

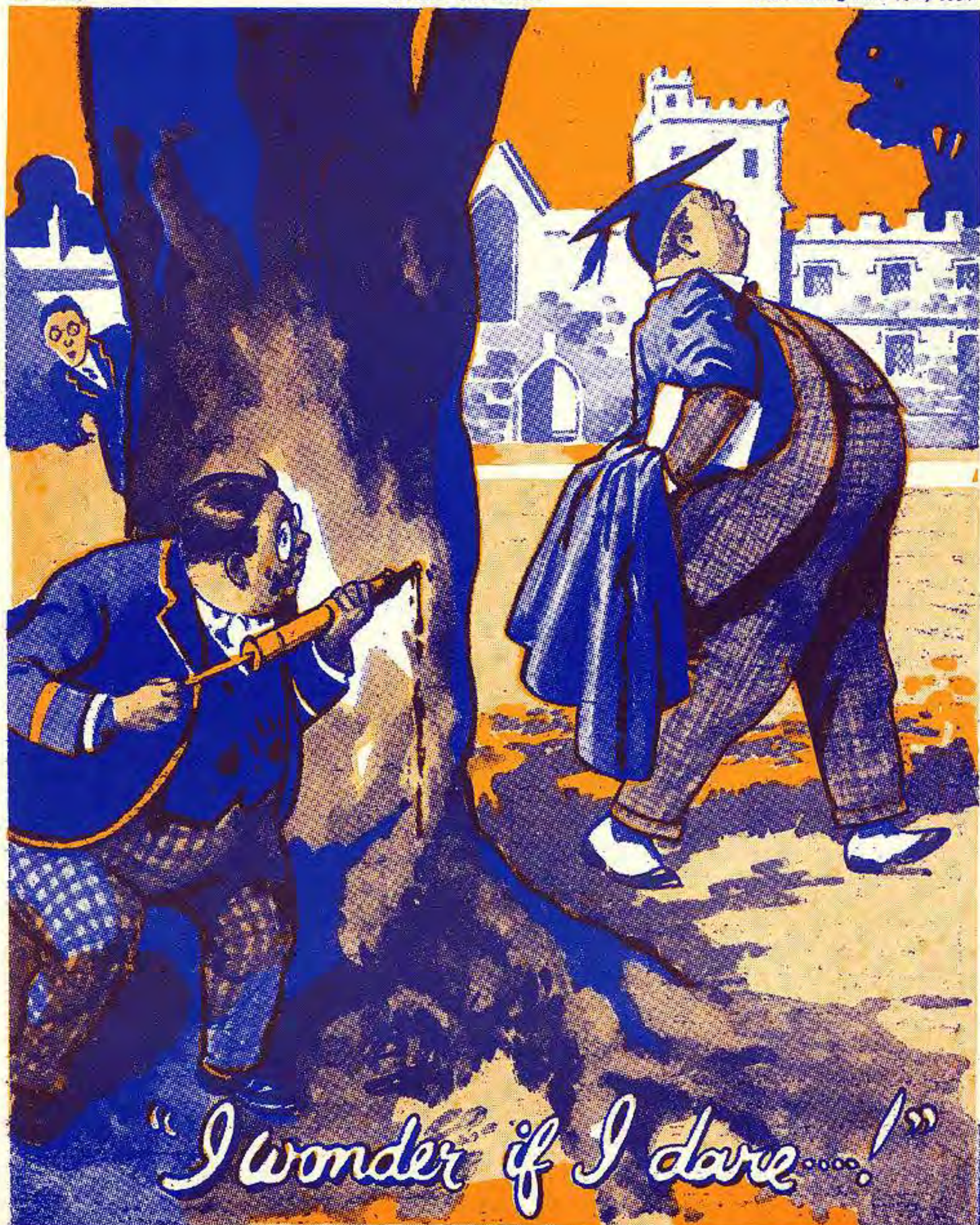
"THE 'BUNKING' OF BILLY BUNTER!" This Week's Breezy Yarn of
School Life at Greyfriars.

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THE "BUNKING" OF BILLY BUNTER!

BY FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Asking For It!

"**T**HAT old ass, Prout!" said Billy Bunter, in tones of the deepest disgust. "Shut up!" breathed Bob Cherry, of the Remove.

"Shan't!" retorted Bunter independently.

Billy Bunter did not want to shut up. It was not his way to shut up. Seldom did the fat Owl of the Remove shut up. When his fat chin got into motion, it father resembled the little brook in the poem, which went on for ever.

Bunter saw no reason for shutting up. That was because he had no eyes in the back of his head, and could not, therefore, see Mr. Prout coming up the passage to the Remove Form-room.

Having his podgy back to Prout, Bunter remained happily unconscious of his approach. And he burred on:

"I call it thick! We don't want old Pompous in our Form-room! It's a rotten idea for a senior master to take a junior Form! Why can't the Head give us a holiday till Quelch comes back? It's only a few days. Anyhow, we don't want that pompous old ass, Prout!"

"He's coming!" hissed Harry Wharton.

The Greyfriars Remove had gathered at the door of their Form-room for the third school after break. They were waiting for Prout.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, had not yet returned to Greyfriars, after his rather long absence. The temporary master in his place had left suddenly. Arrangements had to be

made for the Form to be "taken" by other masters who could find the time. That was why the Fifth Form-master was to take the Remove in third school on this particular morning.

Prout was a few minutes late.

Perhaps he did not like being bothered very much. Anyhow, he was late. But now he was coming—plump and portly, rolling up the passage like an ancient galleon under full sail.

"I say, you fellows—" Bunter burred on.

"He's coming!" repeated Wharton, in a hissing whisper.

Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles. Bunter was not quick on the uptake.

"I know he's coming," he answered. "He's coming to take the Form in third school—it's up on the board! That's what I'm talking about! We don't want Prout; pompous old ass! Walker of the Sixth took us in second lesson, and he sat and read a novel all the time, and we didn't have to do any work. That was all right. But that silly old ass, Prout—"

Most of the juniors round the Form-room door had seen Prout coming by this time. Bunter, standing in the middle of the passage with his back to Prout, did not see him. But, short-sighted as he was, he discerned the expressions of horror and alarm on several faces, and realised that something was up. Then he was conscious of a heavy tread behind him.

"Oh lor'!" ejaculated Bunter.

The fat junior spun round like a globe revolving on its axis. His little round eyes almost popped through his big, round spectacles, at the sight of the

portly master of the Fifth not ten feet away.

"Oh, crikey!" gasped Bunter. "It—it—it's Prout!"

"And he's heard you, you howling ass!" murmured Frank Nugent.

"Oh lor'!"

"The hearfulness is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "and the waxfulness is also great."

"I guess Prout looks mad!" grinned Fisher T. Fish.

Prout came on, with his elephantine tread. Obviously, he had heard Billy Bunter's unfortunate remarks. His plump face, always rather florid, was almost crimson. His eyes sparkled. Plainly Prout was wrathful.

"Good-morning, sir!" ventured Harry Wharton, hoping that a polite and pleasant greeting might help to assuage Prout's obvious wrath.

It did not produce that effect. Prout did not even answer. He unlocked the Form-room door, and the juniors marched in—Bunter quaking.

Prout went to the Form-master's desk. Mr. Quelch's cane lay there. It seemed that Prout wanted that cane.

"Bunter!"

"Oh scissors!"

"I heard you speaking, Bunter, as I came up the passage!" said Mr. Prout. "I heard your disrespectful and insolent observations."

"It—it wasn't me, sir!" gasped Bunter, in alarm.

"What?"

"I—I mean, I wasn't speaking about you, sir!" stammered Bunter. "I—I was speaking of another pompous old ass, sir—"

"Wha-a-ah!"

"Not you at all, sir?" groaned

Bunter. "I—I wouldn't call you a pompous old ass, sir! I'd never dream of telling a Form-master what I think of him, sir. I'm much too respectful, sir."

If Bunter hoped that this would placate Prout, it showed that he had a very hopeful nature.

It did not placate Prout. Rather it seemed to intensify his wrath. His plump hand had grasped Mr. Quelch's cane almost convulsively.

"Bunter!" he gasped.

"Yes, sir! M-m-may I go to my place, sir?"

"You may not, Bunter."

"Oh crumbs!"

Cane in hand, Prout glanced at a silent Form.

"I am reluctant," said Prout, in his ponderous way, "to use the cane in a colleague's Form-room. The head-master has requested me to take this Form in third school for a few days, until Mr. Quelch arrives. I had hoped, and expected, to be treated in this Form-room with the respect to which I am accustomed in the Fifth Form-room. I have been disappointed. Reluctant as I am to use the cane here, I am left no choice in the matter."

Prout's reluctance did not equal Bunter's!

Reluctant as he was, it was clear that Prout was going to use that cane, and use it with vigour.

He swished it in the air.

"Bunter—"

"Oh dear!"

"You will bend over, Bunter! Touch your toes."

"Oh lor'!"

Some of the Removites grinned.

It was not a grinning matter, so far as Bunter was concerned. But it was not, in fact, easy for the fattest fellow at Greyfriars, or in the wide world, to touch his toes! Bunter, as he bent over, hardly succeeded in reaching his toes with his fat fingers, and he looked as if he was going to burst in the process.

The cane swept up. It swept down.

Whack!

"Whoooooop!"

Whack!

"Yaroooooooooh!"

Whack!

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

Prout slammed the cane on Mr. Quelch's desk.

"You may go to your place, Bunter!"

"Ow! Wow! Ow!"

"You will write two hundred lines of Virgil, and bring them to my study after tea."

"Ow! Wow! Ow! Yow!"

"Silence! Go to your place!" thundered Prout.

Billy Bunter limped and wriggled to his place. He sat down. The next moment he jumped up again, with a yelp. Prout's eye glittered at him.

"Bunter! Sit down at once!" he hooted.

"Ow! Oh lor'! Ow! Wow! I—I—I'd rather stand this lesson, if—if you don't mind, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Bunter, sit down at once, or I shall cane you again!" boomed Prout.

"Oh dear!"

Bunter sat down, tenderly and gingerly. He wriggled on his form like a fat eel during third school. Three cuts made him unwilling to sit down, and made it impossible for him to sit still. It was quite a painful hour for the Owl of the Remove. Prout, no doubt, was glad when the bell rang, and it was time to dismiss the Form. But he was not so glad as Billy Bunter.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Just Like Coker!

"KICK him!" said Coker of the Fifth.

There was absolutely no reason for kicking Johnny Bull of the Remove. It was true that Johnny was a member of the Famous Five of the Remove, who never treated Coker with the respect that was due to so great a man. Apart from that circumstance, Johnny had given no offence.

He was, indeed, oblivious of the existence of Horace Coker at that moment. He was coming away from the school shop, with a good-sized parcel under his arm.

He headed for the House, not even noticing Coker and Potter and Greene strolling in the offing.

Johnny had had a remittance that morning. He was nobly expending it on a study spread in Study No. 14. There was going to be a very handsome tea in that study. His study-mate, Squiff, had already gone up to get ready, while Johnny did the shopping. Now he had done it, and was getting home with the goods, when Horace Coker's eye fell sourly on him.

Coker of the Fifth was not in a good temper. Coker had had rather a hectic time in third school that day with the mathematics master.

Coker loathed mathematics.

"Maths," like the rain and the hail,

Somebody has had the awful nerve to swamp ink over Mr. Prout, the pompous master of the Fifth. Billy Bunter has the awful nerve to boast that he did it, little realising that the awful sentence to follow is expulsion!

fell alike on the just and the unjust. Few liked them, but all had to stand them. Still, Coker had a genuine grievance on this occasion.

The Remove being, temporarily, without a master had necessitated a rearrangement of the time-table. As Prout had taken the Remove in third school, obviously somebody else had to take the Fifth.

That was easily arranged. Mr. Lascelles, the maths master, was at leisure, and willing to sacrifice his leisure for the common good! So Larry Lascelles took the Fifth in maths. The drawback to this convenient arrangement was that the Fifth got an extra and unexpected dose of mathematics.

Hence Coker's bad temper.

Maths, as usual, were bad enough. Extra maths were the limit. It was all the fault of the Remove, bagging Coker's Form-master, and leaving him to the tender mercies of Lascelles.

Not by the widest stretch of the imagination could Johnny Bull be supposed to be responsible. But he was a Remove fellow—and Coker was annoyed with the Remove! He was at hand—and Coker was feeling strongly inclined to kick somebody! He could not kick Prout for taking the Remove. He could not kick Lascelles for taking the Fifth! But he could kick Johnny Bull—and he did!

So it came to pass that Johnny, trotting off cheerfully with his parcel, and thinking chiefly about tea in the study,

was suddenly surprised by an unexpected attack in the rear.

Something that might have been a steam-hammer, but which was really only Coker's number eleven boot, smote him, and he staggered and pitched forward.

"Ow!" roared Johnny Bull.

He pitched on his hands and knees. His parcel crashed! It burst as it crashed, and all sorts of things poured out.

The earth was strewn with cakes and buns and tarts, bottles and packets, like leaves in Vallombrosa of old.

There were eggs in that parcel. Few of them remained whole after landing on the earth. Johnny, sprawling, roared.

Potter and Greene stared at Coker. They knew that Coker had a rather short way with fags; but this seemed to them rather the limit, even for the obstreperous Horace.

"Well, my hat!" said Potter. "Look here, Coker—"

"What the thump—" ejaculated Greene.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker.

He seemed amused. He had not really intended to send Johnny sprawling with that kick; but his foot was bigger and heavier than Coker realised. The sight of the astounded junior sprawling with his tuck strewn around him, and a dozen eggs streaming yolk, seemed to entertain Coker. He roared with laughter.

Johnny Bull rose to his knees dizzily. He glared at Coker. Having glared, he picked up a couple of eggs that remained whole, one in either hand. With great promptness, he buzzed them at Coker.

Crash! Smash!

Coker's mouth was wide open as he roared with laughter. The first egg smashed on it, almost filling Coker's mouth, large as it was. The second cracked on his nose.

