

BILLY BUNTER IS UP TO HIS TRICKS AGAIN!

READ ABOUT HIS LATEST "GRUB" WHEEZE IN THIS ISSUE.

No. 996. Vol. XXXI.

Week Ending March 19th, 1927.

The Magnet 2^d

LIBRARY

EVERY MONDAY.



"WILL YOU WALK INTO MY PARLOUR——!"

Would you like to be in Billy Bunter's shoes? Read how this "whacking invitation" came about in this week's grand story of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled: "BUNTER'S BRAIN-STORM!"



Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his chums. Write to him when you are in trouble or need advice. A stamped and addressed envelope will ensure a speedy reply. Letters should be addressed: The Editor, THE MAGNET LIBRARY, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

A RED NOSE!

A LOYAL London reader of the MAGNET, who signs himself "S. A.," writes and tells me that he suffers with a red nose, and wants to know a cure for it. Well, "S. A.," red noses are either due to indigestion, or they are constitutional. If yours comes into the latter category—in other words, if your parents or grandparents suffered with red noses—I'm afraid there is no cure for you. But if the offensive colour of your nose is due to indigestion, I advise you to take a glass of hot water and sip it slowly before each meal. Chew your food well, too, and avoid as far as is possible, fatty and sweet dishes. Also, take plenty of exercise in the open air. Pay attention to these things, and your digestion, ditto the offensive colour of your nose, will soon be things of the past.

KEEPING DIARIES!

Several Magnetites have written me lately on the subject of diaries. The urge to jot down in a book the events of the day seems to be catching. But I would remind my "Diary" chums that they must keep at it day in and day out throughout the year, otherwise the value of the diary becomes negligible. I know how easy it is to start a diary in January, we will say, for that's the time when kind aunts and uncles, etc., hand out these useful little books to their nephews and nieces, but by the time June comes round, the few moments once given to making the daily entry in the diary somehow get overlooked. The result is your diary is incomplete, and in its incomplete stage it always serves to remind you of your inconsistency and laziness. Don't let the diary habit be put on one side with the weak excuse that it's "too much fag," for a well-kept diary will recompense you in the long run. After all, it's very nice to be able to look back on events without quarrelling, so to speak, with your own memory. Stick it, you diary enthusiasts.

HE WANTS HIS PARROT TO TALK!

"E. B.," of Aberdeen, writes me a long, cheery letter telling me about his latest present. And his latest present is a parrot. Now "E. B." is jolly keen to make this parrot talk, and he wants to know the best way to go about it. At the moment of writing this par, your favourite author, Frank Richards, is in the office, having a look through the

hundreds of letters I have received to-day. Between you and me, chums, Frank Richards has a parrot. It's a beauty, too! I have been pumping Frank Richards about this parrot-talking business, and he tells me that one method of teaching the bird to talk is to cover the cage in the evening—the bird being inside, of course—and then repeat to the parrot, slowly and distinctly the words you wish it to learn. So that's that, "E. B." Perhaps you will be good enough to let me know how you progress should you try out this method.

MIND YOUR "P's" and "Q's!"

"Curious," of Liverpool, having said a heap of nice things about the MAGNET and Mr. Frank Richards, tells me that he cannot discover how the phrase "Mind your P's and Q's" originated. "Do I happen to know?" he asks. I have made a trip to our special library and have discovered that the phrase came into being many years ago at a certain tavern where "tick" was allowed. Whatever the customer consumed was chalked up against his name, P standing for Pint, and Q for quart.

BRIEF REPLIES!

Alan K. Finley, of Australia, wants to know if he can have a story dealing with Wun Lung, the Chinese junior. There's one coming along soon, my chum.

R. Ross, of London, is anxious to see the story entitled, "Nobody's Study!" republished. Maybe your wish will be gratified one day, chum, but if you search your memory again, you will discover that that particular yarn appeared in the "Gem," not the MAGNET, although, of course, it dealt with Ernest Lavison, who was once a MAGNET character. Got it now?

Next Monday's Programme:

"THE INTERLOPER!"

By Frank Richards.

This is the first story in the "special request" series of yarns dealing with Herbert Vernon-Smith, better known as the Bounder. I'm not letting on at this juncture who this interloper is—his identity will be made known to you next Monday. But don't miss this treat of a story, whatever you do!

"THE TRAIL OF ADVENTURE!"

By Lionel Day.

Look out, too, for another trenchant instalment of this amazing mystery and adventure story. Jack Horner and Squall are booked for a rough passage, but they are smilers—and smilers win through in the long run.

"THE SCAPEGRACE OF ST. SAM'S!"

By Dicky Nugent.

If you miss this latest "shocker" from the pen of Dicky Nugent you'll be missing the laugh of the week. Cheerio, chums!

YOUR EDITOR.

I GOT IT THROUGH FIGHTING!

"Proper black eye, isn't it? Gosh, but you ought to have seen it this morning—talk about a beauty! There was about five different colours in it, including yellow an' sky-blue-pink! You see, there was only one copy of the paper left, and another bloke got there the same time as I did—he lashed out at me, and I lashed out at him. I got the black eye—and the front half o' the paper. It was **The BOYS' REALM** we were after, o' course. My bit had got the yarn about Jack, Sam, and Pete in it, and wasn't it good! When I'd read it, I found out where this chap lived, an' we swapped halves. We got real matey after a bit, an' he's going to join my footer club. But the **REALM** is always worth a black eye—comes out on Wednesdays, you know, and only costs twopence!"

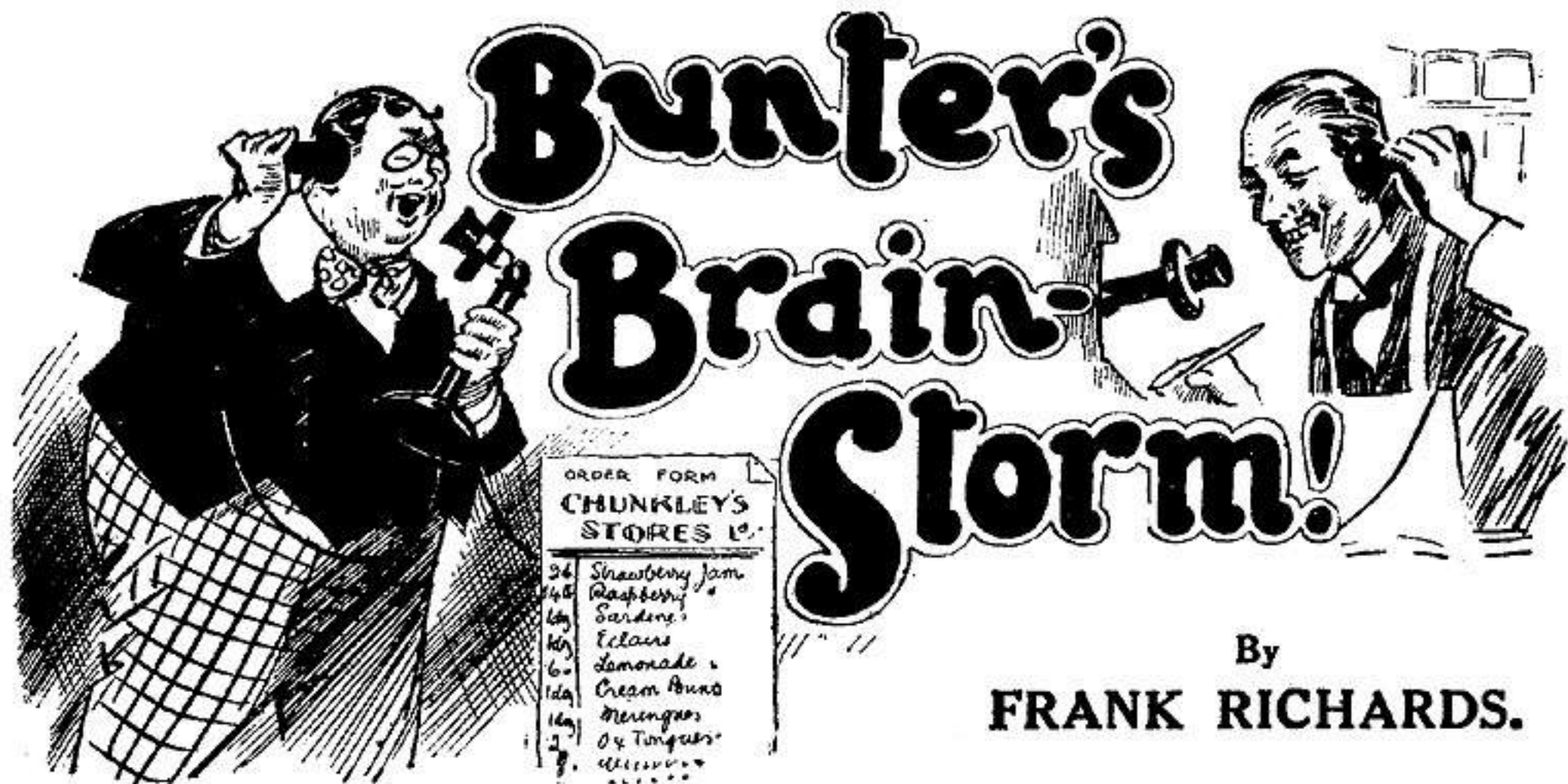


Every
Wednesday

The Boys'
REALM
OF SPORT & ADVENTURE

Price
Twopence.

DEAF, BLIND AND DUMB! All these "afflictions" has Billy Bunter tried on his Form-fellows in order to get more grub, for that magic word is the beginning and end of his fat existence! But his latest "affliction" is a fair corker and, as usual, grub is at the bottom of it!



By
FRANK RICHARDS.

A Rousing Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars, and Billy Bunter—the fat boy who has made millions laugh.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter's Wonderful Wheeze!

BILLY BUNTER smiled. The smile expanded into a grin which irradiated his fat face from ear to ear.

Then he broke the silence in Study No. 7 with a fat chuckle.

"He, he, he!"

Billy Bunter was sitting in the armchair in Study No. 7 in the Remove, and he had been silent for at least ten minutes. That alone was a very unusual circumstance. Out of the Form-room Bunter was seldom silent. When he was sleeping his snore awoke the echoes of the Remove dormitory. In his waking hours his fat chin was the only part of him that received sufficient exercise, and it was generally agreed in the Remove that it received too much.

Bunter had been thinking, another unusual circumstance.

There was a wrinkle of deep cogitation in his podgy brow as he sat silent in the armchair, until it was chased away by his expansive grin.

Evidently something unusual had been going on in Bunter's fat intellect. To judge by appearances, the outcome of his cogitations was satisfactory—to William George Bunter.

He blinked across the study at Peter Todd.

Peter was busy with lines, and had no eyes for Bunter. Peter had to write two hundred of Virgil for Mr. Quelch, and he had to hand them in before tea. At such a time he was not likely to remember the unimportant existence of the Owl of the Remove.

"I say, Peter——"

Peter Todd seemed deaf. His active pen continued to race across the foolscap.

"Todd, old man——"

No reply.

"Todd!" bawled Bunter.

Then Peter Todd looked up, to bestow upon his fat study-mate a glare of Hunnish ferocity.

"Shut up!"

"Oh, really, Todd——"

"Quiet!"

Toddy's pen raced on again. Billy Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles, and was silent for a few seconds. Then he began again.

"It's rather important, Toddy. We've got nothing for tea!"

"Dry up!"

"You've chipped me often enough for not standing my whack in the study, Toddy. I've got a wheeze——"

"Can it!"

"A top-hole, tip-top, A1 wheeze," said Bunter impressively. "No fellow but me could have thought of it. It means a study spread—the biggest spread of the term. What do you think of that?"

"Has your postal-order come?" asked Peter Todd, ceasing his labours for a moment to indulge in sarcasm.

"Nunno! I've been disappointed about a postal-order to-day, Toddy. But——"

"Cheese it! I've got to hand in this impot before tea!"

"Never mind that."

"It's a licking if I don't, fathead!"

"What's a licking?" said Bunter contemptuously. "Don't be soft, old man."

"Why, you—you——" stuttered Peter.

"Never mind a licking, that's nothing," said Bunter cheerfully.

William George Bunter could stand any number of lickings with the greatest fortitude, provided that those lickings were not administered to himself. "Just listen to me, Toddy. How would you like one of Chunkley's big ten-bob cakes for tea?"

"Fathead!"

"And ham and eggs?"

"Ass!"

"And preserved ginger and candied fruits?"

"Will you dry up?"

"And nuts and biscuits, and meringues and jam-roll?"

"Ring off!"

"Wouldn't you like it?" demanded Bunter.

"Yes, ass! Are you going to stand all that when your postal-order comes?" snorted Peter Todd.

"I'm going to stand it to-day," said Bunter firmly. "That's what we're

going to have for tea, Peter, if you'll back me up."

Peter Todd ceased to scribble lines, and stared at Bunter across the table. Funds were short in Study No. 7, and commons were shorter. Peter had made up his mind to tea in Hall that day—the last resource of the stony. Certainly, he would have liked such a magnificent spread as the Owl of the Remove had described. He would have liked it very much.

"If you're not talking out of the back of your silly neck, tell me what you're driving at," he snapped.

"Lend me your ears, old bean," said Bunter, "or one of them will do—it's as big as two of mine. He, he, he!"

Peter reached for the inkpot.

"I—I say, only a joke, old chap," said Bunter hastily. "Look here, we can bag that spread as easy as falling off a form. We can have it specially delivered from Chunkley's Stores in Courtfield."

"And who's going to pay for it?"

"Queelch!"

"Mr. Quelch, our Form master?" ejaculated Peter.

"Just that!" grinned Bunter. "Some stunt, what?"

"You howling ass!" said Peter in amazement. "How——"

"Just listen to a chap for a minute," said Bunter. "Never mind your lines now. Do you remember some weeks ago old Quelch had a nephew come to see him?"

"What on earth has that to do with it?"

"Lots!" chuckled Bunter. "He telephoned to Chunkley's Stores for some tuck to feed the kid."

"Well?"

"He was jolly generous about it, too," said Bunter. "Not at all the stingy old rhinoceros a fellow would naturally think him. He had two or three fellows in to tea with his kid nephew, and they said it was topping. He didn't ask me, for some reason——"

"Probably Chunkley's couldn't have supplied enough if he had?"

"You silly ass! Now, I've been thinking about that a lot," said Bunter.

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impressively. "It was mean of Quelch not to ask me. Suppose his schoolboy nephew was coming again to-day, and Quelch telephoned same as before? They'd deliver the goods right off. Well, that's the wheeze. Only instead of Quelch himself telephoning, Toddy, you're going to phone, using his name!"

"Eh?"

Peter Todd fairly jumped.

"That's it," grinned Bunter. "You see how simple it is. They get a call at Chunkley's Stores—an order to deliver goods to Mr. Quelch at Greyfriars, and to leave the parcel in his study if he's out. Well, he's gone out now, and won't be back, so the coast is clear."

"Great Scott!"

"The parcel's put in his study and we walk it off, and Quelch never knows anything at all about it—till the bill comes in, perhaps not for weeks," said Bunter complacently. "Some stunt, what?"

Peter Todd stared at his fat study-mate open-mouthed in his astonishment. He had not known what to expect, but certainly he had never dreamed of expecting this.

"And what's to happen when the bill comes in?" he gasped.

Bunter winked a fat wink.

"Who's to know you phoned, old man?" he asked. "Quelch can fight it out with Chunkley's. What do you think of the idea, Toddy? Not the sort of thing you'd have thought of, what?"

"No!" gasped Peter. "Not at all—not quite! I'm not qualifying for a stretch at Borstal."

"Oh, really, Toddy——"

"When I want to see what the inside of a reformatory is like, I'll use up a stunt like that," said Peter.

"Look here——"

"It doesn't occur to you that it would be a swindle—what?"

"If you're going to say nasty things, Peter Todd——"

Peter rose from the table. He was in a hurry to get his lines done. But even the lines could wait on an occasion like this. When it was a question of tuck, Billy Bunter had about as much respect for the rights of property as a Bolshevik. Bunter was often near the limit, and when he overstepped it Peter felt bound to set him right again. It was useless to talk to Bunter. But even the Owl of the Remove could understand a cricket-stump.

Bunter, quite misunderstanding Peter's motive in rising, nodded approval.

"That's right," he said. "Don't say nasty, envious things, Toddy—just play up, and help me bring off this stunt. Quelch's out, and it's as easy as anything to use his phone. I'll keep watch in the passage. Come on!"

"I'm coming," said Peter grimly.

He picked a stump out of a corner of the room.

Bunter's expression changed.

He realised that Peter, for some reason inexplicable to the fat junior himself, was not going to play up.

"Look here, Toddy——"

"Where will you have it?" inquired Peter.

"Beast!"

Bunter did not state where he would have it. He did not seem to want it at all. He dodged away to the study door.

"Yarooooop!"

The Owl of the Remove gave a wild howl as the stump lunged against his fat ribs.

"Have another?" asked Toddy affably.

"Yooooop!"

Bunter had another—and another!

He would have had some more, but by that time he had dodged out of Study No. 7.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Come back!" exclaimed Peter Todd, brandishing the stump in the study doorway. "I haven't finished yet."

"Yow-ow-wooop!"

Billy Bunter had finished, if Peter hadn't. He scudded away down the Remove passage at top speed.

Toddy chuckled, and slammed the door of the study. He returned to his lines, and his pen raced over the paper again, uninterrupted further by William George Bunter and his wonderful wheezes.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Not Taking Any!

"HOLD on!" Harry Wharton & Co., of the Remove, were going out of the House when Billy Bunter called on them to hold on.

The Famous Five walked on regardless.

It was a half-holiday, and a half-holiday was too precious to be wasted in listening to William George Bunter exercising his fat chin.

"I say, you fellows!" hooted Bunter.

Five faces smiled, but still the juniors walked on. Bunter blinked after them through his big spectacles with a wrathful blink.

"Deaf?" he howled.

"Stone deaf!" answered Bob Cherry over his shoulder cheerily.

And Hurree Janset Ram Singh remarked:

"There are times when it is necessary for the deaf-fulness to be terrific, my esteemed, talkative Bunter."

And the Famous Five accelerated.

Billy Bunter rushed after them. Bunter was full of his new and wonderful wheeze. There had been no takers in Study No. 7, and Bunter hoped for better luck with the Famous Five. He hoped that they had a little more sense than Peter Todd, and would know a good thing when they saw it. The wheeze was really brilliant, in Bunter's opinion. All that was needed was someone to take the risk of telephoning to the Stores in the name of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove.

There was no doubt that Chunkley's would deliver the goods. There was still less doubt, if possible, that William George Bunter would enjoy the process of disposing of the goods when delivered. Other considerations did not matter. Only Bunter did not exactly want to do the telephoning himself. He was prepared to explain to the other fellows that there was no risk—no risk whatever. Still, he did not exactly want to do the telephoning.

"I say, you fellows, hold on!" he exclaimed indignantly, butting into the path of the Famous Five.

"Oh, all right!" said Bob Cherry.

"As you ask for it, all right!" Bob Cherry held on, though not exactly in the manner that Bunter meant. He grasped the fat junior's ear and held on like a vice.

There was a roar in the Greyfriars quadrangle.

"Yarooooop!"

"Say when!" said Bob cheerily.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yarooooop! Leggo!" yelled Bunter.

"Didn't you ask me to hold on?" demanded Bob, in surprise.

"Yow-ow-ow! Yes; but——"

"Well, I'm holding on—tight."

"Beast! Leggo!"

"There's no satisfying some fellows,"

said Bob, as he released Bunter's fat ear. "First he asks a chap to hold on, and then he asks a chap to let go. He doesn't know his own mind."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter rubbed his reddened ear and blinked at the humorous Bob with a ferocious blink.

"You silly ass! Hold on—I—I mean, keep off, you beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Just stop a minute, and listen to a chap," said Bunter. "It's rather important. I want to stand you fellows a splendid spread."

"And you want us to lend you the tin to do it?" asked Frank Nugent. "We've been there before, old bean."

"Not this time—I mean, no, not at all. I'm standing you a spread that will cost five pounds."

"Whose pounds?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"Has Smithy been dropping some of his fivers about?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Look here, you beast, let a chap explain," said Bunter. "It's a wheeze—a jape on old Quelch, and a spread for us. I've told Toddy about it, but he's funky. You fellows ain't funky, are you?"

"Not the least little bit," said Bob.

"Get it off your chest, fatty. Only buck up! Time's precious."

And the Famous Five kindly held on to let Bunter explain. Bunter explained.

They gazed at him silently while he expounded his brilliant wheeze.

They were used to Bunter, and they had supposed that he was not able to surprise them any more. But he surprised them now.

