunter."

Billy Bunter blinked at him.

"No joke that I know of," he answered.

"You really think that that's what Quelch told you to write?" roared the Bounder.

"Certainly! You all heard him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at," said Bunter.

"Doesn't he take the jolly old bun?" asked Peter Todd. "Why did his people send him to Greyfriars instead of to Colney Hatch? It beats me!"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"You'll get a licking if you take that stuff to Quelch, Bunter," said Bob Cherry warningly.

"Rats! He's a just beast," said Bunter. "But if he cuts up rusty I shall appeal to the Head. I know I'm jolly well going to have justice."

And Bunter, having finished his prep, rose from the study table, picked up his remarkable impot, and left the study. The Remove fellows stared after him as he rolled away towards the stairs.

"The fat duffer!" exclaimed Wharton. "He can't really be going to take that to Quelch!"

"Looks like it," grinned Bob Cherry.

"Let's follow on and see what happens," said Johnny Bull. "Bunter may want carrying home when Quelch's done with him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Quite a crowd of the Remove fellows followed Billy Bunter downstairs, curious to see the outcome. Bunter marched on steadily to the Remove master's study and tapped at the door.

"Come in!"

"My only hat! He's really taking it in!" breathed Nugent.

Billy Bunter marched into Mr. Quelch's study, with his impot in his fat hand.

The Remove fellows waited in the corridor, as near to Mr. Quelch's door as they could venture. They listened breathlessly, and the sound they expected to hear was the whacking of Mr. Quelch's cane on the podgy person of William George Bunter.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Chopper Comes Down!

MR. QUELCH fixed a severe glance upon Bunter as he came in. He was displeased with Bunter, as his displeasure was growing. The most obtuse fellow in his class added laziness and obstinacy to obtuseness, which really was a little too much for any Form master to bear with patience. Mr. Quelch had been making up his mind that he had to take Bunter severely in hand and bring him up in the way in which he should go. Giving an obtuse, lazy, and obstinate fellow individual and special attention was not an attractive prospect, and it did not please the Remove master, or make him better tempered.

Bunter rolled across the study to Mr. Quelch's table, with some slight inward trepidation. His sheet of impot paper was in his hand; upon it was written a single line. Bunter hardly knew himself how much of his stupidity was genuine and how much was humbug; he had never troubled to think it out. But he had a great capacity for believing what he wanted to believe, and certainly he

wanted to believe that Mr. Quelch had told him that King John had signed Magna Charta five hundred times. It saved the trouble of writing out four hundred and ninety-nine lines.

So Bunter was prepared to brazen it out that that really was what Mr. Quelch had told him; nevertheless, he felt a trepidation, under the gimlet eyes of the Remove master.

"My—my line, sir!" faltered Bunter.

"Your lines, Bunter? Lay them on the table."

Bunter laid the sheet of paper on the table, and backed to the door. He would have been pleased to back out of the study before Mr. Quelch examined his impot. But it was not to be.

"Stop!" said Mr. Quelch, raising his hand.

Bunter stopped.

"What does this mean?" Mr. Quelch picked up the paper. "You appear to have written only one line, Bunter, instead of the imposition I gave you! Why—why—why what does this mean? Bless my soul!"

Mr. Quelch stared at the remarkable impot, as well he might. Certainly no Greyfriars master had ever beheld such a one before. He could scarcely believe his eyes as he read:

"King John sined Magna Carter five hundred times."

Mr. Quelch laid the paper down, and fixed a basilisk glare upon Bunter across the table.

"Bunter! Explain what you mean by this."

"I—I've written what you told me, sir!" faltered the Owl of the Remove.

"I told you to write five hundred lines."

"Oh, no, sir! All the Remove heard you, sir. You told me to write that King John signed Magna Charta five hundred times, sir."

"It is impossible, Bunter, that you can have misunderstood me so."

"Oh, no, sir, I understand all right!" said Bunter. "I've written just what you told me, sir. I—I hope the spelling is correct, sir."

"The spelling is very far from correct, Bunter. But I will pass over that item for the moment. Bunter! Do you expect me to believe that you really supposed that I told you to write this absurdity?"

"Didn't you, sir?"

"I did not!" thundered Mr. Quelch, in a voice that made Bunter jump almost clear of the floor. "It is true that you are the most stupid boy at Greyfriars, Bunter, and that your backwardness would disgrace a boy in the Second Form. It is true that you seem to lack the capacity to understand the most simple things. But I do not credit for one moment, sir, that you are so stupid as you pretend."

"Oh, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"This is a trick, sir, to escape writing out your imposition!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "You dare to suppose that you can deceive me, Bunter, by this pretence of inconceivable stupidity!"

"Oh!"

"You cannot deceive me so easily, Bunter! I shall cane you for this impertinence. And you will write out a thousand lines instead of five hundred."

Mr. Quelch rose to his feet.

In the corridor the breathless juniors exchanged grinning glances. This was the outcome they had expected. There was only one master at Greyfriars who could possibly have been "stuffed" to such an extent—the good-natured and unsuspicious Monsieur Charpentier. Mr. Quelch was far too downy a bird to be caught with such chaff.

"Well, Bunter's asked for it!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Begg'd and prayed for it, really! Poor old Bunter!"

"Now listen for the fireworks!" grinned Skinner.

"Bunter!" Mr. Quelch came round his table. "Bunter, bend over that chair."

Billy Bunter backed away.

"I—I say, sir—" he gasped.

"You hear me, Bunter?"

"I—I appeal to the Head, sir!" stammered the Owl of the Remove.

Mr. Quelch already had his cane in hand, ready to administer the correction of which Bunter really stood in need. But he paused now. It was Bunter's right to appeal to the headmaster if he chose. It was any fellow's right, though seldom or never exercised. It was not likely to make matters better for a delinquent, as a rule—much more likely to make them worse. But Bunter never could stand a licking. If he could not escape it, at least putting it off was something.

"You—you appeal to your headmaster, Bunter?"

"Yes, sir," said Bunter. "I—I'm sure Dr. Locke will do me justice, sir. Dr. Locke will take a fellow's word, sir. When I tell him that I've written exactly what you've told me, sir, and—and call the other fellows as—as witnesses, sir—"

Mr. Quelch looked at the Owl of the Remove long and hard.

He began to wonder whether Bunter's obtuseness really did extend to this incredible length.

There was a pause, and then Mr. Quelch laid down his cane, much to Bunter's relief.

"Bunter! It is difficult for me to believe that you are so amazingly stupid as you pretend."

"Oh, really, sir—"

"But I should be very sorry to punish anyone for mere stupidity," said Mr. Quelch. "It is possible—barely possible—that you misapprehended me to this extent. I shall give you the benefit of the doubt, Bunter."

Harry Wharton & Co., in the passage, stared at one another. Bunter had pulled it off! Nobody had expected it—probably not even Bunter himself—but he had pulled it off.

"If you really are so obtuse as this, Bunter, I must take other measures with you," said Mr. Quelch. "I shall not cane you, Bunter, and I shall not double your imposition as I intended. Quite other methods are needed with so stupid a boy. I shall take you in hand specially from this day, Bunter, and endeavour to enlighten you. It will be a great trouble to me, and will encroach very seriously upon my leisure; but I regard it as a duty. For the future, Bunter, and until further orders, you will come to my study every afternoon at five o'clock."

"Eh?"

"And remain till six," said Mr. Quelch. "For one hour every day, exclusive of Sundays, I shall give you special tuition, and you will make an attempt to improve your knowledge under my personal supervision."

"Wha-at?"

"You may now go, Bunter."

Bunter stood rooted to the floor.

This was not what he had hoped for. He did not want a licking, but a licking was better than this. "Extra toot" for an hour every day—under the basilisk eye of Mr. Quelch! The prospect made him feel faint.

Mr. Quelch sat down again. Bunter, who no longer seemed in a hurry to go, blinked at him through his big spectacles.

"If—if you please, sir—" gasped Bunter.

"Well?" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

"I—I'd rather be caned, sir!" stammered Bunter.

Mr. Quelch smiled grimly.

"Possibly," he said. "But your wishes count for nothing in the matter, Bunter! I shall, however, cane you if you do not leave my study without another word."

Billy Bunter did not utter another word. "Extra toot" was enough, without a licking thrown in.

He limped from the study.

Grinning faces greeted him in the corridor. Billy Bunter blinked dismally at the Removites. He could see nothing to grin at.

"I—I say, you fellows, what an awful beast!" groaned Bunter. "Extra toot for an hour a day—as if class wasn't bad enough! I'm not going to stand it! I—I can't, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You asked for it!" chuckled Peter Todd.

"The askfulness was terrific."

Billy Bunter groaned dismally, and rolled away. Certainly he had asked for it, but now he had got it he was not pleased with it. For the rest of that evening Billy Bunter wore a lugubrious and woebegone countenance, and, like Rachel of old, he mourned and could not be comforted.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. N. G. I

WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER wore an unusually serious expression when he rolled into the Form-room the following morning with the rest of the Lower Fourth.

He had plenty of food for thought.

Extra toot, which had long threatened, had now fallen upon him; that very day it was to begin. After class—which, as Bunter said, was bad enough—he was to have an extra special hour with Mr. Quelch in the Form master's study. The prospect was appalling.

Probably it was not very pleasant to Mr. Quelch himself. But Bunter was not worrying about that. He was, as usual, thinking of himself, and his opinion was that no fellow ever had been so ill-used in the history of Greyfriars.

It had occurred to his fat brain, however, that there was one possible means of placating his incensed Form master. If he showed up remarkably well in class that day, Mr. Quelch might consider that he was not, after all, in need of special attention, and might let him off. So Bunter, for once, resolved to do his best instead of his worst.

It was rather late in the day, so to speak, for Billy Bunter to set up as a painstaking pupil. His aim, hitherto, had been to learn as little as he could, and to forget that little at the earliest possible moment. This was rather a handicap.

It was, in fact, too late in the day. Bunter had neglected his prep as usual the previous evening, and on the section of the *Æneid* which he was supposed to have "prepared" his fat mind was a beautiful blank. His "con" was likely to be even worse than usual, and he could only hope that Mr. Quelch would not call upon him. But the Remove master did call upon him, and Bunter had to construe.

The Remove were at this time engaged upon the second book of the *Æneid*, and had arrived at the attack on King Priam's palace in Troy. Some of them really did not mind it very

much, admitting that it was unusually lively for Virgil. Bunter's only feeling towards King Priam, and Troy, and Virgil, was a deep-seated wish that they were all at the bottom of the sea together.

"Bunter!"

The Owl of the Remove suppressed a groan. Smuggling a "crib" into the Form-room under Mr. Quelch's gimlet-eyes was an impossibility, and without a crib Virgil was a good deal like Sanskrit to Bunter. He did not even know where to begin till Peter Todd whispered:



Bob Cherry pushed back his cuffs, put up his hands, and advanced upon Skinner. "Put up your paws, old man!" said Bob cheerfully. "You've asked for it, you know, and it's coming along!" Skinner defended himself frantically, amid shouts of laughter from the Removites. In the midst of the scene Mr. Quelch came out of the Remove Form-room. "What—what is this?" he boomed. (See Chapter 3.)

"Limen erat—"

"Todd!" snapped Mr. Quelch. His ears as well as his eyes seemed like gimlets that morning.

"Oh! Yes, sir?" stammered Peter.

"Take fifty lines for speaking in class."

"Oh! Yes, sir."

Peter did not venture to speak again. But Bunter knew where the kick-off was now, so to speak, and he started:

"Limen erat—"

"Construe!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

Bunter blinked dismally. He wondered what "limen" meant, if it meant anything.

Mr. Quelch encouraged his pupils to trace English words etymologically to their origin in Latin, and even Bunter could catch on to this. For instance, he would not have been at a loss to know that "dominus" meant a lord or master, from its resemblance to "dominate." He could have guessed that "puer" was a boy from its resemblance to "puerile." But this was not always a safe guide, as he was to discover in the present instance. But it was the only guide Bunter had, and he chanced it.

"Limen erat—there was lime—"

"Lime!" repeated Mr. Quelch, almost dazedly.

"Lime there was—" went on Bunter.

"Lime!"

If Bunter had stated that there were

bricks and mortar, Mr. Quelch could not have been more flabbergasted.

"Bunter! You have not prepared this lesson!"

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I've taken a lot of trouble over it, sir. I—I was working hard in the study last evening, sir, with—with a wet towel round my head, sir. Todd knows, sir."

"How dare you, Bunter!"

It dawned upon Bunter that "limen" could not possibly mean lime. He wondered dizzily what it possibly could mean.

"You do not know that so simple and commonplace a Latin word as 'limen' means a door or entrance, Bunter!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, dear!"

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How was Bunter to guess that "limen" meant a door or entrance? The study of Latin at Greyfriars was not, really, run on lines of a guessing competition; fellows were supposed to look out a word they did not know in the dictionary. Dictionaries bored Bunter, and he preferred to guess and chance it.

"Yet you tell me that you prepared this lesson?" said the Remove master. "You may sit down, Bunter! I will not waste the time of the class! I shall attend to you later. Wharton, please go on."

Harry Wharton went on, and Bunter was left in peace, but with dismal anticipations. He had feared that "extra toot" would deal with history and obnoxious dates; now it looked as if it would touch upon Latin as well. This was what came of trying to please his Form master!

Third lesson that morning dealt with geography—a subject, in Bunter's eyes, only less detestable than Latin and maths. In third lesson Bunter gave Mr. Quelch the interesting information that the Heights of Abraham were in Palestine.

The Remove master stared at him, almost in wonder. The Remove grinned. When the stores of Bunter's knowledge were turned out, the result really was amazing.

Bunter had already forgotten a lesson on the subject of the Battle of Quebec, and the glorious death of General Wolfe. That the Heights of Abraham were in Canada, and connected with a glorious episode in the history of his country, Bunter had known a week ago; but how was a fellow to remember such things for a whole week?

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Quelch. He left it at that. But the expression on his face showed that when "extra toot" came along, Bunter was going to get very, very special care.

Bunter felt bitterly that it was useless for a really painstaking fellow to seek a word of commendation from a Form master. He felt that he might as well give up the attempt. But with the dreadful shadow of "extra toot" hanging over him, he resolved to make one more effort in the afternoon.

There was English literature that afternoon—a subject which was the least beastly of all subjects from Bunter's point of view, as it required less mental effort; and moreover, Mr. Quelch was liable to let himself go on English literature a little, and would sometimes use up a great deal of time with observations which his pupils were not expected to answer.

In English literature, indeed, Bunter had sometimes succeeded in snatching a short nap on a warm afternoon.

Mr. Quelch selected the "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" for the edification of his pupils.

No doubt Bunter had heard before of that celebrated poem, and might even have heard that it was written by Gray. But such matters did not linger in Bunter's memory. Why the thump should he worry himself over things written by a man named Gray, or White, or Black, for that matter? Bunter did not see any reason why he should. So anything that Bunter ever knew about the famous "Elegy" was quite gone from his fat mind, and it came as a new experience to him.

The Removites were told to write out the first stanzas, the beauties of which Mr. Quelch was going to expound to them.

Bunter considered that he was at least

equal to this, and still with a faint hope of getting on the right side of the Form master, he listened to Mr. Quelch's words as if they were pearls of wisdom, and wrote them down carefully. He was more than usually careful with his spelling, too, whispering to Toddy to ask him how many "k's" there was in curfew, and whether it was a "w" or a "u" in ploughman.

Possibly Mr. Quelch guessed that Bunter was distinguishing himself, as usual, for the Owl of the Remove was told to bring up his paper.

Feeling that this time, at least, Mr. Quelch could have no fault to find with him, Bunter marched out with his paper and presented it to his Form master.

Mr. Quelch gazed at it. He gazed again, and then gazed, Bunter watching him with a sinking heart. Again there was something wrong, though Bunter did not know what it was. Mr. Quelch read, by way of title:

LEG IN A COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD.

He gazed at it, and gazed at Bunter. "Is this an impudent jest, or what is it, Bunter?" asked the Remove master, breathing hard.

"No, sir! Certainly not, sir! What's the matter?"

"I told you to write 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard'."

"Yes, sir, that's what I've written."

"You have written 'Leg in a Country Churchyard,'" thundered Mr. Quelch, and the Remove gasped.

"Yes, sir, that's right," said Bunter, bewilderedly. "L-E-G spells leg, sir."

"L-E-G spells leg!" repeated Mr. Quelch dazedly.

"Yes, sir. I—I thought myself there were two g's—L-E-G-G, sir, but as you said L-E-G, sir, I spelt it with one. Isn't that right, sir?"

"Bless my soul!"

"You didn't say whose leg it was, sir," said Bunter. "You just said L-E-G, sir. That's what I've written, sir."

Mr. Quelch gazed at him again.

"Is it possible, Bunter, that you are unacquainted with the word 'elegy'?" he said. "Do you not know what an elegy is?"

"Yes, sir; it's a leg, of course," said the perplexed Owl. "L-E-G, leg."