"Urrrgh!" spluttered Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Potter and Greene.

They had not been amused by Johnny Bull's disaster. But they seemed extremely tickled by the sight of Horace Coker, masked with egg-yolk, frantically spitting out burst egg.

"Take that!" hooted Johnny Bull. "You cheeky Fifth Form ass! Take that—and that—and that!"

Johnny found a third egg that had not been smashed. It smashed, the next second, on Coker's neck. He followed it up with a rich, juicy jam tart, that clung lovingly to Coker's eyebrows.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Potter and Greene.

"Urrrgh!" spluttered Coker. "Wurrgh! You silly asses! What are you cackling at? Gurrgh!" He clawed egg and jam from his face. "I'll smash him! Urrgh! I'll pulverise him! Wurrgh! I'll spifficate him! Oooogh!"

He hurled himself at Johnny Bull.

Johnny was a sturdy fellow, very strong and sturdy for a Lower Fourth junior. But he was nothing like a match for a Fifth Form senior. He stood manfully up to Coker, but he had no chance.

"Rescue!" bawled Johnny at the top of his voice. "Rescue, Remove!"

"I say, you fellows!" howled Billy Bunter. "I say, rescue! Fifth Form cads! Rescue!"

Billy Bunter spotted the scene from a safe distance. He stayed at a safe distance. Scrapping, especially with a

hefty fellow like Coker, had no attraction for Bunter. But he yelled to Harry Wharton & Co., who were at a farther distance, and did not observe what was passing.

Bob Cherry stared round.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What—"

"I say, you fellows, rescue!" yelled Bunter. "Coker's whopping Johnny Bull—"

That was more than enough for the chums of the Remove.

"Come on!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

And the four rushed to the rescue.

It was time—for Johnny was crumpling up in the powerful grasp of Horace Coker, and Coker was smacking him right and left.

Coker was in a state of great wrath.

Having expressed his feelings by kicking Johnny Bull, Coker was prepared to let the matter end there. Coker saw no harm in kicking a fag if he felt so disposed. What were fags for, except to be kicked, Coker would have liked to know. And this cheeky fag had had the nerve to buzz eggs and jam tarts at him, and Coker was eggy and jammy!

Naturally, he felt that it was up to him to make an example of the cheeky young rascal! Which he was doing, with a heavy hand, when Johnny's chums arrived on the scene with a rush.

Potter and Greene exchanged a glance, and strolled away, with an elaborate air of unconcern. Coker was a fellow who was born for trouble as the sparks fly upward; but Potter and Greene had no use for a shindy with a mob of fags. So they quietly disappeared.

The Co. did not heed them. They only heeded Coker. Four pairs of hands were laid on Coker all at once, and, with a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull all together, the chums of the Remove dragged him off Johnny Bull. Coker smote the quadrangle with a mighty smite.

"Ow! Ow! Ow!" gasped Johnny. "Hold him! Jump on him! Squash him! Whop him! Lemmo gerrat him!"

"Got him!" gasped Bob Cherry.

Coker, under four juniors, heaved like the mighty ocean. But he heaved in vain. They had him down and they kept him down. And Johnny Bull, gasping for breath, grabbed up jam tarts from the burst parcel and plastered and lathered them over Coker's crimson countenance.

Coker resisted desperately.

But as four fellows had an arm or a leg each, with Coker on his back, his resistance counted for nothing.

Coker roared. He howled! He spluttered! He gurgled! All in vain. He was safely held, and Johnny Bull, with a reckless disregard of expense, plastered jam tarts over his face, till Coker's features disappeared under jam and pastry. His nose, his mouth, his ears, his hair, were of the jam, jammy! His roaring died to a horrid gurgle.

"He, he, he!" cackled Billy Bunter. Coker being in safe hands, the fat Owl of the Remove rolled up to watch. "I say, you fellows, give him jip! Give him beans! He, he, he!"

"I'll smash you—groogh—I'll—gurrgh!" gurgled Coker. "Potter! Greene! Grooogh! Lend me a—yurrgh—hand!"

But Potter and Greene were out of hearing. There was no help for Horace Coker!

"That's the lot!" gasped Johnny

Bull. "Hold him, though, while I open a bottle of ginger-beer."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fizzzz! Squish! Better uses, no doubt, could have been found for ginger-beer on a warm, June afternoon. Really, it was a waste. Still, Coker was worth watching, as he got the ginger-beer. He got most of it on his jammy face, but a considerable quantity of it went down his neck.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Have some more, Coker?"

"I say, you fellows—" squeaked Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, here comes Prout!"

"Oh, my hat!"

The Famous Five, rather dishevelled and untidy, released Coker of the Fifth, who sat up, gurgling, as the Fifth Form master rolled majestically on the scene.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

One For His Nob!

MR. PROUT stared grimly at the scene.

It was rather an unusual scene in the old quadrangle of Greyfriars School.

"Disgraceful!" snorted Prout.

Harry Wharton & Co., panting for breath after their tussle with Coker, blinked at Prout.

Coker had asked for this—in fact, begged for it; but the chums of the Remove realised that they had meted out rather drastic punishment to the great Horace.

He was in a shocking state. His hat was off, his hair a jammy mop, his collar and tie gone; he was eggy, he was jammy, he was streaming with ginger-beer. He was not a sight to please the eye of the least exacting Form-master.

Perhaps, in the excitement of the moment, the juniors had overdone it a little! Coker certainly looked as if they had!

"Outrageous!" boomed Prout.

"Urrgh!" contributed C o k e r.

"Gerrooogh! Gurrgh!"

"Such a scene—such an unparalleled scene—disgraceful—scandalous!" boomed Prout. "Coker, go to the House at once, and—clean yourself! Wharton, Nugent, Cherry, Hurree Singh, Bull, Bunter, you will take five hundred lines each!"

"Wha-a-at?" gasped the juniors together.

"Oh crikey!" ejaculated Bunter.

Coker picked himself up.

He did not speak—he had no breath left to speak with! Gurgling feebly, he took his way to the House—to clean himself, as his Form-master directed. He needed cleaning!

"Five hundred lines of Virgil each!" boomed Prout. "And I shall expect the lines to-morrow!"

The six juniors gazed at Prout. Prout was not their Form-master. True he acted as Form-master in third school, and for that morning hour he wielded a Form-master's authority. Outside that hour he had no more authority over the Remove than had Hacker, the master of the Shell, or Capper, the master of the Fourth.

He was exceeding his authority. That was one of Prout's little ways. He was an authoritative gentleman by nature. In his Form he was variously called "Old Pompous," and "Don Pomposo." Prout's pomposity was rather a trial to the Greyfriars Fifth. But they had to stand it! The Remove hadn't!

"If you please, sir—" said Harry Wharton, quite respectfully.

"Enough!" boomed Prout.

"But, sir—" said Frank Nugent.

"Silence, Nugent!"

"Coker asked for what he got!" bawled Johnny Bull, "and I'm jolly glad he got it, for one!"

"Bull, how dare you!"

"Esteemed sahib—" began Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Silence!" Prout raised a plump, commanding hand. "Each of you will bring me five hundred lines to-morrow!"

Wharton's face set.

"You're not our Form-master, sir!" he said coolly.

"What?" boomed Prout. "What?"

"Nobody but our Form-master has a right to give us lines!" said the captain of the Remove.

Prout purpled.

It was perfectly true, and Prout knew it as well as Wharton did. But it was not agreeable hearing for a portly and pompous gentleman who was exceeding his authority, and apparently expected to get away with it by sheer pomposity.

"Wharton!" gasped Prout. "This—this impertinence—"

"I don't mean to be impertinent, sir. But—"

"Your Form-master is absent, Wharton! I shall be only too glad when Mr. Quelch returns. Perhaps some semblance of order, some vestige of discipline, may be seen in the Remove when Mr. Quelch returns. In the meantime, your headmaster has requested me to take the Remove—"

"Only in third school, sir!" said Harry.

"I shall not allow rioting in the quadrangle, Wharton, while your Form-master is away. I shall not allow boys of my Form to be attacked and—disfigured, by young ruffians—"

"I hadn't anything to do with it, sir!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "I wasn't here—I mean, I was only looking on—"

"Silence, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Another word, and I shall take you to my study and cane you, Bunter."

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter.

He said no more.

"Now, Wharton"—Prout's plump hand was raised again—"understand me! I have given you six boys impositions for your outrageous and disgraceful conduct. I shall expect those impositions to be handed in to-morrow. Otherwise, I shall cane you all."

With that, Prout turned and rolled away.

Harry Wharton opened his lips—but closed them again. Prout was in the wrong; but arguing with a Form-master was a delicate matter, even when that Form-master was in the wrong.

"Pompous old ass!" granted Bunter, when Prout was gone. Stately and majestic, though red in the face, Prout rolled away towards the House. "I say, you fellows, I'm jolly well not going to do lines for Prout."

"Same here!" said Johnny Bull grimly.

"The samefulness is terrific!" declared the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur. "The esteemed and ridiculous Prout will not get those absurd lines."

"No fear!" agreed Nugent.

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"No lines for Prout!" he said. "He can give us all the lines he likes in third school. Outside third school he won't get any lines from us!"

"It doesn't seem to have occurred to him that Coker may have started the row!" remarked Bob Cherry. "And I suppose he did?"

"Of course he did!" granted Johnny Bull. "And he asked for all he got,

and more! Prout can give lines to Coker if he likes; he won't get any out of me!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Let's pick up this stuff—what's left of it!" grunted Johnny Bull. "All the eggs are gone, and the tarts—— Leave that cake alone, Bunter, you fat Owl!"

"I was only picking it up for you!" said Bunter, with a great deal of dignity. "I wasn't slipping it under my jacket."

"Kick him!"

"Beast!"

The Famous Five proceeded to gather up the scattered contents of Johnny

Now, added to that offence, he had found a mob of Removites ragging a Fifth Form fellow, and they had as good as defied him when he inflicted a just punishment.

It was all the more annoying because, if the Removites did not write those lines, it was a humiliation for Prout, and yet he did not quite see how he was to enforce an order on a Form that was not his own.

Pacing to and fro, Prout was thinking this out, when he heard a giggle from a study window far above.

He glanced up.

High above him were the windows of

There he turned, to pace back.

As he did so he felt a sudden shock. Something dropped on his head from above.

It had dropped from the window of Study No. 14, and it landed fairly on top of Prout's mortarboard, knocking it off his head.

"Oh!" gasped Prout.

He staggered.

His mortarboard fell at his feet; the bright June sunshine gleamed and glistened on the bald spot on top of his majestic head! Beside the mortarboard lay a book, evidently the object that had fallen from the window.



Johnny Bull rose to his knees dizzily, and glared at Coker. Having glared, he picked up a couple of eggs that remained whole and buzzed them at Coker. Crash! Smash! "Urrrgh!" spluttered the Fifth Former. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Potter and Greene. They had been amused by Johnny Bull's disaster, but they seemed extremely tickled by the sight of Horace Coker masked with egg-yolk.

Bull's parcel. Coker had had some of the eggs, and nearly all the tarts, and some of the other things had been trampled on in the wild affray. Still, there were a good many left; and, having fielded them, the chums of the Remove adjourned to the tuckshop for a fresh supply of eggs and tarts.

Meanwhile, Mr. Prout rolled away in a state of indignant wrath.

He soothed his ruffled feelings by pacing on the path that ran under the study windows, and gradually grew calmer.

Prout felt that he had cause to be indignant.

He did not want to be bothered with the Remove at all; but, in the circumstances, the Form being masterless, every "beak" had to lend a hand, it being impossible to refuse a request of the Head's.

Probably Prout knew already that he was sometimes referred to at Greyfriars as Old Pompous. Still, he had been deeply offended when he heard the fat Owl of the Remove so refer to him.

the Remove studies. Most of those windows were open, in the sunny June weather. From one of them—Study No. 11—three faces looked down—those of Skinner, Snoop, and Stott. And they were giggling.

Prout's brow darkened.

There was no law against any fellow at Greyfriars looking out of his study window into the quad and giggling, if the spirit moved him so to do. But Prout guessed that he was being giggled at! He had no doubt that one of those young rascals had said "That's Old Pompous!" That was the sort of treatment a senior Form-master received when he condescended to take a junior Form at the request of the headmaster.

However, Skinner & Co. withdrew their grinning faces at once, when Prout looked up with thunder in his brow.

Gloomy and indignant, Prout paced on.

He reached the corner of the building, under the window of the last study, No. 14 in the Remove.

"Good gad!" gasped Prout.

Hardly able to believe in such a happening, he glared up at the window. It was open, but nobody was to be seen there. Yet someone, evidently, had tossed that book out on Prout's head below!

It was amazing—unprecedented—unparalleled! Yet it had happened! Impertinence, impudence, defiance—and now actual assault! Prout clutched up his mortarboard! He clutched up the book. Then he whisked along the path, heading for the House doorway—and Study No. 14 in the Remove, on the trail of vengeance!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Fierce for Fishy!

FISHER T. FISH was in possession of Study No. 14 when Squiff stepped in to get ready for tea. It was Fishy's study as well as Squiff's and Johnny Bull's; so Fishy, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,374.

of course, had a right to be there. Judging by the look he gave Squiff, he fancied that he was the only fellow who had.

It was near tea-time, but Fisher T. Fish was not thinking of tea. He was busy! He had papers on the study table, and an account-book, in which he was entering sundry items. There was a thoughtful wrinkle in his bony brow and a spot of ink on his bony nose.

Fishy was making up his accounts—a form of accounts that would have earned him a flogging had the headmaster seen them. He was calculating the profits accruing from his system of lending small sums among hard-up fags at a rate of interest that sounded small, but might have made Shylock himself stare and gasp when it came to be computed. A penny a week on the loan of a shilling did not sound much to Nugent minor of the Second or Tubb of the Third, but it was over eight per cent per week, or something over four hundred per cent per annum! Such a loan lasting a year would have produced over four shillings profit, as well as the original shilling back, which was enough to make Shylock's mouth water.