Evidently the Owl of the Remove was unable—or, at least, unwilling—to see that there was anything shady in his amazing scheme for capturing a gorgeous spread at the expense of the Remove master.

"Well, my only hat!" said Harry Wharton, when the fat junior had finished. "That's it, is it?"

"That's it," said Bunter. "I thought it out, you know."

"Better think again," said Wharton. "I suppose it's no use explaining to you that it is dishonest?"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"No good telling you that people go to chokey for that kind of thing?"

"If you're going to be nasty and envious, like Toddy——"

"Isn't he a brute?" said Bob Cherry. "Isn't he a giddy treasure? You'll write to us sometimes from Dartmoor, won't you, Bunter?"

"Beast!"

"I know now why they founded Borstal," said Johnny Bull, with a nod. "It was to accommodate fellows like Bunter."

"If you funk it——" said Bunter disdainfully.

"Well, without being exactly a funk, I'd rather not be sacked from Greyfriars for swindling," chuckled Bob Cherry.

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"It's as safe as houses," urged Bunter. "Nobody will know who phoned!"

"Then why don't you phone?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, you see—you see——" stammered Bunter. "I—I'll keep watch in the passage, and—and take all the risk. See?"

"We see—quite!" agreed Harry Wharton. "Well, there's nothing doing, you fat fraud. Chuck it up!"

Bunter blinked wrathfully through his big spectacles at the chums of the Remove. This second disappointment



Bob Cherry changed the key of the box-room to the outside of the door. "What's the game, you beast?" cried Bunter, jumping up. A gentle shove, however, sent him tottering back again. He caught his legs on a box, and sat down with a gasp. "Catch on now, old fat pippin?" asked Bob Cherry. "Ow! Wow!" Next moment the door slammed home. Bunter was a prisoner! (See Chapter 3.)

was really exasperating. Really it was not much use thinking out brilliant wheezes, if fellows funk'd backing him up to carry them out.

"Well, you jolly well won't have a whack in the spread, that's all," he said.

"And they say stolen fruits are sweetest!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"Look here, Bunter," said Harry Wharton seriously. "Chuck it! You don't seem able to understand what a rascal you are—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"But you've got to chuck it, see? You would certainly get flogged, and it might be the sack."

"All the better for Groyfriars!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

"Come on, you fellows," said Wharton. "We've wasted enough time listening to the latest thing in juvenile crime."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts!" roared Bunter, as the Famous Five walked on. "I'm jolly well going to do it! I'll phone myself—and I'll jolly well leave you out of the spread. Yah! Funks!"

Bob Cherry paused.

"You mean that, Bunter?"

"Yes, I do!" snorted Bunter.

"You'll be sorry when you see me scoffing a lot of expensive tuck."

"You fellows wait for me," said Bob Cherry. "If Bunter's bent on this, I think I ought to see him through."

"What utter rot!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "You're jolly well not going to have a hand in it. Why, it's swindling!"

"You mind your own business, Bull!" hooted Bunter. "Bob can do as he likes, I suppose?"

"Look here, Bob—" said Nugent.

Bob closed one eye at his comrades.

"Just hang on a few minutes while I see Bunter through," he said. "It's up to me, really."

And Bob Cherry walked back to the House with Bunter, leaving his comrades smiling. Bunter's impression was that Bob was going to help him with his wonderful wheeze. The Co.'s impression was that Bunter was having his fat leg pulled. It remained to be seen which impression was the correct one.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Taking Care of Bunter!

"THIS way!" grinned Bunter, as he entered the House with Bob.

He started in the direction of the Remove master's study.

Mr. Quelch was out for the afternoon, and the coast was quite clear. On that fine afternoon there were few fellows indoors. It was unlikely, Bunter considered, that a fellow would be observed sneaking into the Remove master's study to use the telephone. Not that it really mattered very much, as it was Bob who was to do it. In Bunter's case it would have mattered very much indeed.

But Bob Cherry turned towards the staircase.

"This way, old chap!" repeated Bunter.

"That's all right," said Bob. "Come up here first!"

"What on earth for?"

Bob Cherry did not answer; he mounted the stairs. Billy Bunter blinked after him impatiently, and followed him up the staircase.

"I say, Cherry—"

"Buck up, old fat man!"

Bob Cherry went up the Remove staircase next, and Bunter followed him in surprise and irritation.

"Look here, Cherry—"

"If I'm going to see you through, Bunter, I'm going to do it in my own way," said Bob tersely. "Take it or leave it."

"We're wasting time!" grunted Bunter, rolling along the Remove passage after Bob. "There's no telephone up here!"

Bob halted where the box-room stairs turned off from the Remove passage.

"This way!" he said.

Bunter blinked at him, more and more surprised and irritated.

"The Remove box-room?" he asked.

"That's it."

"What are you going there for?"

"I'll tell you when we get there."

"Look here, Bob Cherry—"

"Are you going up?" demanded Bob impatiently.

"No, I'm jolly well not!" growled Bunter. "We've got no time to waste, if Chunkley's are to deliver the goods before tea-time. What the thump do you want to go rooting in the box-room for?"

"I've told you I'll explain when we get there."

"Well, I'm not going up!"

Bob Cherry grinned.

"Your mistake, old pippin; you are!"

And Bob grasped the Owl of the Remove by the collar, and propelled him up the box-room staircase.

"Yarooogh! Leggo!" roared Bunter.

"Get on!"

"I—I won't! I—I— Stop shoving me, you beast! I'm going, ain't I?" howled Bunter.

And he went.

Bob Cherry propelled him cheerily into the box-room. It was a rather dusky apartment, lighted only by a small window, which looked out on roofs. It was tenanted only by empty boxes and trunks, with some scattered straw packing and old newspapers.

Bunter blinked ferociously at Bob's cheery, smiling face. It was dawning on Bunter's obtuse mind that Bob had reasons for bringing him to that remote room, quite unconnected with any jape on Mr. Quelch, or any scheme for obtaining free supplies of tuck from Chunkley's Stores in Courtfield.

"Look here, you beast, what's this game?" demanded Bunter savagely.

Bob Cherry changed the key of the box-room to the outside of the door.

Then Bunter understood.

He jumped to the door; and Bob gave him a gentle shove that sent him tottering back again. He caught his legs on a box, and sat down with a gasp.

"Catch on now, old fat pippin?" asked Bob cheerily.

"Ow-wow!"

"You want to land yourself for the sack," explained Bob. "I'm going to see you through—by keeping your fat paws from picking and stealing. As we're going out this afternoon, we can't keep an eye on you. But you'll be safe in this box-room!"

"Beast!" howled Bunter.

"It's for your own sake, old fat man," explained Bob. "Think how unpleasant it would be if the bobbies came for you?"

"You—you—you beast—"

"Think of poor old Eugene Aram, when he walked away with gyves upon his wrist!" urged Bob.

"Lemme out!" roared Bunter.

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"The Fourth would chip us no end if a Remove man was sent to a reformatory!" he answered.

"You—you—you rotter!" gasped Bunter.

"We shall be back in a couple of hours," said Bob. "I'll come and let you out then. If you get bored in this box-room, you can read those old newspapers. Or you can meditate on your

sins. Make an effort, and try to get it into your thick head that honesty is the best policy."

"Will you let me out?" yelled Bunter.

"Be reasonable, old bean. I haven't taken all this trouble for nothing. What's the good of boxing you up here, only to let you out again?"

Billy Bunter made a sudden rush, as Bob stepped out of the box-room. Bob Cherry stood as firm as a rock, and Bunter staggered back from the collision. Bob gave him a cheery push, and he sat down on the floor.

"Good-bye, old fat man!" said Bob.

Slam!

Click!

The door closed, the key turned. Bunter heard the key drawn from the lock on the other side.

He staggered up and thumped furiously on the door.

"Let me out!" he roared.

Bob Cherry chuckled, and went down the box-room stairs. His opinion was that Bunter, for his own sake, required to be taken care of that afternoon. No doubt he was right, and he was entitled to Bunter's gratitude. Gratitude, however, did not seem to be Bunter's feeling at the moment. He thumped on the door, and roared and yelled, apparently in a state of towering wrath. Bob Cherry cheerfully left him to it.

"Well?" said Harry Wharton, as Bob rejoined his chums in the quadrangle.

"All serene," said Bob.

"Where's Bunter?"

"In the Remove box-room."

"What on earth is he doing there?" asked Nugent.

"Yelling."

"He's not going to stay there, I suppose?" asked Johnny Bull, puzzled.

"Not if he can help it," agreed Bob. "But my belief is that he won't be able to help it. I've locked the door on him, and I've got the key in my pocket."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Co.

"A couple of hours under lock and key will do him good. It will be a tip what it's like to be in chokey."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Famous Five walked cheerily out of gates, satisfied that Billy Bunter's wonderful wheeze would not be carried out that afternoon, at all events.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

In Durance Vile!

BILLY BUNTER breathed fury.

He roamed up and down the box-room like a tiger—rather a fat tiger—in a cage.

The box-room was not a pleasant place in which to spend a couple of hours on a fine half-holiday. But it was Hobson's choice with Bunter. He was there, and there was no getting out of it.

For several minutes Bunter had thumped on the door and roared. But his voice was not likely to be heard from that remote box-room, especially with most of the fellows out of the House. Moreover, he realised that even if anyone did come, the door could not be opened without the key.

So he gave up shouting at last, rather out of breath, and went to the window. But one glance at sloping roofs outside decided Bunter that he would not attempt to leave the box-room by the window.

He was a prisoner—until Bob Cherry came back with the key. The fat junior's indignation knew no bounds.

This cheeky interference with his liberty of action was really the limit. Moreover, time was passing—valuable time. Every minute was precious, if he was to get the goods from Chunkley's in time for tea. Bunter had made up his fat mind that he would take the risk of telephoning to the stores himself, if the other fellows farked it.

Having made up his mind to that, it was really exasperating to be barred off from Mr. Quelch's telephone in this high-handed way. Bunter fumed with rage as he paced the box-room. But fuming did not improve matters, and he sat down on Lord Mauleverer's big trunk at last to rest.

After a quarter of an hour, Bunter felt as if he had been caged up in the box-room for about a week. Bunter was a gregarious youth; and, fascinating as his society was, he never was satisfied with it himself. Sleeping and eating were the chief pleasures of his fat existence; but talking came a good third. He was bored almost to tears with solitude. He might have taken Bob Cherry's advice, and meditated on his sins. He might have found profit therein. But meditation never had appealed to William George Bunter.

"Oh, dear!"

He went to the door again, and grabbed the handle, and tugged and shook, and shook and tugged.

But the lock was strong, and he gave it up in a few minutes.

Then he rolled to the window again, and gave another blink at sloping roofs and gutters. But he shook his head.

There was nothing doing. Bunter was booked for the box-room till Bob Cherry should return.

"Beast!" he mumbled.

He sat down on Mauly's trunk again, and in sheer desperation for something to pass the weary minutes, picked up a newspaper which had been used for packing purposes.

It was two or three weeks old, and the news did not interest Bunter much, anyway. He was quite indifferent to epoch-making speeches by long-winded political gentlemen. He cared nothing for motor-bandits, and less than nothing for breakages in China.

As his father was a stockbroker, he might have found some interest in the "city page." But the rise and fall of the franc did not interest him; neither did the glowing advertisement of a new issue of shares by the Hanky-Panky Tin Mines, Ltd.

He grunted discontentedly over the newspaper.

He found some slight interest in a news item from New York, that lively city where so many exciting things happen, or are invented if they do not happen.

It was headed:

"BANKER'S BRAIN-STORM!"

Bunter had heard of brain-storms, and was aware that they were a modern addition to the fairy tales of medical science.

It was quite thrilling reading.

A middle-aged banker, after a long and sedate life of respectable banking, had suddenly developed homicidal tendencies.

He had startled the staff at the bank by a sudden, unexpected outbreak of insane ferocity. He had felled the chief cashier with a ledger, and gone for the janitor with a hatchet. Medical men were agreed that it was an undoubted case of brain-storm. After receiving the usual medical care, at the



"Were you responsible for these—these foodstuffs being placed in my study?" demanded Mr. Quelch. "I—I brought the man 'ere, suttlingly, sir," gasped Trotter. "He said they was for you, sir—special delivery from Chunkley's Stores, sir!" "Nonsense!" snorted the Remove master. (See Chapter 9.)

usual medical fees, the banker would be quite himself again.

Bunter read that interesting news item carelessly. He was not, at the moment, interested in brain-storms; though certainly he would have found some satisfaction in felling Bob Cherry with a ledger, or even going for him with a hatchet.

But that piece of news from the great country where the journalists are gifted with such fertile imaginations was to recur to William George Bunter's mind later—with surprising results.

He threw the newspaper across the box-room at last, and resumed prowling dismally round the room.

Half an hour had passed; and another hour and a half lay before him. It was getting intolerable.

Bunter breathed fury. He knitted his brows, and gritted his teeth, and brandished fat fists in the air. Anyone looking in on Bunter in these moments might have wondered whether the Owl of the Remove was in the throes of a brain-storm.

He resumed thumping on the door again at last.

Thump, thump, thump!

He remembered that Peter Todd was in his study, engaged upon his lines for

Mr. Quelch. It was a good distance to Study No. 7; but Bunter banged and thumped, and thumped and banged, and hoped for the best.

To his great relief, there was a step on the box-room stair at last.

"What on earth's that fearful row?"

It was Peter Todd's voice.

"Toddy!" yelled the Owl of the Remove.

"My hat! Is that Bunter?"

"Ow! Yes! Let me out, Toddy!"

"Are you locked in?" asked Toddy, in amazement.

"That beast Cherry locked me in to keep me away from Quelch's telephone!" groaned Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Peter, on the landing outside. "Good old Bob!"

"Why, you beast—" howled Bunter.

"Quite a bright idea, old bean! Stick it out!"

"I want to get out!" roared Bunter.

"Well, you're a bit too wide for the keyhole," chuckled Peter. "What about the window?"

"You silly ass, I should break my neck!"

"Would that matter?"

"Why, you—you—you—" gasped Bunter.

"If your neck's of any value, old

bean, don't do it," said Peter. "I don't see it myself; but I'll take your word for it. I suppose it's one of those things of no value to anyone but the owner!"

"Boast!"

"What about the chimney?" asked Peter.

"You silly chump! I should get smothered with soot crawling up the chimney, you blithering ass."

"That wouldn't do," agreed Peter. "As you never wash, you would be black for the rest of your life."

"You—you rotter! Let me out, old chap."

"You're getting a little mixed, Bunter. Let's have this clear. Am I a rotter or an old chap?"

"I—I say, Peter, old fellow—" groaned Bunter. "Do get that door open somehow, old pal!"

"How can I get it open without a key? Not that I would, anyway, in the giddy circumstances."

"Get a chopper, old chap, and smash it in," said Bunter. "Never mind the damage."

"Oh, my hat! You'd pay for the damage, I suppose, when Quelch raised Cain about it?"

"Certainly, old man!"

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"And when?" asked Peter. "When your postal-order comes?"

"Yes!" gasped Bunter. "Certainly!"

"The damage would have to be paid for," said Peter thoughtfully. "You're sure you'll pay for it when your postal-order comes?"

"Yes, yes."

"All serene, then!" said Peter.

"You'll smash in the lock, old chap?"

"Yes—when your postal-order comes!"

"Is that what you call gratitude?" asked Bob Cherry, more in sorrow than in anger.

"What?" yelled Bunter.

"I've saved you from committing a swindle and getting a flogging, and perhaps the sack. You weren't worth it, of course; but I've done it," said Bob. "Can't you thank a fellow?"

"You—you—you——" spluttered Bunter.

He did not thank Bob Cherry. He shoved past him savagely, and rolled away down the box-room stair. Bob Cherry smiled, replaced the key on the inside of the lock, and followed. Bunter rolled into Study No. 7, and Bob gave him a cheery smile as he passed the door of that apartment.

"Trot in, Cherry!" called out Peter.

"Eh! Why?"

"Lines——"

"Good-bye, old chap!"

Bob Cherry disappeared.

"I say, Peter, go after him and lick him," suggested Billy Bunter. "I'll hold your jacket, if you like."

"I'll hold your fat neck, if you don't shut up, and wring it," said Peter.

"Oh, really, Toddy——"

"Look here, Bunter, you can do some of these lines," said Peter. "I've got a regular cargo. Two hundred for Wingate, because he happened to get a footer on his boko by sheer accident when I was punting it in the quad, and fifty for Loder, because he's a bully. Which section will you tackle?"

"I'd be jolly glad to help, Peter——"

"Oh, good!" said Peter, in surprise.

"You know what a good-natured fellow I am, always thinking of others," said Bunter.

"Hem!"

"Only I remember now that I've got to speak to a chap," said Bunter.

And he rolled out of Study No. 7 before Peter could reply.

William George Bunter rolled as far as the Remove, landing, where he rested his considerable weight against the balustrade, and settled down to think. Bunter's wonderful wheeze was still lingering in his mind. Two hours had been wasted, owing to the unwarrantable interference of Bob Cherry with his personal liberty. But Mr. Quelch was still absent, and Bunter knew that he had gone somewhere by railway, and would not be back early. He had heard Mr. Quelch ask Mr. Prout, the Fifth Form master, to take the roll that evening, which proved that he would be late home.

If there was no time for Chunkley's to deliver the goods in time for tea as usual, there was still time for delivery for a late tea. Bob Cherry was under the impression that he had squashed Bunter's enterprise. But that impression, as it turned out, was a mistaken one.

Bunter thought it out. The result of his thinking was that he rolled down the lower stairs, and made his way cautiously to the Remove master's study.

As he came into Masters' passage, the Owl of the Remove looked this way and that way, like Moses of old; but the coast was clear.

He scudded along the passage to Mr. Quelch's door.

Just as he reached it, and put his fat hand on the handle, the door of Mr.

Prout's study farther along the passage opened, and the Fifth Form master came out.

He glanced at Bunter. The fat junior let go the handle of Mr. Quelch's door as if it had suddenly become red-hot.

He stooped to tie his shoelace. He hoped that Mr. Prout had not observed that he had been about to open the Remove master's door, and he waited for the Fifth Form master to be gone.

Mr. Prout frowned at him. He was not quite so unobservant as Bunter hoped. Had Bunter gone directly into the study Mr. Prout would hardly have heeded him, a junior might have gone to the study to deliver lines, which could be left on the Form master's table in his absence. But Bunter's action was a plain proof that he had been about to enter the study surreptitiously, and had taken the alarm.

Mr. Prout came along the passage with his ponderous tread.

"Bunter!"

"Oh! Yes, sir! I—I didn't see you, sir!" stammered Bunter. "I—I was tying my shoelace, sir!"

"Your shoelace is tied, Bunter!"

"Oh! Is—is—is it, sir?" gasped Bunter. "So it is! Fuf-fuf-fancy my not noticing that it was tied, sir!"

"You were about to enter your Form master's study, Bunter?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"I saw your hand on the door-handle, Bunter!" boomed Mr. Prout. "How dare you tell me such palpable untruths?"

Certainly it was not Bunter's intention to tell palpable untruths. He did not realise that they were palpable.

"Oh, really, sir! I——"

"Your surreptitious conduct, Bunter, demonstrates that you were about to enter your Form master's study for no good object."

"Oh, sir!"

"What disrespectful prank were you intending to play?" demanded Mr. Prout.

"Oh, sir! Nothing of the kind! I—I was—was taking in my lines, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Your lines?" boomed Mr. Prout.

"Yes, sir. As—as Quelch—I mean Mr. Quelch, is out, I—I was going to—to leave them on the table, sir. We always do, sir!"

"Where are your lines, Bunter?"

"Where—where are they, sir?" stammered Bunter.

"Yes. I do not see them."

"Oh dear!"

That very obvious consideration had escaped Bunter's powerful intellect.

"I—I left them in the study, sir, my study," he stammered. "Fuf-fuf-fancy my forgetting to bring them, sir!"

"You are telling palpable untruths, sir!" boomed Mr. Prout. "Go away at once, Bunter. If you were in my Form I should cane you for this rascally prevarication. Begone!"

"I—I—I——"

"Begone!" thundered Mr. Prout.

And Bunter jumped, and begoned, so to speak.

Mr. Prout gave an indignant snort, and continued on his ponderous and majestic way to Masters' room.

It was ten minutes later that William George Bunter peered round a corner and found the coast clear again. He trod softly towards Mr. Quelch's door in fear and trembling. Really, it was hard lines, when Bunter had thought of the most brilliant wheeze ever planned at Greyfriars, that all these difficulties should keep cropping up in his way. The stars in their courses

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Sticking To It!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. came in cheerily at the school gates. They strolled across to the House. There, while his comrades sauntered into the Rag, Bob Cherry went up to the Remove quarters. Peter Todd called to him as he passed the open door of Study No. 7. Peter was still busy at lines.