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

Even Mr. Quelch's face broke into something like a smile.

"Bunter, you are an incredibly obtuse boy. A poem of this serious nature is called an elegy—E-L-E-G-Y."

"Oh, dear!" gasped Bunter. "I—I didn't know it was a—a catch, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bless my soul! Go back to your place, Bunter! You are more backward than I ever supposed, and I shall take great pains with you—very great pains. You will come to my study at five o'clock."

"Oh, dear!"

Bunter rolled back to his place. He made no further effort after that. He realised that it was futile. If a Form master was going to catch a fellow out like this, what was the use? Bunter gave it up.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

For It!

"HARRY, old fellow!"

Bunter's tone was affectionate, and the captain of the Remove grinned. Whether Bunter wanted to come to tea in No. 1 Study, or whether he wanted someone

to cash—in advance—a postal-order that he was expecting, he did not know; but he knew that Bunter wanted something. "Old fellow" was a sufficient indication of that.

"Give it a name," said Wharton.

"I—I want you to help me, you know," said Bunter, blinking at him dismally. "It's close on five."

"Time to get along to Quelch's."

"I know; that's the trouble," groaned Bunter.

"Hinc illae lacrymae!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Buck up, Bunter! Extra toot will do you lots of good. You can do with it, you know."

"It's quite a mistake of Quelch's," said Bunter. "I don't need it. It's not as if I were ignorant like some fellows—you chaps, frinstance."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I can't stand it, you know," said Bunter. "I'd rather be licked—blessed if I wouldn't rather have a Head's flogging. A flogging's only once, anyhow, but this awful toot goes on day after day. I've got to dodge it somehow, and I want my friends to rally round."

"Better go and speak to your friends about it, then?" suggested the captain of the Remove gravely.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"But what can I do, anyhow?" asked Harry, good-naturedly. "I can't coach you in advance—I don't even know what Quelch is going to spring on you. And it's too late."

"It isn't that," said Bunter hastily. "I—I want you to go instead."

"Eh?"

"You're a studious chap, you know," said Bunter. "You'd please him much more than I should. Suppose you go to Quelch's study, and ask him to explain some knotty point in Virgil? You know what he is when he gets going—he might keep on for the whole hour, and have no time left for me. See?"

"He might!" grinned Wharton. "I know I'm jolly well not risking it."

"Well, you might do that much for a pal," said Bunter. "Remember all that I've done for you, you know, old fellow."

"I'm afraid my memory's failing; I don't seem to remember anything that you've done for me, or for anybody else."

"Oh, really, Wharton! I used to be in your study when you first came to Greyfriars, and I stood by you, you know. You remember what a bad-tempered and unpopular beast you were—"

"Eh?"

"Who was it stood by you like a brick, and helped you through all your troubles, at that time?" demanded Bunter.

"Nugent," said Harry.

"Me, you know! The very first day you came to Greyfriars, you remember, I—"

"I remember—you borrowed five shillings of me," said Harry. "I don't remember that you ever squared. Shell out!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Shell out!" repeated the captain of the Remove, holding out his hand. "It's high time you squared—now you mention it."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter did not "square"; he gave the captain of the Remove an indignant blink, and rolled away.

It was a quarter to five; extra toot was terribly close at hand now. The prospect of being shut up with Mr. Quelch for a whole hour, concentrating his fat intellect on the acquisition of

undesired knowledge, was simply awful to Bunter. In class it was bad enough; but in class, there were the other fellows to whack it out, so to speak. Having Mr. Quelch all to himself for sixty minutes was like a nightmare to Bunter. He felt that it really was more than flesh and blood could stand. Lickings were a mere jest compared to this.

He stopped Hurree Jamset Ram Singh on his way to Little Side, and the dusky nabob grinned at him. Bunter's woebegone face seemed to excite more hilarity than sympathy in all the Remove.

"I say, Inky, old chap, lend a fellow a hand," groaned Bunter. "I'm up against it, you know. I've got to go in to Quelch, and I—I want some chap to butt in and interrupt. I've always treated you well, Inky—I've never looked down on you because you're a blinking nigger, old chap."

"The esteemed Bunter is too good?" murmured the nabob of Bhanipur. Inky had his bat under his arm, and he let it slip down into his hand, as if he had found a use for it. Possibly he did not like being alluded to as a "blinking nigger."

"Well, I'm no snob, you know," said Bunter. "I don't care whether a chap's black or brown or green. 'Tain't every fellow who'd be civil and kind to a black savage, is it, Inky? Now, what I want you to do is—yarooop!"

A sudden lunge of Hurree Singh's cricket bat sent Billy Bunter sprawling. He sat down.

"Ow, wow! Yaroooooh! You black beast—grrrrrooooooh!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh walked on cheerily, leaving Bunter to roar. The hapless Owl of the Remove staggered to his feet.

"Oh dear! Beast! I say, Toddy." Peter Todd was passing on his way to the cricket, and he stopped, with a grin, as Bunter hailed him.

"Time for toot, Bunter," he said.

"I say, Peter, be a pal," urged Bunter. "Go to Quelch's study and tell him I'm ill. Say you saw me in fearful pain in the study."

Peter stared.

"Tell him I'm in awful agony, and can't come," said Bunter. "Quelch will take your word, Peter, old chap."

"Quelch takes my word because I tell the truth, old bean," answered Peter, cheerfully. "I don't mind giving him your message—"

"Oh, good!"

"On condition that it's true."

"Eh?"

Peter swung up a cricket-bat.

"It's all right," he said; "I can soon put you into a state of fearful pain and awful agony. A few swipes of this bat will do it. Stand steady!"

"Ow!"

Bunter fled.

Peter Todd chuckled and went on his way. His assistance did not seem to be needed after all.

The hour of five boomed out from the clock-tower. It might have been the knell of doom from the effect it had on Bunter's spirits. With a deep, deep groan, the Owl of the Remove started for Mr. Quelch's study.

There was no help for it! The hour had come. And Bunter, as he knocked at Mr. Quelch's door, looked as if it were the hour of execution.

"Come in!"

Bunter rolled in.

"You are two minutes late, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch severely. "If you are late again I shall cane you! Do you realise that you are wasting my time?"

Bunter wondered whether Mr. Quelch realised that he was wasting his—



"I've always treated you well, Inky," said Bunter. "I've never looked down on you because you're a blinking nigger. I don't care whether a chap's black or brown or green. 'Tain't every fellow who'd be civil and kind to a black savage, is it, Inky? Now what I want you to do is—yarooop!" A sudden lunge of Hurree Singh's bat sent Bunter sprawling. (See Chapter 7.)

Bunter's—time. But he did not venture to ask.

"You may bring a chair to the table," said Mr. Quelch. "Now, Bunter, I shall give you half an hour of Latin grammar."

"Ow!"

"What did you say, Bunter?"

"N-n-nothing, sir."

"Very good," said Mr. Quelch, with a glare. "And half an hour of history, Bunter. I trust it will make an improvement."

"Shall I—shall I fetch my books, sir?" gasped Bunter, in the faint hope of wasting a few minutes more out of that dreadful hour.

"No, Bunter; they are not needed."

"I—I think I should get on better with—with my books, sir."

"Kindly make no further remark, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter suppressed a groan, and submitted to his fate. The awful hour commenced. Sometimes Bunter had wondered what the victims of the Inquisition had felt like. He knew now.

Three minutes having elapsed, fifty-seven minutes remained of the hour. They seemed at first to Bunter like fifty-seven hours—then like fifty-seven years—finally, like fifty-seven centuries. Before the hour was over, it seemed to Bunter that he was shut up with Mr. Quelch for unending spaces of time, and

that he would be an old, old man when he emerged—if ever he did emerge alive—from the Remove master's study.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Something Desperate!

GROAN!

Peter Todd gave a start.

It was a deep, almost sepulchral groan that greeted him on his arrival at Study No. 7 after tea. Peter had come in hungry after cricket practice and was thinking of tea; but for the moment he forgot tea as he heard that sound of woe.

Groan!

"Oh, you!" ejaculated Toddy, staring at a fat figure that was sprawled in the study armchair.

Billy Bunter blinked at him with lack-lustre eyes and groaned again. The Owl of the Remove seemed to be sunk deep in the dimmest depths of woe.

"What's the matter?" demanded Toddy.

Groan!

"Pain in your little inside?" asked Peter. "You shouldn't scoff tuck in the way you do, Bunter. Stands to reason that no fellow's inside could stand it!"

"You silly ass!" said Bunter. "It isn't that! I've just got through with Quelch."

"Oh!" Peter chuckled. "Is that all?"

"All?" said Bunter. "You frabjous chump, you don't know what it's like! An exam's nothing to it. A whole hour right under Quelch's eye. Keeps you at it, you know! Not a second's rest."

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Expects a fellow to remember things—raps your knuckles with a ruler if you don't."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is it a laughing matter?" howled Bunter. "You unfeeling beast, I'm absolutely done in! Done to the wide!"

"You'll get used to it," said Toddy encouragingly. "Keep on like this and you'll soon be able to spell cat without a K. In the long run you'll know the nominative case from a packing-case."

"Beast!"

And Bunter groaned again. He seemed in an exhausted state; doubtless, he was. It was the first real work he had done that term. Bunter was a past-master in the art of dodging work. But under the personal and individual supervision of Mr. Quelch there was no dodging to be done. Bunter had had to work, and work hard. He had had to concentrate his fat mind on Latin grammar till conjugations and declensions fairly buzzed in his fat brain. He had had to tackle English History till dates were crammed into him like the other kind of dates pressed in a box.

Possibly Mr. Quelch, exasperated by the Owl's laziness and incessant dodging, had driven a little too hard.

Certainly Bunter looked, and felt, worn out. And he thought of the dreadful hour on the morrow with horror. On the morrow, and the morrow after, and every day till "further orders." It was awful to contemplate! And Mr. Quelch was inexorable as Fate. Bunter had passed the limit of slacking and "rotting," and he had been brought up to time with a jerk. His fat heart failed him at the awful vista of endless hours of extra toot with Mr. Quelch.

While Peter Todd and Dutton were getting tea in the study Billy Bunter sat in the armchair and groaned. Groaning relieved his feelings, perhaps; but, no doubt, it was also a bid for sympathy.

Toddy was not unsympathetic; but, naturally, he was soon fed-up with the unmusical sounds from the armchair. Dutton had the misfortune to be deaf—or rather, the good fortune in this instance—and he did not hear. Bunter could have delivered himself of the most hair-raising groans without worrying Tom Dutton. It was different with Peter Todd, and Peter put in a remonstrance at last.

"Chuck it, Bunter!" he said. "Enough's as good as a feast, you know. You've made enough row!"

"Beast!"

"You'll get this loaf on your chest if you groan any more!" said Peter warningly.

Groan!

Whether from defiance or sheer force of habit, the Owl of the Remove groaned again. Peter was as good as his word.

Crash!

The loaf landed, and Bunter jumped and roared.

"Yarrah! Beast!"

"Now give us a rest!" said Peter.

Billy Bunter gave his study-mate a rest after that. Tea being ready, Bunter sat at the table and disposed of his whack; his uncommon sufferings at the hands of a too-dutiful Form master did not seem to have affected his appetite.

He gave Peter reproachful blinks during tea, to all of which Toddy seemed quite indifferent. After tea he rolled out of the study in search of sympathy elsewhere.

But there was little sympathy for

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Bunter in the Remove. The fellows seemed to look on the matter as a joke. Some of them even expressed compassion for Mr. Quelch, whose task, in driving knowledge into the dense brain of the Owl of the Remove, must have been a hard one.

"I say, you fellows, I'm not standing it, you know!" Bunter declared in the Rag that evening.

His statement was greeted with many chuckles.

"The question is, can Quelch stand it?" said Vernon-Smith. "Depend on it, Bunter, you'll wear him out before he wears you out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shall do something jolly desperate, you know!" said Bunter darkly. "I—I'd jolly well run away from school if I—if I had any money!"

"Hasn't your postal-order come?" inquired Squiff sympathetically; and there was a laugh.

"It's tyranny," said Bunter—"sheer tyranny! I'd write to my father to take me away from Greyfriars, only—only he wouldn't, you know!"

"Probably not!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Your pater might even agree with Quelch that it's a jolly good idea to make you learn something while you're at Greyfriars. Fellows do come here to learn things, you know."

"Rot!" said Bunter. "I'm going to be a stockbroker, like my pater, when I'm old enough. What does a stockbroker want with Latin?"

"Might even be a disadvantage to him in his business, to know the difference between 'meum' and 'tuum,'" remarked Ogilvy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Anyhow, I'm not standing it," said Bunter. "It's tyranny. We had a barring-out in this school once for a much smaller thing than this. If you fellows would back me up, we'd have a barring-out again."

There was a roar of laughter in the Rag. The idea of a barring-out, to rescue Billy Bunter from extra toot, quite entertained the Removites. Bunter blinked indignantly at the hilarious juniors.

"I think you're a lot of rotters!" he said warmly. "I'm being persecuted—that's what it is, persecution! And I can tell you that I'm not standing it! I shall do something jolly desperate!"

"Why not buck up and do some work?" suggested Mark Linley. "Stick to it, and chuck slacking, and you'll be all right."

"You—you silly ass!" said Bunter, with unmeasured scorn.

Evidently that suggestion did not appeal to him in the very least. If he did something desperate, it would not be quite so desperate as that.

Bunter rolled away dismally, leaving the juniors laughing.

That evening and the next day his fat brain was busy. He was up against a problem that had to be solved.

Slacking in class, slacking at prep, was exertion enough for Bunter. When it came to real work, the limit had been reached—and passed!

Something had to be done. Something—anything—that is, anything but work! That was the one thing needful, in Mr. Quelch's opinion—in Bunter's, it was the last resource to be tried after all other resources had failed. On that subject there was, therefore, never likely to be agreement between master and pupil.

Like many lazy fellows, Bunter would take twice as much trouble to dodge a task as would have been required to get

it done. If his present mental efforts had been directed towards the acquisition of knowledge, he would have gained quite a high place in his Form master's esteem. But Bunter's aims were quite different from that.

The following day—Wednesday—was a half-holiday, and the Remove were playing cricket with Temple, Dabney, & Co. of the Upper Fourth. Nobody gave Bunter much heed that afternoon, so plentiful was the lack of sympathy for the persecuted Owl of the Remove.

In fact, Bunter's fat existence was quite forgotten. But the Removites were shortly to be reminded of it—tragically.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Startling News!

MR. Quelch sat in his study as five o'clock sounded from the Greyfriars clock-tower, awaiting the arrival of W. G. Bunter of the Remove.

The Form master did not look very amiable. His special attention to Bunter encroached very deeply upon his scanty leisure. Mr. Quelch felt that it was his duty, and he did it; but really he could not be expected to be pleased.

His countenance, unamiable to begin with, grew positively menacing as several minutes ticked away and Bunter did not arrive.

The fat junior was late again.

Mr. Quelch reached for a cane, and laid it handy, all ready for Bunter when he did arrive. His valuable time was not to be wasted like this.

But Bunter did not arrive.

At ten minutes past five Mr. Quelch rose from his table, breathing hard and deep, with a pink spot glowing in either cheek. The look on Mr. Quelch's face would have warned any Remove fellow who had seen him to be on his very best behaviour.

Mr. Quelch stepped to the study door, and glanced into the passage. There was no sign of Bunter.

"Upon my word!" breathed Mr. Quelch.

He left the study and walked as far as the corner of the passage. By the big staircase two or three Remove fellows were lounging and talking, and they stood to attention at once at the sight of Mr. Quelch and the expression on his face.

"Russell!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir."

"Do you know where Bunter is?"

"Bunter? No, sir."

"Kindly find him at once, Russell, and send him to my study," said the Remove master.

"Certainly, sir."

Mr. Quelch whisked back to his study in a state somewhat like that of a volcano on the eve of an eruption.

Russell grinned at his companions—as soon as the Form master was out of sight. It would not have been judicious to grin while Mr. Quelch's gimlet-eye was upon him.

"That fat idiot's dodging again," he said. "The awful ass! He will get the licking of his life for this! Blessed if I see why I should root about hunting for Bunter on a half-holiday."

"Better do it, all the same," grinned Ogilvy. "I didn't like the look in Quelch's eye myself."

Dick Russell proceeded to look for Bunter. He walked down to the cricket-field, where Harry Wharton & Co. were

(Continued on page 17.)