Deep in calculations of this entrancing nature, Fisher T. Fish did not want to be interrupted. So as Squiff came in he waved an impatient pen at him and yapped:

"Bull's not here! Shut the door after you!"

"Bull's gone for the tuck!" said the Australian junior. "And we shall want that table for tea!"

"Can't you tea somewhere else?" demanded Fish, exasperated. "Bull generally teas with those guys along at Study No. 1."

"Standing a feed here this time," said

Squiff cheerfully. "Get that rubbish off the table!"

"Aw, wake snakes!" growled the junior from New York. "I guess I'm busy! Look hyer, you take your feed along to some other study, see?"

"Shall I help you clear?"

"Nope!" roared Fisher T. Fish.

"Well, get a move on! I'll come back in ten minutes," said the junior from New South Wales good-naturedly, and he left Study No. 14 again and strolled in the Remove passage.

Coming on Tom Brown, the New Zealander, there, and Peter Todd, Squiff entered into the subject of cricket—just then an all-absorbing topic at Greyfriars—and was absent from Study No. 14 rather more than ten minutes. A discussion of leg-theory banished other and lesser matters from a fellow's mind. However, the half-hour chiming out reminded Squiff that Johnny Bull would be along with the tuck, and that the guests would be arriving; so he regretfully quitted the topic of leg-theory and returned to his study, expecting to find that Fisher T. Fish had put his multifarious papers away by that time.

Fisher T. Fish hadn't!

Deep in figures, absorbed and entranced by the subject of money, Fishy had forgotten Squiff's existence the moment he had gone.

His bony, sharp face was bent earnestly over his papers, and he was still making entries in the account-book.

He glanced up irritably as Sampson Quincy Ifley Field came in.

"Wake snakes! Can't you leave a guy quiet for a minute at a time?" yapped Fishy. "For the love of Mike, absquatulate, do!"

"Can't wait any longer," said Squiff. "Clear that table, please!"

"Guess again!" growled Fisher T. Fish.

"What the thump are you up to?" asked Squiff, staring at the litter of papers. He frowned. He had not paid any particular attention to Fishy's occupation, hitherto; but now he did, and he realised what it was. "You pie-faced, piffing tick, are you at your Shylock business again?"

"Find out!" grunted Fishy.

Squiff stepped up to the table.

"Take that putrid rubbish away, and sharp!" he rapped.

"I guess—"

Without waiting to hear what Fisher T. Fish guessed, the Australian junior grasped the end of the table and tilted it up.

Papers and account-book and inkpot slid off to the study floor and landed there in a heap.

There was a wild howl from Fisher T. Fish.

"Great snakes! You slab-sided jay! I guess you're mixing up all my papers!" he yelled. "By the great horned toad—"

Fisher T. Fish made a jump for his precious papers. The ink was streaming over them from the inkpot.

He grabbed them up wildly.

Squiff, grinning, picked up the account-book. Fishy, with his hands full of inky papers, glared at him.

"Gimme that book!" he yelled.

"Go after it!" suggested Squiff, as he tossed it out of the open study window! That, in Squiff's opinion, was the way to deal with the account-book in which the Shylock of Greyfriars kept record of his business transactions.

"Great Abraham Lincoln!" gasped Fisher T. Fish, as the book vanished. "You—you—you jay! You slab-sided mugwump! You—you— Well, by the great horned toad, if this ain't the bee's knee! I'll say it's the elephant's side-whiskers! You pesky gink!"

That valuable account-book had vanished. It had dropped far below on the path under the study windows. Neither of the juniors was aware that a plump Form-master was pacing there and that the book had dropped on his majestic head and knocked off his mortarboard. The Remove windows were too high up for Prout's exclamations to be heard in the study.

"You pesky gink!" howled Fisher T. Fish. "Wharrer you chuck my book out of the pesky winder for?"

"Because there wasn't a fire to chuck it into!" explained Squiff cheerfully.

"You—you—you—" gasped Fishy.

He laid down his papers and clenched his bony fists! Fisher T. Fish was no fighting-man as a rule. But now his "dander" was "riz." He forgot caution; forgot that he had no more chance in combat with the sturdy Australian junior than a fox had with a mastiff. He hurled himself at S. Q. I. Field, and crashed a bony and unexpected fist on his nose.

Taken by surprise, Squiff sat down suddenly, with a roar.

"Take that, you pie-faced geck!" howled Fisher T. Fish. "I guess I'll make potato-scrappings of you! I guess I'll—"

Fisher T. Fish left off guessing suddenly as Squiff scrambled up, with an expression on his face that was quite alarming.

Fishy remembered all of a sudden that he was no fighting-man! And instead of waiting for Squiff to get on his feet in order to make potato-scrappings of him Fisher T. Fish darted out of the study.

"Stop!" gasped Squiff.



NERVE-TINGLING thrills—light-hearted fun—gripping adventure! You'll find all you want—and more—in this great book-length yarn of the exciting experiences of the film star chums of Greyfriars in California—featuring Harry Wharton in the role of a dare-devil sheik. Ask your newsagent for this ripping story to-day—it's much too good to miss.

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Fisher T. Fish did not stop! He accelerated! He flew! After him flew Squiff, with claret streaming from his nose and wild wrath gleaming from his eyes.

They went down the Remove passage as if it were a race-track, Fisher T. Fish well in the lead.

He reached the Remove landing ahead of his pursuer. But just as he was about to leap down the Remove staircase he sighted a portly form ascending. It was Prout coming up.

Prout barred Fishy's retreat. He spun off to the left, raced along the landing, and darted into the Fifth Form passage, past the games study.

After him raced Squiff. Prout, coming up slowly—stairs always presented difficulties to Prout—did not even see them as they disappeared.

Mr. Prout puffed and blew his way up the Remove staircase and up the Remove passage. He reached Study No. 14, from the window of which the book, now in his hand, had fallen on his head.

That study was empty. Prout stared round it grimly. Some disrespectful young rascal from that study had buzzed a book at his head! That disrespectful young rascal had promptly disappeared, doubtless expecting Prout to come after him.

Prout breathed hard—with wrath and from the effects of the stairs. He was too late—the bird had flown!

But Prout was not beaten yet. He had the book that had fallen on his majestic napper! Every book had an owner. He was going to discover the owner of that book!

He proceeded to examine the book. It seemed to be some sort of an account-book. There were pages and pages of mysterious-looking entries and figures. No owner's name was written in it. Fisher T. Fish was not likely to write his name in such a book, lest it should meet the eyes of authority. Fishy was proud—very proud—of his business abilities. He loved to think that during his sojourn in a backward old island he was getting "dollars" off the bone-headed inhabitants. But he did not want Dr. Locke to flog him for his business activities. So, proud as he was of his transactions, he kept them as dark as possible.

So there was no clue in that book to the owner. Mr. Quelch would have known at once to whom it belonged; but Prout was not well acquainted with the manners and customs of the Remove fellows. Prout did not know.

He grunted.

Slipping the book into his pocket, the Fifth Form-master left the study. Vengeance was postponed—but it was only postponed. As a matter of fact, vengeance was already falling on the owner of that book. Squiff had cornered him at the end of the Fifth Form passage—and already Fisher T. Fish's nose was in a worse state than Squiff's, and his other features were decorated to match! It was, as Fishy would have said, "fierce."

Leaving Fishy for dead, as it were, Squiff came back to Study No. 14, to get the study ready for tea. Fortunately, Prout had gone by that time.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Tea in Study No. 14!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Scat!"
The spread was on in Study No. 14 when Billy Bunter arrived there. The spread being on, Bunter was bound to arrive. His scent

of a spread was as keen as Fishy's scent for cash.

He rolled in.

It was useless to tell Bunter to "scat" when a spread was on. Nothing short of a boot would have dislodged him.

The Famous Five, Squiff, Lord Mauleverer, Vernon-Smith, and Tom Redwing were gathered round the festive board. Nine fellows made a fairly large party for a junior study. Really, there was no room for Bunter. But Bunter was the fellow to find room. "I say, Johnny, old chap—"

GREYFRIARS CARTOONS.

By HAROLD SKINNER,

our lightning artist.

No. 2.—WUN LUNG.

(the Chinese junior of the Remove.)

Harold Skinner hasn't many good points, it's true, but we must certainly give him full marks as a cartoonist and a rhymester.—Ed.



Tasty stews of rats and mice,
Tadpole pies to tempt the tongue.
Allee velly muchee nice,
What you t'inkee?—says Wun Lung.

Snails and pussy cats as food,
Excellent for old and young;
Savvy plentee muchee good,
What you t'inkee?—says Wun Lung.

"Hook it!" grunted Johnny Bull.
"If that's how you thank a fellow for coming to the rescue when Coker of the Fifth was whopping you—" said Bunter, with dignity.

"You fat, funky foozler, you never lent a hand!"

"Well, I called the other fellows," said Bunter. "Coker would have spifficated you. You couldn't handle him as I could."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The idea of Billy Bunter handling Coker of the Fifth seemed to cause general hilarity.

"Well, there's lots," said Johnny Bull. "Tuck in, you fat foozler!"

"One of you fellows might give a fellow a chair," suggested Bunter.

"There's a box in the corner," said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull, if you think I can sit on that old box—"

"Well, there's the door!" remarked the founder of the feast. "Get on the other side of it, if you like that better."

"That box will be all right for me," said Bunter hastily. "Pull it up to the table, will you, Bob?"

"Not at all!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"Pull it up to the table for me, Inky."

"Rats!"

Bunter pulled the box to the table for himself. He sat down and made up for lost time by the rapidity with which he attacked the good things. They had been disappearing fairly fast before Bunter's arrival; now they vanished at lightning speed.

Talk at the tea-table ran on the subject of Prout, and the unheard-of cheek of that portly gentleman in handing out lines to Remove men.

The Famous Five were determined not to do those lines, as a matter of principle. Bunter was determined not to do them, as a matter of laziness.

It was agreed on all hands that they shouldn't be done. If it meant a row with Prout, it meant a row with Prout. And that was that!

The conversation was interrupted by a sound which hinted that an escaped elephant was coming up the Remove passage. Escaped elephants, of course, were rare at Greyfriars, so the juniors guessed that it was Mr. Prout coming.

"What the thump!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "That's Prout's footwork—unless they're delivering tons of coal in the passage! He can't be expecting our lines yet!"

The heavy tread came up to the door of Study No. 14. There was a tap at the door. Prout was a polite, if pompous, gentleman. The door opened and revealed the Fifth Form-master.

The tea-party rose respectfully to their feet.

Prout, to their surprise, had a book in his hand. It was not a schoolbook. Squiff recognised it as the account-book he had tossed out of the study window an hour ago.

"Please come in, sir!" said Johnny Bull politely.

He was politely making it clear that a senior master had no right to enter a junior study without being invited so to do!

Prout rolled in. He held up the book. "To which of you boys does this book belong?" he demanded.

Prout had come back at tea-time in order to catch the owners of the study at home. As a matter of fact, he had caught only two of them at home, as Fisher T. Fish was not present. Fisher T. Fish, at that moment, was still bathing a damaged nose.

There was no answer to Prout's question.

"Wharton, I think you are head boy of the Remove."

"I think so, sir," assented Harry.

"Kindly tell me the names of the boys belonging to this study."

"Bull, Field, and Fish, sir," answered Wharton.

"Is this book yours, Bull?"

"No, sir," answered Johnny.

"Is it yours, Field?"

"No, sir," answered Squiff.

"Then doubtless it belongs to Fish," said Mr. Prout. "It certainly belongs to some boy in this study, as it was hurled at me from the window of this room."

Squiff gave a jump.

"Hurled at you, sir?" he ejaculated.

"Hurled at my head, while I was

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1374.

pacing the path below," said Mr. Prout sternly. "It struck me with considerable force."

"Oh, my hat!"

"The boy who hurled it will be reported to the headmaster for a flogging," said Mr. Prout grimly.

Squiff, about to speak, decided not to speak. It was a sheer accident that the book had fallen on Prout's majestic head. But it was clear that Prout was in no humour to listen to a tale about an accident. He was in a humour to march a fellow off to the Head's study and demand that that fellow should be flogged. In the circumstances, silence was golden!

"I must question Fish," said Mr. Prout. "Where is Fish? Can you tell me where to find Fish, Field?"

"In the sea, sir," answered S. Q. I. Field innocently.

"What?" ejaculated Mr. Prout. "Boy! Are you venturing to jest?" His glare at the tea-party checked a general impulse to merriment. "I am not speaking of fish, but of Fish—the boy Fish. Where is Fish?"

"Haven't seen him for some time, sir."

Disappointed of his prey, Prout rolled away again, and the elephantine tread died away down the Remove passage to the stairs.

The juniors resumed tea.

"I say, you fellows, fancy Fishy having the nerve to chuck a book at old Prout's napper!" grinned Billy Bunter.

"He didn't, fathead!" grunted Squiff. "That Fishy's rotten account-book, that he keeps his swindling in. I chucked it out of the window."

"You did?" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"How was I to know that old Prout was prancing about under the window?" demanded Squiff. "What did he want to prance under our windows for?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shall have to own up if he fixes it on Fishy!" grunted Squiff. "But he won't believe that it was an accident. Bother him!"

"The botherfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows, Fishy will be in a funk when he knows that a beak's got hold of that book!" grinned Billy Bunter. "It will get him a flogging if the Head knows."

"Serve him jolly well right!" remarked Vernon-Smith.

"Hear, hear!"

Tea in Study No. 14 was ending when the door opened and Fisher T. Fish came in. The tea-party smiled as they glanced at him. Fishy had a red and bulbous nose, and a shadowy shade under one eye. He looked tired and dusty and irritated. He gave Squiff a scowl, and the rest of the party a sour stare.

"I guess I can't find it!" he yapped. "Look here, you dog-goned gink, Field, you chucked that book out of the window, and you've got to find it, see? I've rooted all over the shop, and can't see hide nor hair of it."