"Hallo, Cherry! Doing anything?"

"Nothing special," said Bob, halting. "I've got to let a fat rabbit out of a cage, but there's no hurry for that."

"None at all," agreed Peter. "Like to do some lines?"

"Eh?"

"I've got a lot for Quelch, and a lot for Wingate. Old Wingate hardly ever looks at the fist; you can risk it."

Bob Cherry smiled.

"Dear man, you'd get into a row if Wingate did spot it. I wouldn't give you such a risk for anything. I like you too much!"

And Bob Cherry strolled on cheerily to the box-room stairs. There was a sound of movement in the box-room as Bob approached it. He could hear a tramp of feet and a mumbling voice, as he stopped at the door and took the key from his pocket, and he grinned.

"Beast! Rotter! I'll lick him! Beast!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Is that you, you rotter?" bawled Bunter.

"Little me! Tired of chokey?" asked Bob, as he inserted the key in the lock and turned it back.

Bunter rolled to the door as it opened.

His face was red with wrath, and his little round eyes fairly burned behind his spectacles. Never had the Owl of the Remove been in such a towering rage. Only one thing prevented him from hurling himself upon Bob Cherry and smiting him right and left. It was the little circumstance that such a proceeding would have turned out more painful for Bunter than for Bob.

"You awful rotter!" howled Bunter.

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seemed to be fighting against William George Bunter as against Sisera of old. But the coast really was clear this time, and Bunter dodged into Mr. Quelch's study and closed the door after him, and breathed more freely. A moment later he was at the telephone.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Good Order for Chunkley's Stores!

"**C**HUNKLEY'S Stores!" That answer came through when Bunter rang up. Chunkley's Stores in Courtfield was run on the lines of the big stores in London. They had innumerable departments, innumerable telephone lines, and innumerable difficulties in the way of getting at the right person in the right department. They did not say "Hallo!" or "Who's there?" like common mortals, when the bell rang. They said "Chunkley's Stores," and then took a rest.

"Speaking from Greyfriars," said Bunter. "A—hem—a few weeks ago I telephoned an order for tuck—"

"What?"

"Tuck!"

"Did you say tuck, sir?"

"Tuck—tarts, and cakes, and things. When my—my nephew came here to visit me," said Bunter. "Mr. Quelch speaking."

Bunter was imitating the voice of the Remove master, and in that line, at least, Bunter had some gifts. He made his voice quite like enough to Mr. Quelch's to pass on the telephone.

"Mr. Quelch?"

"Quelch!"

"Oh, Welch! Yes, sir. What can we do for you, Mr. Welch?"

"Quelch!" shrieked Bunter.

"Quite so, sir. I remember the order."

"I require some things in rather a hurry," said Bunter. "I am standing a spread—"

"Eh?"

"I mean, I am—am asking some juniors to tea, and I require a large quantity of things to be delivered immediately."

"I am afraid the afternoon vans have left, sir."

Bunter was afraid of that, too. He paused a moment to murmur something uncomplimentary regarding Bob Cherry, and went on:

"It's very important. I simply must have the things this afternoon. Expense is no object!"

That was quite a true statement—expense was no object to Bunter. Possibly Mr. Quelch might have taken a different view.

"That will be special delivery, sir."

"That's all right! Take down the list," said Bunter. "Two dozen jam-tarts—"

"I will put you through to the confectionery department, sir. If you mention that you desire special delivery, the goods will be delivered this afternoon."

"Buck up, then!"

Bunter waited.

"Chunkley's Stores" came through on the wires, apparently from the confectionery department.

"Mr. Quelch speaking from Greyfriars. I require goods by special delivery this afternoon. A large cake—"

"That will be the ironmongery department, sir."

"What—what?"

"Rakes are in the ironmongery department, sir. Hold the line, and I will put you through."

"Not rakes—cakes!" shrieked Bunter.

But it was too late, the prompt and efficient man at Chunkley's Stores was already putting him through to the ironmongery department. They never wasted a second at Chunkley's.

"Chunkley's Stores!" came through again.

"I want to order cakes and—"

"I am sorry, this is not the department, sir. Ironmongery—"

"Blow you!"

"What?"

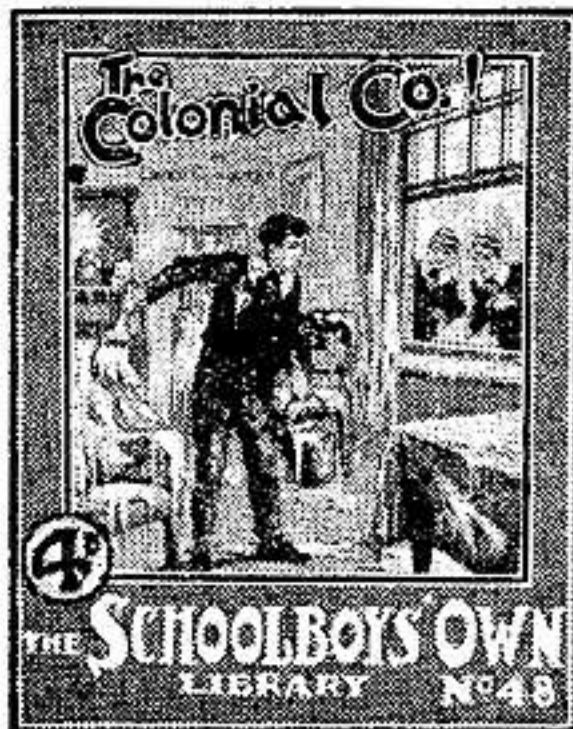
"A silly idiot thought I said rakes when I said cakes!" shrieked Bunter. "I want cakes—cakes—cakes!"

Bunter intended to make it quite clear this time.

"Please hold the line, sir," came the courteous reply. "I will put you through to the confectionery department."

Bunter waited again. He was getting a little excited now. He was in his Form master's study, using the Form

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master's telephone and his Form master's name, and the possibility of being caught there made him turn quite cold when he thought of it. In these circumstances, the up-to-date and efficient system at Chunkley's Stores was a little exasperating.

There was rather a longer wait this time; but a voice came through at last. Unfortunately, it was only a feminine voice from the exchange.

"Are you finished?"

"No!" yelled Bunter.

Then another voice, snappy and efficient like all the voices at Chunkley's Stores.

"Chunkley's Stores!"

Bunter breathed hard.

"Are you the confectionery department?"

"No; this is the general inquiry office."

"Oh, my hat!"

The efficient young man in the ironmongery had evidently put Bunter through not wisely but too well.

"Put me on to the confectionery department," groaned Bunter.

"Certainly, sir. Please hold the line."

Bunter held the line.

"Chunkley's Stores!" came through again.

"Is that the confectionery department?" hooted Bunter.

"Yes, sir."

Bunter had got home at last, as it were. In spite of the absolutely modern and efficient equipment of Chunkley's Stores, he really was on, at last, to the right quarter.

"Mr. Quelch speaking from Greyfriars School. I require special delivery this afternoon of—"

"Special delivery orders to the Special Delivery Department, sir. If you will kindly hold the line, I will put you through."

"Oh, crikey!"

Bunter waited again. He was perspiring a little, and he felt that he was earning that spread—when he got it.

"Chunkley's Stores!" came through again, snappily but courteously.

"Is that the Special Delivery Department?" moaned Bunter.

"Yes, sir."

"Mr. Quelch speaking from Greyfriars. I require a special delivery this afternoon of some confectionery and things."

"Very good, sir. If you will kindly state—"

"Take down the list," said Bunter.

"Certainly, sir."

Bunter could scarcely believe in his good luck. The order was really being taken now.

"Three dozen tarts one large cake—with marzipan on top, three dozen meringues—"

"Yes, sir."

"Box of preserved fruits, jar of ginger, one dozen cream puffs, six bottles of ginger-beer—"

Bunter was going it, now that he had fairly started, doubtless on the principle that it was as well to be hung for a sheep as for a lamb.

"Very good, sir. Is that all, sir?"

It was not all, by any means. Bunter continued, giving reckless orders for all the good things he could think of. On the occasion when Mr. Quelch's school-boy nephew had visited the school, and the Remove master had had a party of juniors to tea in his study, Mr. Quelch had given quite a generous order over the phone to Chunkley's. But it had not been anything like so generous as the order Bunter was giving now. In the circumstances, Bunter could afford to be generous.

But he stopped at last. It was a shipping order, so to speak; even Bunter felt that he had ordered enough.

"Is that all, sir?"

"That's all," said Bunter. "I want them by five o'clock."

"Kindly wait one moment, sir."

Bunter waited several moments. Then the voice came through again.

"We can send the goods by special delivery, sir, to reach the school at a quarter past five. I trust that will be satisfactory?"

"Oh, all right," said Bunter. "You will send the account later to Mr. Quelch—to—to me, you know."

"Quite so, sir—the same as before, sir. I quite understand."

"Hold on a minute. I—I may be absent when the goods reach the school," said Bunter. "In that case, instruct your man that they be delivered

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in my study here—the House page will tell him.”

“Quite so, sir. I recall that you gave similar instructions before. Is that all, sir?”

“That’s all.”

Bunter rang off.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Not All Serene!

“HALLO, hallo, hallo!”

Bob Cherry uttered that ejaculation later in the afternoon, as he came upon a rather surprising sight.

Trotter, the House page, was guiding a heavily-laden man to Master’s passage.

The man was in uniform, though little could be seen of him and his uniform, so large and numerous were the parcels he carried. On his peaked cap was the name “Chunkley’s Stores” in gilt letters. And the man looked as if he had brought a very considerable proportion of the stock at the stores to Greyfriars. Cardboard boxes and cartons and paper bags covered him to overflowing. Trotter had a perplexed expression on his face. He had to believe the statement of the man from Chunkley’s, that this was a special delivery of goods by Chunkley’s special motor-van at the order of Mr. Quelch. But he could not help being astonished. What the Remove master could possibly want with that vast supply of tuck, was a deep mystery to Trotter.

“What’s this game, Trotty?” inquired Bob Cherry, staring at the consignment in great surprise.

Trotter grinned and shook his head.

“I don’t know, Master Cherry; but the man says that Mr. Quelch ordered these things special, and they’re to be placed in his study. I s’pose it’s all right.”

“Oh, my hat!” gasped Bob.

“This way,” said Trotter, and the man from Chunkley’s, breathing hard under his burden, followed the page to Mr. Quelch’s study, where the goods were stacked on the study table in a huge pile.

Bob Cherry stood staring after them. He understood.

It was past tea-time now. Bob had been on his way to the stairs, to go up to the Remove passage to tea, when he sighted Trotter and the man from Chunkley’s. He understood what had happened. In spite of the imprisonment in the box-room, Bunter had carried out his scheme. That was the only possible explanation. Obviously, Mr. Quelch had not ordered all that tuck—though Bob, like Trotter, would have supposed so, had he known nothing about Bunter’s wonderful wheeze.

“My hat!” repeated Bob.

He went slowly up the staircase.

He had done his best to save the egregious Owl of the Remove from this. It was done now, and could not be undone. Bob Cherry wondered what was going to happen next.

“I—I say, Bob—”

Billy Bunter met him at the top of the Remove staircase. There was a grin of happy anticipation on Bunter’s fat face.

“You—you image!” said Bob.

“Oh, really, Cherry—”

“You frabjous, footling frump!”

“Have the things come?” asked Bunter. “Did you see them? I—I’ve been watching from a top window—I saw Chunkley’s van go round—”

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“You frumpious, burbling jabber-wock,” said Bob. “They’ve come. They will make a stack nearly to the ceiling in Quelch’s study, I should think.”

“He, he, he!”

“Of all the burbling chumps—”

Bunter sneered.

“You needn’t put in for a whack in the spread now, Bob Cherry. You refused to help bring it off. You’re out of this. I sha’n’t give you so much as a penny bun.”

Bob Cherry went into Study No. 1 without replying. Words were wasted on William George Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove, with a cheery grin on his fat face, went into Study No. 7. Peter Todd had just risen from the table; his extensive transactions in lines were completed at last.

He glanced at Bunter’s grinning, complacent face.

“You’re looking very chirpy, old fat man,” he said.

“He, he, he!”

“Postal-order come?” asked Peter.

“Better than that! The tuck’s come!”

“What tuck?”

“From Chunkley’s!”

“Great pip! You—you really did—” gasped Peter.

“The man’s putting it in Quelch’s study now,” said Bunter cheerily. “As soon as he’s gone, I’m going to nip in and bag it. Look here, Peter, you haven’t treated me really decently about this; but I’m not going to leave a pal out of a good thing. You get the stuff out of Quelch’s study, and I’ll let you have your whack!”

“Still looking for a catspaw?” asked Peter.

“Oh, really, Toddy—”

Peter Todd gazed at him. Possibly Peter had supposed, hitherto, that there was a limit to Bunter’s fatuousness. If so, he discovered now that his supposition was a mistake.

“You really mean that you phoned to Chunkley’s—”

“He, he, he!”

“Using Mr. Quelch’s name—”

“He, he, he!”

“And they’ve delivered the goods?”

“He, he, he!”

“And—and the stuff’s in Quelch’s study now?” said Peter, like a fellow in a dream. “Oh, my only sainted aunt! You’re for it this time!”

“He, he, he!”

Those successive cachinnations showed that William George Bunter was well satisfied with the state of affairs, whether he was “for it” or not.

“The man’s gone by now,” said Bunter. “Trotter will have gone downstairs now. Cut off to Quelch’s study, Peter.”

“I’m going to Quelch’s study,” assented Peter. “I’ve got to take in my lines; they’re just due, as I told you. Quelch told me he had to have them by tea-time.”

“That’s all right—leave your lines there when you bag the stuff,” said Bunter. “I’ll meet you on the stairs and help you get it into the box-room. Safer there than in the study—a lot of greedy fellows might want some if they saw it. I can’t stand greediness.”

“And what am I to say to Quelch?” asked Peter.

“Quelch’s out, fathead!”

Peter looked at the study clock.

“He’s in by this time. I shouldn’t be surprised if he ran right into the man from Chunkley’s.”

“Wha-a-at?”

“You left this game rather too late, Bunter. I suppose you would have had half a chance in a billion of bringing it off, if you’d cut in sooner. Quelch’s back by this time!”

“Q-Q-Quelch back?”

“He told me that if my impot wasn’t in by half-past five it would be doubled!”

“You leave it on the table,” said Bunter. “We always do. I tell you Quelch’s out—”

“And I tell you he told me he would be back after five!” hooted Peter. “Didn’t I tell you I had to hand in these lines by tea-time? Think I’d have slogged at them all the afternoon, as I’ve done, if I could have left some of them till after tea?”

Bunter blinked at Peter Todd.

His podgy jaw dropped.

“But—but—” he stammered. “I—I know he’s gone somewhere by railway. I saw him take the time-table—”

“What about it, fathead?”

“I—I heard him ask Prout to take roll-call for him!” howled Bunter. “Roll’s not till half-past seven.”

“That’s because he’s dining with the Head.”

“Dud-dud-dining with the Head?” babbled Bunter.

“Yes, ass!”

“Oh crikey!”

Bunter’s jaw dropped still further.

His expression, as he blinked helplessly at Peter Todd, greatly resembled that of a freshly-landed codfish.

“If Quelch isn’t in his study now,” said Peter ruthlessly, “he may be there any tick.”

“Oh dear!”

“He’s as punctual as a clock, and he told me he had to have my lines at half-past five, or before. He’s there all right!”

“Ow!”

“Which reminds me, that I’d better cut off, or I shall be late. Can’t run risks with Quelch.”

“Ow!” groaned Bunter. “Wow!”

“If you’d stayed in and helped me with my lines, old fat man, you’d have done better,” said Peter. “Ta-ta! Think over which reformatory you’d like to go to when you’re whizzed out of Greyfriars.”

Peter gathered up his lines and made for the door. Bunter gazed after him with lack-lustre eyes.

“Pip-pip-Peter!” he said faintly.

“Can’t stop!”

“Sus-sus-see if Quelch’s there and—and tell a chap!” moaned Bunter. “And—and if he’s not there, bag the tuck quick for me!”

“I can see myself doing it!” agreed Peter.

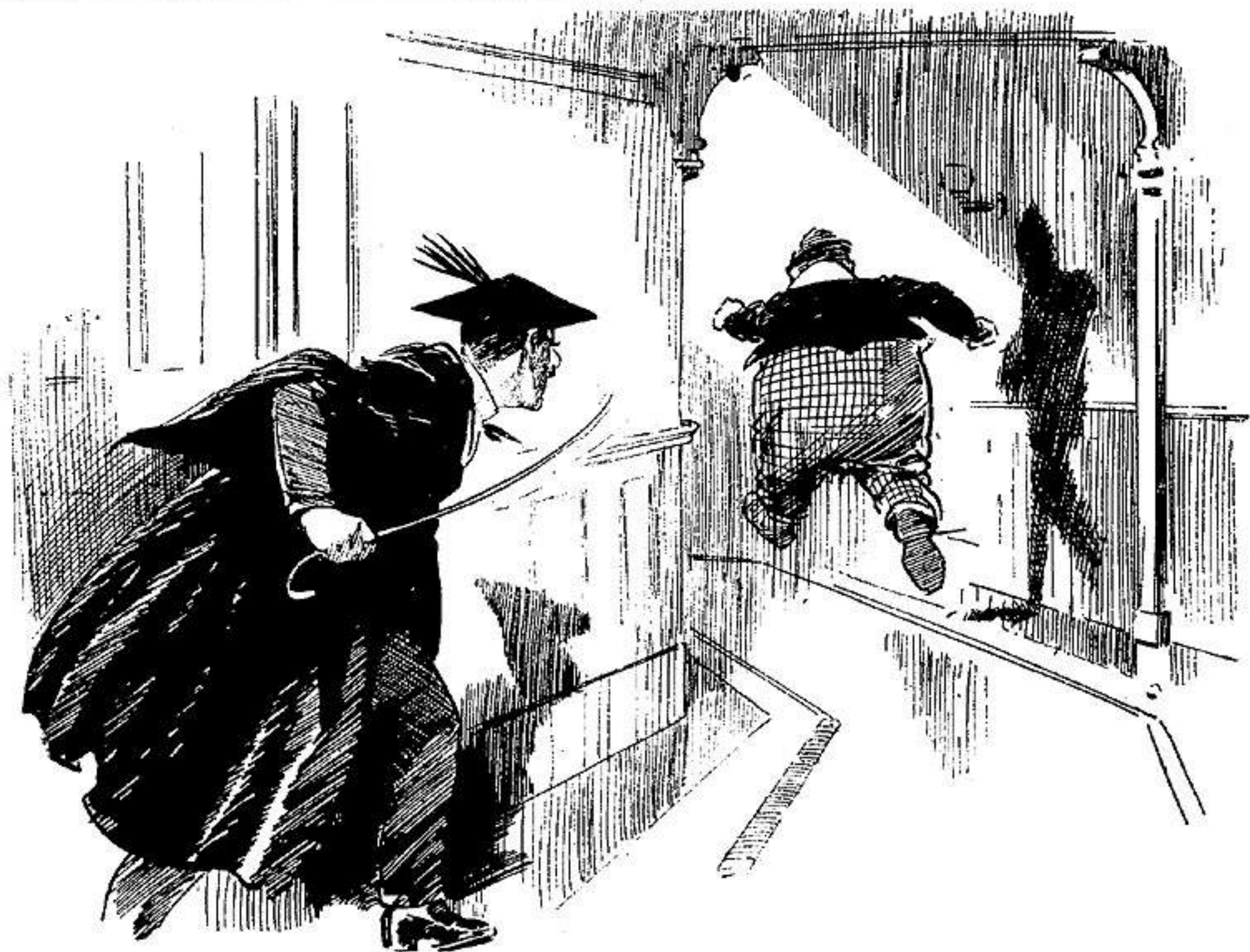
“Anyhow, let me know quick if he’s there—there may be time for me to dodge in and clear it off—”

Bunter’s voice trailed away, and he leaned on the study door, quite overcome, as Peter went down the passage. After all the trouble, all the risk, after bargaining with Chunkley’s for special delivery, at an extra cost to Mr. Quelch—after all, it seemed that Bunter was to lose that gorgeous spread.

Worse than that—if anything could be worse—Mr. Quelch would find the tuck in his study! He would want to know immediately and imperatively how it got there, and what it all meant, anyhow.