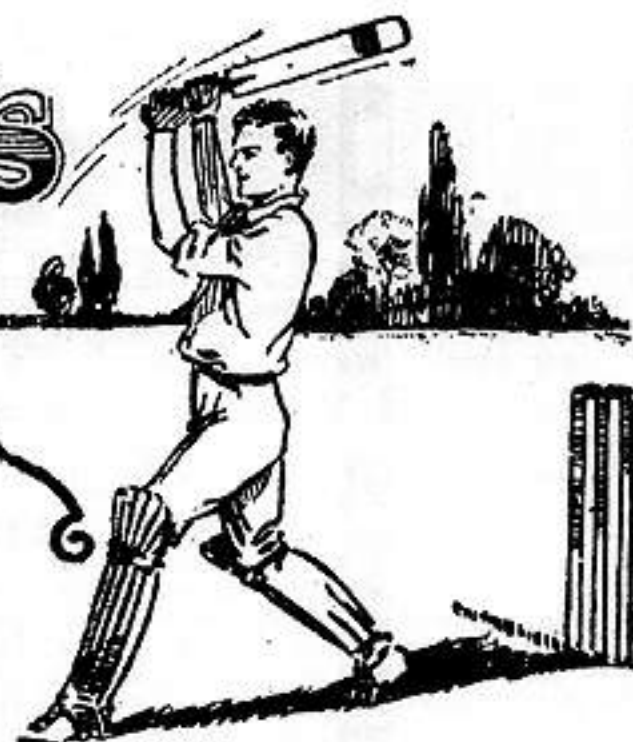
HARRY WHARTON'S Cricket Supplement

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June 12th, 1926.

No trouble or expense has been spared to make this supplement interesting and informative. In it all phases of cricket will be discussed by writers chosen from the foremost cricket authorities in the land. Readers may, therefore, rely upon the facts, figures, etc., mentioned from week to week in this supplement as being authentic.

HARRY WHARTON, Editor.



Boundary Hits! by "SCORER"

THIS is the criticism which I heard passed on a batsman the other day: "He has a fine style, and would certainly make a lot of runs if he only hit the ball."

W. H. Ponsford, the Australian, is a most accomplished swimmer, and that may be one reason why he was brought to England—so that he would be at home even on the worst wickets which the Clerk of the Weather may provide.

Jack Durston, the Middlesex bowler, fills up his spare time in making wireless sets. When one of his expresses hits a batsman Durston may also be said to have made a loud speaker.

Frank Watson, of Lancashire, is regarded as a possible Test match player for England this season. About a year ago he was bowled by a "softish" sort of delivery, and as he passed the bowler on his way to the pavilion he made this remark: "I don't know how you managed to get me out with that one." To which the bowler, who had evidently read "Sherlock Holmes," replied: "Elementary, my dear Watson!"

The other day I asked Oldfield, the Australian wicket-keeper, why all his friends call him "Bertie." "I only know one reason," he replied, "and that is because my name is William."

Here is this week's gem produced by the office-boy: "Surely if we want to get the 'Ashes,' and to keep them, we ought to have a Fender all the time." He's hot stuff, our office-boy.

When the Hon F. S. Jackson captained England in a series of Test matches in this country he won the toss five times out of five. He ought to lend that coin to England's captain for this summer.

During last season the Rev. R. H. Moss made his first appearance for Worcestershire at the age of fifty-seven. He evidently subscribes to the view that one is never too old to learn.

Freeman, the Essex batsman and wicket-keeper, takes a benefit when the county play Middlesex in July. It sounds contradictory, but the free list will be entirely suspended for Freeman's benefit.

Perhaps you didn't know that at the Oval you can sit on a "white elephant" for a shilling. That is the name given by habitués of the ground to the white stand at the Vauxhall end of the ground.

On behalf of Notts, Oates, the wicket-keeper, has caught out 756 batsmen and stumped 233 others. Earning his "corn," obviously.

In a match against Middlesex at Lord's last season O'Connor, of Essex, batted for seventy-five minutes and scored one run. No wonder the spectators said: "Oh, oh, Connor!"

In the Surrey v. Notts match last season Staples was both caught and stumped by Strudwick off the same ball. "Struddy" never was a wicket-keeper to miss his chances.

On Trial!

England Wants Fighters to Beat the Australians.

IT can certainly never be said that England has failed to treat the Test matches against the Australians this summer other than most seriously. Indeed, we can say that we have gone into the business of beating our opponents much more thoroughly than for many years past, and possibly the care taken will be reflected in the results.

In the first place, two matches were arranged against the Australians which were largely in the nature of trial games, and the teams to represent the South and the North against our touring visitors were chosen by the Selection Committee. In addition to these games, there starts at Lord's this week-end what might be called a full-dress rehearsal for the first Test match. This takes the form of a contest between what the selectors consider the best England eleven at the moment against the next best eleven. Immediately after this Test trial has been played the selectors will get together and choose the team for the all-important first Test match, which is to be played at Nottingham, commencing on the 12th.

It is difficult to estimate exactly how much this trial match will teach the selectors.

Just by way of an example, you certainly can't measure the worth of a batsman by the number of runs he happens to score in any particular innings or in any particular match. If the best batsman in the world gets a real snorter right at the start of his innings—before he has got his eye in, as the saying goes—he will probably be sent back to the pavilion. Speaking as a player of wide experience, I don't mind the snorters so much when I am "set," but to get a real snorter right at the start of your innings may, in a way, be considered bad luck.

Look at the matter in another way. Let us suppose that Jack Hobbs, playing in the trial match, gets a couple of ducks, and that some other comparatively unknown player does quite well. We shouldn't leave Jack Hobbs out of the actual Test match because he had failed in the trial game, should we? We know Hobbs to be the world's greatest batsman, and to leave him out of the side merely because he failed in a trial match would be sheer suicide. Hence my contention that you can't judge your batsmen merely on their showing in a Test trial.

In the bowling department things are rather different. A bowler on trial is allowed to send down several overs. He may get punished very severely in his first over or two—before he has got over his stage-fright, as it were—but sooner or later the real bowler will prove whether or not he is able to tie up the batsmen. Even if he is nervous at the start, he will shed his nervousness before he has finished his spell of bowling. Thus I think that it is in bowling rather than in batting that the trial match ought to teach us certain lessons—tell us exactly what certain bowlers can do on certain pitches against the very best batsmen.

What the trial matches can also teach the selectors is whether this or that player has what can best be described as the Test match temperament, and here it is more a question of how a fellow behaves during the match rather than what he does. Suppose that we are trying in this trial match a young batsman who is so nervous before he goes to bat that he can't fasten up his own pads. I should say at once that this player is not the type who ought to be chosen for England. He is almost literally out before he is in.

On the other hand, suppose we find a young player full of confidence. He doesn't get a lot of runs, but he shapes well at a crisis in the game. Then you can say, with a fair amount of assurance, that he has the right temperament.

To sum up, my view is that wise selectors, having watched the trial match, will immediately forget the actual figures—the batting figures and the bowling analysis—and rather choose our England team for the way they have deputed themselves generally. England wants fighters to beat the Australians. If the Test trial discovers some of these fighters for us, then it will have proved well worth while.

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AT THE NETS!

By a County Cricketer.

A New Series of Articles which will tell you how to improve your cricket.

No. 2.—THE RIGHT STANCE FOR MAKING RUNS

LAST week in my article I laid down a few general principles to be observed in learning how to play cricket, or, at any rate, how to improve your game.

Now I propose to get down a little more to detail, and we shall take the batting side of the game first. As most of my readers are in the boyhood stage, it is necessary, first of all, to say a word or two about the sort of bat you should use. In this connection there is one thing to be avoided all the time—never use a bat which is too heavy or which is too big.

THE STRAIGHT BAT.

A bat which is too heavy prevents that freedom of movement which is so essential to the making of most of the strokes which get the runs, and a bat which is too big is apt to develop the tendency to play with the implement other than straight. And, as everybody knows, the straight bat is at the very beginning of the making of a first-class cricketer. There are very few boys under fifteen years of age who are strong enough to use properly a bat which is more than two pounds in weight, and a handle shorter than is used by the grown-ups, helps the merely normal boy.

Having got the right sort of bat—something which gives you the confidence that you can move it freely, the next important thing is

YOUR STANCE AT THE WICKET

and here we come up against differences of opinion right away. There are what might be called two schools of cricket at the present moment; the school whose pupils stand in the old, orthodox way, left leg in front and covering up with the right, with left elbow and shoulder facing the bowler. Then there is the other school which adopts what everybody calls the two-eyed stance. This phrase is sufficiently clear to require little explanation. It means

standing with practically the whole of the body facing the bowler.

Now the object of the two-eyed stance is to give the batsman a clearer view of the ball as it comes to him; it enables him, as the phrase suggests, to watch the ball with both eyes. I am not going to lay down a hard and fast rule for any young player, because my own opinion is that the best stance for the making of a variety of strokes, and against ordinary bowlers is the one which strikes the happy medium between the two schools of ideas. The left elbow and left shoulder facing the bowler stance can be so exaggerated that the batsman is doing little more than squinting at the bowler out of one eye. Moreover, this stance, if carried out slavishly, creates quite a big space which can be called the blind spot. This stance is all right if the bowler is a fellow with an off-break; but if he is a leg-break man, then there is a certain part of the pitch which is shut out from the vision of the player with the bat.

Equally there are draw-backs to the two-eyed stance, and if you will try this you will see how difficult it is with this stance to make off-side strokes or straight drives. So my advice to the young batsman is to take a mean between the two; keep the left shoulder pointing in the direction of the bowler, but not to such an exaggerated extent as to restrict your view of the ball. On top of this advice in reference to stance, it must be added that complete

FREEDOM OF ACTION

should be retained in every respect. The most generally accepted and proper position for the feet is the left foot just outside the popping crease, and the right foot just inside it. And here I want you to get one golden rule stuck most firmly into your head, for, believe me, you will never improve your game if you forget this rule. It is that, whatever else happens, the right foot should never be moved backwards in the direction of square leg. The minute you do this, then you will cease to play with a straight bat. I shall explain next week that you will have to move the right leg across the wicket for making certain strokes, but in the direction of square leg—never!

Of course, you will understand that in these batting hints I am assuming always that it is a right-handed batsman to whom the instruction is being given.

(Look out for another interesting article next week, chums.)

PLAYERS WORTH WATCHING!

By JACK HOBBS.

(Continued from previous page.)

sometimes makes good scores; and, as I have said, of all the sixteen Australians, Grimmett alone can be depended upon to help the averages of the English bowlers. None of the other Australians are new to England, but those familiar with them may detect new qualities in several. The most improved bat on the side is J. M. Taylor, and I for one would not be surprised to find him finish up the tour with the best batting average. He is still a magnificent long field, and one of the few men I have seen who seems capable of putting the ball direct into the hands of the wicket-keeper from long distance—a magnificent thrower.

NEW WAYS OF OLD FOES.

Cricket followers will probably note that Gregory, the tall "Wallian" bowler, is not quite so fast as formerly, but, like many other fast bowlers, he may prove more destructive here than in Australia. It is sometimes claimed that Everett, the new man, is even faster, but Gregory is greatly helped in England by his height and reach and the consequent elevation of his deliveries, which come more awkwardly here than in Australia. Gregory's slip fielding is also splendid and a menace to any side. Macartney, the little "Governor-General," seems as great an all-rounder as ever, as he has quite recovered from his recent breakdown in health. He always reminds me of a smaller edition of Roy Kilner, not perhaps so virile as the Yorkshireman, but more subtle both in batting and bowling. Bardsley is still a great batsman, though the veteran of the side, and his 160 for New South Wales I considered the best "knock" hit against us during our last tour "down under." He had bad luck in the Tests, generally getting the worst of Tate's "snorters."

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A FIELDSMAN TO WATCH.

When J. S. Ryder was here before he had little chance to show his worth, but he may get more opportunities on this occasion, being a good change bowler and generally good enough for a fair score. I have a great opinion of W. A. Oldfield, not only as



O. V. GRIMMETT.

a wicket-keeper, but as a batsman. Indeed, he would be a dangerous scorer if he came in to open the innings, for few members of the side want so much getting out. But as a batsman, the stylist of the team is T. J. E. Andrews, who is also the best cover-point in Australia.

JB Hobbs

A WORD WITH THE UMPIRE!

L. Bouchier.—If, as you say, the Australians had won two matches and England one prior to the last Test of the season, this last Test would not be played to a finish. There will only be a fight to a finish in the last match if the two countries are level in the number of victories when the game starts.

M. Mac, Glasgow.—Three batsmen have each made two separate hundreds in one Test match—Bardsley for Australia against England, Sutcliffe for England against Australia, and Russell (Essex) for England against South Africa.

Samuel Broad, Brighton.—Tate, the Sussex bowler is 31 years of age, and is the only cricketer who has scored 1,000 runs and taken 200 wickets in three consecutive seasons.

L. Bradshaw, Oldham.—When the Australians were here in 1921 they were twice defeated—by a team captained by A. C. Maclaren, at Eastbourne, and by another "scratch" side got together by C. L. Thornton, at Scarborough.

E. Edwards, Nottingham.—It is not easy to name the best eleven left-handers in the country, but if I were choosing a team of left-handers I think most of the following would find a place—Frank Woolley, Kilner, Hallows, Mead, A. P. F. Chapman, J. L. Bryan, H. L. Dales, and Brown (Hampshire). Moreover, with those eight to start off with I think a team of left-handers could be got together to give the best lot of right-handers a run for their money.



(Continued from page 12.)

going strong in the match with the Upper Fourth.

The cricket-ground was not really a very likely place for finding Bunter; but Russell was interested in the progress of the match more than in the Owl of the Remove.

He stopped to look on at the game for about ten minutes, and joined in the cheering of a mighty swipe by Bob Cherry.

Then he remembered Bunter, and as the fat Owl was not visible there, he strolled away to the tuckshop.

Bunter was not in the tuckshop; he was not even at the window thereof, feasting his eyes upon the good things. Russell asked several fellows he passed, but nobody seemed to have seen Bunter.

Russell went into the House at last, and looked along the Remove passage. Study No. 7 was vacant. Peter Todd was at the cricket, and Dutton in the crowd, watching the game, and Bunter was not at home. Russell was about to leave the study when he noted a sheet of paper lying on the table, pinned there at the corner, and on it some writing in Bunter's large and sprawling hand. He glanced at the paper and gave a jump.

"Great pip!" he ejaculated. Russell stared blankly at the sprawling message on the paper.

Finally he detached it from the table, and left the study with it in his hand.

It was now turned half-past five. Bunter was more than half an hour late for his appointment with Mr. Quelch. The Remove master was busying himself with Latin prose papers for his Form, his brow thunderous. He looked up grimly as Russell presented himself.

"Where is Bunter?" "I—I can't find him, sir," faltered Russell. "I—I found this paper pinned to his study table, sir."

"That does not concern me. Find Bunter at once, and—"

"I—I think you ought to look at it, sir," stammered Russell.

The expression on the junior's face startled Mr. Quelch. He motioned to Russell to hand him the paper. Dick Russell backed out of the study as the Form master was reading it.

The expression on Mr. Quelch's face was extraordinary as he read the epistle from William George Bunter. It ran:

"I have been driven to this by persecution. I hope that Mr. Quelch will be sorry when he finds I'm gone. I forgive him.

"W. G. BUNTER."

Mr. Quelch gazed at that precious communication as if it mesmerised him. This, then, accounted for Bunter's unpunctuality.

"Impossible!" gasped the Remove master. "Trickery! Impossible!"

He rose to his feet, crushing the paper in his hand. It was impossible; it was one more dodge of the elusive Bunter. Mr. Quelch did not believe the message for a single moment. Yet Mr. Quelch

had an intense desire to see Bunter immediately, and make assurance doubly sure that it was impossible.

He hurried from his study. In the corridor he passed Dick Russell in deep confabulation with five or six other fellows, all of them ejaculating. It was clear that the news was already spreading. With a black brow the Remove master stopped.

"Russell!" he rapped out, almost savagely.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Russell.

"Kindly do not spread this absurd story over the school, Russell. It is a mere subterfuge—a fatuous attempt to deceive me."

"Is—is it, sir?" stammered Russell.

"Certainly it is, you foolish boy."

"Then—then Bunter hasn't gone, sir?" exclaimed Bolsover major, who was in the group.

"Certainly not!" roared Mr. Quelch. "Do not be so absurd, Bolsover. Have you no common sense?"

Mr. Quelch whisked on, leaving the juniors staring.

"That's all jolly well!" said Bolsover major, when he was gone. "But if anything would make Bunter bunk, it would be having to work."

"Of course, it's all gammon," said Skinner.

"If it's gammon, where is Bunter?" asked Russell. "I couldn't find him anywhere."

"Hiding somewhere, of course," grinned Skinner. "Isn't he as full of dodges as a monkey?"

"But a fellow would get a terrific flogging for gammoning a Form master like that! Bunter wouldn't have the nerve!"

"Fools rush in where angels fear to tread!" chuckled Skinner. "Nobody in his senses would play such a trick! But has anybody ever supposed Bunter to be in his senses?"

Skinner expected a laugh, but the other fellows looked very grave and serious.

"That's all very well," said Bolsover major gruffly. "But I wouldn't make any rotten jokes about Bunter till we know he's safe and sound!"

"Bosh!" said Skinner.

"Your fault, too, a lot," said Bolsover major. "You helped to get him into Quelch's black books, with your rotten tricks in the Form-room, Skinner. I consider you're partly to blame."