"Somebody picked it up, perhaps!" suggested the Bounder, with a grin. And the other fellows laughed.

"I'll say I want that book!" snorted Fisher T. Fish. "You hear me, Field? You lost that book and you've got to find it."

"Ask Prout for it!" grinned Squiff.

"Prout! What's that old guy got to do with it?" demanded Fisher T. Fish.

"It dropped on his napper, so he says, and he wants to find the owner to get him flogged."

"Waal, I swow!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "Say, you guy, you dropped it on

his cabeza! It's you for the flogging. But look here, you mean to say Prout's got my account-book? Wake snakes! What's he doing with it?"

"Better ask him!" chuckled Squiff. "If he's found out the sort of account-book it is, he may have taken it to the Head."

Fishy's lean jaw dropped.

"Oh gum! Oh jumpin' Jehosaphat! If the Head sees it—oh, wake snakes and walk chalks! This is the rhinoceros' moustache—I'll say this is the grasshopper's pyjamas! I guess the Beak will go off on his ear if he spots that book! Yep! You pie-faced jay, wharrer you mean by chuckin' it out of the window? I calculate I got to get that book back from Prout somehow."

Fisher T. Fish hurriedly left the study. Evidently he was in a state of great alarm. Which did not worry the chums of the Remove in the least. If Fishy bagged a flogging for his money-lending transactions, they regarded it was exactly what Fishy deserved, and so much to the good! If it came to that, they wished more power to the headmaster's elbow! Tea in Study No. 14 finished merrily and brightly, regardless of the woes and worries of the businessman of the Remove.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Whose Property?

MR. PROUT snorted. Sitting by the open window of his study in the Masters' passage, the Fifth Form beak was examining the book that had fallen into his hands—after falling on his head!

Prout had been rather puzzled by the contents of that volume.

He had looked into it, not from motives of curiosity, but to ascertain who was the owner. He had failed to find any clue to the owner. But he found a perplexing interest in the contents.

There were names and dates and figures, covering pages and pages, which seemed the record of some sort of business transactions. Prout was quite unaware that business transactions were, or could be, carried on in a junior form at school. This was rather a revelation to Prout.

Mr. Quelch, who knew his Fishy, would have understood the thing at once. But it puzzled Prout, and only slowly the meaning of it dawned on his majestic brain. Any Form-master, really, might have been puzzled by such an entry as the following:

Tubb. May 5. 1s.

May 12, 1d. May 19, 1d. May 26, 1d. June 2, 1d. June 9, 1d.

It came into Mr. Prout's plump brain that there was a boy at Greyfriars named Tubb—a fag in the Third. This must be the Tubb!

But it was a considerable time before it dawned on him that that boy, Tubb, had been obliged with a loan of a shilling, and that the other dates and figures implied that Tubb had been paying a penny a week on the loan.

So far, apparently, Tubb had repaid fivepence; but this, no doubt, was all in the way of interest, and he still owed the shilling!

Prout could hardly believe in such iniquity.

Nothing of this kind had ever come to his knowledge before in all his long career as a schoolmaster; though he

admitted that he had heard of such things afar off, as it were.

Hardly able to believe in his own discovery, Prout turned page after page, scanning names and dates and figures, till there could no longer be any doubt on the subject.

He realised the truth: that some boy at Greyfriars was carrying on a small-scale Shylock business—lending money to other boys at interest.

It was a shocking discovery.

And the boy, whoever he was, was in the Remove, Prout felt sure of that. That book had been pitched at him out of a Remove window. He began to doubt now whether it had been pitched at him by the owner, however. The owner of that book could hardly have wanted to risk a Form-master seeing it. Still, it was pretty clear that it belonged to some Remove boy.

Some masters in Prout's place would have taken it to the Head. Prout did not think of doing so. He preferred to keep the matter in his own hands. Prout liked keeping matters in his own hands.

He was going to nail the unscrupulous, degraded young scoundrel who was doing this: and, having nailed him, hand him over to just and dire punishment.

But who was the owner of the book? He had all the Remove—a rather numerous Form—to choose from.

Thinking it over, and snorting with disgust, Prout stared from his window into the June sunshine.

Then he became aware of a Remove boy in the quad, who was gazing straight at his study window.

He recognised that Removeite! It was the American boy, Fish.

Fish was the fellow Prout wanted to see! He rose from his chair, leaned from the window, and beckoned to the junior from New York.

Fisher T. Fish approached rather reluctantly.

Fishy was in sore doubt and distress. He had to get that book back from Prout! He dared not claim it as his own! Spying in at the Form-master's window, he saw the coveted volume actually in Prout's plump hands—and the Fifth Form beak snorting over it! He hoped to see Prout lay it down, and leave the study—in which case Fishy would not have been long in nipping in at the window, at all risks, to annex it.

Instead of which, Prout, standing at the window with the book in his left hand, beckoned to Fish with his right!

Slowly, the junior from New York came up to the study window. He wondered dismally whether Prout guessed that the book was his. Fortunately for Fishy, the Fifth Form beak did not know him as well as his own Form-master did. Prout had no more suspicion of Fish than of any other Remove fellow.

"Have you seen this book before, Fish?" he inquired, holding it up for the junior outside to see.

Fisher T. Fish repressed a frantic desire to snatch!

"Oh, nope!" he gasped.

"It is not yours?"

"Nope!"

Fisher T. Fish was not following the shining example of his celebrated fellow-countryman, George Washington. George, according to his own account at least, could not tell a lie! Fisher T. Fish could—and did! Now that he knew that Prout had been looking through that precious book he simply dared not admit ownership.



"Great Abraham Lincoln!" gasped Fisher T. Fish, as Squiff picked up his account-book and tossed it out of the open study window. "You-you-you jay" The valuable account-book dropped into space to land fairly on top of Mr. Prout's mortar-board, as the Fifth Form master was pacing to and fro under the study window.

"Do you know to whom it belongs?"
"Nope!"

"It certainly belongs to a Remove boy," said Mr. Prout. "It was flung at me from a Remove window."

"I guess I might be able to find the guy it belongs to, sir," said Fisher T. Fish, eagerly. "If you'll hand it over to me, sir, I'll take it round and show it to the galoots, and ask them—"

"This book," said Mr. Prout, "remains in my hands till the owner is discovered. That boy, whoever he is, will be taken before Dr. Locke, and either flogged, or expelled from the school for carrying on moneylending transactions among the boys. If you are aware of his identity, Fish, you may tell me."

Fisher T. Fish gasped.

He was aware of the identity! But he was not going to tell Prout! Hardly!

"Nope! I—I couldn't even guess, sir!" he articulated. "I—I calculate that book doesn't belong to the Remove at all, sir! One of the Fifth, perhaps—"

"Take a hundred lines for impertinence, Fish!"

"Eh?"

"And go!" snapped Prout, greatly incensed by the suggestion that the unknown and surreptitious moneylender might be in his own Form.

"Carry me home to die!" murmured Fisher T. Fish, as he retreated from the study window.

He did not go far. Leaning on an elm, at a little distance, Fisher T. Fish affected to be watching the pigeons in the quad. But with the corner of his sharp, cute eye, he watched Prout's window.

A little later he saw Prout leave his study. Unfortunately, he saw him slip

the account-book into his pocket before he went.

Prout was gone; but the account-book was gone with Prout. Fisher T. Fish groaned in bitterness of spirit.

Many and various were the difficulties that cropped up in the way of the business man of the Remove. But this was the worst of all.

Prout had said that the owner of that book would get a flogging or expulsion. Fishy feared that it might be the latter. He had been "up" before the Head a term ago for the very same offence, and had been flogged. This time it was quite on the cards that the Head might "turf" him out. The prospect of going home to New York was a dismaying one. Vastly superior as the U.S.A. was to anything on the inferior side of the Atlantic, Fisher T. Fish did not want to hit the home trail.

If the Head saw that book he would know at once. Was that pesky goob, Prout, going to the Head with it? The anxious Fishy had to know.

Fisher T. Fish cut off to the House doorway at a great speed. If Prout was going to the Head, his number was up. Fishy fairly raced in at the door. He had no time to look where he was going. It was unfortunate that Wingate of the Sixth was coming out.

Crash!

The captain of Greyfriars staggered back and sat down. Fisher T. Fish cannoned off him, and rolled over.

"Great pip!" gasped Wingate. "What—who—"

"Jumpin' snakes!" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

He sat up dizzily.

"You silly young ass!" roared Wingate, staggering to his feet.

Wingate was hurt; and he was annoyed. He was more annoyed than

hurt. The captain of the school could not be barged over like this by a reckless junior in a hurry without dire consequences. He stooped over the gasping Fish, grasped him by the collar, and jerked him to his feet.

"Aw! Leggo!" gasped Fishy. "I guess I'm in a hurry."

"Too much of a hurry, I think," remarked Wingate. "Come along to my study."

"Oh, great gophers!" groaned Fisher T. Fish.

Whether Prout was going to the Head or not remained unknown to Fisher T. Fish, after all his haste and hurry. He was quite unable to refuse Wingate's pressing invitation to visit his study.

With a grasp of iron on his collar, Wingate marched him along to that study. There he picked up a cane from the table.

"Bend over," he said laconically.

"I—I guess—"

"I said bend over!"

It was "six," and every one of the six elicited a wild yelp from Fisher Tarleton Fish. Wingate laid down the cane.

"Next time, perhaps you'll look where you're running," he suggested genially.

Fisher T. Fish crawled from the study, wriggling.

For the next hour or so Fishy, wriggling from the six, was wondering dismally whether he was going to be called to the Head's study.

But no summons came.

Prout, after all, had not gone to the Head. Prout was keeping this matter in his own plump hands. Fisher T. Fish had a respite.

But how was he going to get that
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,374.

hook back from Prout. He had to do it somehow—but how? That was a problem that haunted Fisher T. Fish all the evening, and kept him awake in the Remove dormitory that night.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Hard Lines!

“QUELCH back yet?”

“No!”

“Rotten!”

Henry Samuel Quelch, the master of the Remove, might have felt flattered had he been aware how eagerly his return was awaited by at least some members of his Form.

That morning Harry Wharton & Co. would have been very glad to hear that Quelch was back.

They rather anticipated trouble in third school.

The Remove, however, were still without a master. Smedley, the temporary master, had left with unexpected suddenness; few fellows knew why. As Quelch was due to return in a few days at most, doubtless the Head had not thought it worth while to engage another temporary master for so short a period. Also, it was rumoured that the Head had broken off all connection with Messrs. Leggett & Teggars, the scholastic firm who had hitherto supplied temporary “beaks” when required. No doubt the Head considered that the Remove could jog along very well for a few days without a master.

And, in fact, except for Prout in third school, they jogged along very well. Several prefects of the Sixth took them in turn, and when they had Walker they slacked as much as they liked while that dutiful prefect read novels. When they had Wingate or Gwynne they had to work, but not so hard as with Quelch. Extra maths with Lascelles, certainly, were rather a trial. But extra French with Monsieur Charpentier, on the other hand, was a relaxation.

A turn with Capper, the master of the Fourth, did not worry them. A turn with Wiggins, master of the Third, was really agreeable. A turn with Hacker, master of the Shell, was distinctly unpleasant; but luckily they had Hacker only once. On the whole the Remove did not mind being without a master; and even Prout might not have worried them very much, had he not overheard a Remove fellow refer to him as “Old Pompous.”

That trifling incident had offended Prout, and it had led to others. Six members of the Form had heavy imposts to show up, of which they had not written a line, and did not intend to write a line.

The Famous Five were quite determined on that point. They had said in the Remove that they weren’t going to do those lines, and they were as good as their word. Billy Bunter had said the same; and Bunter was not, as a rule, as good as his word. But what Bunter lacked in nerve he made up in laziness, which served equally well on this occasion. No more than the Famous Five had the fat Owl written a single one of the five hundred lines imposed on him by Prout.

There was some excitement in the Remove in break that morning. When they gathered at their Form-room door for third school there was a buzz of eager voices. Some fellows were of opinion that Prout, realising that he had exceeded his authority in imposing those lines, would conveniently forget.

to ask for them, as a tactful way of ending the matter.

“Not in your lifetime!” said the Bounder, shaking his head. “Prout’s not the man to give in, especially when he’s in the wrong.”

And the Famous Five could not help thinking that Smithy was right.

“I say, you fellows, I’m not going to take any dashed cheek from Prout!” said Billy Bunter. “Who’s Prout, anyhow? Pompous old ass!”

Bob Cherry winked at his comrades.

“Is that Prout coming?” he asked.

“Oh lor’!” gasped Bunter. “I—I say, sir, it wasn’t me speaking! I never said— Why, you beast, he ain’t coming!” gasped Bunter, blinking round through his big spectacles.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

It was some minutes before Prout arrived—just as if the Lower Fourth Form did not matter very much in his estimation.

However, he arrived at last, and the Form went in.

Prout glanced over them as they took their places. He referred to a paper in his hand, on which was a list of names.

“Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, Bull, Hurree Singh, Bunter,” he read out. “Place your lines on my desk.”

Evidently Prout was not letting the matter drop in a tactful way. Prout lacked tact.

COMPOSE A GREYFRIARS

LIMERICK and win a

LEATHER POCKET WALLET

like L. Hughes, of 75, St. Margaret Road, Coventry, who sent in the following winning effort:

Said Bunter: “I’m generous, at least.

To prove it, I’ll stand you a feast.”

Said Cherry: “No fear.

Your feasts are too dear.”

And Bunter, departing, groaned:

“Beast!”

“Oh lor’!” murmured Billy Bunter, in dismay.

Bunter wished at that moment that he had done the lines. It was all very well to declare that he wasn’t going to take any “dashed cheek” from Prout—when Prout was out of hearing. In Prout’s portly presence it was a different matter.

The Famous Five, however, were made of sterner stuff than William George Bunter. They were prepared to face the music.

“If you please, sir—” began Harry Wharton, very respectfully.