Bunter had not intended Mr. Quelch to know anything about the matter till Chunkley’s bill came in, a week or two later. That, evidently, would have been much safer for Bunter. But now—

He still considered that he was safe as far as that went. Of all the fellows who might have used Mr. Quelch’s name on the telephone, why should anyone pick out Bunter? That was all right—at least, Bunter hoped that it was. But the spread—the gorgeous spread—the stack of first-class tuck, the best that Chunkley’s could supply, in unheard-of quantities—that was gone



Billy Bunter jumped back into the passage and fled for dear life. "Bunter!" roared Mr. Quelch. The Remove master strode after Bunter, swishing his cane in the air. As he stepped out of the study he had a view of a pair of heels vanishing round a corner. "Bunter!" But Bunter was gone. (See Chapter 10.)

from Bunter's gaze like a beautiful dream.

Billy Bunter leaned weakly on the door, and groaned in anguish of spirit.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Mr. Quelch!

MR. QUELCH stepped in at the doorway of the House, and removed his silk hat, and stopped to exchange a word or two with Wingate of the Sixth. Then he headed for his study. At the corner of Masters' passage, he was confronted by the portly bulk of Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth. Mr. Quelch would have passed him; but Mr. Prout evidently desired to speak. The desire was all on Mr. Prout's side, but the Remove master paused politely.

"There is a circumstance I feel it my duty to mention to you, my dear Quelch!" said the portly Fifth Form master.

"Yes?"

Mr. Quelch looked as interested as he could. The ponderous Mr. Prout never suspected that he was a bore. But that fact was well-known to all other members of Dr. Locke's staff at Greyfriars.

"During your absence this afternoon, my dear Quelch, I found a boy of your Form surreptitiously entering your study."

"Indeed?"

"The boy was Bunter. On seeing me," said Mr. Prout, with indignant emphasis, "he would have deceived me

by a pretence that he was not designing to enter your study. I regret to say that he uttered a series of the most palpable untruths."

"Is that so?" said Mr. Quelch.

"It certainly is so. I mention the circumstance, sir, as I have no doubt that the young rascal was purposing to play some trick, and may have returned to do so when my observation was withdrawn."

"Thank you for mentioning it, Mr. Prout."

"Not at all, sir—not at all," boomed Mr. Prout. "Any slight service to a colleague, an esteemed colleague—"

Mr. Quelch was walking on, and Mr. Prout stopped at that point, or he would have been wasting his sweetness on the desert air. Long, long ago had Mr. Prout's oratorical style palled on the other masters at Greyfriars.

The Remove master entered his study.

It was improbable, in his opinion, that a fellow like Bunter had planned to play any practical joke on his absent Form master, and he thought it very likely that Mr. Prout was mistaken. His unexpressed opinion was that he wished Mr. Prout would attend solely to the affairs of the Fifth Form, and not waste his valuable time on the Remove. Mr. Prout, in the kindness of his portly heart, often butted into the province of other masters, and the amount of gratitude he earned thereby was absolutely negligible.

But all thought of Mr. Prout, and of the surreptitious or not surreptitious Bunter, vanished from Mr. Quelch's

mind at the sight of the pyramid on his table.

He stared at it.

As Peter had told the fatuous Owl, Mr. Quelch had had a narrow escape of catching Chunkley's man in the very act. Indeed, had he not stopped to speak to Gosling at the gate when he came in, he would have arrived in the House before the man from Chunkley's had departed.

The Special Delivery Service was a great feature at Chunkley's Stores. Undoubtedly delivery of the goods had been very prompt. Had Mr. Quelch remained out till after roll-call, as Bunter had expected, all would have been well. The goods were rather late for tea, but not too late for Bunter. The Special Delivery had been so prompt that the man from Chunkley's had just escaped a meeting with the gentleman who was supposed to have ordered the goods.

But that was all.

Had Bunter arrived to annex the goods even before Chunkley's van had rolled away from the tradesmen's gate, he would have been too late.

Mr. Quelch was there!

He was there, standing like a man in a trance, gazing at a stack of tuck that looked sufficient to stock the school shop and leave a little over.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch.

He approached his study table, which was covered from end to end with boxes, cartons, bags, and packets. They were piled high. There was no room on the table for the whole lot without piling them up.

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Boxes of chocolates, boxes of creams, cakes and tarts and buns, ginger and ginger-beer—all sorts of things such as might have made Mr. Quelch's mouth water forty years ago.

But forty years on made a lot of difference.

Mr. Quelch's mouth did not water now. It set in a tight line, and his eyes glinted.

He was astonished and he was angry. His first natural supposition was that Mrs. Mimble had ordered a consignment of goods for her shop, and that by some inexplicable blunder the goods had been delivered into his study. If that was so, it was a foolish and annoying blunder, and somebody had to be scarified by Mr. Quelch's sharp tongue for committing it.

Tap!

Peter Todd looked in while Mr. Quelch was still gazing at that toothsome stack.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Peter.

Had Mr. Quelch not been there, certainly Peter would have conveyed word promptly to Bunter, to give the hapless Owl of the Remove a chance to get the stuff out of sight. But Mr. Quelch was there.

"What is it, Todd?"

"My lines, sir," said Peter meekly.

"Lay them on the table—Hem! Lay them on my desk, Todd."

"Yes, sir."

Peter Todd placed the impot on his Form master's desk and withdrew, leaving Mr. Quelch still gazing at the tuck. Mr. Quelch, having gazed sufficiently, crossed to the bell, and rang it furiously for Trotter. Peter Todd returned to the Remove passage.

Bunter was awaiting him there, with an anxious face.

"I—I say, Peter, is—is the tuck there?"

"It's there all right," answered Peter.

"And—and Quelch?"

"He's there, too!"

"Oh lor!"

"I left him admiring it," said Peter. "He seemed a bit surprised. Rather cross, too, I think."

"Ow!"

Bunter groaned.

"It's all Bob Cherry's fault! Ow!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's my fault?" asked Bob, looking out of Study No. 1, where the Famous Five were at tea.

"Bunter's for it!" said Peter. "He's landed the tuck."

"I saw it coming in," said Bob, with a grin.

"Quelch's come in, too."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Quelch's found it?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

All the Famous Five were looking out of the study now.

"Yes. That fat idiot—that frabjous duffer—that footling frump, thought that Quelch was staying out till roll-call!"

"I heard him ask Prouty to take the roll!" moaned Bunter. "What was a fellow to think?"

"Well, my hat! You've done it now, Bunter!" said Wharton.

"The donefulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh, with a nod of his dusky head.

"It's all your fault, Bob Cherry!" howled Bunter. "If you hadn't shut me up in the box-room I should have had the stuff here two hours ago. You wasted my time, and you've landed me in this!"

"You silly owl," said Bob, "I was trying to keep you from making such a blinking idiot of yourself. It would have come out, anyhow, when Quelch got the bill from Chunkley's."

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"It won't come out," said Bunter. "Nobody knows I've telephoned, only you fellows. I'm not thinking of that. It's the feed."

"You'd better think of it," said Nugent. "Quelch will raise Cain over this, and you can bet on it he will find out who ordered the stuff in his name. He won't let the thing rest till he does find out."

"Oh, rot!" said Bunter uneasily.

"Is it possible that the blithering idiot didn't know that?" asked Johnny Bull in wonder. "You fat chump, whether it happened to-day or when the bill comes in, it makes no difference; you were bound to be spotted."

Bunter blinked at the chums of the Remove.

"That's all rot!" he said. "I was too jolly careful. Look here, after landing me like this, Bob Cherry, and losing me a splendid spread, the least you can do is to lend me ten bob till my postal-order comes. I'm hungry."

"You won't feel like feeding when Quelch's done with you," said Bob comfortingly.

"Yah!"

Harry Wharton & Co. went back into Study No. 1 to finish their tea. They had not the slightest doubt that Mr. Quelch would discover the delinquent, and would have discovered him if the matter had remained unknown to him till the bill came in from Chunkley's. It was obvious that such an occurrence would be sifted to the very bottom, and that the facts would be brought to light. Bunter, in his fatuous self-satisfaction, did not see it, but the other fellows had no doubt of it.

Bunter rolled into Study No. 1 after them.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Take a pew, Bunter," said the captain of the Remove, with unexpected kindness. "Pile in!"

"Well, it's up to you, after practically robbing me of a splendid spread," said Bunter.

"Fathead!"

"Tuck in," said Nugent. "You need to keep up your strength, old barrel, considering what you've got to go through shortly."

Bunter tucked in. But he blinked round the tea-table in Study No. 1 with growing alarm.

So far as his fatuous brain could understand, he had been excessively cautious, and had covered up his tracks well, and stood in no danger of discovery. But the opposite opinion, so obviously held by the other fellows, gave him a quain of uneasiness.

"I say, you fellows, Quelch will never spot me," he said, with his mouth full.

"How could he?"

"He jolly well will," said Johnny Bull. "I dare say you were seen going to his study, for that matter."

Bunter felt a still more unpleasant quain, as he remembered Mr. Prouty in Masters' passage.

"Oh!" he ejaculated.

"Quelch and the Head will never let it rest till they've got you, you born idiot," said Bob Cherry. "It stands to reason."

"Then it's up to you," said Bunter warmly. "It would have been safe enough if the stuff had come early."

"It would have come to the same thing, fathead."

"It wouldn't!" howled Bunter.

"You've landed me like this, and the only thing you can do now is to own up."

"Own up!" repeated Bob blankly.

"Yes—own up to Quelch that you did it!"

"That—that I did it!" gasped Bob. "You did it!"

"It's up to you, after landing me in this. You go to Mr. Quelch, and own up in a—a frank and manly way, you know, like—like Eric in the story—"

"Well, my hat!" said Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry half-rose from the table; but he sat down again.

"I won't kick you, Bunter," he said. "You'll get enough from Quelch and the Head when they spot you. But shut up, or else I shall give you a kick to go on with."

Billy Bunter finished his tea un-kicked.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Vials of Wrath!

"YESSIR! You rang, sir?" said Trotter.

Trotter had just seen Chunkley's van off at the tradesmen's gate. He had barely had time to confide to the cook his opinion that Mr. Quelch was getting "bats in the belfry" when the bell rang for him. Unless it was a case of bats in the belfry, Trotter couldn't understand why Mr. Quelch had ordered all that tuck from Chunkley's. As Trotter said to the cook, he couldn't intend to eat it. Mr. Quelch had reached an age when he had to be rather careful in his diet. Had he consumed all those tarts and cakes and buns and meringues and cream puffs and chocolates and tinned pineapples, and the rest, there would probably have been a vacancy on Dr. Locke's staff soon afterwards. And if Mr. Quelch didn't intend to eat it, what did he intend? Trotter asked cook argumentatively. "He couldn't," Trotter declared, "have bought it for a table ornament." Trotter's speculations were cut short by the bell, and he repaired to Mr. Quelch's study, in a very curious frame of mind. He was prepared to dodge, if, as he half-suspected, the Remove master was really parting with his sanity.

"Yessir," said Trotter, keeping in the doorway.

Mr. Quelch pointed to the mountain of tuck on his table.

"What does this mean, Trotter?"

"Mean, sir," said Trotter.

"Yes. Why have these articles been brought to my study?" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"'Cause you ordered them, sir," said Trotter.

"What!"

Trotter backed a pace into the passage. He did not like the look on Mr. Quelch's face at all.

"Are you out of your senses, Trotter?"

"I—I 'ope not, sir," faltered Trotter. He hoped that Mr. Quelch wasn't, either; but he had doubts.

"Then what do you mean by saying that I ordered this—this rubbish?" said Mr. Quelch testily. "I suppose it has been delivered here by mistake—it must have been intended for the school shop. I cannot understand such a mistake. I will not allow such mistakes to be made. I will not be subjected to this annoyance and inconvenience. Do you understand me, Trotter?"

Trotter didn't; not in the least. He could only gape.

"You hear me, Trotter?" snorted the Remove master. "Were you responsible for these—these foodstuffs being placed in my study?"

"I—I brought the man 'ere, suttin'ly, sir!" gasped Trotter.

"You brought him here, with these articles!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Yessir."

"And how dared you do anything of the kind?"

"I—I—I—"

"How dare you play such a prank!" roared Mr. Quelch. "Is it your desire to be discharged, Trotter?"

"Oh, sir! No, sir!" gasped Trotter. "The man said they was for you, sir, special delivery from Chunkley's Stores, sir."

"Nonsense!"

"Like it 'appened before, sir, when your nevvie was 'ere, sir," said Trotter. "Only there wasn't such a lot that time."

Mr. Quelch gazed at him.

"Do you mean to tell me, Trotter, that Chunkley's van-man told you the goods were ordered by me?"

"Suttin'ly, sir. Special order by telephone, he says, the goods to be sent by special delivery, sir. If Mr. Quelch wasn't in, he says, the goods was to be placed in his study, he says, according to instructions given on the telephone, he says."

"I cannot believe it," exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "It is incredible! Has the van gone?"

"Gone about five minutes, sir."

"Extraordinary! Is it too late to recall the carman?"

"He's about 'arf-way back to Courtfield by this time, sir," said the wondering Trotter.

"It is—is absolutely amazing!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch angrily. "How could such a mistake be made? I have ordered nothing from Chunkley's—nothing. It is really extraordinary! However, if the carman made such a statement to you, Trotter, you are exonerated, of course. You may go."

Trotter went, wondering more than ever. Mr. Quelch made a jump to the telephone, almost as if he had been a kangaroo. He grabbed the receiver off the hook, and gave the number of Chunkley's Stores in Courtfield. Mr. Quelch wanted to know what it meant, and he wanted to know at once. The mistake was serious enough. Apart from the annoyance of having that stack of foodstuffs on his hands, doubtless there would be a bill from Chunkley's—that was certain to follow the delivery of the goods, even if they had been delivered by mistake. And to judge by the size of the pyramid on the Form master's study table, the bill would be a long one. It could not be less than five pounds at least. Such an error could not be set right too quickly.

"Chunkley's Stores" came through.

"Mr. Quelch speaking from Greyfriars. Certain goods have been delivered here for me that were never ordered—"

"That will be 'Inquiries,' sir. Kindly hold the line and I will put you through."

Mr. Quelch fumed over the telephone. It was past tea-time, and he wanted his tea. But this extraordinary matter had to be set right first.

"Chunkley's Stores!" came from the Inquiry Department.

"Mr. Quelch speaking from Greyfriars. Certain goods have been delivered here by mistake. Nothing was ordered by me. I decline to accept these goods. I require you to remove them at once."

"When was the order given, sir?"

"No order was given!" shrieked Mr. Quelch.

"If you will tell me by what delivery

you received the goods, sir, no doubt the matter can be set right."

"The page tells me they came by special delivery, not more than ten minutes or a quarter of an hour ago."

"Very good, sir! That will be the Special Delivery Inquiry. If you will kindly hold the line I will put you through."

Mr. Quelch held the line, but not kindly. His expression was most unkind.

"Chunkley's Stores!" came along cheerfully from the Special Delivery Inquiry Office.

"Mr. Quelch speaking from Greyfriars. A quantity—a huge quantity—of comestibles has been delivered here during my absence—"

"Quite so, sir. I remember the order. I trust the goods arrived in time."

READ HOW FISHER T. FISH CAME TO GREYFRIARS!



"Hustle" and "Pep" are the two watch-words of Fisher T. Fish, the amazing junior from New York, but by the time the Greyfriars boys have pulled his American leg a little, Fisher Tarleton Fish is forced to the conclusion that England is not such a "sleepy li'l ole island" as he has been led to believe! If you're in the humour for a good laugh read—

THE SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY (No. 47)

Any Newsagent will supply you
with a copy.

"Bless my soul! I—"

"The order was for Special Delivery, sir. Our Special Delivery Service is absolutely reliable, as you have found, sir. Thank you, sir!"

"Hold on!" shrieked Mr. Quelch.

But the Special Delivery Inquiry Office had rung off. No doubt the bright and efficient young man there supposed that Mr. Quelch had courteously rung him up to thank him for that prompt delivery. No doubt he thought it very civil of him; but he had, of course, no time to waste; they were very busy at Chunkley's. Or perhaps he did not think at all. At Chunkley's Stores things were speeded up in quite an American manner, so naturally there was not much time for thinking.

Mr. Quelch gazed at the telephone. He would probably have ground his teeth had he possessed his first or second teeth. But at Mr. Quelch's age, and with his dental arrangements, grinding

the teeth was rather too risky an experiment. Third teeth would not stand it.

He looked at the telephone as if he would like to bite it, and rang up again. Having gone through the lengthy process required by the efficient system at Chunkley's, he arrived once more at the Special Delivery Inquiry Office.

"Mr. Quelch, speaking from Greyfriars," he recited wearily. "Kindly hold the line till I have finished speaking. An immense quantity of foodstuffs has been delivered here—"

"Yes, sir. Everything satisfactory, I trust, sir?"

"Nothing of the kind!" hooted Mr. Quelch. "I gave no order to-day. Some absurd, some ridiculous mistake has been made. I require you to take away these—these ridiculous things at once!"

"I am sorry if there has been a mistake, sir! What did you order?"

"Nothing!"

"Kindly make the matter as clear as possible, sir. You say that certain goods have been delivered by mistake, in that case, have or have not the goods you ordered reached you?"

"Nothing was ordered!"

"Nothing, sir?"

The smart young man at Chunkley's was evidently surprised. Even Chunkley's, efficient as they were, did not make mistakes like this.

"Certainly not! I have been out all the afternoon, and on my return I found that your man had just delivered these goods. A large quantity—an enormous quantity of foodstuffs."

"I recall the order, sir. Three dozen jam-tarts—"

"Kindly do not go through the list. No order was given by me."

"Hem! The goods were ordered in your name, sir, at least. Perhaps some other person spoke on the telephone for you."

"No one was authorised to do so. Impossible!"

"One moment, sir, while I refer to my order list for Special Delivery."

Mr. Quelch waited one moment, and then a good many more moments. But the voice came through again at last.

"There is no mistake, sir."

"What—what?"

"The goods were ordered by telephone, for Special Delivery, sir, and were delivered as booked. I do not quite understand your complaint, sir."

"I did not give the order. If you have received such an order under my name, someone was using my name without authorisation!" shrieked Mr. Quelch.

"Indeed! Are you Mr. Quelch speaking?"

"I have said so."

"From Greyfriars School?"

"Yes, yes, yes!"

"Then I fail to see where a mistake can have arisen, sir. Certainly the goods were ordered, with instructions to place them in your study if you were not at home, sir. It was stated that the page would take the carman to your study with the goods, if you were absent. The man has not yet returned, but it appears he carried out his instructions."

Mr. Quelch gasped.

"You are absolutely sure that these goods were ordered in my name?" he spluttered.

"There is no doubt whatever on that point, sir."

"Bless my soul!"

(Continued on page 17.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 99b.

"FEARLESS TO THE RESCUE!"

(Continued from previous page.)

drew a small bicycle-pump from his pocket, and pumped in breath.

"Mersy?" he cried. "What mersy would you have shown to this poor girl had she fallen into your clutches?"

"We should not have harmed her, senior," said the leader of the gang. "We were merely going to give her a dose of clorry-form and render her unconshus, and then kidnap her and hold her to ransom. Her father—the Senior Birchmall—is a rich schoolmaster. He has a horde of gold in the old oak chest, and he would gladly have paid a fat sum for the release of the pretty seniorita—his daughter."

"His daughter!" gasped Frank Fearless.

He turned quickly to the girl.

"Are you really Doctor Birchmall's daughter?"

"Y-e-e-s," faltered the girl, "but that's the only thing against me. I'm trying hard to live it down! And I can't help being his daughter, can I?"

"Of course not!" said Frank gallantly. "What shall I do with these ruffians? Would you like me to take off my belt and give them a round duzzan apeace?"

"No, no! Let them go!" said Molly Birchmall. "They have suffered enuff, judging by their faces. You have robbed them of what little bewty they had."

Frank Fearless turned to the cowering cowards in the roadway. He waved his hand towards space.

"Hop it!" he said curtly.

And the would-be kidnappers of Molly Birchmall were only too glad to obey. They slunk out of sight as fast as their hurts would allow them, swaring softly in Spanish as they disappeared.

Molly Birchmall slipped a slim white hand in one of Frank's. She looked up at her gallant rescuer with a bewitching smile.

"My hero!" she purred softly. "You have earned my lifelong grattytude! Tell me, what is your name?"

"Frank Fearless."

Molly gave a start.

"You are the new boy—the boy who is due to arrive at St. Sam's to-day?"

Frank nodded.

"What have you done with my father?" gasped Molly. "He was to have fetched you from Fearless Towers."

"He is safe and sound," said Frank with a grin. "Owing to an unforchunit misshap on the road, we had to part company. But he will come rolling home in due corse."

At this Molly was mollyfied. She had feared at first that something dreadful had happened.

"May I give you a lift to St. Sam's, Miss Birchmall?" asked Frank Fearless, with all the curtesy of a night of old.