"Why, you silly ass—"

"Look here, let's look for Bunter," said Russell uneasily. "Let's see if we can find Bunter."

And the juniors proceeded to search for Bunter—a search in which forty or fifty fellows joined, as the startling news spread. Meanwhile, Mr. Quelch had hurried to the Sixth Form passage. He was aware that Wingate, the captain of the school, was working at Greek that afternoon in his study, and he needed the assistance of the head prefect of Greyfriars.

Wingate forgot all about Greek as the agitated face of the Remove master looked in upon him. He jumped up.

"Is anything the matter, sir?"

"Nothing, I think," said Mr. Quelch, though he certainly did not look as if nothing was the matter. "But kindly glance at that message, Wingate."

Wingate, in amazement, perused Bunter's farewell message. The spelling did not make him smile. He looked very grave.

"It's impossible, of course, sir," he said. "It must be some silly trick."

"I am convinced of it," said Mr. Quelch. "I am sorry to interrupt you,

Wingate, but Bunter must be found at once. Will you kindly take the matter in hand, with the help of any prefects who may be in the House?"

"This minute, sir!" said Wingate. "Thank you!"

Wingate of the Sixth lost no time. Loder and Walker and Gwynne were within call, and they joined up for the search.

Up and down and round about Greyfriars the prefects went, inquiring after Bunter of the Remove, seeking him everywhere, and finding him not.

According to Bunter's farewell message, he had run away from school—and certainly he seemed to be gone!

Mr. Quelch returned to his study in a very angry and agitated frame of mind. If Bunter was not found soon, it would be necessary to apprise the Head. Mr. Quelch had a very strong and natural disinclination to mention the occurrence to Dr. Locke, if it could possibly be helped. He had done no more than his duty—but in view of this outcome, was it not possible that some other view might be taken?

It was only one more of the tortuous trickeries of the unspeakable Bunter. Still, the Head would have to know if Bunter was not found soon; and Mr. Quelch waited with intense anxiety for news that Bunter was found.

And the news did not come.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Where is Bunter?

"MAN in!" said Harry Wharton. The Form match on Little Side was drawing to its end.

Vernon-Smith and Penfold were at the wickets, when a lucky ball from Scott of the Fourth sent the Bounder home. As Smithy came off, and Wharton called to next man to take his place, he was aware that some excitement or other was spreading among the fellows who had gathered to Little Side to watch the game. He heard, without heeding it, the name of Bunter repeated.

Wingate of the Sixth came through the crowd of juniors as the batting was resumed, and called to Wharton. The captain of the Remove looked round.

"Have you seen anything of Bunter of your Form this afternoon?" asked Wingate.

"Bunter? No; not since dinner!"

"I don't want to interrupt a game," said the captain of Greyfriars, "but as soon as you're at liberty, help to look for Bunter. Something may have happened to him."

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Has he burst at last?" asked Bob Cherry, and there was a chuckle among the cricketers. But Wingate did not smile.

"It seems unlikely, but it may be serious," he said. "Bunter's got to be found as soon as possible. Mr. Quelch is anxious about him."

"Right-ho!" said Wharton at once. "I'm out, and I needn't watch the finish. I'll begin hunting for him."

Wingate hurried away, leaving the cricketers wondering what had happened to Bunter—of whose unimportant existence they were thus reminded. Bolsover major was in the crowd, telling the fellows what had happened, and Harry Wharton was not long in getting particulars.

"Utter rot!" was his verdict. "He's not far off, I fancy."

"The rotfulness is terrific," said the nabob of Bhanipur. "It is a whacking

whopper of the esteemed and ludicrous Bunter."

"Bosh!" said Peter Todd. "He daren't go home—and where else could he run to? It's a spoof!"

"Just that!" said the Bounder. "We shall find him hiding somewhere, of course. The fat chump!"

"The howling ass!" said Wharton. "He will get a Head's flogging for this. It's just a trick to dodge extra toot, and it means a licking for him."

"Serve him jolly well right!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Yes, rather!"

Among the Famous Five, at least, there was no alarm. They thought they knew their Bunter too well to suppose for a moment that he had found refuge from "extra toot" by so desperate an expedient as running away from school.

"Still, we'd better find him."

There was no doubt that Bunter was better found. The Bounder was left to supervise the 'fag-end' of the match, and Harry Wharton & Co. joined up in the search for Bunter.

By this time, Greyfriars was being rooted over from end to end for the Owl of the Remove.

The House was searched, even to the remotest unused attics; the old tower and the ruined chapel were explored—every nook and corner was scanned, and scanned again.

Gosling, the porter, was questioned by a score of fellows, and Gosling stated that he had seen Bunter of the Remove go out of the gates, as Bunter of the Remove was entitled to do on a half-holiday. Whether he had come in again, Gosling did not know.

That the fat junior was not within the precincts of Greyfriars was fairly certain by this time, and most of the fellows considered it equally certain that he was staying out of gates in order to cause alarm and uneasiness.

Certainly, that was not a very wise or judicious proceeding; but Bunter had never been supposed to be wise or judicious. Possibly, he hoped to soften Mr. Quelch's heart by this peculiar method. Bunter was ass enough for anything.

Mr. Quelch had taken it for granted that Bunter was still within gates; as he had been ordered to come to his Form master's study at five, he was bound to be within gates. It was clear now, however, that he had gone out—and stayed out. Harry Wharton & Co. proceeded out of gates also, to look for him along the river. On that sunny afternoon there were a good many boats out, and the searchers hailed fellows on the school raft, and on the river, to ask them whether they had seen anything of Bunter.

Nobody had, apparently; at least, there was no news.

"He will turn up for tea," said Bob Cherry with conviction. "It's past tea-time now, a good deal; he's bound to turn up soon. You see, he will be hungry."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"He may stick it out till evening call-over," he said. "Not later than that, I think. It's not much good hunting for him—he's keeping out of sight, of course. Still, we may as well keep it up."

"May as well," agreed Bob.

The Famous Five moved along the towing-path. Other fellows were seeking Bunter in different directions.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry suddenly.

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He stopped, and pointed to an object in the rushes by the margin of the river.

It was a straw hat.

A sudden seriousness fell upon the party of juniors. Wharton stooped down the grassy bank, and caught up the hat.

Inside was the name "W. G. Bunter."

"He's been along here, then!" said Bob Cherry in a lower voice.

The straw hat was wet—the river had washed over it as it clung among the rushes. The chums of the Remove stood and stared out over the river shining in the golden sunset. Was it possible? What secret could those glimmering waters have told?

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"He's been here," said the captain of the Remove. "He must have—must have had his hat blown off. It was—was very windy this afternoon. You remember, the wind got up while we were playing cricket."

"Ye-es!" said Bob slowly. "But I—"

"That's what's happened, of course," said Frank Nugent, but he looked very uneasy as he spoke. "If he was going to the railway-station he would very likely walk down to Friardale by the towing-path."

"That looks as if he really meant to run away."

"Perhaps he did. He's ass enough for anything."

"But—" Wharton scanned the shining river. "Of—of course, he may have lost his hat here. But—"

"Dash it all, nothing can have happened to him here!" said Johnny Bull uneasily. "Of course, if he fell in, he can swim hardly a stroke. But he wouldn't fall in."

"The bank's rather steep here, and he's as blind as an owl," said Wharton. "But—"

"It's too beastly to think of," said Bob. "Dash it all, the hat may have blown off, and he would be too blind to see it sticking in the rushes. He can't see a yard."

"Yes, that's it, most likely."

The Famous Five looked at one another in silence. It was the most probable explanation—that Bunter had lost his hat by accident. Such an accident might very easily have happened. But—there was a "but." It was possible—barely possible, at least—that a much more serious accident had occurred. The river bank was steep, and Bunter was the worst swimmer in the school, and a yard or two from the rushes the water ran deep. If Bunter had fallen in—

"Hang it, don't let's think of it, till we've something more to go upon, at least," said Nugent. "Accidents do happen in—"

"But it's no use meeting troubles half-way," said Harry. "Most likely he's safe and sound all the time. He may even have gone in to tea while we're looking for him here."

"The likelihood is terrific."

"If—if he's all right, he's not likely to miss tea," said Bob Cherry hopefully. "It wouldn't be like Bunter to cut a meal."

Wharton wrinkled his brows in thought.

In Bunter's farewell letter he had said that he was going to run away from

school. Even Bunter was not likely to make that threat and turn up for tea in Study No. 7 as usual. If he was deliberately remaining out of sight, he was likely to remain away a good deal longer than that. Until he re-appeared, his fate must be in doubt, with the lurking possibility that some terrible accident had happened. Bunter, of course, would know nothing of the discovery of his lost hat—he would not know what conclusions might be drawn from it. He wanted to give the impression that he had taken the desperate step of running away from school, apparently in the hope that Mr. Quelch's heart would be softened thereby.

But, as the matter stood, anxiety at the school would be much keener than Bunter had imagined.

Once more the juniors stared over the river. They could not, and would not, believe that a tragedy had occurred; but the murmuring of the waters had a sinister sound to their ears now.

"Let's get back," said Bob Cherry, with a slight shiver. "No good looking for him any farther along here, anyhow."

Wharton, with the straw hat in his hands, looked out over the murmuring river again. "The fat duffer! We'd better take this to Mr. Quelch, I suppose—it's all we can do."

The Famous Five retraced their steps to the school. Absolutely convinced as they were that Bunter was only playing a trick, they were silent and grave. The barest possibility of such an awful occurrence was enough to make them so.

"Found anything?" asked Bolsover major, as they came in at the gates of Greyfriars.

Wharton held up the straw hat.

"Bunter's?"

"Yes!"

"Where did you find it?"

"In the rushes of the Sark."

"Great Scott! Quelch will feel queer over this. After all, he was hard on Bunter."

"I don't see that he was hard on Bunter," said Wharton curtly.

"Well, I jolly well think so," said Bolsover major. "I'm sorry for poor old Bunter, if you're not. I think you're unfeeling."

"You silly ass!" said the captain of the Remove, and with that, he went on to the House, to Mr. Quelch's study.

He knocked at the Remove master's door, and Mr. Quelch bade him enter. The Remove master was no longer busy upon Latin-prose papers. He found it impossible to put his mind into them. The longer Bunter remained absent, the deeper grew Mr. Quelch's lurking uneasiness. There was no doubt that if Bunter's object was to make his Form master "sit up," he was succeeding. Mr. Quelch was sitting up with a vengeance now.

"What is that, Wharton?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, in startled tones, as the captain of the Remove laid the drenched straw hat on the table.

"I thought we'd better bring this to you, sir," said Harry. "We found it in the rushes by the river, about a quarter of a mile below the raft. It's Bunter's hat."

Mr. Quelch's face became very pale.

"You have seen nothing of Bunter himself?"

"Nothing, sir!"

"Very good, Wharton! Doubtless the foolish boy will return in time for roll-call," said the Remove master, with forced calmness.

Wharton quitted the study. He found the news already all over Greyfriars that Bunter's hat had been picked out

ANSWERS
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of the river. Bolsover major, who seemed to like taking the most pessimistic view possible, declared that the matter was settled now, and even went to the length of punching Skinner's head, on the ground that Skinner had been partly the cause of this awful catastrophe.

At roll-call that evening, taken in Big Hall by Mr. Quelch, one Greyfriars fellow failed to answer to his name.

"Bunter!"

There was no voice to reply "Adsum!"

"Bunter!"

Mr. Quelch's voice echoed amid a deathly silence.

The Remove master compressed his lips hard, and marked Bunter as absent. The Greyfriars fellows wondered what he was thinking. But whatever might be Mr. Quelch's thoughts, his face gave no clue to them, and the fellows were left to wonder.

But one thing was clear to the Remove master now; the Head had to be informed of the state of affairs. And when Mr. Quelch was seen heading for Dr. Locke's study after roll-call, there was a buzz of excitement. Bunter was an ass—every kind of an ass, known and unknown—but even Bunter wouldn't have let the matter come before the Head, if there was nothing in it—that was the general opinion in the Remove. Once before the "beak," it became awfully serious. And now it was before the beak!

Had Bunter run away from school? Had he met with a terrible accident in running away?

"Is it possible——" Peter Todd was heard to mutter. And Peter's face was very grave.

And all Greyfriars was wondering now, whether it was possible; and wonder and doubt were changed into something like certainty, when bed-time came—and no Bunter!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Not a Ghost!

"TODDY!"

Peter Todd was dreaming, in his bed in the Remove dormitory; and in his dreams, the Owl of the Remove mingled with other unpleasant things, in the throes of a nightmare. It seemed to Toddy, as he slumbered and dreamed, that the missing Owl was hovering about him, trying to speak, trying to make himself heard, like some voiceless spectre; and Peter could not hear or answer, as is so often the case in the grip of nightmare, caused by a reckless supper or by sleeping on one's back.

"Toddy!"

The fat spectre that haunted Toddy's dreams was whispering—in his slumber, Toddy was sure of that. Toddy was conscious of a dreamy feeling of annoyance that Bunter had picked him out to haunt.

"Toddy!"

Shake!

The dream was amazingly real—it was Bunter's fat whisper, and Toddy even felt himself shaken by the shoulder by a fat hand.

Then, all of a sudden, Toddy's eyes opened, and he realised that it was not all a dream; dream had become a reality.

In the darkness of the dormitory, a fat hand was shaking his shoulder to awaken him—a fat voice was whispering from the gloom.

Peter had plenty of nerve; but that startling awakening made him start

and shiver. He stared into the gloom of the dormitory. Dimly by his bedside a podgy figure appeared. No spectre, spook, or phantom ever had such a circumference. It was the real Bunter, in the flesh.

"Toddy, old man! Wake up!"

"Bunter!" breathed Peter Todd.

"Oh, you're awake! Don't make a row, old son."

"You fat idiot! How did you get here? You've made me jump, you blithering fathead."

Bunter chuckled softly.

"Did I frighten you, Toddy? Sorry—I forgot you hadn't much nerve, old chap! It's me, you know."

"You silly owl!" said Peter crossly. "What do you mean by raising our hopes like this, and then letting us down?"



"Oh, really, Toddy——"

Peter Todd sat up in bed. He did not like being awakened in the middle of the night, and he had been very unpleasantly startled. But undoubtedly he was glad that Bunter was there safe and sound. He had not believed that there was "anything in it"—but uneasiness had grown, and he had been extremely disquieted. His disquiet had changed now to a desire to punch Bunter hard on his fat little nose, as a reward for the anxiety he had caused.

"You frabjous jabberwock," said Toddy, peering at the fat junior. "What have you been playing this potty game for? Where have you been all the time?"

In the faint starlight from the high windows of the dormitory, Toddy discerned a grin on the fat face by his bedside.

"I stayed out of gates, you know," said Bunter. "I suppose Quelch got the note I left for him?"

"Yes, you ass."

"And he thought I'd run away from school, what?" grinned Bunter. "Made him jump, what?"

"I don't know what he thinks, fat-head! I know he would jolly well skin you if he got his paws on you now."

"He jolly well isn't going to," said Bunter. "I've come here to let you know I'm all right, Toddy, and——"

"And now clear out!" growled Toddy.

"Oh, really, Peter——"

"You fat villain, do you know you're supposed to be drowned?" demanded Peter Todd.

Bunter jumped.

"Wha-a-at?" he ejaculated. "Wharton found your silly hat sticking in the rushes by the river. Lots of the fellows think you're at the bottom of the Sark. They know what would happen to you if you fell in, you cack-handed ass."

Peter Todd had plenty of nerve, but that startling awakening made him start and shiver. He stared into the gloom of the dormitory. Dimly by his bedside a podgy figure appeared. No spectre, spook, or phantom ever had such a circumference. It was the real Bunter, in the flesh. "Toddy, old man! Wake up!" "Bunter!" breathed Peter Todd. (See Chapter 11.)

"What rot!" said Bunter. "I'm about the best swimmer in the Remove, and chance it. I say, did Wharton bring my hat home?"

"Yes, you chump!"

"Good! I thought it was lost," said Bunter. "You know, some of those Highcliffe cads got after me on the towing-path and I had to hook it—and my hat blew off. I couldn't stop for it—that beast Ponsonby was just behind me. I'd have stopped and thrashed him, only——"

"Only you funk'd it?" snorted Peter.

"Only he had Gadsby and Monson with him," explained Bunter. "I could have handled two of them, of course——"

"Oh, my hat!"

"But three of them would have been rather a large order, even for me," said Bunter, blinking at Peter in the gloom. "So I had to let my hat go. I hardly got clear as it was. I suppose

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Ponsonby kicked it into the water—just what a cad like that would do. But did that make you think I was drowned? You must have been an ass, Peter."

"Why, you—you—" gasped Peter. Evidently his concern for the Owl of the Remove had been wasted.

"Ho, he, he!"

"You'll wake the whole dormitory if you go off like an alarm-clock, you fat image!"