“You need not speak, Wharton. You are wasting time. Place your lines on my desk, and we will commence.”

“I haven’t done any lines, sir.”

“What?” boomed Prout.

“Same here, sir!” said Bob Cherry.

“And here, sir!” said Johnny Bull coolly.

“And here!” said Frank Nugent.

“The sameness with my esteemed self is terrific,” remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur placidly.

Bunter did not speak. He nourished a hope that Prout might overlook him, in face of this act of defiance on the part of five other members of the Form. It was a delusive hope.

There was a pause. Prout was, perhaps, slightly at a loss. However, he rallied at once.

“Your lines are doubled!” he rapped.

“They must be shown up in third school to-morrow—a thousand lines each. Bunter!”

“Oh dear! Yes, sir!”

“Have you written your lines?”

“My—my lines?” stammered Bunter, to gain time. He was undecided whether to reply in the affirmative or the negative. Truth, on its own merits, had no appeal for Billy Bunter. He decided hastily on the affirmative; fibbing being Bunter’s accustomed resource in times of trouble. “Oh! Yes, sir! Certainly.”

“Place them on my desk.”

“Oh! I—I mean—”

“You are wasting time, Bunter!”

“I—I’ve left them in my study, sir!” gasped Bunter.

“You should not have done so, Bunter. However, you may go and fetch them,” snapped Mr. Prout.

“Oh lor’!”

“What did you say, Bunter?”

“N-nothing, sir!”

“Go and fetch your imposition at once—if you have written it,” said Prout, with a suspicious glare at the Owl of the Remove.

“Oh! Yes, sir!” groaned Bunter, and he rolled out of the Form-room.

“The blithering ass!” murmured Bob Cherry. Some of the Removites grinned. All of them knew that Billy Bunter had not written that impost. What he was going to say, when he came back to the Form-room, was rather an interesting question.

Third lesson that morning was Latin grammar. Prout proceeded to deal with deponent verbs; those irritating verbs which, although passive in form, are active in meaning. Hardly a fellow in the Remove liked deponent verbs at close quarters. Prout, too, being accustomed to a senior Form, did not seem to realise that the Lower Fourth were far behind the Fifth in such matters, and did not make due allowance for that circumstance. It was not a happy lesson. Ten minutes later it was interrupted by the return of William George Bunter—empty-handed.

Prout glanced at him sourly.

“Your lines, Bunter!”

“I—I can’t find them, sir!” gasped Bunter.

“You cannot find your lines?” exclaimed Prout.

“No, sir! I’ve looked all over my study, but they’re not there,” said Bunter—truthful for once. Certainly the lines were not in his study, as they were not in existence at all.

“Bunter!” Prout’s voice was deep. “You have not written your lines! You have attempted to deceive me, Bunter.”

“Oh, no, sir! I—I left them on the table in the study, sir, and—and somebody must have shifted them. Somebody’s always larking in our passage, sir. The lines were there last night, sir, on my desk—”

“On your desk?”

“Yes, sir. I put a paper-weight on them on my desk,” said Bunter, who never lacked details in telling the tale.

“A moment ago you stated that they were on the table.”

Bunter started.

“I—I mean on the table, sir. I—I wonder what made me say my desk? I really meant on the table, sir. I put them on the table, sir, and stood the inkstand on them so that they shouldn’t blow away, sir—I’m very careful indeed with impositions, sir—”

Mr. Prout picked up a cane.

He was not a suspicious gentleman. There was nothing of the doubting Thomas about Prout, as a rule. But Billy Bunter was putting rather too severe a strain on his credulity. A fellow who stated, almost in the same breath, that he had put his lines under a paper-weight on his desk, and under the inkstand on his study table, could

not really expect to be believed easily. It was, in fact, evident that Bunter was lying—as he usually was

"You will bend over, Bunter!" said Mr. Prout.

"Oh lor'! I—I say, sir, that ain't fair, sir!" gasped Bunter in dismay. "You only doubled the other fellows' lines, sir."

"I am going to cane you, Bunter, for uttering falsehoods!" thundered Prout. "Your lines are doubled, in addition."

"Oh crikey!"

"Bend over at once, you young rascal!" boomed Prout

"Oh crumbs!"

Mr. Quelch's cane in Prout's plump hand swished and swished. Six times it rose and it fell, and every time it fell there was a terrific howl from Billy Bunter. Certainly Bunter deserved to be whopped for lying; and perhaps Prout remembered, too, that Bunter had called him a pompous old ass! Anyhow he laid it on hard and fast; and it was a groaning Bunter that tottered at last to his place. After which the Remove and Prout got on with deponent verbs.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Knows How!

"SMITHY, old chap!"
"Ask next door!" suggested the Bounder.

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Bow-wow!"

"I was going to ask you—"

"I know! And I was goin' to say no."

"You don't know what I was going to ask you yet, fathead!" hooted Billy Bunter.

The Bounder grinned.

"I can guess!" he answered.

The Bounder was sauntering in the quad with Tom Redwing, after class, when Bunter rolled up and addressed him affectionately as "old chap." Evidently Bunter wanted something. Generally it was easy to guess what Bunter wanted, especially when he addressed a fellow as "old chap" in affectionate tones. But for once Bunter was not in search of a small loan to tide him over till his celebrated postal order came. Deeper and darker thoughts were working in the fat brain of William George Bunter.

"If you think I want to borrow anything—" he grunted disdainfully.

"Don't you?" asked the Bounder, in surprise.

"No!" roared Bunter.

"Then what did you call me 'old chap' for?"

"Beast!"

Smithy and Redwing, laughing, walked on. Bunter rolled after them.

"I say, Smithy! Hold on a minute, old chap! I want to ask you something. I'm speaking to you, old fellow, because you're the pluckiest chap in the Remove."

"Eh? What?"

The Bounder halted.

"That's it, Smithy," said Bunter, blinking at him through his big spectacles, "I've asked Toddy, but he's turned it down. You're not funky like Toddy, old chap. You're not afraid of Prout, any more than I am."

"Prout!" repeated Vernon-Smith.

"I'm fed-up with that pompous old ass!" said Bunter darkly. "I'm going to pay him out. You saw how he whopped me to-day—making out that a fellow was telling lies—"

"Weren't you telling lies?" asked Redwing.

"You needn't barge in, Redwing, when I'm talking to Smithy. I've got a

thousand lines as well, Smithy. Would you do them, in my place?"

"Not for Prout!" answered Smithy.

"Well, of course, I shan't do them—like his cheek to give us lines," said Bunter. "Wharton's lot say they ain't going to, either. But it means trouble with Prout, you see—a whopping in the Form-room. It's altogether too thick. Makes a fellow wish Quelch was back, you know. But if Prout thinks he's going to whop me whenever he likes, and get away with it, Prout is jolly well mistaken, and I can jolly well tell him so."

"Good!" assented the Bounder. "Go and tell him so—no good telling me."

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

That suggestion did not seem to appeal to Bunter. It seemed that he preferred to hurl defiance at Prout, in Prout's absence.

"Well, look here, Smithy, you being the pluckiest fellow in the Remove—" recommenced Bunter.

"Hear, hear!" said Smithy gravely, while Redwing grinned.

"I'm going to pay Prout out!" explained Bunter. "I'm going to make him sit up, and feel sorry for himself. I'm not going to be whopped by a beast who isn't my Form-master! See? I believe Prout's specially down on me. He may not have liked hearing me call him a pompous old ass, I shouldn't wonder."

"I shouldn't wonder, either!" chuckled the Bounder.

"Well, you know the old ass goes meandering by himself in the quad in the evening," said Bunter. "Every night, as regular as clockwork, he goes rolling up and down the Elm Walk. What's to prevent a fellow hiding behind a tree, you know, and mopping ink over him—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I know where to get Gosling's garden-squirt, in the woodshed," said Bunter, his little round eyes glistening behind his big round spectacles. "We can fill it with ink—I can get the bottle from the Form-room cupboard—"

"You howling ass!" exclaimed Redwing.

"You shut up, Redwing. I'm talking to Smithy. Easy as falling off a form, Smithy—Prout will be too surprised, when he gets it in the chivvy, to look for the fellow who did it. It will be dark, too—not quite dark, perhaps, as it's summer-time now, but dark enough to make it safe for you, Smithy—"

"For me?" ejaculated the Bounder.

"Yes, old chap," said Bunter affectionately. "You're the fellow to handle a thing like this, being the pluckiest fellow in the Remove."

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

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I'm asking you, because you've got tons of pluck, Smithy! I haven't picked you out, because you're a reckless ass, always risking getting the sack—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Besides, there's no risk! Fancy Prout with a gallon of ink mopping all over his chivvy! urged Bunter. "He won't be able to see anything! You whizz the ink at him, chuck the squirt away, and bunk! Easy, what?"

"Quite easy!" assented the Bounder.

"And safe!" said Bunter eagerly.

"Perfectly safe."

"And Prout's asked for it."

"Begged for it!" agreed Smithy.

"Then you think it's a good idea?"

"Splendid!"

"And you'll do it?"

"Oh, no, I won't do it; you can do it."

"Wha-a-at?" ejaculated Bunter.

"Being easy, and safe, and all that, you can do it on your head," said the Bounder gravely. "I wish you joy of it! Come on, Reddy!"

The two juniors walked away, laughing; leaving Billy Bunter blinking after them through his big spectacles.

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

And he gave it up—so far as the Bounder was concerned. But it was much too good a stunt to be dropped. Bunter rolled away in search of another catspaw, and found Bob Cherry going down to Little Side with his bat under his arm.

"Hold on a minute, old chap!" said Bunter, catching Bob by the arm. "I say, I've got an idea for scoring off Prout. You being the pluckiest chap in the Remove—"

"Leggo—they're waiting for me."

"But I say—yarooop!" roared Bunter, as Bob's bat poked into his fat ribs. "Beast! Rotter! Ooooh!"

Bob went on to the cricket, without even learning what was the great idea that was stirring in Bunter's powerful intellect.

Billy Bunter grunted discontentedly. He frowned darkly over his big spectacles at the sight of Mr. Prout coming out of the House.

Bunter's feelings towards Prout were exceedingly bitter. With a whopping in hand, and another in the bush, so to speak, Bunter naturally felt as if nothing that could happen to Prout would be too bad for him. Something lingering, with boiling oil in it, was really suitable for a beak who had whopped Bunter that morning, and was probably going to whop him again the next morning! As Prout rolled majestically across the quad Bunter's eyes and spectacles followed him darkly and bitterly.

Thus it was that he noticed that Fisher T. Fish also had his eyes on the Fifth-Form master.

The bony youth from New York was stalking Prout!

Bunter had not observed—but Fishy had observed—that Prout had a book in his hand—an account-book! Prout had been poring over that book, still searching for a clue to the owner thereof.

Obviously he had not yet discovered who owned it, or Fishy would have been called before the Head to answer for his sins.

Somehow, Fishy had to get that book back before Prout made any discovery as to its ownership! With a vague hope that Prout might drop the book, or sit

(Continued on next page.)



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down on one of the old oak benches under the elms and leave it there, Fishy was stalking Prout across the quad. It was a very faint hope—but the businessman of the Remove was getting desperate. Danger dogged his steps so long as that book was in Prout's keeping. It was only the fussy desire to keep matters in his own hands that had prevented Prout from taking it to the Head already—and he might do so any hour.

Bunter's fat face brightened at the sight of Fisher T. Fish! Fish was the man he wanted! Fish had even more cause to loathe Prout than Bunter had. He rolled up to the American junior and clutched him by a bony arm.

"I say, Fishy—"

"Aw, git!" grunted Fisher T. Fish, jerking the bony arm away.

"You being the pluckiest chap in the Remove, Fishy—"

"Can it!" said Fishy, who had no use for soft sawder.

"And you're up against that pompous old ass," said Bunter, "I've got a wheeze for making him sit up, Fishy! The fact is, I thought of it entirely on your account—"

"Give us a rest, you fat clam."

"He's got that book of yours, you know," said Bunter. "You'll be flogged or sacked, when the Head sees it. Serve you right, of course—"

"You pie-faced gink—"

"But what about paying him out in advance?" urged Bunter. "What about getting behind a tree when he takes his trot on the Elm Walk to-night and letting him have Gosling's squirt full of ink, what?"

"Jumpin' snakes!" ejaculated Fisher T. Fish.

"You'll be jolly glad you've made him sit up, you know, when you're kicked out of the school for your filthy money-lending," urged Bunter.

It was not a tactful way of putting it.

Billy Bunter did not know why Fishy suddenly grasped him by the collar and sat him down in the quad with a terrific bump.

But he knew that Fishy did!

He smote the quadrangle with a heavy bump, and a loud roar.

"Whoop! Beast! Wow! Yooop!"

Fisher T. Fish jerked on, his cute, keen eyes on Prout. Billy Bunter sat and roared.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Bunter the Bold!

AFTER tea that day Billy Bunter's fat face wore a morose expression.

Nearly every other face in the Remove wore a grin.

All the Greyfriars Remove, by that time, had heard of Bunter's wonderful stunt for punishing Prout.

Plenty of fellows declared that it was a jolly good idea! Almost all agreed that Prout had asked for it, in fact, begged for it!

The whole Form was prepared to laugh heartily when Prout got Gosling's squirt full of ink over his august countenance.

But nobody wanted to handle the squirt!

There was the rub!

It was in vain that Bunter urged one fellow after another to take it on; pointing out, in each case, that he had picked on that particular fellow because he was the pluckiest chap in the Remove.

Fellows were willing to admit that they were the pluckiest chaps in the Remove; but they were not willing to squirt ink over Prout!

They were willing to enjoy the joke if

some other fellow did it; but at that point their willingness stopped.

Prout might have asked for it, might have begged for it on his bended knees, so to speak; but it was the "sack," short and sharp, for any fellow who mopped a squirt of ink at a Form-master.

On the other hand, it was, as Bunter insisted, perfectly safe! It would be dusky under the elms, if not quite dark! And Prout, drenched with ink, would be in no state for spotting a fellow dodging away among the trees. It was absolutely safe!