Molly's eyes sparkled with plezzura. She perched herself on the soap-box beside her reskewer, and together they rode in state through the school gateway, where Fossil, the porter, stood fossilised at the spectacle.

The Flying Fury, with Frank Fearless and Molly and the rest of the menagery on board, rumbled and rattled into the quadrangle, scattering right and left the startled juniors, who were playing footer there. Snorting like an old war-horse, and with clouds of smoke pouring out of the exhaust, it careered wildly over the flagstones.

And that was how Frank Fearless came to St. Sam's.

II.

"MY hat!"

"What a quaint old buss!" Jack Jolly & Co., the heroes of the Fourth Form at St. Sam's, crowded round the Flying Fury.

"Why," said Jack Jolly with a larf, as he surveyed the car, "it's got no body!"

"That's no body's business but mine!" retorted Frank Fearless, as he helped his charming companion to alite.

Jack Jolly frowned.

"This cheeky cub of a new kid wants a jolly good bumping!" he growled.

"First he nearly runs us down, and now he starts being sorey! Just wait till Molly Birchmall's gone, and then we'll put him in his place!"

Molly overheard that remark.

"You will do nothing of the sort!" she cried, her eyes flashing. "You will not lay a finger on Frank Fearless. He is a brave and gallent hero! But for his curridge and resorce, I should not be here now."

And then, while Frank Fearless stood blushing, with downcast eyes, Molly told all the fellows how he had reskewed her from the clutches of the gipsies.

Instantly Jack Jolly & Co.'s attytude changed towards the new boy. Plucky heroes themselves, they were quick to recognise pluckyness in another. Warmly they shook Frank Fearless by the hand, chanting at the same time, "Freeze a jolly good fellow!"

Molly Birchmall smiled. She gave Frank Fearless a bright nod, and tripped lightly into the house.

Frank gazed wistfully after her retreating figger.

"A stunning girl, that!" he said. "I'd have fought a thowsand gipsies for her sake!"

"Molly Birchmall's one of the best," agreed Merry of the Fourth. "The Head duzzent desserve to have such a bewtiful daughter. He's an ugly-faced old fogey himself."

"Where is the Head, by the way?" asked Jack Jolly, peering into the rabbit-hutch as if he eggspected Doctor Birchmall to emerge.

Frank Fearless told the paneful story of how the towing-rope had snapped, leaving the Head stranded in the bathchair trailer, miles away from anywhere, and not knowing the nearest way to it.

Jack Jolly & Co. held their sides, and a merry peel of larfter rang out. The juniors never failed to be tickled by the Head's misfortunes.

"Poor old Head!" gurgled Bright. "Aren't you going back to fetch him, Fearless?"

"No jolly fear! I'd rather walk into a lion's den than face old Birchmall at this moment!"

"But you'll have to face him later on—as soon as he gets back," said Jack Jolly.

Frank Fearless shrugged his shoulders. "P'raps the old buffer will have simmered down by then," he said.

And then he turned his attention to his pets, who were glad to be released after their long captivity.

Billy the goat was conducted to the Head's garden, where he was left to wander at will. The rabbit-hutch was also conveyed to the garden, and the bunnies were let loose among the Head's cabbages. There was no fear of them running away, for they were devoted to Frank Fearless. When they had fed to their harts' content they would find their way back to their hutch.

What the Head would say when he found that the new boy's pets had been given the freedom of his garden remained to be heard!

Percy the parrot was the only member of the menagery who was not liberated. Percy was taken in his cage to Jack Jolly's study, and suspended from the ceiling. He chattered away quite gaily to Jack Jolly & Co., who made an awful fuss of him, and fed him with sugar through the bars of the cage.

Frank Fearless found a home for the Flying Fury in the Head's private garridge. The garridge was empty, for the Head had long ago been compelled to put his Rolls-Rice in pawn.

The new boy was invited to tea by Jolly and Merry and Bright, who stood him a fine feed of fried sossidges, followed by cakes and pastrys from the tuckshop. After which, to show their admiration and esteem for the gallant hero who had reskewed Molly Birchmall, they pressed him to a little jelly.

Frank Fearless was sprawling in the armchair after his repast, when suddenly there was quite a commotion down in the quadrangle.

The juniors sprang to their feet and rushed to the window.

A remarkable seen greeted their gaze.

(Continued on page 28.)

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ST. FRANK'S ON THE SPREE!

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THE MYSTERY MASTER



(Continued from page 13.)

"I trust you will be able to rectify the mistake, if any, at your end, sir. Good-bye!"

Chunkley's rang off.

Mr. Quelch put up the receiver. For some moments he was quite dazed. He realised that the mistake had not been made at Chunkley's Stores. Someone had telephoned in his name, ordering these goods—an absurd practical joke at his expense. Someone in the school, of course. A practical joker outside Greyfriars would not have known that Mr. Quelch was absent that afternoon, and could scarcely have added the detail about the page showing the carman to the study. It was some Greyfriars fellow who had played this trick—Mr. Quelch knew now that it was a trick. Who?

Back into Mr. Quelch's mind came Mr. Prout's information. Bunter had entered his study surreptitiously during his absence.

Bunter!

Mr. Quelch understood.

Bunter was not the fellow to risk playing a practical joke on a Form master like Mr. Quelch. It was not merely a joke. The unscrupulous, iniquitous young rascal had intended to consume these foodstuffs—only the Remove master's return had nipped that scheme. All was clear to Mr. Quelch now. Had he remained out of gates till after tea, he would never have found these goods in his study. He would have known nothing of them until the bill came in from Chunkley's at the end of the month. Mr. Quelch saw it all.

He whipped open the door of his study.

Hobson of the Shell was in view in the distance, and Mr. Quelch called to him, or, rather, shouted.

"Hobson!"

"Yes, sir?"

The Shell fellow came along, quite surprised by the excitement in the face of the usually grave and composed Remove master.

"Hobson, will you kindly find Bunter, of my Form, and tell him to come to my study at once, sir?"

"Certainly, sir!"

Hobson of the Shell hurried away, and Mr. Quelch stepped back into his study. There he selected his stoutest cane.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Bend Over!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! You're wanted, old fat bean!"

Bob Cherry made that remark as the voice of Hobson of the Shell was heard in the Remove passage.

Hobson was singing out cheerily:

"Bunter! Bunter's wanted! Anybody seen a fat pig rooting about? Where's that piffling porker Bunter?"

Billy Bunter had finished tea in Study No. 1. He rose from the table, his fat jaw dropping a little.

"I—I say, you fellows, who—who do you think wants me?" he stammered.

"I—I say, it—it can't be Quelch, you

know. Wha-a-at should he want me for?"

"Fathead!" said Bob.

The door of Study No. 1 opened under the propulsion of James Hobson's boot, applied from without.

"Got a fat pig here, you men? Oh, here he is! Your Form master wants you in his study, fatty."

"Wha-a-at does he want me for, Hobson?"

"Blessed if I know, or care; but you'd better put some exercise-books in your bags!" grinned Hobson. "I've never seen old Quelch look in such a bait!"

"Is—is—is he waxy?"

"Waxy?" said Hobson. "Waxy isn't the word. Ever seen a savage Hun thirsting for blood?"

"Nunno!"

"Well, I haven't, either; but if you saw one, you'd see somebody exactly like Quelch at the present moment!"

"Oh dear!"

"What have you been up to?" asked Hobson. "It's something a bit out of the common, I should say, judging by Quelch's looks. Burgling his desk?"

"Oh, really, you beast!"

"Well, you'd better travel," said Hobson cheerily. "He's boiling now. If you wait till he boils over you may get it worse."

And with that kindly advice James Hobson betook himself about his own affairs.

Bunter turned a ghastly face upon the Famous Five.

"I—I say, you fellows, d-d-d-do you think Quelch knows?"

"Looks like it," said Harry Wharton.

"He—he suspects me of ordering that stuff from Chunkley's, you think?" groaned Bunter.

"What did you expect, you fat idiot?" growled Johnny Bull.

"Oh, lor'!"

"Better cut off, Bunter," said Bob Cherry. "You won't make it any better by keeping Quelch waiting, as Hobby said."

"But—but—I—I say, I—I can't go, you know. I—I'm not going to be licked, you know!"

"Cut off, ass!"

"I don't see why Quelch should suspect me. Shows a rotten, low, suspicious mind—"

"For goodness' sake, go, you ass! Do you want Quelch to come up here for you?" exclaimed Nugent.

"Oh, lor'!"

Billy Bunter rolled to the study door. It seemed almost as if his fat little legs refused to carry him.

But evidently he had to go when Mr. Quelch sent for him. Matters would not be improved by compelling the Remove master to come up and fetch him. Rather the reverse.

Bunter tottered down the stairs.

"Well, the fat idiot has done it now," said Bob Cherry commiseratingly. "I did all I could to stop him."

Bunter dragged himself along to the Remove master's study.

The door was open.

Mr. Quelch was standing there with a cane in his hand, and the expression on his face was undoubtedly Hunnish, though perhaps not quite so Hunnish as depicted by Hobson of the Shell.

His eyes glittered at the sight of the Owl of the Remove.

"Come in, Bunter!"

Bunter tottered in. He halted a pace or two inside the doorway, blinking dolorously at Mr. Quelch.

"Now, Bunter—"

"I—I didn't, sir!"

"What?"

"I wasn't!"

"What do you mean, Bunter?"

"I—I mean I'm innocent, sir!" gasped Bunter. "It was—was very likely another fellow all the time, sir!"

"Bunter!"

"I—I hope you can take my word, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I never did anything of the sort, sir! I—I've been out of gates all the afternoon. I never touched the telephone, sir!"

"The—the telephone?"

"Yes, sir. I assure you I never dreamed of such a thing, sir. Nothing would make me do it."

"Upon my word!" stuttered Mr. Quelch.

"Some fellows use a master's phone when he's out, sir," said Bunter. "Not me, sir. I wouldn't. The—the fact is, sir, I—I hardly know how to use a telephone, and I—I don't know Chunkley's number, sir. I—I hope you believe me, sir?"

"Believe you!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir. C-c-can I go now?"

"No, Bunter!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "You may not go!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"I was about to inquire, Bunter, whether you had been guilty of the outrageous trick that was played here this afternoon. I had very little doubt, Bunter, but it was my intention to inquire very thoroughly before administering punishment. Inquiry, however, would now be superfluous, as you are condemned out of your own mouth."

"Not at all, sir. I—"

"You telephoned to Chunkley's Stores upon this instrument this afternoon?"

"Oh, no, sir! I—I was in my study at the time, sir!"

"At what time?" hooted Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I mean—"

"You used my name in ordering a large quantity of goods from Chunkley's Stores?"

"Your—your name, sir?"

"It was your intention to consume—I should say devour—to devour this unhealthy mass of foodstuffs. Only my fortunate return prevented you from carrying out your iniquitous scheme."

Bunter could not see anything fortunate about the Form master's return. From his point of view it was distinctly unfortunate.

"What have you to say, Bunter?"

"I—I—I—I am quite innocent, sir! Innocent as the—the babe in arms!" gasped Bunter.

"Do you deny entering my study?"

"Certainly, sir!" Bunter was prepared to deny anything just then.

"Mr. Prout saw you coming to my study in a surreptitious manner."

"Oh, no, sir! Mr. Prout was mistaken, sir! You—you know what an old donkey Mr. Prout is, sir?" stammered Bunter.

"What?" roared Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I mean—that is—I wasn't doing anything surreptitious, sir! I—I never was surreptitious in my life, sir! P-p-perhaps Mr. Prout had been—been drinking, sir?" suggested Bunter hopefully.

"Drinking?" said Mr. Quelch dazedly.

"Yes, sir! You—you know people think they see all sorts of things when—when they've been drinking!"

If Bunter expected to improve matters by the suggestion that the Fifth Form master had been "seeing double," he was disappointed. Indeed, his ingenious suggestions seemed to intensify Mr. Quelch's wrath.

"You—you insolent young rascal!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "How dare you make such iniquitous suggestions? Your punishment will be all the more severe for your insolence!"

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"Oh, lor'!"

"I shall cane you, Bunter, with the utmost severity. I shall give you twenty strokes!"

"Yaroooh!"

"The bill for these goods will be sent to your father. You will not, however, be allowed to touch them. I shall explain the matter fully to Mr. Bunter. If you were a less obtuse boy, Bunter, if you were not the most crassly obtuse and stupid boy at Greyfriars, I should take you to the Head and request him to expel you from the school. I am treating you very leniently in sentencing you only to twenty strokes of the cane. Bend over that chair, Bunter!"

Bunter fairly goggled at him through his big spectacles.

It had fallen to Billy Bunter's lot, more than once, to take "six" bending over a chair. But twenty!

And in Mr. Quelch's present mood it was absolutely certain that every one of the twenty would be a hefty one. Obviously, the Remove master was going to put his beef into it.

"Do you hear me, Bunter?"

Mr. Quelch pointed to the chair with his cane.

Bunter heard him. Dozens of fellows heard him, for that matter. Mr. Quelch's voice was both loud and deep, and the study door was open. But though Bunter heard him, he heeded not.

Twenty swipes of the enraged Remove master's cane was altogether too thick. Bunter knew that he had to obey. He knew that rebelliousness would only make matters worse. He knew that it was wisest to take his punishment and get it over. But it was no use—he couldn't! If the spirit was willing, the flesh was weak. It was really a physical impossibility for Bunter to bend over the chair and take twenty.

"Bunter, I command you!"

"Oh dear! Ow!"

Mr. Quelch made a stride towards Bunter, evidently intending to grasp him and bend him over the chair.

Bunter jumped back into the passage. It was not his will that acted; it was instinct. His fat body carried on, as it were, without waiting for the direction of his fat mind.

"Bunter!" roared Mr. Quelch.

He strode after Bunter, the cane in the air. As he stepped out of the study he had a view of a pair of heels vanishing round a corner.

"Bunter!"

Bunter was gone.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Brain Storm!

"O H, crikey!"

Billy Bunter groaned.

If ever a fellow in the wide universe had been up against it, William George Bunter was up against it now.

He was in Study No. 7. He had fled there, like a rabbit to its hole. But there was no protection in Study No. 7. He had locked the door. But what use was a locked door against the authority of a Form master?

Bunter was for it! He knew that! And he groaned in dismal terror and apprehension.

Mr. Quelch might consider it undignified to pursue a junior who scudded away to escape punishment. In that case, he would send a prefect to fetch him. Bunter was only postponing the evil hour. He was making matters worse. It might be a Head's flogging.

now, instead of twenty from Mr. Quelch. It might be both! Bunter knew it. But the knowledge did not help him. He had asked for it; but, like another transgressor of earlier times, he found the punishment greater than he could bear.

Bunter generally depended upon his wonderful power of fiction to help him out of a scrape. If "crammers" could have saved now, he was prepared to turn out a series of untruths that Ananias or George Washington would have regarded with admiring despair. But that was all in vain now—prevarication was futile. Mr. Quelch knew that he was the guilty party, just as those beasts had warned him. A low, suspicious mind had caused Quelch to suspect him; an ungentlemanly refusal to take a fellow's word had finished the matter.

"Oh, lor'!" groaned Bunter.

Any resource would have been welcome to the Owl of the Remove to escape punishment. But he was at the end of his resources.

What could he say?

Like the celebrated witness who was prepared to swear "in a general way, anything!" Bunter was not particular what he said, so long as it staved off punishment. That was the important point. And he could think of nothing—he was at the end of his tether.

There was a chuckle in the Remove passage. The other Remove fellows were not taking this awful crisis so seriously as Bunter was.

"Locked in his study," said Skinner's voice. "The potty chump! Quelch will skin him alive!"

"Ow!" groaned Bunter.

"Must be mad!" giggled Snoop.

"Mad as a hatter, I should think, to play the goat like this! Quelch's erupting like Vesuvius!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beasts!" groaned Bunter.

But he sat suddenly upright in his chair.

Mad!

That word, carelessly uttered, had touched a chord in Bunter's memory. It recalled the news item he had perused in the newspaper that afternoon, while locked up in the box-room.

Bunter's eyes glistened behind his big glasses.

He had done the trick—that was known. There was no getting out of that. But suppose he had been temporarily insane when he had done it!

If a New York banker could have brain-storms, why couldn't a Greyfriars fellow have brain-storms?

The newspaper had distinctly stated that the hapless banker had suffered from a brain-storm, in the throes of which he had felled a cashier with a ledger, and gone for the bank janitor with a hatchet. Bunter's proceedings had not been so serious as that, at all events.

His fat face cleared.

He had sat in helpless, hopeless search of a "crammer" that would answer his purpose. Here it was.

If he did not get away with it, so to speak, at least he would be no worse off. But why shouldn't he get away with it? The American banker had got away with it. Brain-storms, in fact, were quite fashionable in modern days, like appendicitis and things. In the sleepy old Victorian days, people had got on well enough without either. But medical science had advanced by leaps and bounds since then. All sorts of diseases had been brought into daily use, as it were.

Any medical man would know a

brain-storm when he saw one. Mr. Quelch, unfortunately, was not a medical man, and he might share the ordinary man-in-the-street's sceptical attitude towards the fairy tales of science. But, after all, there must be such things as brain-storms, or they wouldn't be reported in the papers. If a thing was in a newspaper, there must be something in it. Bunter, of course, was not yet old enough to know much about the working of the daily Press.

"I've got it!" he murmured.

Bunter felt bucked.

It was a chance, at least—and it was a case of any port in a storm.

There was no doubt about the storm! It was about to break on Billy Bunter's devoted head. If that storm might be averted by another storm—a brain-storm—Bunter was saved. All that was needed, so far as Bunter could see, was a little lying. In that line Bunter had a just confidence in his own powers.

There came a tap at the study door.

"Come out, Bunter!" called Peter Todd's voice. "For goodness' sake don't play the fool! Walker's coming up to fetch you!"

Bunter unlocked the study door.

A crowd of fellows stared into the study as he opened it.

Bunter caught up a bread-knife from the table. There was no ledger or hatchet handy, so he could not follow exactly in the footsteps of the American gentleman who had had a brain-storm. But a bread-knife was good enough.

"What the thump——"

"Blood!" shouted Bunter.

"Wha-a-at?"

"Blood! Ha, ha!"

Bunter brandished the bread-knife.

Exactly how maniacs behaved Bunter did not quite know. He had never been inside a lunatic asylum; though Remove fellows had told him often enough that he ought to have been. But this seemed good enough. If he had become temporarily—a lunatic, with homicidal tendencies, something of this sort would fill the bill.

"Put down that knife!" roared Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha! Blood!"

"Is the fat idiot mad?" exclaimed Skinner, backing away hastily from the study doorway.

"Great Scott!"

"What——"

"Mad!" yelled Bunter. "Ha, ha! Blood!"

He made a rush at the juniors, and they scattered, with startled exclamations.

"Look out!"

"He's gone potty!"

"Mind your eye!"

Walker of the Sixth came along from the stairs. He was commissioned by Mr. Quelch to fetch Bunter. He stared at the alarmed crowd in the passage.

"What's all this?" snapped Walker.

"Look out!"

"Bunter's mad!"

"He's got a knife!"

"Oh, don't play the goat!" said Walker crossly, and he came on to the doorway of Study No. 7.

Billy Bunter's fat heart almost failed him at the sight of a prefect of the Sixth Form. Had it been Wingate, Bunter would probably have dropped his remarkable scheme like a hot potato. But it was only Walker, and there were many jests in the Lower Forms about Walker of the Sixth being a funk.

Bunter carried on.

"Ha!" he roared, brandishing the bread-knife, and making a lunge in the direction of the prefect.



"Mad!" yelled Bunter. "Ha, ha! Blood!" He made a rush at the juniors, brandishing the bread-knife, and they scattered with startled exclamations. "Look out!" "He's gone potty!" "Mind your eye!" (See Chapter 11.)

Walker jumped back.

Certainly that lunge would not have reached him. Bunter's brain-storm did not carry him so far as that. But Walker took remarkable good care that it did not reach him. His backward jump carried him right across the Remove passage to the further wall.

That was enough for Bunter. He only needed encouragement.

"Blood!" he roared.

And he jumped out of the study after Walker of the Sixth.

"Great pip!"

Walker of the Sixth went for the stairs as if he thought he was doing the School quarter-mile. Walker of the Sixth had no use for a dangerous maniac at close quarters.

At the sight of the prefect running—a prefect of the Sixth Form—there was a further scattering of the alarmed Removites. Fellows scudded to the stairs, or up to the box-room, or into their studies, slamming the doors. Bunter raged down the passage after Walker.

"Stop!" he roared. "I'm mad—mad! Ha, ha! Stop! Blood! Ha, ha!"

"Oh crumbs!" panted Walker, and he descended the Remove staircase three steps at a time.