"Ho, he! I say, Peter, did Quelch think I was drowned?" chuckled Bunter. "I say, did he look cut up? I suppose he would feel practically heart-broken, after all his harshness and injustice—extra toot, and all that. Did he cry?"

"Oh, crumbs! Not to any extent!" gasped Peter.

"He's rather an unfeeling beast," said Bunter. "Still, he's bound to realise what a beast he's been, when I stay away a long time, and he thinks of me lost in the cruel world, Peter. Don't you think it will give him a heart ache or something?"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came a sleepy voice. "What's that row? Somebody up?"

"It's Bunter," said Toddy.

Bob Cherry jumped. He sat up in bed, and peered through the darkness towards the dim figure beside Peter Todd's bed.

"The fat idiot has turned up again," said Peter.

Bob Cherry gasped.

"Bunter!" he ejaculated.

"The fat idiot has turned up like a bad penny."

"My only hat!"

"Don't wake the whole House!" breathed Bunter. "I've not got to be found here, you know. Quiet!"

Bob Cherry peered in amazement at him.

"You fat villain!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"How did you get here?"

Bunter chuckled.

"I got in by the Cloisters, after dark you know. I left a box-room window unfastened, and got back into the House, and I've been in the attics since then. Of course, I couldn't stay out all night. I suppose there's been a search for me, hasn't there?"

"Yes, you frabjous ass!"

"I thought so," assented Bunter. "Now the search has been made, you see, nobody will suppose I'm in the attics, and it will be quite safe—safe as houses, see?"

"Great Scott!"

"Don't wake all the fellows, Bob Cherry. That cad Skinner might give me away if he knew."

"Might he?" came Harold Skinner's voice.

Whispering voices in the dormitory had awakened several fellows—Bob Cherry's whisper, indeed, being rather of the stage variety. Fellows were waking up all along the row of white beds.

"I—I say, Skinner—" stammered Bunter.

"Didn't I say the fat rotter was all right?" sneered Skinner. "Catch him drowning! I don't believe he could, either. Fellows who are born to be hanged can't be drowned."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is that Bunter?" exclaimed the voice of Harry Wharton. The captain of the Remove was awake now.

"Yes, old fellow."

"You fat rascal!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"What are you doing here?" de-

manded Johnny Bull. "If you're a fat spook, go back to your watery grave, and be blowed to you. If you're real, shut up and let a fellow go to sleep."

"Oh, really, Bull—"

Nearly all the Remove were awake now. They sat up in their beds and blinked and peered at Bunter.

Bunter, apparently, expected something like an enthusiastic burst of joy and relief at his return. No doubt the Remove fellows were relieved to know that he was safe. But there were no signs of joy. Indeed, the remarks they addressed to him, numerous as they were, did not include one of a complimentary nature.

"I say, you fellows, don't make a row," urged Bunter uneasily. "I can't be found here, you know. I should get into a frightful row. I really came to see my old pals. I knew how awfully anxious they'd be about me. I knew how you were feeling, Toddy."

"I'm feeling for a bolster," said Toddy. "Wait a minute."

Bunter did not wait a minute, or a second. He backed hastily away from Peter's bedside.

"Of course, you fellows will keep this dark," went on Bunter. "I put you on your honour, you know. I say, Peter, what—"

"Well, you frabjous owl! Come nearer," said Peter Todd, with a grasp on his bolster.

Bunter kept his distance.

"What has Quelch done, Peter? I want to know, you know. Did he seem cut up?" asked Bunter.

"He looked as if he would like to cut you up," said Peter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, keep quiet! The game would be up if I was found here you know. Do you mean to say that Quelch doesn't care, Toddy? I say, he can't be so unfeeling as all that! I thought it would wring his heart."

Peter blinked at the fat junior. Some glimmering of Bunter's remarkable scheme dawned upon his mind.

"So you thought Quelch would be cut up?" he asked.

"Ye-e-es, of course."

"And so grieved at losing you that he would be overcome with joy when you turned up again."

"Well, why not?" demanded Bunter.

"I suppose he's got some feelings—even schoolmasters have feelings. They're human—at least, to a certain extent. It stands to reason that Quelch would repent of his harshness when he found that he had driven me to running away from school. I suppose he's got a conscience."

"You fat dummy!"

"Oh, really, Peter! Besides, he will be so jolly worried that he will be no end glad to see me again when I turn up. At least, that's what I think. And while I'm missing he will have a rotten time, you know, which will punish him for his tyranny."

"Fathead!"

"Anyhow, I got out of extra toot all the while I'm missing," said Bunter. "That's so much to the good, isn't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You awful ass!" said Harry Wharton. "There's no doubt that you've made both Mr. Quelch and the Head very anxious—"

"Good!"

"But as soon as you're found, you ass, they won't feel anxious any longer—they will only feel rabid."

"Oh! You—you don't think Quelch's heart will be softened?" asked Bunter anxiously.

"Ha, ha! No. Hardened!"

"You don't think he will realise that he's been near losing one of his most promising pupils, and repent!"

"Great pip!"

"Of all the frabjous chumps!" said Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I'm jolly well not showing up, then," said Bunter. "The only question is, grub. That's why I came here to speak to Toddy."

"Not to relieve your old pals of their anxiety?" chuckled Bob.

"Eh? Oh, yes, of course! But grub's important, you know. You see, a fellow can't live on air. I'm hungry now. I should be famished if I hadn't found a pie in Smithy's study—"

"Have you been raiding my study, you fat brigand?" demanded the Bounder.

"Oh, really, Smithy! I hope you're not going to be mean about a pie. You see, I can't come down to breakfast in the morning when I'm supposed to have run away. Now, can I?"

"Well, Quelch might guess you weren't gone if he saw you gobbling brekker," said Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's all right, though," said Bunter. "I can keep in the attics and sneak out when all the fellows are in class and get some tuck in Friardale. I shall have a day out, you know, and get in again after dark. I shall need some money."

"Now we're coming to the point," grinned Bob.

"I say, you fellows, I suppose you're going to stand by me in an awful crisis like this. A general whip round, you know," said Bunter. "Suppose you make it a shilling fund—every fellow puts a shilling. Half-crowns would not be objected to, of course. What do you fellows say?"

"Rats!"

"The ratfulness is terrific."

"I suppose you're going to back me up, aren't you, in standing against persecution and tyranny?" howled Bunter. Apparently the Owl of the Remove was looking for enthusiastic support from his form-fellows. He was not likely to receive any.

"The best thing you can do, Bunter, is to turn into bed and let Mr. Quelch find you here in the morning," said Harry Wharton.

"No jolly fear! A licking in the morning and extra toot in the afternoon! Catch me!" said Bunter, disdainfully. "I expect all my old pals to rally round and back me up."

"Fathead!"

"I've a jolly good mind to turn out and bang your silly head on the wall," growled Bolsover major. "We've been taken in."

"Hush!" exclaimed Peter Todd suddenly. "Cave!"

There was a step in the passage without. It was a firm tread, approaching the door of the Remove dormitory—a tread that the Removites knew well.

"Quelch!" breathed Bob Cherry.

There was a gasp from Bunter.

"Oh!"

"A fair catch!" chuckled the Bounder. "Now you'll be able to see just how much Quelch's heart has softened, Bunt."

"Oh, dear! I—I say, you fellows, keep it dark!" panted Bunter. "Not a word, you know—not a word, you chaps! Oh, dear!"

And Billy Bunter plunged under Peter's bed, and crouched there, palpitating, as the dormitory door opened.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Poor Old Bunter!

MR. QUELCH stepped into the Remove dormitory and turned on the light.

The light glimmered on a row of white beds, and on a row of juniors, apparently asleep.

Every fellow had laid his head upon his pillow and closed his eyes, and, to all appearances, the dormitory was buried in slumber.

Mr. Quelch, however, did not judge by appearances. He knew the rising generation rather too well for that.

Possibly he had heard sounds from the dormitory—some of the voices had been rather incautiously raised. Undoubtedly he was suspicious and watchful. In point of fact, the Remove master had been too anxious and troubled, on Bunter's account, to go to bed that night. The exasperating Owl weighed on his mind, while at the same time he was intensely angry.

Mr. Quelch suspected—or rather, was certain—that the elusive Owl of the Remove would somehow sneak back into the shelter of the school—the only shelter he had, in fact.

After all the rest of Greyfriars had retired, the worried and sleepless Form master was making his rounds, hoping to see or hear something of the vanished junior.

Mr. Quelch stood looking at the Remove fellows as they lay silent and, to all appearance, slumbering, with a grim look on his face. He was silent for a minute or two, and then he spoke.

"Wharton!"

No answer.

"Wharton!" repeated Mr. Quelch, raising his voice and coming nearer to the bedside of the captain of the Remove.

It was impossible to feign slumber longer. Mr. Quelch's penetrating voice would have awakened any sleeper. Wharton opened his eyes, yawned, and sat up in bed, blinking in the light.

"Who—what— Oh, Mr. Quelch!" he ejaculated drowsily.

Mr. Quelch looked hard at him.

"I thought I heard a sound of voices in this dormitory, Wharton," he said.

"D-did you, sir?"

"I did, Wharton!"

"Indeed, sir!" murmured Harry.

He closed his eyes again and blinked, to let Mr. Quelch observe how sleepy he was. But the Remove master did not heed.

"Kindly listen to me, Wharton."

"Oh, certainly, sir!"

"I have a very strong suspicion, Wharton, that Bunter may now be again within the walls of Greyfriars," said Mr. Quelch, "unless something has happened to him—which I think improbable—he must have returned for shelter. In that case it seems to be exceedingly probable that he would seek to communicate, in a surreptitious manner, with his friends in the Remove."

"Oh!" murmured Wharton.

"If you should see anything of him, Wharton, it is your duty, as head boy of the Remove, to inform me at once."

Wharton shifted uncomfortably. Probably that was his duty as head of the Remove; but, on the other hand, he could not very well "give away" the fatuous Bunter to punishment. He was very glad that Mr. Quelch did not put a direct question to him, and he remained uncomfortably silent.

Mr. Quelch gave him a very penetrating look, and possibly his keen eyes read something in the junior's face. However, he turned away without speaking

again, and the Remove fellows hoped to see him cross to the door, and disappear. Bunter, quaking under Peter Todd's bed, watched the Form master's feet, which were all that he could see of Mr. Quelch, longing to see them progress doorward.

But Mr. Quelch did not go. It was clear that his suspicions were awakened.

He walked the length of the dormitory, and looked into every corner, and into the big cupboard at the end, obviously in quest of the concealed Owl.

As it was useless to keep their eyes closed any longer the Remove fellows watched Mr. Quelch with deep interest. Bunter watched his feet with still deeper and intenser interest.

At the end of the long dormitory Mr. Quelch stopped and stooped down, and peered under a bed.

"Game's up!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Mr. Quelch came back along the row of beds, and at each bed he stopped, and stooped his rather angular figure, and peered underneath.

The Removites exchanged glances.

Whether Mr. Quelch was proceeding merely upon suspicion, or whether he knew that Bunter was in the room, they could not guess. But it was clear now that if he did not know, he would know soon.

When he arrived at Peter Todd's bed, the interest among the watching juniors was quite breathless.

Mr. Quelch stooped once more, and peered under Todd's bed, and then he was seen to jump. He rose again at once to his full height, with thunder in his brow.

"Bunter!"

His voice reverberated through the startled dormitory.

"Bunter!"

There was no answer. The Owl of the Remove, almost frozen with terror, still crouched under the bed.

"Bunter!" boomed Mr. Quelch.

"Come forth!"

"Ow! I—I'm not here!"

"What?"

"I—I mean—"

"Wretched boy!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "I know that you are there! Come forth at once!"

Bunter quaked, and remained where he was. Indeed, Mr. Quelch's tone was not inviting. No Remove fellow would have liked to come to close quarters with him just then.

"Do you hear me, Bunter?" hooted the Remove master.

"No, sir! I mean yes, sir! Oh dear!"

"Come out from under that bed immediately, Bunter! I command you to come forth at once!"

Bunter remained where he was. Apparently he regarded the bed as some sort of a protection from his Form master's towering wrath. Mr. Quelch's face was red with anger, and it was growing more and more crimson.

His anxiety on Bunter's account was relieved. His wrath, therefore, had full play. And his wrath was, as Hurree Janset Ram Singh remarked afterwards, terrific.

"Wharton! Cherry!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Rise at once, and draw Bunter out from under that bed!"

The two Removites reluctantly turned out. They stooped down on either side of Todd's bed, and Bunter blinked at them.

"I say, you fellows, hands off, you know. Oh dear!"

"You fat duffer, come out!" said Bob. "What's the good of sticking there now you're found out, you ass? Come on!"

Bob Cherry reached for Bunter's leg to

get a hold. The next moment he was rolling on the floor, Bunter's foot having been planted fairly on his nose.

"Ow! Yaroooh!" roared Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Silence! Wharton, Cherry, pull the bed aside! Todd, you may rise and help them!"

Peter Todd turned out, and the juniors grasped the bed, and dragged it aside.

Then William George Bunter was revealed.

He sat up, blinking at Mr. Quelch's terrifying face through his big spectacles, a good deal like a very fat rabbit fascinated by the gaze of a serpent.

"Bunter, rise!"

Billy Bunter groaned, and dragged himself to his feet. Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes seemed almost to bore holes in him. The Removites watched in silence—excepting Bob Cherry, who was mumbling as he dabbed his nose with a handkerchief.

"Bunter, you have played a disrespectful trick, causing personal anxiety to me and to your headmaster! You have thrown the whole school into commotion. You have attempted to deceive me, sir, in the most unscrupulous and iniquitous way."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"Have you any excuse to offer?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, yes, sir! Lots!" stuttered Bunter. "You—you see, sir, it—it was only a joke, sir—"

"A joke?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, in a terrifying voice.

"Yes, sir, that's all! I—I mean, I—I wasn't really going to run away, sir—not really. I—I knew it would be an awful blow to you, sir, to—to lose me! That's why I did it, sir."

"Bless my soul!"

"Because—because I'm so—so attached to you, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Peter Todd involuntarily.

"Silence, Todd!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"Bunter, it is difficult to find words in which to describe your conduct!" said Mr. Quelch. "You have deliberately caused alarm in the school. You have deliberately spread a false impression, for what object I cannot imagine."

"I—I thought, sir—"

"What?"

"I—I thought you might repent, sir, and—"

"Repent?" said Mr. Quelch dazedly.

"Yes, sir, and—and leave off persecuting me, you know, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Persecuting you!" said Mr. Quelch, gazing at Bunter. "Are you in your right senses, boy?"

"Extra toot, and all that, sir," said Bunter. "I—I thought the shock would—would do you good, sir."

"You thought the shock would do me good!" repeated Mr. Quelch, as if he could scarcely believe his ears. Perhaps he scarcely could.

"Yes, sir! You see, sir—"

"You impudent young rascal!" thundered the Remove master.

Bunter jumped.

Evidently the shock had not done Mr. Quelch any good. He was not repentant—there was no sign at all of that! Indeed, he seemed to be worse than ever!

"I—I mean, sir, I—I didn't do it!" gasped Bunter. "It—it wasn't me, sir!" The Owl of the Remove was getting a little confused now. "I—I really meant to say, sir, that—that it wasn't me."

(Continued on page 28.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 956.

THE DWELLER IN THE CAVE! Locke & Co. heard a scraping movement in the dark; then they saw a bent form slouching along furtively. It was a man—a very old man, with rounded shoulders, long trailing arms, and a long white beard that covered his chest! And a queer story he had to tell!



The Phantom of the Dogger Bank!

An Amazing New Detective Serial, featuring Ferrers Locke and his boy assistant, Jack Drake.
(Introduction on page 23.)

The Dweller in Desolation!

LOOK out for the next, Mr. Langsom," snapped Drake, as he sprang into the gloom of an alcove near by.

But Langsom had already found cover. Lumps of hurtling rock are very effective in making even starving men move quickly. From their various points of vantage, the three peered into the depths of the cave.

"Who are you?" shouted Locke, in a sharp voice. "We mean you no harm!"

"Get outa here! Get outa here!" croaked a wheezy voice from the blackness at the end of the cave. Then a crazy laugh rang out. "I got plenty o' rocks—so stand your distance!"

"My man," replied Locke, "whoever you are, we appeal to you as starving men, as castaways on this terrible coast."

Again the crazy laughter rang out. "Starvin', is it? So was I—onst! Starvin's the right thing for people like you! So get outa here, lest ye get a lump o' rock smashin' in yer skulls!"

"He's English!" said Drake.

"Ay, an' so was the rest. They blew up the rocks at Saint Gully. But they didn't find it! No, they didn't find it—and never will. 'Tis John Carr's an' I be here to guard it for him. So get outa here!"