But fellows, when that was pointed out, only asked Bunter why he didn't handle the matter personally, as it was absolutely safe! That was rather a difficult question for Bunter to answer.

Safe as it was, absolutely safe, the Owl of the Remove was not keen to take the matter in hand himself.

But having tried it on from end to end of the Remove, without finding a cat's paw, the fat junior began, at last, to consider the possibility of giving that great stunt his own personal attention.

"Safety first" was always Bunter's motto. He did not want to be sacked. He did not want to be flogged! He wanted to make Prout sit up; and he wanted to show off in the Remove as a bold, daring, reckless fellow who wasn't afraid to get his own back on a beak! But if he performed a bold, bad, reckless, daring action, he wanted to be perfectly safe all the time—which was rather a difficulty.

But he made up his fat mind at last!

He was going to do it! At least, he fancied that he was going to do it! He was going, at least, to be in ambush on the Elm Walk with the inky squirt all ready for Prout! The probability was, that his courage would fail at the pinch and that Prout would roll by unsquirted and uninked! That was, in fact, a very great probability, indeed, almost a certainty! Bunter was not of the stuff of which heroes are made!

He liked to fancy himself a bold, reckless fellow—but it was, in fact, only fancy! His bold recklessness was likely to ooze away from his fat finger-tips at the pinch.

Unaware of that little weakness of his own, Bunter made up his fat mind; and screwed up his courage to the sticking-point without realising that it was likely to come unstuck!

He rolled away to the woodshed to secure Gosling's squirt as a beginning. That, at all events, was easy.

He was relieved to find the woodshed unlocked. Gosling generally kept it locked, and squeezing in by the window presented difficulties to a fellow of Bunter's ample circumference.

But as soon as the fat junior rolled in, he discovered why the door was unlocked. It was because Gosling was in the shed.

The ancient porter of Greyfriars School stared at him as he came in. Bunter jumped.

"What do you want 'ere, Master Bunter?" demanded Gosling.

"Oh, nothing!" answered Bunter. "I—I just dropped in, you know. I wasn't after anything."

Grunt from Gosling.

"I mean I came to tell you that you're wanted," said Bunter, with a masterly stroke of strategy. "There's a man knocking at the door of your lodge, Gosling."

Grunt!

"I think it's Sir Hilton Popper," added Bunter, and he rolled out of the woodshed again.

He did not go far.

He went as far as the corner of the shed and took cover there. A minute later Gosling came out.

Gosling probably suspected that his leg was being pulled. Still, the possibility that so great a man as Sir Hilton Popper, lord of Popper Court, wanted to speak to him was enough to draw Gosling back to his lodge. He passed out of sight; and Bunter, grinning, emerged from cover when he was gone, whipped into the shed, and bagged the big garden squirt from the shelf.

He rolled away with it in triumph.

He was gone some minutes before Gosling came back, frowning and mumbling, having discovered that there was nobody at his lodge.

Grunting, Gosling went on with his task of putting things tidy in the woodshed. Naturally, he missed the squirt at once.

"The young limb!" said Gosling.

And he made a mental note to report Bunter of the Remove for taking the garden squirt from the woodshed.

Happily unconscious of that, Bunter rolled away with his prize, which he concealed in a hollow of an ancient tree close beside the Elm Walk.

So far so good!

The next step was to obtain the ink with which to load the squirt. There was plenty of ink in the Form-room, and Bunter rolled into the House, where he discovered that the Form-room door was, fortunately, unlocked.

The big bottle of ink in the Form-room cupboard was at his mercy. There was plenty of ink in that bottle—quite enough for Prout. Prout, at least, was certain to think that it was enough if he got it!

With the big bottle under his arm, Bunter rolled out of the Form-room—and nearly rolled into Wingate of the Sixth.

Wingate stared at him and his burden.

"What the dickens are you up to, Bunter, with that?" he demanded.

"I—I've got no ink in my study, Wingate!" gasped the Owl of the Remove.

"I—I've got leave to fetch this bottle. I've asked Quelch—"

"Quelch!" repeated Wingate. "Is Quelch back, then?"

"I—I mean I—I asked Prout—"

"You young ass! Take that bottle of ink back at once!" said Wingate. "And keep out of the Form-rooms."

To Bunter's relief, Wingate let it drop at that. The fat junior rolled back into the Form-room with the bottle and waited there till the captain of Greyfriars was gone.

Then he emerged again with the ink-bottle. This time he got it out of the House unnoticed—so far as he was aware! Happily, he was not aware that about a dozen fellows saw him with it and wondered what the game was. As they were not prefects, however, they did not barge in. Bunter got safely out of the House and headed for the Elm Walk.

He had nearly reached his destination, when Mr. Prout emerged from the path under the leafy old trees.

Prout stared at Bunter and the big bottle.

"Goodness gracious! What are you doing with that, Bunter?" exclaimed the Fifth Form-master.

This was "cheek" on Prout's part! It was no business of a senior Form-master what a junior was doing with a bottle of ink! It was just like Prout to butt in! However, Bunter had to answer.

"Mr. Capper asked me to take this old bottle away, sir!" said the fat Owl. "It's empty, sir."

Fortunately, Prout did not think of testing that statement.

"You should not bring it here, Bunter," he said. "If Mr. Capper has



Having filled the squirt with ink ready for use, Billy Bunter replaced it in the hollow tree. A bony youth, wandering dismally in the elms, spotted Bunter and stared at him. It was Fisher T. Fish, the American junior of the Remove.

asked you to dispose of that bottle you should take it to the proper receptacle for such things. Take it away at once."

Prout rolled on. When he was gone Billy Bunter proceeded on his way under the elms and reached the tree where he had left the squirt sticking in a hollow trunk.

Blinking round him cautiously, he ascertained that he was not observed, and proceeded to fill the big squirt with ink. Some of the ink trickled down over Bunter's trousers, some splashed on his waistcoat, some dripped on his fat fingers. However, the squirt filled ready for use, the fat Owl replaced it in the hollow tree.

A bony youth, wandering dismally in the elms, spotted Bunter through the trees and stared at him. It was Fisher T. Fish—rooting about in the faint, faint hope that Prout might have dropped that book. Really Prout was not likely to drop that book about.

Fishy gave Bunter a stare, grunted, and jerked on. Unaware that Fishy had seen him at work—though it would not have worried him if he had been aware of it—Bunter stacked away the loaded squirt and dropped the empty bottle into the trunk to get rid of it.

All was ready now when the time came to waylay Prout and make him "sit up" for his sins! Bunter rolled away satisfied.

There was a chortle from a bunch of Removites when he appeared in the quad. Traces of Bunter's recent dealings with ink were thick upon him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" bawled Bob Cherry. "What have you been up to, Bunt?"

Bunter blinked at him.

"Oh, nothing!" he answered.

"Not handling ink?" asked Harry Wharton, laughing.

"No! The fact is I've given up that idea of inking Prout," said Bunter cautiously. "I haven't decided to ink him myself because nobody has the pluck to do it. So if you hear that Prout's been inked, you needn't fancy it was me."

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

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

"The washfulness is the proper caper if you do not desire the suspectfulness, my esteemed idiotic Bunter!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "You are of the ink inkful!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Bunter.

"He hasn't been handling ink—but he's got ink on his paws and ink on his nose and ink on his collar!" said Bob Cherry. "How did Bunter manage that, you men, without handling ink?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, Bunter, you fat ass, if you've been getting the ink ready for Prout, you'd better wash it out!" said the captain of the Remove seriously. "Ten to one you'll be spotted, and that means the sack."

"Yah!" retorted Bunter elegantly.

And he rolled on to the House—to get a necessary wash! An extra wash was annoying, but he realised that he had too many clues about him and had better wash them away. As for waylaying Prout and inking him, warnings were wasted on Bunter; he was grimly determined—as yet. It remained to be seen whether his determination would stay at sticking-point when the time came for the inking. On that point there was some doubt—or, rather, a lot of doubt.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Funk!

"PREP!" said Peter Todd.

"Rats!" said Billy Bunter.

"You can't cut prep—"

"It's all right," said Bunter confidently. "Walker's taking prep! You know Walker of the Sixth. He will have his nose stuck in a book, and half the Remove might be out of prep without Walker noticing."

Peter Todd regarded his fat study-mate seriously.

"If you're thinking of Prout—" he began.

"Oh, no!" answered Bunter airily. "I've chucked that, Peter! I haven't got Gosling's squirt hidden in the elms full of ink. That's all right."

"Oh, my Aunt Selina!" said Toddy. "Look here, Bunter, come up to the study, and don't be a howling ass."

"Yah!" said Bunter.

And he rolled away—not to the study. Peter Todd shook his head as he went up to Study No. 7 in the Remove.

Bunter, evidently, was on the war-path. Peter had no rooted objection to the inking of Prout, so far as that went. But he did not believe for a moment that the fat and fatuous Owl would get away with it successfully. He was rather alarmed for Bunter.

Still, circumstances seemed rather propitious for the fat Owl of the Remove. All his preparations were made in readiness. It was only a question of getting out of the House unobserved in prep—and it fortunately happened that Walker of the Sixth was the prefect on duty that evening.

Walker, it was fairly certain, would have his eye on one of his favourites

(Continued on page 16.)

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THE BUNKING of BILLY BUNTER!

(Continued from page 15.)

novels, instead of on the Remove. Deep in the thrilling adventures of Bandog Chummond, Walker would not notice whether Bunter was in his study or not. It would have been a different matter with Wingate, or Gwynne, or Sykes, or Loder. Really, the stars in their courses seemed to be favouring Bunter.

Instead of going up to the studies, Billy Bunter surreptitiously sneaked into the Rag. "Cutting" prep was rather a serious matter, but not so serious when Mr. Quelch was away as when he was at the school. Anyhow, Bunter had to cut prep, if he was going after Prout—and he was.

Prout dined with the other masters in Common-room. After dinner he was accustomed to smoke a cigar in his study, and then walk in the quad. His favourite walk was the path under the old elms, called the Elm Walk.

His habits were regular almost as a clock. Anybody knew where to find Prout at a certain time in the evening.

Indeed, at that particular time in the evening the other masters were wont to avoid the Elm Walk—knowing that Prout was there. Otherwise, they ran the risk of being bagged for one of Prout's chats! Prout was a chatty gentleman, and his chats were frequent and long, and dreaded by other members of the staff. They were all about Prout; a topic of which he never tired, but which had palled on the other beaks.

From the window of the Rag—deserted during prep—Billy Bunter blinked into the quad.

It was not dark. He murmured unfavourable opinions on the authors of the Summer-time Act—a lot of asses who pretended it was an hour later than it really was. Bunter preferred the darkness for such deeds!

However, he had time to wait.

Prout would go out for his walk before prep was over; but he would hardly be going yet! Bunter waited.

It grew dusky in the quad. Under the thick, shady trees it was, of course, duskier than in the open. Bunter remembered that with comfort.

"Beast!" he murmured suddenly.

In the distance he had a glimpse of a portly figure.

It was the figure of Paul Prout, master of the Fifth Form, rolling across the quad with his usual galleon-like aspect.

Prout disappeared under the elms.

Bunter waited no longer.

He looked this way and that way, like Moses of old; and, like Moses, he saw that the coast was clear. He dropped from the window of the Rag.

Then he ran.

In a couple of minutes he was in cover of the elms, and stopped there to take breath—which he needed.

From a distance there was a sound as of a hippopotamus clambering on a river-bank. It was Prout pacing.

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Bunter's eyes gleamed behind his big spectacles.

With infinite caution he crept among the elm trunks, till he reached the hollow elm where he had parked the garden squirt.

He drew it from its hiding-place.

His fat heart beat fast. But he told himself that it was safe—perfectly safe—safe as houses! Squirt in hand, he crept to the path, and hidden behind a tree, waited and watched. There was a heavy tread as Prout came by. He walked slowly, his hands behind his back.

Now was Bunter's chance!

Where he stood under the tree the dusk was deep and thick. It was improbable that Prout would have recognised him if he spotted him. And Prout evidently hadn't the faintest idea that anybody was there.

All Bunter had to do was to lift the big squirt, take aim, and let fly! Swamping ink in his majestic countenance would keep Prout busy—amply busy—while Bunter bolted! Nothing could have been safer! But—

There was a but—

Somehow or other, now that it came to the point, Bunter found that his fat hands were shaking to such an extent that he could hardly hold the squirt steady! His fat knees, unexpectedly, were knocking together! Somehow, the stern face of the Head seemed to appear before his mental vision. He seemed to hear the Head's deep voice saying, "Bunter! You are expelled!"

Prout passed on.

Never dreaming what a narrow escape he had had, he passed on—unsquirted! Bunter wiped the perspiration from a fat brow with a fat finger.

His courage had failed! It quite surprised Bunter! Any fellow who knew Bunter would have expected it! Bunter himself had not expected it! But there it was!

Prout's heavy footsteps died away up the path. Bunter, squirt in hand, still stood motionless.

"Beast!" he murmured.

Prout's heavy steps were heard pacing back!

It was another chance for Bunter!

Nothing on earth, however, would have induced the fat Owl of the Remove to avail himself of that chance! He remained as still as a mouse behind the tree—only wishing that he was elsewhere! Now he made up his fat mind that as soon as Prout was gone again he would park the squirt in the hollow tree once more, and vanish. Certainly that was the wisest thing he could have done.

But Prout was not gone yet!

Prout stopped.

In the middle of the path, where the last red of the sunset glowed between the branches, Prout came to a halt, almost exactly opposite Bunter's tree.

The fat Owl's podgy heart almost ceased to beat! For a terrible moment he fancied that Prout had spotted him!

But it was not so bad as that! Prout, standing in the path, had taken a little book from his pocket, opened it, and was scanning the pages. Bunter, peering round the elm, could see that it was a book, but did not discern that it was Fisher T. Fish's business book.