Skinner and Snoop were falling over one another in a frantic effort to get into their study, while Stott was blocking the doorway. Bunter rushed towards them.

"Help!" yelled Snoop.

"Oh, my hat! Keep off!" roared Skinner.

Stott flew into the study, and Snoop after him. Skinner heard Bunter panting close behind him. He raced in and slammed the door.

Slam!

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter.

He had caught the door with his nose.

"Lock it!" screamed Snoop. "Shove the table against it! Put the desk to it. Help!"

There were sounds of hasty barricading.

In the Remove passage Bunter was left alone—monarch of all he surveyed.

He was getting away with it!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Looking for the Lunatic!

"NONSENSE!"

"He's mad, sir!"

"Nonsense!"

"Mad as a hatter, sir!"

"Nonsense!" roared Mr. Quelch.

The Remove master looked quite excited.

Mr. Quelch was sometimes cross, sometimes very angry, occasionally in a rage. But he had seldom or never been in so towering a rage as he was in now.

It really was the limit.

On his study table were still stacked the piles of tuck ordered by Billy Bunter in his name. The mere sight of them had the effect on Mr. Quelch of a red rag on a bull. And Bunter, after that iniquitous trick, had recklessly, rebelliously, fled from punishment. Mr. Quelch had selected his stoutest cane for Bunter. He had been left standing with the cane in his hand and fury in his face. He had sent a prefect to fetch Bunter back. And the prefect returned empty-handed, with a report that was calculated to add fuel to the flames of the Form master's wrath.

Mr. Quelch glared at Walker. He was angry, and, like the prophet of old, he felt that he did well to be angry. But his look was almost alarming. Anyone looking at the Remove master at that moment might have suspected that it was Mr. Quelch, and not a member of his Form, who was suffering in the throes of a brain-storm.

"Nonsense!" hooted Mr. Quelch for the fourth time. "How dare you, Walker, stand there and make such utterly ridiculous statements!"

"I—I assure you, sir—" stammered Walker.

"Nonsense!"

"I—I've seen him, sir!"

"Nonsense!"

"The—the other fags are frightened out of their wits!"

"Nonsense!"

"They were running like—like rabbits, sir!"

"Nonsense!"

Mr. Quelch's vocabulary seemed to be limited. But what it lacked in variety it made up in emphasis.

He fairly shouted at Walker of the Sixth.

"Perhaps you'd like to see for your self, sir," said Walker sulkily.

"Bah! Certainly I shall see for myself," snorted Mr. Quelch. "If Bunter is playing some absurd trick I shall soon bring him to reason."

"Look out for the bread-knife, sir!"

"Nonsense!"

"He's got it in his hand!"

"Nonsense!"

"He's wildly excited——"

"Nonsense!"

Mr. Quelch, gripping his cane hard,
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strode out of the study, leaving Walker of the Sixth biting his lips. Bunter's proceedings had undoubtedly given Walker the impression that he had lost his senses—not that he had many to lose. Mr. Quelch evidently had quite a different opinion. If Bunter was out of his senses, Mr. Quelch had not the slightest doubt that he could restore him to sanity by a liberal application of the cane. That, at least, was the method Mr. Quelch intended to use.

He strode away to the stairs, his face like a thundercloud. He found Harry Wharton & Co. on the Remove staircase, going up. The Famous Five had been in the Rag when they had received the startling news that Bunter had gone mad. They decided to go up to investigate. Mr. Quelch, coming up the stairs at the double, overtook them.

"Wharton," he rapped out, "what is this? What is this ridiculous prank that Bunter is playing?"

"We were just going up to see, sir," said the captain of the Remove. "The fellows say he's gone potty."

"What—what?"

"I—I mean, barmy, sir!"

"You mean what?" hooted Mr. Quelch.

"Mad, sir!"

"If you mean mad, Wharton, why do you not say what you mean? Cannot you speak the English language?"

"Ye-es, sir."

"Then kindly do so when addressing your Form master."

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Where is Bunter now?"

"In the Remove passage, sir."

Mr. Quelch whisked on.

The Famous Five looked at one another with peculiar expressions. They did not know what to make of the matter yet, or whether it was to be taken seriously.

"If this is gammon—and I suppose it is—Bunter is fairly asking for it," said Bob Cherry.

"The gammonfulness is terrific," opined the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Still, he might be mad," said Johnny Bull. "After all, he never was very far off it. He hadn't far to go."

"But——" said Wharton.

"Let's go and see."

The chums of the Remove followed Mr. Quelch up. Only the Form master was in the Remove passage when they reached it, and he was looking like a lion seeking whom he might devour.

"Where is Bunter, Wharton?" he boomed.

"I—I don't know, sir."

"I have looked in his study. He is not there. No doubt he is hiding in another study."

Mr. Quelch was almost flaming now. He really looked as if he thought of beginning on the Famous Five with the cane, so eager was he to use it on somebody. Harry Wharton & Co. kept at a respectful distance. Whether Bunter was mad or sane, there was no doubt that Mr. Quelch was the more dangerous of the two.

"Bunter!" shouted Mr. Quelch.

He heard a sound in Study No. 11, and hurried to the door of that apartment. He knocked loudly on the door.

There was a howl from within.

"Go away!"

"Get away, you mad idiot!"

"Wha-a-at?" stuttered Mr. Quelch.

His voice was not heard in the study. Skinner and Snoop and Stott were frantically piling chairs and fender on the barricade.

"Go away!" yelled Skinner. "Leave us alone, you potty rotter!"

"Good gracious!"

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"You mad villain, clear off!"

"Upon my word!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Skinner, you shall be flogged—you shall be expelled—you—you—Words failed the indignant Remove master.

"Oh crumbs!" Skinner heard him then. "It's Quelch! I—I say, sir, we——"

"You young rascal——"

"I—I thought it was Bunter, sir!" gasped Skinner. "He—he—he's after us with a knife, sir!"

"Nonsense! Open this door at once!"

"Is—is Bunter there, sir?" quavered Snoop.

"Pah! Are you concealing Bunter in this study?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, my hat! No fear!"

"Pah!"

Mr. Quelch turned away, boiling. His infuriated eye fell on the Famous Five.

"Look for Bunter at once!" he commanded.

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

Mr. Quelch rooted furiously along the Remove passage. Never had he been so anxious to see anybody as he was to see Bunter. William George Bunter often said that he was a much-sought-after fellow. But he had never been sought after before so eagerly as this.

Bang! The door of Study No. 14 was locked, and Mr. Quelch banged on it with a bang that made it jump.

"Oh, Jerusalem crickets!" came a nasal voice from within. "You get, you potty mugwump! I guess I'll make potato-scrappings of you if you butt in here. You vamoose instant!"

"Fish!" roared Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! Gee-whiz! Yes, sir?" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

"Is Bunter there?"

"No, sir! Nope! I guess not! He's gone mad, sir——"

"Take five hundred lines, Fish, for talking such utter nonsense!" roared Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, holy smoke!"

Mr. Quelch raged on. But Bunter was not in any of the studies. Meanwhile, Bob Cherry, looking up the box-room stair, had made a discovery.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's a light on in the box-room!" he exclaimed. "Come on, old beans!"

The Famous Five ran up the stair to the box-room. The gas was burning there; and they sighted William George Bunter, sitting on Lord Mauleverer's trunk, with an old newspaper in his fat hands.

They stared at him. It was not a moment when they had expected to find Bunter reading a newspaper. They were not aware of the particular news item in that particular paper, or that Bunter was reading the report over and over again, in order to refresh his memory concerning the symptoms of brain-storms.

The Owl of the Remove jumped up, however, as they came in.

"Bunter, you ass——"

"Bunter, you owl——"

"Bunter, you prize idiot——"

"Ha!" yelled Bunter, grabbing up the bread-knife, which he had laid on the trunk, and brandishing it. "Blood!"

"Great pip!"

"I'm mad—I mean, I've got a brain-storm! Ha, ha! Go and tell Quelch I'm not safe! Ha, ha!"

"My esteemed farheaded Bunter——"

Mr. Quelch's voice boomed up the stair.

"Is he there?"

"Yes, sir!"

The rapid footsteps of the Remove master were heard ascending the box-room stair.

Bunter heard them, and ceased

brandishing the bread-knife. A sudden change came over him.

Now was the time for a terrific paroxysm of maniacal fury, to convince the Remove master that he really had a brain-storm. But it did not materialise.

Bunter's fat knees knocked together as he heard the Form master mounting the stair.

"Oh, lor'!" he gasped.

He dropped the bread-knife behind Lord Mauleverer's trunk, as Mr. Quelch appeared in the doorway. It was borne in upon Billy Bunter's fat mind that it was time to recover.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Complete Recovery!

"BUNTER!"

Mr. Quelch's glance was almost wolfish.

Bunter palpitated.

"Where—where am I?" he gasped.

"What?"

"Where am I?" gasped Bunter. "I—I don't seem to remember anything I—I think I've had a—a brain-storm."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Brain-storm, sir. Like the man in the paper."

"Like—like what?" articulated Mr. Quelch.

"I—I think I am recovering now, sir," said Bunter hopefully. "I've had a brain-storm, sir."

Mr. Quelch seemed petrified. No doubt he had heard of brain-storms. But he certainly had never expected to hear of one in the Greyfriars Remove.

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed blankly at Bunter. They were beginning to understand now. But it fairly took their breath away. Evidently Bunter had been reading some stuff in the newspaper, and had derived this extraordinary stunt therefrom. But giving it to Mr. Quelch was something like twisting the tail of an enraged tiger. It was a case of fools rushing in where angels might fear to tread.

"I—I hope you understand, sir," said Bunter, with diminishing hopefulness. "You—you know what a brain-storm is, sir. It—it comes on a fellow suddenly, and—and he doesn't know what he's doing. Having done it, he's not responsible. Just a temporary brain-storm."

Really, it was hard lines that Bunter should have to educate his own Form master like this on the subject of the fairy tales of science. But he realised that he had to make the matter clear.

"You—you can see it all in—in the paper, sir, if—if you don't understand brain-storms, sir," said Bunter. "There it is, sir!"

Mr. Quelch, too astounded to speak, took the newspaper mechanically. His dazed eyes fell on the news item that had inspired Bunter with his latest and most amazing stunt.

He read it in a dazed sort of way. Bunter watched him hopefully. He could see no reason—absolutely no reason—why he shouldn't have a brain-storm, as well as any New York banker.

"Bunter!" gasped Mr. Quelch at last. He hurled the newspaper to the floor, and fixed his eyes on Bunter with the glare of a basilisk.

"That's how it was, sir," stammered Bunter. "I—I've had a brain-storm, sir!"

"Bless my soul!"

"Fellow with a brain-storm, sir, doesn't know what he's at. That's how I—I came to telephone to Crinkley's this afternoon, sir. It—it was coming on then."



Billy Bunter dropped the bread-knife as Mr. Quelch appeared in the doorway. "Bunter!" The Remove master's glance was almost wolfish. Bunter palpitated. "Where—where am I?" he gasped. "What?" "Where am I?" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I don't seem to remember anything. I—I think I've had a—a brain-storm—er—er—like the man in the newspaper, sir!" (See Chapter 12.)

"It—it—it was coming on?" stuttered the Remove master.

"Yes, sir."

"Boy!"

"I—I did it, sir, not knowing what I was doing, and without remembering anything about it afterwards, sir. My mind's an absolute blank, sir—I haven't the faintest recollection of telephoning to Chunkley's, sir."

"Upon my word!"

"I—I don't know how—how I came here, sir," went on Bunter. "Is—is—is this the Remove box-room, you fellows?"

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob Cherry.

"I—I don't know how I got here," said Bunter. "It's all a blank, sir. I didn't bunk up here when I heard you coming up the Remove staircase, sir. I just got here without knowing how."

"Is this boy in his right senses?" demanded Mr. Quelch, addressing space.

"Oh, yes, sir, now—I—I've recovered," said Bunter. "Ain't it—ain't it wonderful, sir?"

"I—I—I—I—" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"I—I'm sorry if—if I've done anything amiss while—while I had my brain-storm, sir," stammered Bunter. "Of course, I wasn't responsible. I don't remember anything I did—telephoning to Chunkley's, sir, or wagging a bread-knife about in the Remove passage. Not a thing, sir. My mind's absolutely blank afterwards, just like that man in the newspaper, sir."

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

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

"Silence!" roared Mr. Quelch. "This is not a laughing matter."

The Famous Five did not agree with their Form master on that point. But they tried to suppress their merriment.

"I'm surprised at you fellows," said Bunter reproachfully. "It's a jolly serious matter, I can tell you, for a fellow to have a brain-storm. Mr. Quelch knows how serious it is. Why, that johnny in New York floored the cashier with a ledger, and went for the janitor with a hatchet. Then he recovered and his mind was a perfect blank, just—just like mine."

"Bunter!" stuttered the Remove master. "I—I—I hardly know how to deal with you."

"I'm all right now, sir," said Bunter. "It—it was bad while it lasted, sir, but it's gone—quite gone, now."

"Is it possible, Bunter, that you expect me to believe a single word of your ridiculous and untruthful statements?"

"Oh, sir!"

"You have read a ridiculous report in a newspaper, and upon that, sir, you have founded this absurd story!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, really, sir—"

"How dare you tell me such palpable falsehoods, wretched boy?"

"But—but it's quite true, sir—just—"

just like the johnny in the newspaper, sir."

"Silence!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. It really looked as if Bunter's word was not to be taken again; and as if Mr. Quelch did not believe in brain-storms at all.

"If you repeat one word of that foolish story, Bunter, I shall take you to the Head for a flogging."

"Ow!"

"But for your extraordinary obtuseness, which is perhaps some slight excuse for you, you should be given a public flogging, sir."

"Wow!"

"I intend to deal with you myself. Come."

Mr. Quelch dropped his hand on Bunter's shoulder. Bunter, having bolted once from punishment, the Form master did not intend to trust him again. He gripped Bunter's fat shoulder like a steel vice, and led him out of the box-room.

Bunter tramped down the stair with the Remove master, in the lowest of spirits.

"Well, my hat!" said Bob Cherry, with a deep breath. "If that fat frump doesn't take the whole cake."

"The cakefulness is terrific. The lickfulness of the esteemed idiotic Bunter will also be great."

"Not much doubt about that," said Harry Wharton. "The fat duffer has

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fairly begged and prayed for it this time."

The chums of the Remove followed on. In the Remove passage, most of the Removites were gathered now. An excited crowd watched Mr. Quelch and Bunter progress towards the lower stairs, the Remove master's hand gripping the fat junior's shoulder. It was understood in the Remove now that it had been only a false alarm; that William George Bunter was not dangerous.

Certainly, he did not look dangerous now. He limped along by the side of his Form master, in a crushed and crumpled state. He blinked at the grinning juniors with lack-lustre eyes as he passed them. Bunter, personally, could see nothing to grin at. Whether he suffered from brain-storms or not, there was no doubt that he was going to suffer from his Form master. It was an awfully serious matter, as Bunter realised; but the other Removites did not seem to realise it at all. They grinned as Bunter passed them, and even chuckled.

"So the fat idiot was only spoofing all the time," said Skinner. "Of—of course, I wasn't really taken in."

"Oh, of course not," said Peter Todd. "You bolted into your study and bolted the door, just because you weren't frightened."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I hope he gets a jolly good licking for it," said Skinner viciously. "There's a limit."

"But what was the game?" asked Squiff.

"Getting out of a licking!" gurgled Bob Cherry. "Looks like being a success—I don't think."

"Of all the idiots—"

"A brain-storm!" gurgled Bob. "He had a brain-storm! He read of one in a newspaper—and tried it on—on Quelch! Poor old Bunter!"

A crowd of the Removites followed down the staircase, at a respectful distance. They saw Walker of the Sixth meet the Remove master and his prisoner in the lower hall. Walker of the Sixth gave Bunter a rather uneasy look.

"You—you've got him, sir?" he said. Snort, from Mr. Quelch.

"I am surprised at you, Walker, for being deceived by a trick—a palpable trick, a device to escape a well-deserved punishment!" he snapped.

"He—he looked dangerous, sir!"

"Nonsense!"

"The other fags thought—"

"Nonsense! You have made yourself look ridiculous, Walker—absolutely ridiculous!"

And, leaving Walker of the Sixth to digest that at his leisure, Mr. Quelch marched his victim on. He marched Bunter into his study, and there released him—standing between the Owl of the Remove and the door. Billy Bunter was not to bolt a second time.

"Now, Bunter—"

"Oh dear!" groaned Bunter.

"I shall give you twenty strokes, as I told you, for your iniquitous conduct this afternoon. I shall give you ten strokes in addition for having played a further prank and attempted to deceive me."

"Oh, lor!"

"Bend over that chair, Bunter."

"I—I say, sir—"

"At once!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

"Being innocent, sir—"

"Will you bend over that chair, Bunter?" shrieked Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I'd rather not, sir, if you don't mind!" gasped Bunter.

Mr. Quelch stepped into the doorway. "Walker!"

Walker of the Sixth came up.

"Will you kindly hold Bunter over the chair, while I administer his punishment, Walker?"

"Certainly, sir!" said Walker, with alacrity. He was not feeling very amiable towards the Remove master just then. But he was quite willing to oblige him in that little matter—eager, in fact.

He grasped Billy Bunter by the shoulders, and whirled him face down over the chair.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter.

The cane had not fallen yet; Bunter was yelling in anticipation. But the next moment he had good and sufficient cause for yelling.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yooooo-ooo-ooooop!"

Whack, whack!

"Yaroooh! Help!"

Whack, whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Help! Fire! Yarooooooh!"

"Cease those ridiculous noises, Bunter!" hooted Mr. Quelch, as the cane went up again.

For the second time Bunter was disobedient. He did not cease the ridiculous noises. Rather he increased them. As the cane whacked again on William George Bunter, the voice of William George was heard almost from one end of Greyfriars to the other.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yoooooop! Help!"

Whack, whack!

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry, in the passage. "Quelch is going it! I never knew the old johnny was such an athlete!"

"Poor old Bunter!"

"It will cure his brain-storms!" said Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The cane was still whacking rhythmically. Billy Bunter's yells rang far and wide. Towards the end of the infliction the strokes fell a little more lightly. Perhaps Mr. Quelch thought that Bunter had had enough. If so, for once Bunter was in full agreement with his Form master. He had had enough and to spare.

"There, Bunter!" gasped Mr. Quelch at last.

Vigorous gentleman as he was, he was a little tired, though not so tired as Bunter.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"You may go!"

"Whooooop!"

Bunter went.

Sympathetic juniors gathered round him and took him back to the Remove passage. At every step Bunter let out a deep groan. He was piloted into Study No. 7 in the Remove, where he sank down, collapsing in the arm-chair. He reposed in that armchair for about the millionth part of a second, and then leaped to his feet with a howl.

"Better not sit down for a bit, old bean!" said Peter Todd.

"Yaroooh!"

It was some hours before Bunter sat down again.

Not till after prep that evening did he show any signs of recovery. Then he said to Peter Todd:

"Peter, old chap!"

"Yes, fathead?"

"That tuck in Quelch's study."

"Well?"

"It's taken down to the pantry."

"Well?"

"A fellow could get into the pantry."

"What?"

"You're just the fellow to do it, Toddy—a clever chap like you! And—and it really belongs to me, you know. Look here, you bag it, and we'll go halves! What do you say, Toddy?"

Peter Todd did not say anything. He picked up a cricket-stump and stepped towards Bunter, and that fat and fatuous youth departed from Study No. 7 in haste. Bunter never saw again that enticing consignment of tuck from Chunkley's, though he heard a good deal about it when his father received the bill. And the only outcome of Bunter's wonderful wheeze was to provide the Removites with a standing joke for the rest of the term—and that joke was Bunter's Brain-storm!

THE END.

(Don't miss the opening story in the remarkable series dealing with Vernon-Smith, otherwise the Bunder, which starts in next week's MAGNET. Note the title, chums: "The Interloper!" and be prepared for something extra good.)

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87. **The RIDDLE OF THE GOLDEN FINGERS.**

88. **THE OLD LAG.**

BEGIN THIS REMARKABLE NEW SERIAL TO-DAY CHUMS!

HUNTED LIKE A RAT! Why Black Michael and his scoundrelly gang should be chasing him Jack Horner hasn't the foggiest idea, but he knows well enough now that if he falls into their hands his life won't be worth a moment's purchase!

The TRAIL of ADVENTURE!

by
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An Amazing Story of Adventure and Intrigue, with a strong human interest.

The Escape!

JACK tried to make his high-pitched voice sound very resolute, but at the back of his mind was always the terror that he might have to pass from threats to action. He would have hated to have fired the revolver. He backed across the floor talking to Jim.