Ferrers Locke started. "My man," he said, collecting himself almost immediately, "I am John Carr's friend and his partner in business. He and I own Brek Katel together—"

The crazy man in the dark shrieked. "You be the fiend that's swindled him into sellin'? By thunder, I'll get yer—"

"Your mistake," said Locke swiftly. "I went into partnership with John Carr to prevent another man from buying Brek Katel. And that other man, whom I have foiled, has landed me here to die, so that he can wrest this land from John Carr—"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 956.

"That be truth?" asked the man of the cave. "'Tis like, if you be here, an' starvin'! You got no rocks, there?"

"No, nothing! No weapons of any sort. We were landed with nothing!"

"Then the man who landed ye is a fiend from the pit. Keep back—I'll come out—"

The hidden three heard a scraping movement in the dark; then they saw something glimmer white in the darkness. The white resolved itself into a bent form, slouching along furtively. It was a man, it seemed a very old man, with rounded shoulders, long, trailing arms, and a long white beard that covered his chest.

The cave-dweller halted when in the dim light, and bent his knees, resting the backs of his fingers on the turfed floor, thus helping to support his body, like a gorilla. He peered here and there in the cave with eyes that shone with a dull red light, like rubies.

"Come outa that, like I've done! Lumme, I've a'most forgot the way to talk!"

Ferrers Locke stepped boldly out into the light; and the wild, little man heaved himself back a pace, using his long arms like crutches.

"Ay, I see ye! Ye be different from the rest—"

Drake and Langsom now stepped to view, and the wild man made a guttural sound in his throat. He was so like a beast—an animal—and it appeared as if, living like an animal, he had taken on some of the ways of animals.

Seeing the upright forms of Locke, Drake and Langsom, evidently re-awakened something in the man's brain. He rose to his feet, and let his hands hang down by his sides.

When erect, the three could see that he was not so small as they had at first thought. He was of middle height, though he stooped and had wide, powerful-rounded shoulders. He was dressed in sealskin.

He took three steps towards his visitors.

"I saw ye i' the night," he said.

"What I saw wasn't like the rest. Ye had no gear. What's this about John Carr?"

"Come into the light," said Locke, "and I'll explain!"

The cave-man followed his visitors out into the evening light.

"You can see we are starving," said Locke, halting at the cave mouth.

The white-bearded man nodded.

"Ay, an' I've seen two or three starvin'. Ye are that," he said.

"Well, will you give us some food?"

"Ay, an' I will, for I believe ye! Wait a wee—"

The man slouched back into the cave and returned later with some pieces of dried fish, which had been partially cooked. He handed a piece to each of his visitors who tasted it and found it quite toothsome. It was cod, perfectly sweet and wholesome in its dried state.

"Jingo, that's better," said Jack, looking somewhat happier. "Many thanks, friend, for that bite. I daresay you know what it is, to be on Brek Katel without grub for two days?"

"I starved before I found out how to live," said the man. Then he turned to Locke. "You are John Carr's friend?" he inquired, evidently wishing to hear the fact repeated.

The Baker Street detective nodded as he finished his piece of fish.

"This is all right," said Drake. "Now, maybe we'll be able to hang on till Skipper Proctor comes for us—"

"Skipper Proctor!" The white-bearded man almost shrieked the name. "You know him? And he comes?"

Jack Drake fell back a pace, in surprise, but Locke stepped forward eagerly.

Startling News!

YES, we expect him to search the north of Iceland for us," said Ferrers Locke. "He is John Carr's friend, and admiral of Carr's North Sea fleet, which operates on the Dogger."

"John Carr's friend! Well I know it!

And mine—mine, too! We were shipmates, John Carr, Blazes Proctor, and me. And John Carr has a fleet! An' old Blazes is his admiral! By hokey, 'tis good hearin', sir! We was shipmates all together, in the trawler Carr owned with Proctor. Blazes was skipper, John was mate, an' I was a sort o' second-mate; but I hadn't any share in the boat. John Carr, he said he owned a big lump o' land up here in Iceland. We brought the North Star round. Carr said that if the land was worth anything he'd start a trawlin' fleet—a steam-fishin' company—an' we'd all have shares.

"Blazes, he landed us off Langanæs—me an' John Carr alone. We came to survey the land, an' we did, findin' it a land of rock an' stone. It took us six days, the trekkin' over the jokuls; and when we got back to the trawler old Blazes was anxiously waitin' for us. We gave up any hope of Brek Katel bringin' in money. We fished the far northern banks, till the ice druv us south. We used to be smackmen together—John an' Blazes an' me. But when John's father died, he left a little bit o' money, an' John an' Blazes bought the North Star. She was a steamer, so we ventured far north. We've fished the White Sea together, John an' Blazes an' me. So we had a craft. But the ice druv us south, an' coal was gettin' short.

"It blew up heavy when Blazes was lookin' for a landfall north-east o' Iceland. Ice-floes was comin' down on the land, an' we saw a startin' Polar bear on one makin' his terrible voyage. We got our landfall, but 'twas far to the west'ard. We was on a dead lee-shore. Blazes got anxious, an' we had to steam hard w' the seas abeam. Ah, they was brave days, w' John and Blazes in the North Star!

"I got washed overboard. They thought I was lost. No boat could live in the sea, and I saw the North Star round up an' search about. But I was clingin' to an ice-floe. They left, an' I don't blame them. Ice-floe or no ice-floe, I oughter 'ave been a dead man. But I weren't. There was a dead Polar bear on that floe, an' that carcass saved my life. I skinned it, and kept meself warm, an' ate the raw flesh.

"We crashed on the rocks, and I got ashore, w' my carcass o' the bear. I found a cave. There was treasure in that there cave—gold an' jools an' things. John Carr was a rich man, for I found I was on Brek Katel. I saw things we'd seen before when we was surveyin'—not far from here, neither. I shifted them treasures." The man here poked his head forward, and peered suspiciously at Locke. "If so be as it's truth you be a friend o' John Carr—"

Ferrers Locke's brain was working quickly. He was searching his mind for some words he had heard John Carr use when talking with Proctor. What was it he had said? Something about the White Sea and their "brave" days in their first steamer . . . with—with Peter Deane! He had it!

"I will prove it to you, my friend," said Locke. "Carr has been intimate with me. I know your name—"

"You know me name? Then, what be it, for I've nigh forgotten meself?"

"In one of the yarns John Carr has spun to me," he said: "Ah, Locke, we had brave days in our first steamer—up fishing the White Sea! Old Blazes and dear old Peter Deane. We lost him one night—Peter Deane."

The wild-looking, white-bearded man trembled visibly. His eye became watery, and he held out a trembling hand towards Locke.

"I knew John'd remember me," he

said. "So I've stayed here a-guardin' of his treasures, though others have come w' dynamite, an' telescopes on a tripod, an' funny instruments w' compasses on 'em, like Blazes used for takin' his departure from the land. And ye say Blazes is comin', sir—comin' here to take old Peter Deane outa this fiend's pit o' a land, w' all the treasures for John Carr?"

"It is our hope and belief that he will come, but when we do not know," said Locke. "Where are these treasures, Deane?"

That the man was crazy had not been apparent for some time. As he talked of other days his mind had certainly been normal. But at the mention of the treasure a look of crazy cunning had come into his eyes.

"Ha, ha! I got it safe! Come you here, sir, you friend o' John Carr, an' see!"

He slouched back into his cave, and Locke, Drake, and Langsom followed. At the end the man drew aside coverings of sealskins.

"See there, sir, behind them rocks I kept by me to sling at anyone who comes in for the treasure. Ye can see 'em glintin' in the murk. This'll buy a steam-fishing company for John Carr. An' old Peter Deane can be his admiral along of Blazes Proctor!"

The man cleared away some of the stones, and dragged the sealskins on which the treasure rested into the light.

A pitiful display of tawdry finery came to view. There were some solid gold chalices, it is true, but the "jewels" were worthless.

Deane was chuckling and gloating over the heap.

"Pretty things! Pretty things!" he chuckled crazily. "An' men has starved because o' them—come up here w' their telescopes, dynamite, an' instruments to find 'em!"

"Not worth a thousand pounds."

NEW READERS BEGIN HERE.

FERRERS LOCKE, the private detective of Baker Street, and

JACK DRAKE, his boy assistant, have been engaged by

JOHN CARR, owner of the Carr fishing fleet, to track down a steam trawler of Icelandic design, which, with name and number covered, has been cruising the Dogger in misty weather for the purpose of wrecking the gear of Carr's boats. This mysterious vessel, dubbed the Phantom by the fisherfolk, is carrying out its foul purpose under the leadership of

SCAR HOSKING at the bidding of STANILAU STROMSUND, whose sole object, it appears, is to impoverish Carr, in the hope of making him dispose of Brek Katel, a big stretch of land in Iceland.

BLAIZE PROCTOR, admiral of Carr's fleet and skipper of the Stormcock, another trawler of the same type as the Phantom, on which Locke and Drake set off in chase.

After a series of thrilling encounters between the two trawlers, the Phantom falls into the hands of Ferrers Locke and his men. Leaving his capture in the hands of Carr, the investigator and his crew steam for Ingholdt Farm, Iceland, the haunt of Stromsund, where Locke and Drake gain the confidence of FREDERIC LANGSOM, Stromsund's steward. The trio are unable to reach the Stormcock again, however, for they are captured by the enemy and marooned on Brek Katel; but not before Locke manages to tap out a wireless message for help.

Following the track of human footprints, the marooned trio enter a cave, to be brought up suddenly as a heavy missile comes hurtling towards them from the darkness.

"Into the shadow—quick!" shouts Locke.

(Now read on.)

said Locke, in Danish. "This is not why Stromsund wants to buy Brek Katel. These tawdry baubles, no doubt found by this man in the cave you discovered, Drake, were doubtless the 'relics' used in religion in the days of the Vikings. Except as things of interest to antiquarians, their value is about the weight of these golden vessels. I would not give a thousand pounds for the lot, delivered to my house in Baker Street—"

The white-bearded keeper of the treasure looked at Locke as he spoke. But he did not understand the words as did Drake and Langsom.

The "treasure" was carefully put away again by Peter Deane, after which the unfortunate man showed Locke and his companions where his food-store was situated. Trustful as a dog, he gave his visitors a free hand to help themselves whenever they wished.

There were dried fish and seal-meat, heaps of a certain uncommon type of seaweed, which Locke recognised as the sort used by people on the coasts sometimes, for spinach, and some dried herbs, which Deane explained had grown in his "garden."

Deane could make fire; so Locke, Drake, and Langsom went out on to the headland the next day, and lit a smother fire of turf. The blue smoke curled up towards the sky, and blew thin as it passed inland towards the jokuls.

"The best possible sort of signal," said Locke; "and, if the weather remains dry, will need attention only once a day."

The castaway trawlerman had lines made of seal-sinew and hooks cut from fish-bones. He explained how he fished from the rocks, using limpets as bait.

Drake and Langsom spent a lot of time fishing as the days went on, and they found it splendid sport.

Ferrers Locke ranged about inland, exploring, with Peter Deane as his constant companion. In fact, the white-bearded castaway followed Locke about like a dog. He led the detective to those places where he had seen the men with the "telescopes on tripods" and the other instruments. Locke asked Dan particularly to show him the places where blasting operations had been carried out. These, however, were distant, but Deane promised to take Locke there the next day.

One evening, as Langsom and Jack came home with their day's catch of fish, Locke was sitting outside the cave waiting for them.

Drake threw himself down on the ground beside his chief. He was thoroughly tired out.

"No sign of Proctor, sir," he said. "We've stoked up the smother-fire, too."

"I don't think Proctor could have got that message," said Langsom.

"Not directly," said Locke. "But he may get it indirectly—from some other trawler, perhaps. We must not give up hope yet. At all events, our friend Deane has made us comparatively happy. We can live and keep warm. Proctor is bound to search up here in the end, whether he got my wireless or not."

"Have you come to any conclusion as to why Stromsund went to such lengths to make Carr sell Brek Katel, sir?" asked Jack.

"Not yet," replied the detective. "I only have a theory. To-morrow Deane is going to take me where blasting operations were carried out by Stromsund's surveying party. That may prove something—"

"What I can't understand is this," said Jack. "Why did Deane see men from civilisation come and go, and not

accost them? Why, they might have been Carr's own men, for all he knew—"

"The man is crazed!" broke in Langsom.

"Not so crazy as you think," said Locke. "Have you not noticed how sane he is getting now he has human companionship? Why, to-day he said to me: 'I reckon ye think my treasure ain't worth much, Mr. Locke. Don't go for to tell me as what I've been guarding all these 'ere years ain't goin' to be useful to John Carr, arter all!' Could that be anything but the speech of a sane man? And as to why Deane did not appeal to fellow humans when he saw them in this terrible land—well, remember he was crazed with the obsession of the necessity to guard the treasure. That was sufficient explanation to me before. But to-day I got further news from Deane. You know how I have to drag details out. It appears that he thought these men with the 'telescope on a tripod'—he means a surveyor's theodolite, of course—might be Carr's own men. So he spied at night, as he did on us, and he heard these words: 'I'll make Carr sell, if I have to sink his fleet with a dozen armed phantoms!' That conveys a lot to us who know the ins and outs of this case of the phantom of the Dogger. And I have tried to carry Deane's memory back—I mean, for details. One of those men was addressed by the other two as Stromsund! So, you see, even in desolate Brek Katel we are picking up the soundest clues to link up the chain of our case."

The next day Langsom and Drake set off early for the fishing. Locke and Deane were to start on their own journey later. But just before the detective set out, Jack Drake came running back to the cave, excitedly waving his arms.

Locke spun round on hearing his assistant's shout.

"Smoke smudge on the horizon, sir!" cried Jack excitedly.

"It'll be old Blazes—old Blazes!" croaked Deane, leaping like a child in his delight.

"Steady, old man!" said Locke. "We'll go out on the headland and watch. Our smoke signal will have been seen by now, so it is too late to stamp the fire out."

"But ye want him to see it—ye want him to see it!" cried Deane, his eyes blazing strangely, and a strange look of fresh suspicion creeping into them.

"If it is Blazes—yes," said Locke. "But we have yet to discover if it is Proctor coming to our aid, or Stromsund returning to view our corpses and gloat over the success of his own fiendish handiwork!"

The Watchers on the Headland!

FERRERS LOCKE, Drake, and Peter Deane hurried to the headland to join Langsom, who had remained on watch there.

They found Langsom flushed and excited.

"Proctor has seen our smoke, Herr Locke," said the big Dane, pointing to the approaching trawler, which was just appearing on the horizon. "She is steaming straight for our headland."

Ferrers Locke directed a steady gaze out to the boat.

"Maybe she's coaled again," muttered the detective. "No, we can't be sure yet."

"Coaled? Can't be sure?" inquired Langsom. "To what do you refer, Herr Locke? What trawler could that be but

the one of your good skipper, Blazes Proctor?"

Ferrers Locke looked grim.

"Proctor, under my orders, always filled his bunkers with smokeless coal," he said. "That trawler is not using Welsh stuff, but coal from Newcastle, Lancashire, or America."

Jack Drake's face fell. He felt that, as a detective's assistant, that thought ought to have occurred to him as soon as the smoke smudge was seen by him and Langsom. But he had been carried away by excitement. He did not doubt for a second that this was Skipper Proctor, hurrying to rescue them from this terrible land of Brek Katel, on which they had been marooned by Stromsund.

"As you say, sir," said Drake, "he might have coaled again. I doubt he'd be able to get full supplies of pure Welsh coal in far northern coaling stations. Maybe he couldn't help himself, and had to coal with what he could get—"

"That is my great hope, my boy."

Peter Deane watched the approaching trawler with eyes that were held steady by a strange fascination. A childlike wonder glowed in the poor castaway's face. His long, white beard quivered in front of his deep, hairy chest.

"Yon's old Blazes comin' to pick up his old shipmate, Peter Deane," he said. "Ay—an' all that there pretty treasure I've been guardin' for John Carr all these 'ere years."

The smothered fire smoked merrily alongside the watchers on the headland.

"We must lie down," said Locke. "They will be having glasses on the headland soon. Perhaps it will be best for them not to see us beside the fire. It may be necessary to enter into quiet and secret retirement with Peter Deane and the Viking 'treasure.' Lie down, Langsom—"

Langsom spread his great bulk out on the ground, propping his chin in his hands, and watching the approaching trawler with thankful eyes.

Jack and Locke were the only doubtful ones of the party. Peter Deane still stood upright.

"Deane, lie down!" rasped Locke. The white-bearded man started, glanced at the detective like a cowed dog, and settled down on his stomach in obedience to the order, though he saw no sense in it.

The trawler drew nearer. Soon, it was discernible that she was a craft of Icelandic design. But so was Stromsund's vessel.

"We must lie low, and watch," said Locke. "Not too much movement, remember. If it is Stromsund returning, we can retire in Indian file, at the crouch, back down the depression, and seek the shelter of Deane's cave without being seen."

"And the protection of Peter's hefty rocks," said Jack.

"Exactly," replied Locke, "though I hope we won't be discovered there. I do not look forward to a brutal fight, hurling those rocks—and this quite apart from the terrible danger we ourselves shall be in—"

"You've pretty well made up your mind it's Stromsund?" whispered Jack.