Why the old ass was standing there to squint at a book was a mystery to Bunter! He waited impatiently for Prout to get going again.

Prout was not in a hurry to get going.

Once more he was examining that mysterious ledger, in the hope of discovering the owner from some internal evidence. Prout was quite keen on discovering the young scoundrel who was playing Shylock in the school.

It was a master's duty to make such a discovery—and Prout was a whale on

duty! Also, it meant some distinction for Prout, to root out such an offender and hand him over to stern justice. And if it turned out, as Prout suspected, to be a Remove boy, it would be rather pleasant to tell Quelch about it when Quelch came back. It would annoy Quelch!

"Beast!" breathed Bunter inaudibly.

Prout continued to scan that account-book! He was unfamiliar with the "fist" therein, and he was considering whether an examination of the handwriting of every fellow in the Remove would help.

Bunter, not even dreaming now of squirting Prout, waited in an anguish of apprehension for him to get a move on. Suddenly the fat junior gave a start as he realised that the ink was trickling from the squirt over his trousers.

He dropped the squirt at the foot of the tree.

The sound it made was slight, but it was sufficient to cause Prout to glance round. Prout stared.

"Who is there?" he rapped.

Bunter did not answer! He flew! In terror of Prout barging under the tree and looking for him, Bunter bolted.

Whether Prout looked for him or not, Bunter did not know. He did not pause even for breath till he was under the window of the Rag and clambering desperately in. Once inside, he sank breathlessly into an armchair, and pumped in breath. And he was still pumping in breath, gasping over his narrow escape, when through the open window there floated, across the quad, the sound of a fearful yell—such as Prout might have uttered had he, after all, got the ink!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Fishy Takes a Chance!

FISHER T. FISH could have groaned aloud with disappointment.

He did not, because Prout would have heard him!

But he felt like it!

Billy Bunter was not the only fellow in the Remove who had taken advantage that evening, of Walker's deep interest in the adventures of Bandog Chummond! There was another—and the other was Fisher T. Fish.

Quite unknown to Bunter, utterly unsuspected by Bunter, he had not been the only fellow watching Prout on the dusky path under the elms. Fisher T. Fish also was watching.

Fishy certainly had no idea or intention of playing tricks on a Form-master! Fishy was thinking of that unfortunate account-book in Prout's possession. With the "sack" for his rascality looming over his head, Fishy was getting more and more desperate.

Fisher T. Fish was not the fellow to run risks, as a rule. But he had run the risk of cutting prep that evening and being out of the House. He would have run greater risks on the bare chance of getting hold of that fatal book! And it was risky for any fellow to be on the spot when a Form-master was inked from a squirt! Fishy was taking that risk, too!

With his keen, cute, spry, transatlantic brain, Fisher T. Fish had thought the matter out.

He knew Bunter's plans from A to Z. He had heard all the talk in the Remove about those plans; and with his own cute eyes he had seen Bunter parking the loaded squirt in the hollow tree. That was why Fishy was on the spot!

When it came off—when Prout was inked, flooded, and swamped with ink,

there was a chance of getting hold of that account-book.

Prout might even have it in his hand—Fishy, who had watched him like a cat watching a mouse, had observed him, many times, taking it out of his pocket and looking at it! In that case, a sudden, swift snatch would work the oracle!

If Prout had it in his pocket, Fishy knew which pocket—having seen Prout, again and again, take it from that pocket! In that case, the affair was more difficult, but far from impossible!

Prout would be in a state of flabbergasted confusion when he got the ink! Fishy, acting swiftly, might be able to grab the book and flee unseen! Or he might affect to rush to Prout's help, and, in helping him, annex the book! There would be a lot of chances for a

keen, smart, cute guy—once Prout got the ink!

So Fisher T. Fish's eagerness may be imagined, as, skulking silent and unseen under the leafy elms, he watched Bunter!

He watched—and waited for the ink to fly.

In vain!

The ink did not fly—Bunter did!

Fisher T. Fish, as stated, could have groaned aloud! The disappointment was keen and bitter.

Prout, only a few yards from him, had the book actually in his hand! Undoubtedly, if he got the ink, he would drop the book! All would be clear! A jump, a snatch, a bolt—and that would be that!

And that fat gink, that dog-goned clam, that slab-sided mugwump, had lost his nerve, and failed to ink

Prout; and Fisher T. Fish might as well have been in Study No. 14, at prep, for all the good that cutting prep had done him!

He set his teeth, and breathed hard through his long, thin nose.

Really, he might have expected that outcome of Bunter's exploit, knowing Bunter as he did. But he had hoped for better things. It had been such a glorious chance of getting hold of that dog-goned book, if that gol-darned geek had not lost his nerve and failed him!

Instead of groaning aloud, as he felt inclined to, Fisher T. Fish kept as silent as a mouse, blotting himself from sight behind a tree-trunk. For Prout had heard Bunter in flight, and knew that there had been somebody under the dusky elms. Instead of scanning the

(Continued on next page.)



Send your cricket queries along to "Umpire," c/o The MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. It's his job and pleasure to assist "Magnetites" who are keen on the great summer game.

NO WONDER!

THIS is the story of the boy who had to swallow a lump in his throat. In 1926 the England v. Australia Test matches "kicked off"—as this season—with an affair at Trent Bridge, Nottingham. A boy friend of mine, aged twelve, who had just begun to take an interest in cricket and had begun to play in one of his school elevens, was desperately anxious to see the game. He had never witnessed a first-class cricket match.

So I promised to take him—not for one day only, but for the whole of the three days. (We didn't give Test matches four days then.) Off we went from London in the car. There was a little delay on the journey, and as a result we didn't reach the outskirts of the ground until half an hour after the match had started. We had to put the car in a field opposite the ground, and as we did so we could hear the people cheering. We hurried so as not to miss another ball.

As we stepped out of the car, however, the first drops of rain fell. Before we had reached the gates of the ground the rain was coming down in torrents. And that, as events proved, was the beginning of the end of that 1926 Test match at Nottingham.

There were forty-five minutes of play on the first day only, and my friend didn't even see those forty-five minutes. But he did see ducks swimming on the pitch—and this is no fairy story—on what should have been the third day's play in that Test match he so longed to see.

Now can you understand why I said that I was starting off this week with the story of a boy who swallowed a lump in his throat?

I am not sure whether, as we drove our way back after the match had been declared off, my friend was consciously or unconsciously funny. There was water everywhere: roads were more like rivers.

And as I eased up the car to look at a signpost—not being quite sure of my way—my friend said: "Does that signpost say Stoke-on-Trent or Stoke-in-Trent?"

A WONDERFUL "BAG"!

LET me add that there was consolation for my friend. In due course England played Australia again in 1930 at Nottingham, and again I took him there to see a marvellous England victory, with some wonder cricket.

There stand out in my mind, from that 1930 match, three main things. First, a magnificent bowling performance by Maurice Tate when Australia went in to bat late on the first day. In the course of a few overs Tate had Woodfull, Ponsford and Bradman back in the pavilion, and only six runs had been scored off his bowling. Wasn't that a wonderful "bag" for any bowler?

One of Tate's victims, Woodfull, was caught by Percy Chapman—the then England skipper—at backward point, in marvellous fashion. Woodfull hit one which he must have felt sure was going to the boundary. But Chapman sprang in the air, shot his left arm upwards, and the ball was held as in a vice.

One other incident I remember. It was of R. W. V. Robins, on the third day of the game, and when Don Bradman seemed likely to knock off all the runs required, bowling him with a "googlie" he did not attempt to play. Robins was then playing in his first Test match—a mere boy. Previously Robins had made a fine catch to dispose of Alan Fairfax, so the boy had done his bit.

Incidentally, I should add that if ever you want a pattern in fielding as it should be done, watch R. W. V. Robins. The secret of his success is his enthusiasm for fielding. "I would just as soon spend a day doing nothing else but fielding," he once told me, "as at any other form of cricket."

"ALL PAY, PLEASE!"

THIS Notts County Cricket Ground at Trent Bridge is full of cricket history. Perhaps you don't know, but this was the ground at which—so I believe—money was first taken from people who wanted to see cricket. As far back as 1830 there was in Nottingham a fine cricketer named William Clarke. He played in matches on the very place where England and Australia are playing their match; but, of course, the spot was open to anybody—just spare fields. Now, this man Clarke had an idea that cricket was a game which people might pay to see. So he bought the land, put a closed fence round it, and then allowed cricket to be played thereon. In 1840 a county match between Notts and Sussex was played there, and it is on record that the people who wanted to see it didn't like the idea of having to pay sixpence for the privilege.

I could talk for hours about this Trent Bridge ground. The first Test match there was played in 1899, and it was the last Test match in which W. G. Grace took part.

In that self-same game at least four players whom you must have heard about played in their first Test: C. B. Fry, Johnny Tyldesley, and Wilfred Rhodes, for England, and Victor Trumper for Australia.

I am not going to talk any more about the Notts ground, except just to say that Victor Trumper got a duck in his first innings. Oh, just one little thing more—very important! At Trent Bridge, in 1905, Australian cricketers were first introduced to the "googlie" ball, bowled by B. J. T. Bosanquet. And in one innings he took eight of the nine wickets which fell, one player being unable to bat. In Australia to this day they still call a "googlie" ball a "Bosie"—which is short for Bosanquet. They have a right to remember it!

Now to answer one of many questions which have reached me. A reader wants to know how far I think "Tim" Wall, the Australian, runs in the course of an over. Now Wall, as you probably know, takes the longest run of any present-day bowler—longer than Larwood. I have asked him if he has ever measured his run. He told me he had—twenty-seven yards up to the wicket. After he has delivered the ball he runs about five yards more, making thirty-two yards for each delivery. Then he has to walk back, making a minimum of sixty-four yards. If you are good at arithmetic, you can now reckon how far "Tim" Wall travels in the course of a single over. As I am not very good at arithmetic, I leave it to you. But I know what the real answer is—fast bowling is hard work.

"UMPIRE."

book in his hand, he was staring suspiciously at the trees.

Fisher T. Fish hardly breathed.

Not only was he out of House bounds at a forbidden hour, but close at hand was the inky squirt Bunter had left behind him. If Prout spotted him there, and spotted the squirt, what was Prout likely to think?

He felt a cold chill trickling down his spine at the idea.

But Prout, at last, gave a grunt, and his attention returned to the book in his plump hand. He scanned it again.

"A Remove boy undoubtedly!" Prout was speaking aloud as he communed with his own thoughts, and his voice reached the quaking Fish. "The book was thrown from a Remove window! It belongs to a Remove boy! Quelch would know the hand: but Quelch is not here! The Head, perhaps—"

Prout paused. Fisher T. Fish trembled.

"Some utterly depraved and unscrupulous young rascal!" went on Prout's mumble. "The sooner he is found out, and expelled from the school, the better!"

It is said that listeners never hear any good of themselves! Fisher T. Fish was discovering the truth of that ancient proverb.

"After all, an examination of the various hands in the whole Form!" Prout was mumbling again. "Suppose I set the Remove a paper containing some of the words that occur in this book! Then a comparison of the writing—"

Prout, deep in thought, was considering the matter. Fisher T. Fish peered at him from behind the tree.

He had to get hold of that book! If Prout examined every "fist" in the Remove, he could not fail to discover the owner! It would be as bad as if he had taken it to the Head!

A wild idea came into Fishy's tormented mind of making a sudden rush, snatching the book, and bolting. Had it been darker, he might have got away with that. But it was not dark enough—Prout would recognise him! If only

that pie-faced geck, Bunter, had inked Prout—

And then into Fishy's mind came a really desperate idea. There was the loaded squirt, ready to his hand! There was Prout, with the book in his fat fingers! Bunter hadn't inked Prout; but—suppose Fish did? Who was to know?

Who would suspect Fish?

Nobody!

Nobody knew that he was out of the House! Nobody should know that he had been out of the House! He had left by a back window, and could get in again the same way, unseen, unsuspected. Johnny Bull and Squiff, certainly, knew that he was not at prep in Study No. 14. But they did not know that he was out of the House. They would never suspect him of a daring, desperate jape on a Form-master, that was certain. Fisher T. Fish was the last fellow at Greyfriars to be thought of in such a connection.

Indeed, so far from suspecting that Fishy had done it, Remove fellows would not believe him if he said that he had done it! Neither could or would Prout suspect him! He was not one of the fellows Prout had caned or lined. He might suspect Harry Wharton & Co., who had a "row" on with him. He might suspect Bunter. He could not possibly suspect Fishy—unless he spotted him!

And he was not going to spot him!

It was safe as houses!

Fisher T. Fish groped to Bunter's tree and picked up the squirt. His face was pale! His heart failed him—as Bunter's had failed! But Fisher T. Fish had a motive that Bunter lacked! Bunter's motive had been a fatuous scheme of vengeance. Fishy's motive was much more powerful—that book, if he did not recapture it, spelled the finish for him at Greyfriars. There was too much at stake for Fishy to heed his failing heart! Desperately he made up his mind to it.

Prout was still standing in the path, scanning the book, as Fisher T. Fish lifted the squirt and took aim.

For an instant he hesitated. Then he let fly.

Squish! Sqooooosh! Splash!

"Gurrgh!" gurgled Prout.

He gurgled, and he yelled! He roared!

Right on the majestic nose that adorned Prout's majestic countenance swamped the flood of ink from the squirt. It splashed all over Prout—his mouth, his nose, his eyes, his clothes!

He staggered back, spluttering, gaping, gurgling. The book, unheeded, dropped from his hand.

The squirt, in its turn, dropped from Fishy's hand. One swift spring, and he had clutched up the book! Barely was it in his eager clutch, than he had vanished in the trees again.

Swift as the arrow in its flight, Fisher T. Fish fled.

Prout did not see him!

Prout did not see anything but ink!

Fishy was gone in three seconds. But it was fully three minutes before Prout saw anything but ink! As for the book that he had dropped, Prout never gave it a thought. His thoughts—like his nose and mouth and eyes—were filled with ink!