"Come on, Jim—let's get out of this!"

Jim Snow ran to his side needing no further orders—only too glad at the prospect of escape. As his emaciated body touched Jack an amazing thing happened. Suddenly, all the lights went out, and those strange underground rooms were plunged in impenetrable darkness. A little whimper of terror escaped from Jim Snow, and Jack's grip fastened re-assuringly upon that thin arm.

"Steady!" he whispered.

He was more than a little frightened himself, but the other's terror—the necessity of thinking for both of them—gave him courage. From behind him came the faint fluttering of a silk robe. Instantly Jack backed against the wall dragging Jim with him. Vaguely now through the darkness he seemed to detect the outline of a weird figure.

It was the Chinaman. When he had called Squall off to attend to Black Michael, the Oriental must have cunningly slipped his arms free of the bonds with which he had been bound. And now he was coming to take his revenge.

In the darkness he was discernible simply as a mass of blackness, and it was perhaps some sixth sense that Jack unconsciously possessed which made him realise the close proximity of the man whom Black Michael had referred to as Brilliant Sing.

He was standing on the threshold of the smashed door, obviously listening. Then he moved forward a few steps and Jack cautiously passed his hand along the wall until he felt the doorway. A movement forward with his

arm, the touch of that silk robe, and he had realised that between Brilliant Sing and the doorway was a gap just big enough for Jim and himself to pass through.

To speak was out of the question, but Jack was still clasping the other boy's arm. He pulled him gently along. There was no need to exhort Jim Snow to make no noise. The wail was too far gone in terror to utter a sound.

Now they had slipped behind the figure of Brilliant Sing; now they had gained the outer room. Cautiously Jack felt his way towards the door that gave admittance to those twisting passages and the chute beyond. And,

WHO'S WHO IN THE STORY!

JACK HORNER, a stocky youngster of fourteen, orphaned by the Great War, is given into the care of his uncle,

GEORGE PARKER, who treats the lad so brutally that Jack runs away from Dane's Farm.

BLACK MICHAEL, a mysterious individual, who visits Parker and offers him the sum of four hundred pounds if he will deliver Jack into his hands. In the course of bargaining it transpires that Jack is heir to a title and estates which will automatically go to Black Michael should Jack Horner die.

Knowing nothing of these things, Jack, accompanied by his faithful dog, Squall, is trudging along when he espies a party of men hard on his trail. Boarding a passing lorry he eludes them and reaches the London docks, where he finds a new home with **BILL BOWKER**, skipper of the monkey-boat *Emerald*. Later, **JIM SNOW**, a waif who comes aboard the barge for food, is captured in Jack's stead by the agents of Black Michael, and imprisoned in a villainous Oriental den by the riverside. Squall soon picks up the scent, however, with the result that Jack locates the underground cellar and comes face to face with Black Michael, who attempts to hypnotise him. But once again the wolf-dog saves the situation. He leaps at the man's throat the while Jack seizes his revolver. The tables thus turned the arch-scoundrel is forced to release the waif.

"Now, put your hands up!" orders Jack, facing Black Michael.

(Now Read On.)

even as he gained it, there was a sudden pandemonium.

Though Jack could not see, he realised instantly what had happened. The Chinaman, in his slow, cautious movement forward, had touched Squall. The wolf dog, believing that someone was about to interfere with the task that had been allotted to him of guarding Black Michael, had sprung. The Chinaman was down and Black Michael was up. His voice rang through the darkness:

"The lights—you fool—stab him!"

Jack opened the door that led into those twisting passages. As he did so he removed the key. The tumult grew louder than ever. It was like some grotesque game of Blind Man's Buff, in which those three men in there were colliding with one another—gripping one another—hopelessly preventing each other from doing what they wanted to do—with Squall, a raging demon from the woods, always careering about them in the darkness with his lean powerful jaws.

Jack gave a low whistle. There was a swift patter of feet. The next instant he felt the comforting warmth of Squall's head under his hand. He closed the door quickly and turned the key in the lock. At any rate, for the moment, they were safe.

"Come, Jim!" he whispered. "Come—quickly!"

Holding Squall by the collar, he let the wolf-dog lead him down those twisting passages to the foot of the chute. There they found their further progress barred. In vain Jack tried to climb that steep slope only to come tumbling back again. Above him, he could see the little square of light which showed the still open trap-door. It was so near and yet so far. There was the way of their escape. But how were they to reach it? To climb that greased chute was an impossibility, and he realised only too well how every moment was of importance. Black

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Michael must have turned the lights on now and be searching for them. Sooner or later he would have discovered the way of their escape. He had only to send men to that trap-door, leading on to the deserted quay, and they would be caught.

Then something happened which gave him an inspiration. Whenever he tried to climb the chute. Squall scrambled on ahead, apparently finding no difficulty with his claws in securing a foothold on that greasy slope.

"Jim, I see what we must do!" Jack exclaimed suddenly. "Come here, Squall—"

The dog crouched down at Jack's feet. Taking the rope that Jim still carried, Jack fastened one end to the dog's collar.

"Up with you, old fellow!" he exclaimed.

Squall seemed to realise instantly what was expected of him. Backing a little he took a run, leapt, it seemed, almost half-way up the chute, and then began to scramble painfully up the last stretch, while Jack payed out the rope behind him. Now they could see his huge, furry figure standing at the trap-door, outlined against the night sky.

"Lie down, Squall!" Jack urged. "And don't move!"

The wolf-dog immediately squatted on the ground. Jack turned to his companion.

"Up with you, Jim!" he whispered.

Holding on to the rope, his feet sometimes shooting from under him, Jim hauled himself up hand over hand, to the trap-door. As soon as he saw that he was safe, Jack followed suit. In less than a minute they were all three standing on the mouldering, deserted quay.

A feeling of exultation took possession of Jack. In spite of all obstacles he had won through. Single-handed, he had braved the terrors of that mysterious Oriental den; single-handed, he had rescued Jim Snow and brought him away in safety. Now it was simply a question of getting back to Brentford and the Emerald.

In taking this course, Jack had to rely upon Jim's knowledge of London. As far as he was concerned, he hadn't the faintest idea where he was, or how

to get back to the place from which he had started.

"Jim, I suppose we've got to walk it! You must show me the way. I don't know anything about London."

In the half-light, he could see the boy's white, twitching face.

"If we walks, they'll cop us!" he gasped. "This 'ere's Limehouse, and it's chock full of chinks and dagoes and they'll be watching for us."

"But if we don't walk how are we to get back?" Jack protested, feeling a sudden sinking in his self-confidence.

Jim peered across the edge of the quay. The tide had almost run out now, and below them stretched a mud-bank on which the two barges were resting. An exclamation broke from Jim's lips.

"Lumme! But there's a boat there," he whispered. "That will take us back to Brentford, and nobody'd know."

Jack realised in an instant the wisdom of this plan. To attempt to make their way through the streets in that quarter where the gang would be on the watch would be far too dangerous; but if they trusted to the thoroughfare of the river they would be safe.

Without a word Jack swung himself off the quay and dropped into the mud. He sank up to his knees, and with great labour he ploughed his way across towards the boat. Jim and Squall followed him. Now at last they had reached it. It was a dirty, disreputable boat with a lot of water in the bottom, but it had a pair of oars, and that was the main thing. Jim and Squall scrambled aboard, and as they did so Jack pulled in the anchor and pushed the little craft off into the tide.

At the same moment, from behind them, came the clatter of footsteps. Looking back, Jack saw eight or nine men rushing along the quay towards the trap door. Though he could not distinguish their faces, he knew only too well that they were Black Michael's gang, hastening, too late, to close the exit by which their victims had escaped.

The sight urged Jack to haste. Flinging himself on the seat, he thrust the oars into the rowlocks and began to pull with all his strength. Up in Cumberland he had been trained to the oar on the lakes, but he soon discovered that the Thames was a very different proposition to those smooth, currentless stretches of water.

As he pushed out on to the tide the head of the boat was carried round. Pulling strenuously with his right oar, he made a noise with the rusty rowlocks. Something made him look back towards the shore. What he saw there filled him with a fierce alarm.

That sound had betrayed the whereabouts of the fugitives to the gang. Jack saw the men leap down from the quay and begin to rush along the mud, evidently in search of a boat in which to pursue them. The sight made Jack redouble his efforts. He put all his strength into the oar. Gradually, yard by yard, the boat shot out farther and farther into mid-stream. The mouldering quay and the tall, tumbledown buildings, which hid such sinister secrets, gradually receded into the distance. Could they escape? Jack wondered.

Even as he asked himself the question he heard the rhythmic beat of oars. Jim, who was seated in the stern, turned quickly.

"They're a-following of us!" he gasped. "Oh, mate, what are we to do? If they catch us they'll kill us!"

"But they haven't caught us yet," Jack replied, as he strained with all his strength at the oars. "We must hope for the best."

"The Canal Transport Co."

FORTUNATELY the night was dark, and over the surface of the Thames faint wisps of mist were gathering. The sight cheered Jack. If only they could get farther across the river they might elude pursuit in the darkness. He rowed with all his might for one of those cloud-like masses of vapour that were fleeing across the surface of the river. When it enveloped the boat he turned deliberately inshore again.

As he emerged from the mass of mist he looked round. The boat that was following them was still on its old course, evidently believing that they had gone straight ahead. Jack took courage at the sight. If he could keep up this game of hide-and-seek on the river he might yet win through.

But even as he watched he saw their pursuers stop rowing, as if to look about them. A tug, followed by a string of barges, came rushing down upon Jack's boat. He rowed frantically across the bows, the tug hooting threateningly. A wave caught the little cockleshell and made it rock dangerously from side to side. Water rushed in over the side. To Jack it almost seemed as if the boat were sinking beneath his feet. He called to Jim.

"Come and bale, or we shall sink!" he cried.

Galvanised into action by that warning, Jim Snow groped about under the seat of the boat, and presently found an old can. With this he began to bale out the water from the bottom, while Jack continued his plan of moving from one wisp of mist to another.

And then abruptly he heard a shout and the sudden rhythmic beating of oars.

"There they are!" a voice shouted. "There's fifty quid to split among you if you catch them!"

It was Black Michael's voice, and the sound of it filled Jack's heart with a feeling of utter helplessness. They were going to be caught! There was no escape from this dark, sinister force that was pursuing them. He felt very tired, and only his indomitable pluck kept him rowing. Nearer and nearer drew the boat.

And now, glancing over his shoulder, Jack saw what looked like a yellow wall sweeping down to meet him. It was the fog. If only he could reach that comforting obscurity they might be saved, after all.

Taking a firm purchase with his feet, he put all he knew into the work of rowing. The boat shot ahead. Still twenty yards separated him from his pursuers. Now the bows thrust themselves into that advancing wall of fog, and everything of a sudden was blotted out.

But Jack kept his head. There was still a chance that the pursuing boat might tumble upon them. It was a case for strategy. Risking everything, he turned the boat so that it shot across the path of his pursuers. It was a dangerous game, but it succeeded. A few minutes later and he heard the voices of his pursuers between him and the bank.

"Confound this fog! Where the blazes have they got to?"

Jack waited to hear no more, but once more fell to the work of rowing straight across the river. The voices receded into the distance. For half an hour he plugged on, whilst it almost seemed as if his arms must break. Then at last he paused, resting his oars on the water.

"I'm about done in, Jim!" he exclaimed. "I must have an easy."

Let FRANK HUDSPETH

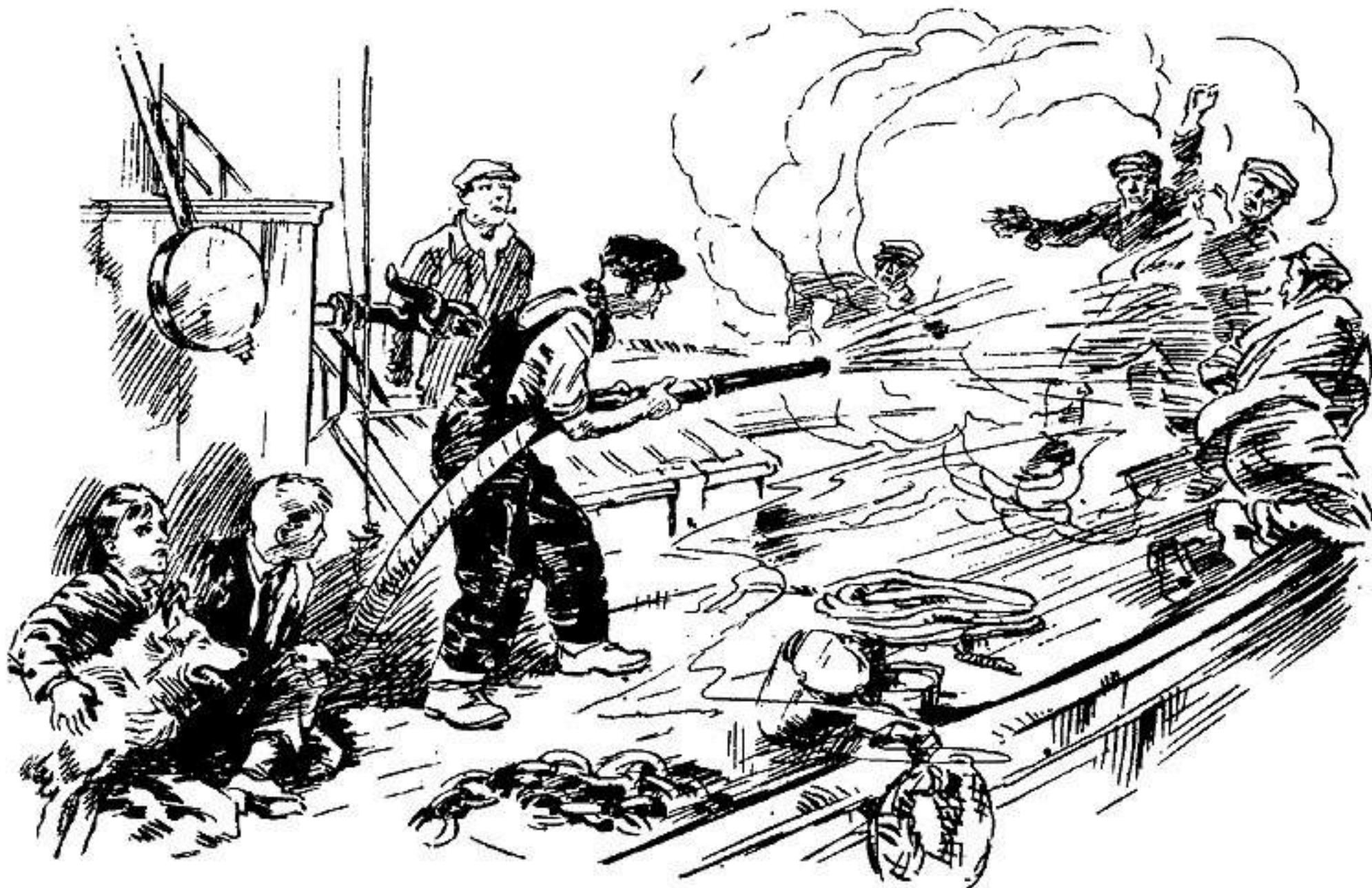
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For full particulars see this week's

SPORTS BUDGET

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Suddenly one of the crew rushed forward with a length of wire-strengthened rubber piping. From the nozzle attached came a hiss and then a jet of scalding steam was directed against the men who had scrambled on deck, causing them to fall back in wild disorder, yelling with anguish. (See page 26.)

It was slack water now, and the boat hung motionless on the bosom of the river. Jack leant forward, his elbows resting on his knees, feeling more tired than ever he had felt in his life. His hands were blistered, and he longed with every ounce of his being for a bed, however hard it might be, and sleep. One thing was certain—he didn't want to row any more.

He had been sitting there motionless for the better part of five minutes when he felt a nervous touch on his shoulder. Looking up, he saw Jim's white, terrified face.

"They've seen us, mate!" whispered Jim. "They're after us again!"

Jack blinked his sleepy eyes. While he had been resting there the fog had lifted with the southerly wind that had arisen. Now from bank to bank of the great estuary everything was visible in the moonlight. And coming towards them, not a hundred yards away, was the boat manned by Black Michael's gang.

The sight nerved Jack to a final effort. Sore though his hands were, he began to row again, but now without any spring or buoyant energy. The boat seemed to hang like a lump of lead in the water, and ever nearer and nearer drew their pursuers.

He could see Black Michael standing up in the bows, the tiller in his hand, watching them. The moonlight lit up his white, strained face. Standing out there in the darkness of the night, it seemed like some incarnate evil force that was bearing down upon them. Every yard that Jack rowed, the following boat, manned with six oars, seemed to cover four times the distance. They were being overhauled rapidly.

A groan of despair escaped from Jack's lips. How could they possibly hope to avoid their ruthless pursuers?

Ahead of them loomed up a string of barges attached to an anchored tug, evidently waiting for the turn of the tide. Wearily Jack pulled alongside, hardly knowing what he was doing, but vaguely carrying out his original plan, that seemed so hopeless now, of zig-zagging across the river, and hiding when over it was possible.

Slowly the boat crept along that line of barges. Jack realised he could go very little further. He cast one despairing glance at the barge alongside. A name leapt at him—"The Canal Transport Company."

He repeated that name stupidly to himself. "The Canal Transport Company!" He had seen it somewhere before. It was curiously familiar. And then his tired brain suddenly found the association for which it was seeking. Why that was one of the companies for which old Bill Bowker worked. Not twelve hours ago Jack, in his role of super-cargo to the monkey-boat *Emerald*, had gone through the accounts between Bill Bowker and The Canal Transport Company, in order to see that the old man was not robbed.

And as he remembered all this, a sudden wild plan formed itself in his mind. Without a word to Jim, he summoned up all his waning strength and rowed as swiftly as he could up that line of barges to where the blunt-nosed tug, with its steam up, was hanging at anchor.

The tide was already beginning to turn. The two ropes by which the barges were attached to the tug were beginning to hang slack. Just as Black Michael's boat shot round the corner of the last of the barges, Jack came alongside the tug. Putting out a hand he grasped the gunwale.

A man in an open shirt and blue

linen trousers, covered with grease and an oily rag in his hand, appeared on deck and stared at him.

"What the blazes are you knocking all the good paint off the sides of the *Sarsaparilla* for? Don't you know as she's the smartest tug on the Thames?"

To judge by what he had seen of her, with her blistered sides and her air of having been seriously overworked, Jack might have been excused for forming a very poor opinion of the general standard of smartness prevailing among the tugs on the Thames. But he wasn't there to argue such nice points. He was there to beg for safety and protection from the gang who were pursuing him.

"Oh, if you please, sir, may we come aboard? We belong to the monkey-boat *Emerald* at Brentford. And, please, sir, we've lost our way and—and those men in the boat behind us are trying to catch us."

The man leaned over the gunwale of the tug and took a view of the boat that was following.

"What's the name of the skipper of the *Emerald*?" he demanded.

"Bill Bowker, sir, and if you please, sir, I am the boy aboard! I live with Mr. and Mrs. Bowker!"

"What, are you the boy as can do all old Bill's totting up for him? He was a-telling me of you. And he's been looking for you—always supposing your name's—what is your name?"

Jack cast one frightened glance over his shoulder. Black Michael and the gang were drawing ever nearer.

"Jack Horner, sir!"

Whatever suspicions the man might have had, were now clearly allayed.

"You're the lad! He telephoned me down to the office at Rotherhithe—midnight it was, and it proper scared me,

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 996.

being rung up on the telephone like that. He thought as you might have gone along of me as I didn't leave Brentford by train until seven. You come aboard, my lad!"

Jack, without any further invitation, scrambled over the side of the tug followed by Jim and Squall. Black Michael's voice rang out across the water.

"Hi, you—that boy's mine. I want him!"

"Who's the guy that's throwing his weight about?" Jack's new friend inquired.

Jack, a little incoherently, explained that Black Michael was a brute and a murderer—that the men with him were scoundrels of the worst type—that they had tried to kill him that night—to all of which the other listened more than a little puzzled.

"I dunno what you're talking about, sonny, but I ain't going to have any blokes giving me orders. We'll give these lads a lesson!"

He took a whistle from his pocket and blew it. Instantly, four men scrambled up on to the deck of the tug, and at the same moment a number of other men appeared on the line of barges in tow.

"Boys—there's some guys here trying to make a rough house. Just give 'em what for, will you? We're going to get under weigh now, but if they make trouble just slosh 'em good and hard!"

As he spoke he leant over the side of the tug, picked up the anchor of the rowing boat from the stern and threw it far out into the river. At the same moment the donkey-engine in the bows of the tug began to revolve, dragging up the anchor. There was the clang of a bell as the man took his place at the

wheel. The tug began to tremble violently, as the screws revolved.