"I never make up my mind about anything of which I am not sure, Drake," whispered back the detective. "We will see as soon as we can distinguish figures on the vessel's deck."

"If it's Stromsund, he'll try to do for us without any artistic slow starving touches this time," muttered Jack in a low voice.

"Of that you may be sure," replied Locke quietly. "But Deane's cave is admirable for defence, even against fire-arms. We could hold the place even if they pumped lead at us from a machine gun every second of the day—"

"And down anyone who entered with a lump of whizzing rock," said Jack. "It's a good thing old Deane's food store is in there. And the deep, emergency water-hole, too."

"Yes, we could hold out for a long while, my boy, against fire arms," said Locke. "But, as I say, I hate the idea of a fight in which we shall have to hurl those great lumps of rock. Still, I'll be the lustiest hurler if it comes to it!"

"You'll have to be pretty smart to be better at it than I shall be," said Jack, with a faint grin.

Deane was showing signs of excitement.

"Lie still, Deane!" commanded Locke sharply.

"I can see figgers on the deck, sir!" cried Deane. "Soon, I'll be able to see old Blazes in the wheelhouse."

"Can you really see figures on the deck?" asked Locke in wonder.

"Ay, sure I can! For years I've laid out on this 'ere 'eadland, watchin' the horizon. That strengthens a man's blinkers a bit, I can tell 'e."

"So it does," said Locke. "I think Deane can be our marine glasses, my boy."

The trawler was in no doubt as to where she should steam. Straight for the headland she came.

Locke made a swift exclamation of chagrin.

"What is it, sir?" asked Jack.

"My boy, she has altered course a point. She is now pointing for the spot where they landed us. It looks as if it is Stromsund."

"Are there any broken panes in the wheelhouse windows, Peter?" asked Jack.

"Na, na, they be all right," replied Peter.

"Proctor may have had them repaired," said Locke.

"If that spot in the middle of the wheelhouse is a bell, sir," said Jack, "that trawler is not the Stormcock. The Stormcock had two bells, one to port and one to starboard."

"You are right, my boy. I'm afraid it is not rescue yet."

"Yon's a bell, right enough," said Deane.

The trawler swerved round in a wide semi-circle when near the coast, but farther on, where Stromsund had before landed Locke, Drake and Langsom. A boat was lowered, and all strained their eyes to pick out the figures of the men.

Things were passed down into the boat.

"Rifles, by jingo!" gasped Jack.

"I don't see Blazes! Why don't Blazes show up?" said Deane, like a peevish child. "I want old Blazes Proctor!"

"You'll see no Blazes yet awhile," snapped Ferrers Locke. "My boy, unless I am greatly mistaken, that man directing things on the deck is Stromsund. It looks just like his stout, flabby build."

"I—I think you're right, sir," said Jack.

Deane was staring intently at the trawler. Suddenly he rolled over on his back, kicking and shouting with rage.

"Wither 'is eyes!" bellowed the castaway. "Wither 'is perishin' pig's eyes! It's that there chap who said 'e'd sink all John's fleet wi' a dozen armed phantoms—that chap that came 'ere twice wi' the telescope on a tripod—"



Peter Deane watched the trawler with eyes that glowed with childlike wonder. "There's old Blazes comin' to pick up his shipmates!" he said to the watchers on the headland. (See page 24.)

"Deane, lie still!" barked Locke. "Don't rise, Langsom, on your life! Back—back, all, along the depression. And keep low till you get behind the first crest. Then run for it for your lives, back to Peter Deane's cave. Go off singly. Drake, lead the way; Langsom, you follow, but keep that great bulk of yours low. Deane, you'll stick by me, and I'll see you don't rise and shake your fist at the trawler or anything silly like that. Off you go, Drake. There's not a moment to lose. If Stromsund can dog us to our lair our lives are not worth a couple of hours' purchase. Stromsund is here for desperate deeds this day!"

The Battle of the Cave!

THE desperate little party got safely back to the cave. And they threw themselves down on the carpet of white turf, panting and almost exhausted. Even Peter Deane had had enough of it, running back for shelter, bent over in an awkward position to prevent themselves from being seen.

"I am confident we got here without being seen," said Locke.

"They can never find the place, Herr Locke," gasped Langsom, who had felt the rigour of the run more than anyone else. "Even you, great English

detective as you are, had a very difficult task to trail Deane to the cave. What chance have they? And there has been no dew moisture of late to soften the sandy patches of ground and leave footprints."

"They've got a big company, where we had three," replied Locke. "They know there is someone hidden for whom they must search, which we didn't know till I happened to light on Deane's footprint that morning. They can extend, like soldiers, and beat every inch of the country. I don't like being a Job's comforter, Langsom, but we must square up to facts. They'll find the cave all right—in the end—"

Peter Deane showed nothing but an animal-like rage at his great disappointment.

"'Tis this 'ere Brek Katel," he said. "Ye see water—ye find it poison. Ye see vegetable growth—ye find it bitter an' it make ye vomit. Ye see a rare mass o' wreckage floatin' in from the nor'ard—ye find it a mass o' spume an' floatin' weed. Ye see rescue comin' straight in from the nor'east—ye find it a murderin' fox o' a swindler comin' to shoot ye down. 'Tis no wonder men is druv stark starin' mad on Brek Katel. In summer it's hot enough to melt ye, an' ye get pestered by stingin' flies. In winter, 'tis all night, an' ye hear the ice crashin' down on the rocks, an' ye

wonder when ye'll see a great polar bear amblin' into the cave—"

"When the people of England know all about this they'll make it a holiday place, instead of Southend and Brighton," said Jack.

"Oh, you English," groaned Langsom. "You joke—how does the poet say it—right at the cannon's mouth."

Ferrers Locke laughed.

"To some nations it seems profane," said Locke. "We laugh—then we fight. And, as I think I heard you say before, we generally muddle through and come out on top in the end."

"I pray, Herr Locke, that we shall this time."

"There ain't much doubt about that," said Peter Deane. "No one can take this 'ere cave, an' we can live for six months on me dried fish an' seal meat. An' there's a rock a man for a regiment in me ammunition store. I'll bet this 'ere Stromsund ain't got more men than I got rocks piled up here."

"Brek Katel didn't drive you mad, anyway, Peter," said Jack.

"No, an' for that I thank the carcass o' that there dead polar bear," replied Deane, whose wit had been steadily quickening ever since he had had human companionship.

For twelve hours the four waited
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in the cave. Then they heard a shout outside.

"They come!" said Locke.

And Peter Deane picked up a lump of rock.

"Get in, three of you! They've no ammunition or guns. They can't harm you!" Stromsund's unpleasant voice boomed out right at the cave entrance.

"Shoot if you sense movement," said Stromsund. "I'll shine the torch in so that you can see."

The men advanced, rifles at the ready. The torch stabbed its bright rays into the cave, and the advancing men saw a big heap of something at the end, covered by sealskins. They also saw something else—a whizzing lump of rock that flew towards them with a deadly menace.

It caught the man in the middle of the cave full in the face, and down he went with a frightful shriek.

The other two fired again and again with their repeating-rifles. And one of these went down by a whistling stone thrown by Peter Deane.

Locke, Drake, Langsom, and Deane crouched in the shallow trench at the end, and the bullets whistled above and splattered into the rock face behind. But the place had been cunningly chosen by Deane. The rock behind sloped upwards. So the glancing bullets flew upwards, too, some to spatter up on the roof, and fall harmlessly down on those in the trench.

Jack picked one of the mutilated bullets up as it fell beside him. But he dropped it again with a yelp. It was burning hot.

The first attack had failed miserably, and the two casualties were dragged out of the cave.

An angry consultation was heard outside.

"Listen," said Locke. "We must try to anticipate all their tactics."

"I tell 'e, guv'nor, if they'd been without cover they'd be dead men now," an angry man shouted. "Here's my pal wi' a face 'is girl won't look at when 'e gets back, till 'e's been well patched up in hospital. I move that you go in yerself nex' time, 'bein' as you be so dead set on finishin' of them off instanter."

Stromsund was fuming like a mad-man.

"We must be quick, I tell you. 'Tis no case of starving them out!"

Ferrers Locke started and strained hard to hear more. But it was pitch dark again in the cave, and the others did not see the eager gleam in the detective's eyes. All he said was:

"Fight without scruples, all. We are defending our lives. I dare to prophesy. If we hold out for two days, we are saved."

"Gee, it's good to hear you say it, sir," said Jack. "I've never heard you prophesy before. Deane's pretty handy with the rocks, isn't he?"

"He is indeed a wonder, as you would say in your quaint tongue," said Langsom. "I feel my fingers itch to throw one of those rocks myself."

"Leave it to Deane," said Locke.

"Don't take away the poor man's pleasures after all these years on Brek Katel," said Jack. "It's a pleasure I'm ready to leave to someone else, if he badly wants to be a human trench-mortar. Watch those ricochets, though—"

"They'll all glance upwards," said Locke. "The falling bullets from the ceiling won't hurt us. Here they come

again. Peter Deane, do not expose yourself when you throw. We cannot afford to have you shot."

Langsom was beginning to enter into the spirit of the thing, and to understand how Englishmen fight.

This time, men crept forward on their stomachs. And when the light from the torch beamed out, Peter Deane let fly with another piece of rock. But he missed. The rock shattered to a hundred fragments on the rocky floor of the cave, beyond the turf covering. And the men squirmed their way onwards.

Deane now hauled forth a terrible missile.

"'Tis this when they be on the floor," he muttered.

Away went the missile. It crashed on the turf with a dull thud, and a man shrieked and groaned.

"Shoot, you fools—shoot!" yelled Stromsund.

Once more the inferno of crashing rifle shots rang out. And the bullets pinged and crashed and whanged on the rock. Rocky chips flew madly, one piece cutting Jack over the eyebrow.

"Crums! Watch your eyes," cried Jack.

"More rocks, Deane, or they'll get in!"

Deane needed no urging.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

A man staggered out of the cave, his rifle thrown aside.

"Get back, you!" roared Stromsund.

"Get back yerself, I'm finished!" snarled the man. "I'm quittin' for this trip, chief!"

Forlorn Hope!

ONE by one the men of the second attack withdrew, dragging their casualties. Stromsund's storming was again heard. But angry men bellowed to him to keep calm, and think out how they could take the cave without running too great a risk with the rock missiles. Then a low-spoken conference took place.

"Be ready for new tactics," said Locke. "They may rush in a body. If so, we all bombard with rocks, then settle down to hand-to-hand fighting, if they get close enough."

"Calling out the storm troops, eh?" said Jack, wiping the blood from his eye and selecting a handy little rock weighing about a quarter of a hundredweight. "If one of the storm troops holds this one and keeps fighting I'll jolly well give him best."

Langsom considered his strength equal to a lump weighing pretty well half a hundredweight. Ferrers Locke and Deane selected smaller rocks, and made little heaps of them.

"This is a disgraceful fight," said Locke, "but it is our only course. Remember, a hurricane bombardment, then hand-to-hand—"

"An' lob rocks at their backs as they retreat," said Deane. "That'll be prime enough haul to keep 'em satisfied for an hour or so."

Deane was a good deal removed from a crazed castaway now. His well-laid defences were being put to the test, and, animal-like, the man was enjoying the brutal fight.

They came in a body, as Locke had surmised. They charged into the cave, crushing each other in their efforts to end the fight quickly. The rocks could not miss.

Over they went. Some of the attackers rushed, yelling with rage and pain, out of the cave, but a great many still came on. The hurricane bombardment could not settle them all.

The front rank now fired rapidly. And the sweet smell of burnt cordite came to the distended nostrils of the desperate defenders as they lay in the trench, the ear-splitting crashing of the shots and the deafening pinging of the bullets seeming to put their brains in a whirl.

A man fell on top of them, but he was disabled, with a broken collar-bone. Locke wrenched his rifle away from him and heaved him aside. The man was senseless.

"Up! Up, and close with them!" cried Locke. For the firing had ceased, and rifle-butts began to swish in the air, often narrowly missing the heads of friends and foes in the darkness.

Jack closed with a burly form, and got a blow on the chest which sent him reeling back. He dived in again, with head lowered, struck the man, whom he could not see, just on the solar plexus. At the same time as his head smashed in he let drive with his fists—once, twice. The blows thumped on the man's ribs, and he fell back, carrying two of the attackers with him.

Ferrers Locke was not hitting often; but every blow he flashed out told. Peter Deane, after having well nigh broken a man's back by doubling him over backwards, sent more rocks hurtling towards the back of the cave, on the reinforcements which pressed in there.

Langsom was doing noble work, too, sending back his own particular attackers like sacks of flour, many of them to lie senseless.

Deane's industrious efforts with the rocks turned the tide of battle. Men charged back, in a panic, and a general stampede for the outside air, where no rocks flew about, set in.

At last the desperate defenders found no more men to fight.

Jack Drake was groaning in a corner.

"What is it, my boy?" asked Locke anxiously.

"I don't know, sir," said Jack. "Nothing! I ought not to have groaned. Bit of a bruise, I expect. Wh-what about our prisoners, sir?"

"Over the top with them," ordered Locke. "Bundle them over! Hi, outside, there! We'll let two men come in, unarmed, and drag away your casualties. We don't want 'em, and they'll get killed if they're left for your next attack."

A babel of talk sounded outside. The defenders gathered that Stromsund wanted to leave the men, but the trawlermen would have none of it.

"No, no, chief! Save our mates or we quit."

"They'll shoot you down. They've got rifles now!" shrieked Stromsund.

"I'd take that 'tec's word before yours, chief. I'll risk it, anyway, for one."

"An' me for another. An' no more bull-at-the-gate tactics for me, Stromsund."

"You mutinous dogs—"

"Steady, mate! We bain't in Reykjavik, within hail o' a gunboat now, but out on Brek Katel. Better be keerful, chief."

Stromsund could be heard spluttering with rage. But two men came in all the same, and dragged the casualties away.

Jack Drake felt that he had been

really seriously damaged. He had received a terrific jab in the ribs as he was tripping up an attacker, to send him hurtling back on his fellows, by clasp him round the ankles. But he pluckily kept any further groan or gasp of pain from escaping his lips.

"What have we got, sir?" he said. "What's the booty?"

Ferrers Locke winced at the halting tones of his assistant. That Jack was seriously hurt he was sure. But nothing could be done at the moment.

"Four repeating rifles, fully loaded," said Locke.

"Then—then we're better off for defence, sir. We might be able to keep them from closing in again."

Ferrers Locke knelt down where he supposed Jack to be. He groped with his hands and found the youngster lying down, with his shoulders against the sealskins covering the Viking "treasure."

"What is it, lad?" whispered Locke.

"I don't suppose it's much, sir," said Jack. "I got in the way of somebody's boot."

"Good heavens, boy!"

"The rifles will come in handy, sir, won't they?" asked Jack again.

"Yes, yes; but why—"

"Because I'm afraid I shall be useless for hand-to-hand fighting again," said Jack. "I'll be able to hurl a smallish rock, though. Or shoot. I'd be most useful with one of the rifles, sir, if you could turn me over on to my stomach on the parapet of the trench—"

"Good heavens, boy! Can't you move?"

"Not very well," said Jack.

And it was Ferrers Locke who groaned this time.

But a shout from Langsom interrupted the detective's examination of his assistant.

"Herr Locke! Herr Locke! They're going to fire the cave! They've brought materials from the trawler to do it with! They will smoke us out! I hear them discussing it now!"

"So it's come, sir," said Jack faintly. "I've been fearing that from the start."

"So have I," said Locke. "Are you comfortable, my boy? If so, I think I must lead a sortie from the cave and break up the party preparing the materials for smoking us out."

Locke was about to go when he felt fingers gripping at his hand. Jack held the detective's hand in a grip for a second.

"We're done, sir!" he said. "But try to come back into the cave."

"I will, Drake," said Locke huskily, and so low that the others could not hear. "I'll come back and carry you out. What ever the end, you shall not smother like a rat in a hole, my boy, but shall lie down with a rifle and render a good account of yourself to the end."

"If it comes to that, sir."

"Yes. There's always hope. But miracles don't happen, particularly in Brek Katel. However, there is hope! More than you all think, perhaps."

"Not more than I think, sir," said Jack faintly. "I deduce something from Stromsund's hurry."

"Langsom, Deane, stand by to follow me," ordered Locke curtly, leaving Jack's side. "My assistant is badly hurt. We must make a sortie, break up the working-party outside, take the cover of the rock ledge beside Deane's garden, and hold them off with our rifles for as long as we can from there."

"With about twenty rounds, Herr Locke?"

"More than that, Langsom," said Locke. "But a meagre enough supply of bullets, all the same. Still, we must do our best. Ready? Then with a rush and surprise is the order!"

The Defence in the Open!

JACK DRAKE let his head fall back on the sealskin covering behind him. He felt pretty bad. How far he was damaged it was, of course, impossible for him to know just yet. The pain was terrible. But, of course, it might be something that would pass off with rest. On the other hand, it might be something that would cripple him for life.

"I needn't worry about myself," he muttered faintly. "Seems to me that the others are as badly off as I am. But I do wish I could be up and at 'em like they are!"

He heard a sharp shout, some curses, and the sound of heavy blows falling. Two rifle-reports sounded after the first fight. Then silence.

Deane came loping into the cave.

"Mister Locke he told me to tell you as we'd taken the gadding ledge," said Deane. "I be holdin' the cave end o' the ledge, Mister Langsom be at the middle, for a front attack, an' the boss,

he's at the end, facin' sideways, wi' the rifle wi' most ammunition in it."

"Thanks, Peter!" said Jack. "Trot off back to your post again!"

Peter Deane went loping out of the cave again.

"The chief is afraid of being enfiladed from the water pool!" muttered Jack. "It's the first bullet for him, if any of Stromsund's men get into position there."

A period of maddening silence followed. Jack fretted as he lay, against the sealskins. Then, suddenly, a terrific clatter of musketry sounded out.

Wild shouts broke in on the rifle-shots.

"Keep a round or two, Langsom!" Jack heard Locke call out.

A stray bullet came pinging into the cave, and Jack ducked, wincing with pain the while and laughing at himself for ducking.

The fight was brisking up outside. And Langsom's shouts had a ring in them that made Jack prick up his ears. Deane bellowed like a maddened bull, and Jack could imagine him fighting like the savage he had become.

Then came a rapid order from Locke, like a sudden burst of machine-gun fire.

"Langsom, keep that party from getting away on the left." Then: "Yes, yes, fire it all, man! They're running like hares!"

The firing died away to desultory cracks now and again. And Ferrers Locke came running into the cave.

"The miracle's happened, Drake, my boy!" cried Locke. "Proctor and John Carr himself are leading an attack on Stromsund's flank, cutting him off from the sea. Stromsund's men are yowling like infants, and running for their lives. We're saved, my boy—saved!"

"Jingo, sir, that's good news, if you like! I feel better already!"

"Lie still, my boy, and we'll soon be back to you. We'll get you out of Brek Katel on some sort of a litter. And you won't be sorry to see the last of the place, I'll warrant!"

"If Proctor's got enough dynamite on the Stormcock, sir, I'd like to see him blow the whole landscape to smithereens!" laughed Jack happily. But Ferrers Locke had gone.

There was renewed shouting outside. Then a short period of silence.

"By hokey, sir, an' I be right glad to be able to shake with ye! Sink me if I didn't think we'd never get here!"

It was Proctor's voice that broke the silence, and Jack thrilled as he listened. If there was one man on the high seas whom Jack respected and admired it was Blaize Proctor, Admiral of the Carr Fishing Fleet, on the Dogger.

The chattering party came into the cave. Lights blazed out. Proctor was holding Peter Deane's arm, and poor old Deane, his hairy face beaming, looked at Proctor as a father would look at a long-lost son.

"An' ye say John'll be up soon?" Deane was asking.

"Ay, ay, Peter, ye old rascal!" Proctor was replying, his voice curiously jerky. "An' ye've been here on Brek Katel all these here years, eh? Livin' on the fat o' the land, the king o' all ye survey, eh? An' where's Master Drake, sir? By thunder, I hope the boy ain't hurt bad. Ah, there ye are, shipmate!"

(It was indeed a happy re-union, but Locke and his party are not out of the wood yet. Mind you read next week's thrilling story of the boys.)

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"THE PERSECUTION OF BILLY BUNTER!"

(Continued from page 21.)

"What! What was not you, Bunter?"

"Anything, sir. I—I mean, nothing!"

"Bless my soul!"

"If—if you please, sir, I—I'd prefer to let the whole matter drop now. Shall I—shall I go to bed, sir?" Bunter asked anxiously.

"You will not go to bed in this dormitory, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch, in a rumbling voice. "You will come with me, Bunter! You will not be allowed an opportunity of playing these amazing pranks again. You will be locked in the punishment-room, Bunter, for the remainder of this night, and taken before your headmaster at the first opportunity in the morning."

"Ow!"

"Whether Dr. Locke will decide to expel you from Greyfriars, I cannot say."

"Oh dear!"

"At the very least you will be flogged with the greatest severity."

"Groogh!"

"Follow me, Bunter!"

Mr. Quelch turned towards the door as he spoke.

Billy Bunter did not follow him. He seemed to be rooted to the floor of the Remove dormitory.

Mr. Quelch turned back.

"Do you hear me, Bunter?" he boomed. "Follow me at once!" He stepped to the Owl of the Remove and dropped a heavy hand upon his shoulder. "Come!"

"I—I say, sir—"

"Silence!"

"Oh, crikey!"

With Mr. Quelch's heavy hand on his shoulder, the Owl of the Remove was marched out of the dormitory. He cast a despairing blink back at the Removites, as they watched him go. Then Mr. Quelch turned out the light, and he disappeared. The door closed on the Remove master and his hopeful pupil.

"Well, my hat!" said Peter Todd, with a deep breath.

"Poor old Bunter!"

Skinner chuckled.

"Bunter's number's up!" he remarked. "What's the odds on the sack from the school for Bunter, you fellows?"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Wharton. "It's no joke for Bunter! The silly owl has landed himself this time."

"Well, he's asked for it!" said Johnny Bull.

"The askfulness was terrific!"

"Poor old Bunter!"

The Removites settled down in bed again, but not to immediate slumber. Billy Bunter, locked in the punishment-room, left to his own dolorous company for the night, occupied the thoughts of all.

Certainly Bunter had asked for it—begged for it, in fact. Bunter had often been near the limit, but his latest amazing stunt was far over it. And the Remove fellows wondered what was going to happen to Bunter on the morrow.

He had certainly asked for it, but now that he had got it, the general comment of everyone in the Remove was "Poor old Bunter!"

(Look out for the sequel to this magnificent yarn next week, entitled: "Bunter's Barring-In!" by Frank Richards. It's a peach of a story, chums.)



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LET THEM ALL COME!

by Charles Hallows

(The Well-known Lancashire Cricketer.)

WHERE SHALL WE PUT ALL THE WOULD-BE SPECTATORS?

THE other day a friend of mine showed me a card he had received from Lord's regarding tickets for the Test match which is to be played there at the end of June. On this card there were some very significant words printed: "Stand tickets for the Test match can only be issued to those who purchase admission tickets, as the ground may have to be closed to all but admission and stand ticket holders." Those few words—"the ground may have to be closed"—have behind them what seems to be one of the minor problems of the season—where shall we put all the people who will want to see the big games between England and Australia?

POINTS OF SPECIAL INTEREST.

At this date there is no necessity for me to make more than mere passing reference to the interest which is being taken in the coming fight for the "Ashes." On every hand it is obvious enough that—by way of a start, at any rate—there is interest in these games greater than has ever been shown in any cricket matches during my experience. Everything has contributed to work up this interest—the obvious fact that England stand a good chance of winning back the cricket honours first and foremost. Then the best of the old brigade of Australians are here, reinforced by some clearly interesting new personalities. In football we had a Cup Final between two Lancashire teams, but a few days before that Final the was to be played the Lancashire newspapers found room for quite a lot of matter about the Australians. So there is no necessity to worry about even football killing interest in cricket.

IMPROVEMENTS ALL ROUND.

Fortunately, the people who will have the worry if the crowds get too big for all the would-be spectators to be accommodated appear to have had the good sense to see



C. HALLOWS.

what was coming. In every direction almost there has been an effort to make an appreciable increase in the holding capacity of the grounds on which the Test matches are due to be played. During the winter a couple of new stands, so I believe, have appeared on the Trent Bridge ground at Nottingham, where the opening fight for the "Ashes" will take place, and these mean accommodation for about five thousand more people. Thus at Nottingham they can now take anything up to twenty-five thousand. At Old Trafford, of course, a lot of

money—something like twenty thousand pounds, I understand—has been spent on the ground during the winter for the welfare and the comfort of the watchers, and much the same sort of story has to be told regarding the headquarters of cricket—Lord's.

THE BIG EFFORT AT LORD'S.

Almost superhuman efforts, I understand, have been made to get the alterations at Lord's finished, and I was rather amused to learn that the workmen had been "bribed" to a special effort by the promise of a free ticket for a day's cricket for each month of work they had put in on the new stands. In this respect the people at headquarters may be said to be not only increasing the accommodation, but doing a little bit to spread interest in the good old game. It is understood that it will now be possible to put 40,000 people on the ground at Lord's, but I don't think that anybody need worry about the England and Australian cricketers playing the Test match with any benches empty.

WHERE AUSTRALIA BEATS US.

I have just seen a picture which one of the men who visited Australia in the winter before last brought back with him. It shows a Test match in progress at Sydney, and the crowd is 47,000 strong. If Sydney has nearly fifty thousand people ready to pay to see a Test match, what can London provide? The pity of it is that our cricket grounds are so comparatively small. They have served their purpose up to now, of course, but there have been occasions—say, when Lancashire and Yorkshire have been playing—when the crowds have reached enormous proportions. But, though the problem of where to put all the people who will want to see the Test matches may be a matter of worry to the responsible heads, it at least provides the consolation that cricket is neither dead nor dying.

WHAT ABOUT WEMBLEY?

I have heard the suggestion put forward that one of the Test matches should be played at Wembley, but I take it that there are insuperable difficulties in the way of such an experiment being carried out. It may be doubted, for instance, whether it is very possible to get as true a wicket in a very few weeks as we batsmen like to have to operate on. Without exaggeration, I think we can say that if it had proved possible to play a Test match at Wembley, then the holding capacity of that wonderful arena would have been taxed, just as it was for the first Cup Final which was played there. You see, it helps such a lot if people know that there is plenty of room. Everybody said that the Wembley arena was big enough to hold all the folk who would ever want to see a Cup Final, but it wasn't. And it is a certainty that the Oval, for instance, in spite of extensions which have been made during the winter, will not be big enough on any day of the last Test Match if it turns out that it is a fight-to-a-finish game, as it may well do, to decide which country should hold the "Ashes."

Charles Hallows

A WOOLLEY STAR! KENT'S BRIGHTEST STAR! THE VETERAN APPROACHING AGE.

BRILLIANT LEFT-HANDER

"PAUL PRY" Takes a Hop into Kent.

THERE are certain things which might be said about Frank Woolley, the star of Kent, which would give rise to argument. I might remark, for example, that in my view he is the greatest all-round cricketer England has had since the War. Some people might differ from that statement, and declare that other men were entitled to the honour. So far as most of us are concerned, however, there is one thing which we can say about Woolley without fear of contradiction—that we can look up to him. I am only a little man myself, and when I looked up at Frank Woolley, standing over six feet in height, I felt very much like a looking up at the lamp-post which I wanted to climb. In order to put the light out for a joke.

If this man of Kent will forgive me for saying so, he suggested the lamp-post to me very definitely. I don't know whether in his many journeys on cricket fields he has ever happened to fall under a roller, but he looks as if something had made him grow all one way—upwards instead of round. Personally, I never see Frank Woolley without the feeling that it is a pity there is such a thing as a regulation bat. The ordinary bat is really too small for him—he ought to have one about half as long again as that which is supplied to players of average stature. When I suggest this to him a little while ago just as he was going out to start his innings, he smiled a broad smile. A few minutes later I fancied, watching him in the distance, that he was smiling more broadly than ever as he smacked his bat after a ball to the boundary. I have never heard a bowler say that. Frank Woolley ought to be given a bigger bat, because most of them know that the ordinary bat is quite big enough for him. The bowlers of Tasmania, once in the long ago, were certainly of this opinion when he smacked them to the right, to the left, to the front and to the rear for 305, the biggest score which has ever been made by an English player out in Australia.

There is one fact about that innings which should be mentioned because it shows more clearly than a lot of words can show, the sort of batsman that Woolley is. Right through his stay at the wicket while he was making those 305 runs not one single maiden over was sent down; those bowlers of Tasmania. Now let me tell you something about him. To start with, right at the beginning he was born at Tonbridge, and if you don't know Tonbridge I am not going to describe the place to you, because it is one of those picture towns in Kent to which justice can only be done by a poet. Incidentally, Frank Woolley evidently thought a great deal of the Tonbridge cricket ground. Anyway, he was often seen on it long before he got anything like six feet in height. It is thirty-nine years that he is now approaching what we call the veteran stage. For my part, however, I shall all too small to be surprised if he hasn't a lot more runs in the all-very-much of his yet, and if he doesn't live a great number of batsmen to their destruction with those insidious, simple-looking shots of his before he finally retires from cricket. However, I am going ahead of myself—pushing on almost as fast as Woolley does when at the wicket and in his best fighting mood.

The possibilities of Woolley as a batsman were recognised by the Kent County authorities—who have ever been believers in the nursery for young cricketers—when Frank was only fifteen years of age. Those in charge at Tonbridge asked him if he would like to have a turn at the nets during morning practice, to which Frank responded very readily. In fact, it is rumoured that when he was asked if he would like to play cricket for Kent, he replied: "Would a duck like to swim?"

Naturally, he had to go through his term of apprenticeship, and I believe he had some doubts in his own mind as to whether he would eventually prove good enough to play for Kent as a batsman. So he did what I commend to every boy reader: thought that it wouldn't be a bad idea if he did his best to make sure that if he failed as a batsman, he would still have value as a bowler. So he started to practise bowling, and that brings me to find justification for the statement made at the very beginning of these notes: that so far as figures can prove anything, they prove that Woolley is the greatest England all-rounder since the War. I think there are some lads who would have broken their hearts



P. M. PRY.

PLAYERS WORTH WATCHING!

by Jack Hobbs

The Famous Surrey and England batsman gives us his opinion on the Strong and Weak Points of the Australian Team.

THERE are already many indications that the Test matches against Australia are going to add enormously to the interest of English cricket this season, and the men who are to try to prevent England winning back those mythical "Ashes" are much-discussed personalities, especially those new to English wickets, among whom are several of the most attractive of the sixteen visitors. Naturally, my frequent visits to Australia have made me quite familiar with the Australian cricketers and their strong and weak points—all our visitors, in fact, except S. C. Everett, the young fast bowler, who was included in the last four selections, and who, until his arrival in this country, was totally unknown here. I cannot recall ever seeing him. I'm certain he never played against us even in a colts match, so that his advance during the past Australian season must have been meteoric. His selection was largely due to the recognition of the necessity for having a bowler to furnish some relief for Gregory, who has reached a stage in the career of a fast bowler when the best is not got out of him if he is worked too strenuously.

THE "GOOGLIE" MEN.

Probably the first of the new men to attract particular attention is Grimmett, the South Australian bowler, and I think he will figure so prominently in the big games as to vie in public interest with W. H. Ponsford, the young batsman. Though a "googlie" bowler, Grimmett differs somewhat from A. A. Mailey, in that he does not spin the ball so much, but he sends down very few "bad ones." I had but a very brief experience of him in the last Test match in Australia. My stay at the wickets was not



W. M. WOODFULL

so long as it sometimes is, and Grimmett got me out once—stumped, though the decision did not meet with universal approval in Australia. Googlie bowlers are rather uncertain quantities, and I have always had the impression that such bowlers are liable to be "found out." When that happens they are apt to prove expensive. They are, however, often useful in breaking up a partnership, and to be quite candid, I should like to see one of as good class as Mailey or Grimmett in an England side.

WILL PONSFORD'S FAULTS VANISH?

The new Australian batsman of especial prominence is W. H. Ponsford. When we last landed in Australia we found he had a great reputation, and, though he was quite successful against us in the last tour, my impression was that he scarcely played up to expectations. To English eyes he had one or two faults, and he always struck me as being nervous at the start of his innings. For all that, he is a batsman for whom

W. H. PONSFORD.

of barracking, are most tolerant towards defensive batsmen. They are so completely wrapped up in the game, so appreciative of its finer points, that every good stroke appeals to them, irrespective of its scoring qualities.

THEIR MEDIUM MAN.

Arthur Richardson, like Grimmett a South Australian, is a capable medium-pace bowler, whose best ball seems to hang back and has a considerable off-break. Occasionally he bowls a straighter, faster one. Now that Kellaway is not in the team, I fancy the Australians will place chief reliance upon him for their medium-pace trundling. His chief fault, against which I see several of the Australian critics have already warned him, is that he is inclined to pitch them short, and may offer opportunities for "pulling" on English wickets. If Richardson overcomes this defect—and it ought to be possible—he may easily become one of the most dependable bowlers.

WILL TAYLOR BE TOP SCORER?

The last of the five new men is Oldfield's understudy, J. V. Ellis, the Victorian wicket-keeper, whose choice proves that ability to keep was the real factor that counted in his choice. The Australian selectors acted wisely, for I always maintain that you cannot take chances with your wicket-keeping. Not that Ellis cannot bat. He

(Continued on page 16.)
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