Jack, who had taken up a position with Jim by his side in the small deck-house, looked back. Black Michael was still standing in the stern of his boat holding the tiller, his face livid with excitement, his body moving backwards and forwards as he urged on his rowers.

"A hundred to be split among you if you catch him!" he cried. "Row, you lazy hounds, row!"

Touch and Go!

SWEPT on by the lash of their leader's tongue, and by the thought of the reward he was offering, the crew redoubled their efforts. Before the tug could develop any speed the boat was alongside. Hands grasped the gunwale. Six men jumped from their seats and swung themselves on board. Black Michael himself took a spring and landed on the stern of the tug.

"The boy!" he shouted. "I want the boy!"

So far their rush had succeeded. The gang had met with no opposition. Jack, crouching against the deck-house, felt for a moment as if, at the very last, he was going to be seized and carried away. It seemed as if there was only Squall to help him.

But as those words left Black Michael's lips a change came over the scene. Suddenly, one of the crew of the tug rushed forward from the stern holding the nozzle of a long wire-strengthened rubber pipe. There was a hiss, and from the nozzle of that pipe there came a jet of super-heated steam. It was directed against the men who

had scrambled on deck—at their faces and hands. There was a yell of pain—screams of anguish—and the next moment the deck of the tug was swept clear—except for Black Michael.

"That's the stuff to give 'em!" the man at the wheel roared. "But there's one guy left, Jock. Give it 'im all 'ot and steaming!"

But before the man could direct that jet of steam towards the figure in the stern, Black Michael had leapt and landed on him. There was a groan as the man slipped to the deck. The skipper of the tug glanced over his shoulder, loosening his hold of the spokes of the wheel with one hand in order to make a signal.

"Come on, boys! Lend us a hand here, will you?"

Apparently that appeal was addressed to the men on the barges, for now, without wasting any time, they began to swing themselves across the tow-rope to the tug. Black Michael, his face distorted with passion, was shouting to the gang in the boat alongside to come aboard. Once more those men began to swarm over the side. It was Black Michael himself who rushed at Jack while his companions closed up behind him.

Jack all this time had held Squall's collar, but now he realised that his only hope was to loose the wolf-dog.

"At them, Squall!" he whispered.

But in that confined space, faced by desperate, resolute men, the dog's movements were hampered. As if identifying his master's principal enemy, he rushed straight at Black Michael. As he did so three of the gang flung themselves upon him, bearing him to the deck. Black Michael, slipping sideways, reached out his hand and caught Jack by the collar.

"You little brat! I'll make you pay for this! Out of it now! Come on!"

With a powerful pull he dragged the boy to the side of the tug. Finding that he was about to be thrown into the rowing-boat, Jack twisted himself round and dropped face downwards on the deck, clasping his hands about Black Michael's legs. Somebody caught him by the ankle, but he held on desperately. Now he felt himself being dragged across the gunwale. He could see the boat below. Hands were stretched out to drag him off the tug. A blow was aimed at his head, but, missing it, hit him on the shoulder, hurting him painfully.

"Squall!" he cried in despair. "Squall!"

From behind him there came what almost sounded like a violent eruption. Hearing his master's despairing call, the wolf-dog had struggled to his feet. With swiftly snapping jaws he freed himself from the men who were trying yet to hold him. The next instant, twisting to the right and left, swinging on his feet with the agility of a dancer, he had cleared a space about the boy. Only Black Michael stood there, one hand on Jack's shoulder.

"Kill that cursed dog, somebody!" he shouted.

As the words left his lips, there was a rush of feet along the deck. The men from the barges were beginning to reach the tug, and the real fight with Black Michael's gang for the possession of Jack Horner had begun.

Armed with wooden batons, crow-bars, and any weapon upon which they had had time to lay their hands, the men

WHAT'S THIS FELLOW LAUGHING ABOUT?

Don't you know?

He's laughing because he knows that there's a screamingly funny long story of Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's in this Wednesday's issue of



THE GEM LIBRARY

Entitled:—

"RIVAL INVENTORS!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



Baggy Trimbles in the "Gem," too!

NOW YOU KNOW, CHUM!

from the barges stormed across the deck of the Sarsaparilla. As man after man, having swung himself across the tow-rope, set foot on the tug, he rushed with enthusiasm into the fray. Of the rights or the wrongs of that encounter, it was obvious that they knew nothing; but a fight was a fight, and not to be missed.

An enormous man, with the arms of a Hercules and a close-cropped golden beard, rushed into the melee, looking not unlike the phantom of a Viking. As he wielded the heavy block of wood he carried, his blue eyes shone with almost berserker fury, and he shouted and sang at every blow. Jack, hanging desperately over the edge of the side of the tug, holding on for dear life—while the men in the boat alongside sought to drag him down, and Squall twisted and snapped all round the spot—heard that enormous voice.

"I never harmed an onion." But you ain't an onion, my lad. Plop for you! "I never mean to try." See what your mother thinks of your face now, my beauty!"

"That's the stuff to give 'em, Dick!" the man at the wheel exclaimed. "Chuck the dirty dogs in the water! It'll be the only chance of a washing any of 'em will likely ever have."

The fight, as far as the expulsion of the invaders from the deck of the tug, was over in less than a minute. Even Black Michael had sprung over the side of the Sarsaparilla. Like a good general, he was quite prepared to lose a battle if he might win a war; he was indifferent to the defeat of the gang provided he could secure Jack.

"Get the boy!" he shouted. "Get the boy! Two hundred to split among you if you secure him."

Most of the gang, however, were dazed by the blows they had received. Two were lying unconscious between the thwarts, and there was not one who did not bear a mark of their encounter with the barges. But that appeal to their greed roused them to a last effort. Jack was seized by the collar of his coat—by his arm; one man even fastened his fingers in his hair.

"Pull!" shouted Black Michael frantically. "Pull!"

All this time the tug was gathering speed, and to the strain upon Jack's hold was added the growing force of that motion. He felt his fingers slipping. He had only one hand with which to hold on. In another moment he must let go.

"Squall!" he gasped. "Squall!" As always in the moment of extremity, he turned to his faithful dog. If Squall couldn't help him, he must fall into Black Michael's hands.

The barges, now that they had cleared the deck, were amusing themselves by pelting the occupants of the boat alongside with whatever missiles they could find. Jack's desperate situation meant nothing to them. As far as they knew, he might belong to the party in the boat.

But Squall heard, and understood. His job was to free his master. In an instant he had launched himself across the side of the tug, falling with his full weight upon the men who were standing up, pulling at Jack. They went down like ninepins. Only Black Michael still clutched frantically at the boy's collar. Squall leapt at him. Straight at his throat he leapt, his jaws opened to make that wolf-like slash at the other's neck.

(Look out for some startling developments in next week's thrilling instalment of this powerful serial, chums!)

Do You Know That?



Interesting Tit-Bits

for the Footer Fan!



The men who play in a Soccer International match are entitled to six pounds, over and above the wages which they receive from their clubs, of course. But the players may, if they like, have a medal instead of the money, and of the eleven England players who appeared in the last International, five preferred a medal to the money.

England has not won an International match for two years, her last victory being a single goal affair at Swansea, in 1925.

The Arsenal have about as strange a collection of players as any club in the country. On their books there is one English International player, two Welsh Internationals, two Irish Internationals, and one Scottish International.

In reply to a correspondent, a trainer of a football team is not allowed to go on the field to attend to an injured man without the consent of the referee.

Golf is now a part of the "ordered" training of the Arsenal players. On four days a week—unless there is a mid-week match, of course—the players are taken to a golf course for at least one round.

The ball which is used in the Cup Final is always chosen by the referee. He has sometimes as many as thirty from which to select, and the choice is not an easy one.

George Camsell, the demon goal-scoring centre-forward of Middlesbrough, says that he sometimes comes to the conclusion that opposing centre-halves are froth-blowers. Anyway, their methods suggest the chorus:

"The More we are together
The Safer we'll be."

London has three clubs in the First Division, and three in the Second Division, but not one player from any of these six teams was considered good enough to play for England in the last International match.

In Spain they have a novel way of rewarding the successful player. As the spectators go through the turnstiles to see a match they are given a voting slip, on which they record their vote as to the best player in the game. The player who receives the biggest number of votes is afterwards presented with a bull's ear in gold.

Goalkeeper Edward Taylor was born in Liverpool, and played for several

amateur clubs in the city. But he had to go to Oldham, and then to Huddersfield before he gained real recognition in Liverpool. He now, of course, plays for Everton.

Just recently Tottenham Hotspur played in their side three men who were born at Edmonton, and these three were shoulder-to-shoulder, as it were—Sanders at centre-forward, Handley at inside-left, and Dimmock at outside-left.

As there is direct connection between the rules of football and records, it may be recalled that Joe Smith and Bert Freeman each scored thirty-eight League goals in one season before the off-side rule was changed, and David Brown, of Darlington, scored forty. Last season, under the new off-side rule, Cookson scored forty-four, but now Camsell, of Middlesbrough, has gone better than all.

The name Jeremiah is not associated with optimism, but Everton recently secured a player with this name—Jeremiah Kelly—to help them to escape relegation.

On February 15th—the very first day for considering applications for Cup Final tickets—all those at five shillings, seven-and-sixpence, and ten shillings were over-applied for.

Of the fourteen clubs relegated from the First Division since the War, only four have regained a place in the premier section, and one of the quartette, Notts County, dropped down again. The other three are Derby County, Manchester United, and The Wednesday.

Within the last five years sixteen players have left Mansfield Town for Football League clubs, and for eleven of them—youths they acquired for the asking—they received £6,000! Some "nursery"!

Ben Cross, Burnley's small but clever inside forward, is regarded as the best billiards player among Association footballers in East Lancashire.

Here are some figures about the holding capacity of Wembley. There will be tickets for 91,504 people at this season's Cup Final. The terraces will hold 53,325 spectators, the enclosures having seating accommodation for 14,827, and the stands have 23,352 seats.

"FEARLESS TO THE RESCUE!"

(Continued from page 16.)

An elderly gentleman, looking weary unto death, and bent nearly double, with his long beard trailing before him, came limping through the quadrangle with a shuffling gait. He looked like a bathchair attendant who had seen better days. His tages were covered with mud and mire. He had discarded one of his shoes, owing to a painful Bunyan on his foot; and the foot in question was tied up with a large silk handkerchief.

Large beads of inspiration were pouring from the brow of the elderly gentleman; and no wonder, for he was dragging behind him a bathchair-trailer, piled high with luggage.

Slowly and wearily he came on, with his shuffling gait and the creaking bathchair. "The—the Head!" cried Jack Jolly in awed tones.

Frank Fearless nodded.

"I don't want to be disrespectful," he said, "but he looks like a broken-down cab-horse! I suppose he's had to foot it all the way to St. Sam's."

The Head halted at last, and collapsed into the arms of Mr. Lickham, who had hurried to the spot.

"I feel whacked, my dear Lickham!"

he panted. "And somebody else will feel whacked very shortly. Send the new boy—Fearless—to my study at once! He is the cause of my prezzant mizzerable plite."

"Now you're for it, Fearless!" murmured Jack Jolly. "Better go and face the musick. I should go now if I were you, bekawse the Head's too exhausted to do much damndidge with his birch."

Frank Fearless nodded, and made his way to the Head's study. When he got there he found the Head sprawling limply in his armchair, looking like a man who had just played a strenuous game of footer, and then run a Marathon, and then swum the Channel.

Weary as he was, however, the Head was galvanised into sudden activity at the sight of Frank Fearless. He leapt to his feet, his eyes glittering like live coals. Then he snatched up a birch-rod and whipped round upon Frank Fearless.

"At last, you young rotter!" he said with a wintry smile. "At last I can administer summery chastishment upon you! I can make some little return to you for all the sufferings and torchers through which I have recently passed. Nothing will save you—no argewment, no pleadings, no eggseuses—no nothing! Get across that table!"

So fierce was the Head's anger that even Frank Fearless, reckless young rascal though he was, dared not oppose it. Meekly he got across the table, prepared to take his grool like a man.

The birch hovered in the air. Slowly—

inch by inch—it crept lower and lower towards the new boy's back. At any minnit he eggpected his jacket to be ripped into ribbons.

Nearer and nearer the fearsome instrument of torcher descended, until there was barely half an inch between it and Frank's jacket.

And then, just as the birch was about to strike home, there was a patter of feet, and Molly Birchmull dashed into the study.

"Stop, pop! Pop, stop!" she cried dramatically. "You must not birch that brave boy! He has saved my life!"

"Well, I'm jiggered!" gasped the Head in blank astonishment.

Eggplanations followed, and Molly Birchmull made an eloquent appeal on behalf of her reskewer. She had arrived in the nick of time, and Frank Fearless was saved at the scaffold, so to speak. For the Head was devoted to his daughter, and dared not refuse her sobbing appeal.

"Go, my brave lad!" he said, pointing to the door. "I'll settle with you another time!" he added under his breath as Frank Fearless took his departure.

And the new boy scuttled gaily back to Jack Jolly's study to tell the heroes of the Fourth what had happened.

THE END.

(Look out for another screamingly funny story by Dicky Nugent next week, entitled: "THE SCAPEGRACE OF ST. SAM'S!" There's a laugh in every line of it, chums.)

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HONK, honk!

Clatter-clutter-clutter! Frank Fearless sat at the steering-wheel, and his car—which he had providently christened the Flying Fury—went dashing through towns and villages at an alarming speed, eating up the miles with a voracious appetite.

There was no special need to hurry. Frank Fearless was on his way to St. Sam's, where he was to start his education; and he was not due to arrive at the school at any specified time. But the new boy was bringing all his pets with him—his tame goat, his bunnies, his white mice, and his parrot—and he didn't want them to suffer the discomfort of travelling any longer than was necessary. He was anxious to release them from their coops and cages, so that they might wander at their own sweet will in the Head's garden, or some other convenient place at St. Sam's.

And then there was the Head himself to be thought of—though Frank Fearless was not thinking of him just now.

He had picked up Doctor Birchmell on the road, many miles from St. Sam's, and was now bringing him to the school. Really, the boy ought to have been on the other foot; and it was the Head who should have been conducting Frank Fearless. But as the Head was riding in the back-seat-trailer at the back—perched upon the new boy's luggage, in eminent peril of his life—it was obvious that Frank Fearless was the leader, and Doctor Birchmell the unwilling follower.

Clank-clank! Clank-clank! Toot-toot! The Flying Fury seemed to think that it was on the motor-track at Brooklands, for it hopped round corners at a trooly alarming rate, and galloped along the King's Highway like a mad thing.

As he rushed through space, with all the wild recklessness of his nature, Frank had a fleeting vision of startled pedestrians scuttling into the hedge, like rabbits into their burrows. He had a vision of horses and carriages being hurricanely driven in to the side of the road; of pedestrians being pushed into ditches to avoid his mad onslaught; of people who shouted, and booed, and jeered, waving their arms like windmills.

"She seems to be running faster now,"

A Titchish Tail of a New Boy's Sensational Arrival at the seat of Learning Known as St. Sam's.



mentioned Frank Fearless. "There's not so much bumping and rattling in the rear. I don't turn my head to look, or I shall lose control; but I suppose old Birchmell's all right."

"Are you all right, sir?"

"Ma-a-a!" bleated the goat.

"I don't mean you, Billy. I mean the other silly goat at the back. Are you nice and comfy in the trailer, Doctor Birchmell? I hope you're looking after my luggage all right!"

Frank strained his ears to catch the Head's reply above the fierce rush of the wind. But there was no response.

Frank was strongly tempted to turn his head and have a peep to see that everything was all right; but he dared not, while they were travelling at that mad pace. All his faculties had to be concentrated on the steering-wheel, and the white ribbon of road ahead.

Frank Fearless pumped in breath.

"I believe the old buffer's gone to sleep!" he muttered. "The jig-jogging of the trailer must have had a soothing effect on him. But it's not safe for him



to take forty winks while he's perched on top of my luggage. A sudden lurch when we're taking a corner, and he'll be thrown. I'd better slow up, and wake him."

The Flying Fury slackened speed, and presently it jolted abruptly to a standstill, with a suddenness that caused Frank Fearless to topple over backwards from the soap-box on which he sat. He landed fairly in the middle of his menagerie, which was piled on to the slushy.

There was a startled bleat from Billy the goat, a corn of squeaks from the rabbits, and a shrill protest from Percy the parrot: "Keep off the grass, you silly ass!"

Frank Fearless staggered to his feet, crossing the back of his cranium, which had collided with a corner of the rabbit hutch. Then his glance wandered towards the trailer—or where the trailer should have been—and he promptly forgot his hurts in his astonishment.

The trailer had disappeared! Frank's personal baggage, consisting of a portmanteau and a couple of suit-cases, had also disappeared!

Last and least—of less importance than the luggage or the trailer—the passenger had disappeared!

Frank Fearless rubbed his eyes in astonishment.

"My only aunt!" he ejaculated.

"What's become of the trailer, and my baggage, and old Birchmell? Have they been spirited away?"

And then he noticed that the towing-rope, which had connected with the fourth-chlor-trailer to the car, had snapped in the middle.

Frank Fearless burst out laughing. He realised that somewhere on the road—doubtless many miles in the rear—the trailer and its cargo were stranded!

"Ha, ha, ha! Old Birchmell will be raving like a madman!" chorried Frank.

"He'll wash his teeth till he's toothless, and tear his hair till he's bald!" jolly queer that I never possessed the assistant.

Why didn't the old buffer shout to me the minute the rope snapped?

Had Frank Fearless but known it, the Head had certainly shouted, in that fateful minute. He had believed to Frank

did not escape the eagle eye of Frank Fearless. "What a peech!" he murmured to himself. "What almost feel like a bud of blushing beauty!"

"Where are you going to, my pretty maid? Will come for a joy-ride? Be not afraid!"

She's the most perfect specimen of girlhood I've ever struck!

Not that Frank Fearless was in the habit of striking girls; but this was indeed a striking girl. The Flying Fury was now crawling along like an ungainly tortoise, and the youthful driver never once took his eyes off the bewitching figure that was coming towards him.

It was a jolly good job he didn't, for at that minute a startling thing happened.

There was a creaking of twigs and a crunching of feet, and suddenly a number of powerfully built ruffians burst their way by sheer brute force through the hedge, and leapt out into the roadway.

Fearsome-looking ruffians they were, with ugly brown faces, and chokers round their necks, and caps pulled down over their eyes and ears.

Frank Fearless saw at a glance that they were the gipsies—not the peace-ful, law-abiding sort of gipsies, but real ruff dis-

They meant mischief now, as they bore down upon the beautiful girl who was tripping along the lane.

"Stop, pop! Pop, stop!" cried Molly.

Frank Fearless stopped his car dead. His eyes flashed fire; all his muscles were taut. He had been instructed how to

use his fists, and he mentally resolved to give those gipsies gyp.

"Maledicos!" cried one of the men, in Spanish. "Por beca! Collar the senorita!"

The girl stopped dead as the brootal ruffians surged around her. She shrank back like a startled fawn, her big blue eyes wide with terror.

"Help! Help!" she cried.

Frank Fearless was out of his car before the words were out of her mouth. Clenching his fists, he rushed into the gang of gipsies—there must have been quite a dozen of them—and started hitting out right and left.

Frank's whirlwind attack took the gipsies completely by surprise.

"Carumbo!" gasped their leader, as Frank's fist took him full in the mouth, and his teeth rattled down his throat.

"Has some fury been let loose among us?"

"Yaroooo!" roared another of the gipsies, as Frank's fist crashed between his eyes.

And the others fell back with angry snarls. Some of them drew their cut-throats, for they were the sort of men who coudgeled brains without stopping to think.

Frank Fearless also caught the glitter of an evil-looking dagger in one of the fellows' hands. He seized the ruffian by the wrist and gave it a sudden twist, and the beggar dropped the dagger with a squeal of pain.

With odds of twelve to one against him, Frank Fearless fought fearlessly, and with fierce ferocity. He was used to facing bigger odds than this. The fact that his opponents were armed did not daunt him. He had a couple of arms himself, and he used them to good purpose.

The girl looked on in wonder and admiration. Men were dropping all around her like skittles. Her gallant rescuer was darting here and there, dealing out hefty punches which would have felled an ox. For Frank Fearless was as strong as a lion; and beneath his Eaten jacket beat a brave British heart.

The gipsies were bent on their heels now. They sprawled on the ground in various attitudes of anguish, whining and whimpering for mercy.

Frank Fearless halted harshly as he

(Continued on next page.)

Looking weary unto death, and bent nearly double, the Head of St. Sam's came limping through the quadrangle, dragging behind him a bath-chair, piled high with luggage.