And he was still gasping and gurgling and spluttering ink when Fisher T. Fish clambered in at a back window, and was safe in the House, with his precious account-book safe in his pocket.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter!

HARRY WHARTON threw down his pen, in Study No. 1, and pitched a classic volume across that study. The captain of the Remove yawned, and rose from the table.

Frank Nugent chewed the handle of his pen thoughtfully.

"Come on, Franky! You've finished."

"Yes; I was just wondering about those lines for Prout."

"Blow Prout!"

Nugent laughed.

"Yes. But there will be a row in third school to-morrow, old bean. We're in the right, and Prout's in the wrong; but it's a ticklish business rowing with a beak, all the same."

"The matter's settled," answered Harry. "No time to turn out a thousand lines to-night! Come on, and don't worry."

There was a thump at the door of the study, and it flew open. Bob Cherry bawled in through the doorway:

"You fellows through? Come on!"

Johnny Bull and Hurree Janset Ram Singh were with him in the passage. None of the three, evidently, was thinking of lines for Prout.

Nugent dismissed the idea from his mind, and came out with his chum. Peter Todd joined them from Study No. 7.

"Seen anything of Bunter, you men?" he asked.

"Wasn't he at prep?"

"He's out prep!"

"The fat duffer! Has he been after Prout?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Looks lik. it! I fancy I heard something going on in the quad a little while ago. If that howling ass has really ragged Prout—"

"He wouldn't have the nerve!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Catch Bunter ragging a beak! All gas!"

"The gasfulness is probably terrific,

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Wingate looked into the study expecting to find Bunter with his box packed and ready to leave Greyfriars. Instead of which the fat junior, not even having started packing, was sitting on the box, eating toffee. "You young ass!" rapped out the Greyfriars skipper. "I've got direct orders from the Head to take you to the station, and the taxi's waiting. Come on!"

and the ragfulness has not come off-fully!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Well, he's cut prep!" said Peter, with a worried look. As Bunter's study-mate, Peter felt rather in the position of the fat Owl's keeper.

"More than one fellow cut prep," said Johnny Bull. "Fishy, in our study, cut it—we'd nearly finished when he came in. He's been doing his accounts in the box-room—so he told us! He doesn't think his precious papers are safe in Study No. 14."

"Oh, bother Fishy! I'm rather worried about Bunter," said Peter. "I'm sure I heard somebody howl out in the quad. Anyhow, where is the fat chump?"

The juniors went down from the studies. A good many of the Remove were curious to see Bunter, and ascertain what he had been up to during prep. It was not uncommon for Bunter to "cut" prep, or any other work that he had to do. But he usually cut it by sitting in the study armchair, instead of working at the study table. This time, however, he had not shown up in the study at all, which looked as if he had had some special business on hand.

They found him in the Rag. The fat Owl was standing by the open window, staring out into the quad through his big spectacles. It was dark in the quadrangle now.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's the jolly old walrus!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What have you been up to, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter blinked round from the window.

"Oh, nothing!" he answered. "I

haven't been out in the quad, you fellows! I—I came down early from prep—"

"You never came up to prep!" said Toddy.

"I—I mean I forgot prep! I—I was rather deep in a book, and—stayed here reading it," explained Bunter.

"In the dark?" grinned Bob. The light had not been on in the Rag till the juniors came down.

"I—I mean—"

"Have you been benighted idiot enough to rag Prout?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"He's got ink on his bags!" said Skinner.

"Bunter, you ass!"

"Bunter, you fathead!"

"I say, you fellows, I haven't inked Prout!" exclaimed Bunter, in alarm. "Don't you fellows get saying that I inked Prout! I don't know who inked him!"

There was a general gasp.

"Has he been inked?" ejaculated Bob.

"I—I think so! I—I heard an awful yell," said Bunter, "and—and I looked out and—and saw him coming in! He was all inky."

"Oh crumbs!"

"You blithering ass!"

"I never did it, you know!" exclaimed Bunter. "I never knew anything about it! I never knew Prout had gone out for a walk in the quad, and never watched him under the elms. If there's a squirt full of ink there, I know nothing about it—nothing whatever! I just saw that he was inky, that's all."

The Removites gazed at Bunter! If Prout really had been inked, they were

not likely to believe that Bunter had not done the inking! Obviously he had cut prep for that very purpose. So if Prout had been inked, it could hardly be doubted that Bunter had done the inking. On the other hand, it was amazing if Bunter had found nerve enough to do it!

"It's gammon!" said Johnny Bull. "If Prout's been inked, Bunter inked him—and he hasn't the nerve! So Prout hasn't been inked!"

"I saw him—"

"Then you did it!" said Nugent.

"I didn't!" roared Bunter. "I say, you fellows, a fellow would be sacked for inking a Form-master! I dare say it was Smithy—"

"What?" roared the Bounder.

"Well, you're the only fellow in the Remove who doesn't care whether he gets sacked or not!" argued Bunter. "It was you who floured Mossos a few weeks ago, and so I suppose it was you who inked Prout—"

"Smithy was at prep in Study No. 4!" said Tom Redwing.

"Well, you'd say that, being his pal!" said Bunter. "I'd say as much for Toddy, if Toddy did it."

"Oh, my hat!"

"But has anything really happened?" asked Harry Wharton. And he went out of the Rag to inquire.

He was not long in learning. He came on a group of Fifth Form men in excited discussion. Horace Coker's bull voice was heard loudly:

"Inked all over! I saw him come in! Black as a nigger, you fellows! I saw Capper leading him away to a bath-room—he could hardly see—ink all

over his face! Somebody must have chucked gallons of ink over him out there in the quad!"

"Who the dooco—" asked Potter.

"Some cheeky fag!" said Coker. "And I fancy I can guess."

"Who, then?" asked Greene.

"One of Wharton's gang, or the whole gang of them!" declared Coker. "Prout gave them lines yesterday. They had the thumping cheek to rag me in the quad, and Prout very properly gave them impots. Hallo, here's young Wharton! Was it you, Wharton?"

"Fathead!" answered Wharton politely.

And he went back to the Rag—with Jews.

"So he really has been inked!" said Bob Cherry. "Where did Bunter get the nerve from?"

"The wherefulness is terrific!"

"I say, you fellows, it wasn't me!" squeaked Bunter.

"Don't be an ass!" grunted Johnny Bull. "If it was done at all, it was you! We're not giving you away, fat-head!"

"But it wasn't—"

"Rats!"

"The ratfulness is terrific!"

"I never!" howled Bunter.

"Can it!" said Fisher T. Fish hurriedly. "Here comes Wingate!"

There was a sudden hush as the captain of Greyfriars came into the Rag. Wingate's face was very grave, so very grave that all the juniors would have known at once that something had happened, if they had not known already.

Billy Bunter blinked at him uneasily through his big spectacles. Fisher T. Fish felt a chill down his spine. But Wingate, though he glanced keenly enough over the crowd of fellows, did not take any particular notice of either Bunter or Fish. Neither of them was a fellow to be suspected easily of such a harebrained act. His glance lingered rather suspiciously on the Bounder, who grinned. Smithy had a reputation for wild recklessness—and was, indeed, the natural fellow to be suspected when something of a particularly reckless and risky nature had occurred.

"Did any man here cut prep?" Wingate asked.

No answer.

"Any man here out of the House during prep?"

Still no answer.

"Anythin' happened, Wingate?" drawled the Bounder.

"Somebody mopped ink over Mr. Prout while he was walking under the elms," answered Wingate. "Where were you, Vernon-Smith?"

The Bounder chuckled.

"Not guilty, my lord! I was in my study at prep. I'm being a good boy this term, Wingate."

"Redwing, was Vernon-Smith in the study all through preparation?"

"Yes, Wingate," answered Tom. "He went up with me, and came down with me, and never left the study till I did."

Wingate nodded. He did not trust the Bounder's word; but Redwing's was as good as gold, and he knew it. The Bounder was exonerated. But that only made the thing more puzzling, for the Bounder was really the only fellow at Greyfriars reckless enough to be guilty of such an act. Other fellows might think of such deeds, or even plan them; but only Smithy was reckless enough to carry them out. And it was not Smithy!

"I guess you needn't look in the Lower School for that guy you want, Wingate!" remarked Fisher T. Fish.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,374.

"You want to root in the Fifth Form. I guess there's plenty of guys in the Fifth fed up with Prout."

Wingate did not answer that. He left the Rag. There was a burst of excited voices after he was gone.

It was a sheer amazement to the Remove to learn that Billy Bunter had actually had the nerve to carry out that harebrained jape on Prout. But they had no doubt that Bunter had done it—for who had if Bunter hadn't? Bunter, of course, knew that he hadn't! But he had no idea who had! Only Fisher T. Fish could have thrown light on the mystery, and Fisher T. Fish was as silent as the clam of his native land.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter In All His Glory!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Well?"

"It was me!"

Thus Bunter!

It was the following morning.

After breakfast the Greyfriars fellows came out of the House, and there was only one topic, while they waited for the bell for classes.

That was the inking of Prout.

Bunter, when he had planned that inking, had not quite realised what a terrific sensation such a deed would make.

He had realised that it was rather a serious matter—and, at the pinch, he had realised that so clearly that his courage had failed him, and he had not done it. But he had not realised how terrific a sensation it would make if it happened!

It thrilled Greyfriars. It was the one topic in every study, in every passage. Masters, in Common-room, talked of nothing else. From the Sixth to the Second, Greyfriars fellows talked of nothing else! It was the sensation of the term.

The Head, it was known, took a fearfully grave view of the matter. From the junior point of view it was a jape—a particularly reckless and fatheaded jape, but a jape! From the headmaster's point of view it was an outrageous attack upon authority. It was an offence that could only be dealt with by the prompt expulsion of the offender from the school. It was not a matter that could be dropped, or allowed, after a perfunctory inquiry, to drift into oblivion. It was a matter that had to be threshed out. The offender had to be discovered and expelled. Hardly anything else mattered in comparison with that.

Fisher T. Fish, the guilty man, was inwardly quaking. But it was only lack of nerve that made him quake. He knew that he was in no danger.

Nobody dreamed of suspecting him.

Bunter, who had intended to be the guilty man, had done a considerable amount of quaking, though he was not, after all, guilty.

But Bunter was reassured now.

All the Remove felt sure that Bunter was the man, but wild horses would not have drawn the information from them. And that supposed act of reckless devilment put the fat junior on a different footing in the Form. Fellows wondered at his nerve. Bunter liked fellows to wonder at his nerve—especially as he hadn't any!

Bunter, feeling safe now, had ceased to quake. In the first place, he hadn't done it! In the second place, nobody outside the Remove seemed to suspect that he had done it! So he felt safe! Feeling safe, it was like Bunter to go for the credit of being a wild, reckless,

daring sort of fellow—the fellow who would chuck ink over a Form-master, regardless of consequences! It was Bunter's first chance of showing off as a bold, bad ragster. He was not losing that chance!

Hence his statement in the quad that morning to a group of interested Removites. It was uncommon for fellows to be interested in Bunter's remarks. But they were interested now. Bunter, for the moment, was the "goods." The man who had inked Prout was, in the estimation of the juniors, "some lad." Billy Bunter enjoyed being regarded as "some lad," so long as he was safe at the same time. And he fancied that he was safe, unaware of the grim determination with which authority was going into the matter, like a dog with its teeth in a bone!

"I say, you fellows, keep it dark, you know," said Bunter airily. "It's the sack if a man's spotted—not that I'm afraid of the sack! I don't mind telling you that it was me!"

"You mean 'it was I,'" suggested Nugent.

"I don't mean it was you, Nugent."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at," said Bunter warmly. "Don't you get making out that it was you, Frank Nugent. You wouldn't have the nerve to ink Prout, or any other beak!"

"So you own up to it, you fat ass?" asked Harry Wharton, with a curious look at the Owl of the Remove. Oddly enough, Wharton, who had not doubted before that it was Bunter, doubted, now that Bunter admitted it. Such was William George Bunter's reputation for unvaracity!

"Well, now I know they ain't going to spot me, it's all right!" said Bunter. "You fellows keep it dark, of course! I did it. If any other fellow makes out that he did it he's telling whoppers."

"Well, we all know that you did it," said Bob Cherry—but there was doubt in Bob's tone now. "Blessed if I know where you got the nerve."

"I'm the man for nerve!" explained Bunter. "You fellows know me—brave as a lion—not funky, like you chaps—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"You're all waxy with Prout," said Bunter, "but would one of you have the nerve to mop ink over him? Not you!"

"I guess not!" remarked Fisher T. Fish, with a very queer look at Bunter. "I'll say nope."

"I hope nobody else in the Remove would be such a fool, and such a silly, disrespectful ass!" said Mark Linley.

Snort, from Bunter.

"Oh, rats to you, Linley!" said Skinner. "It was a jolly good jape. What beats me is Bunter handling it. It's in Smithy's line, not Bunter's."

"Smithy all over!" agreed Peter Todd.

"I say, you fellows, it wasn't Smithy!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "You all heard Redwing say that he was in the study. Look here, Smithy, if you got making out that you did it—"

The Bounder laughed.

"I'll watch it!" he answered. "The fellow who did it is going to get sacked. I've had one or two narrow escapes, and I'm not yearning for more."

"Oh, rot!" said Bunter. "It's all safe—nobody knows. No Remove man is going to give me away, I suppose."

"Nobody will give you away, Bunter, if you did it," said Harry Wharton. "But did you do it?"

"Haven't I just told you so?" demanded Bunter.

"Yes; that's why I'm beginning to think you didn't."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't believe he did," said Johnny Bull. "It looked like it, but I couldn't quite get it down. He hasn't the nerve."

"You mean you haven't!" sneered Bunter. "You'd funk it. You wouldn't understand a fellow being afraid of nothing—like me. Of course I did it! That's why I cut prep!"

"Well, tell us all about it, fatty!" said Squiff dubiously.

Doubt was spreading among the Removites now.

"I got out of the window of the Rag, you know, and laid for Prout under the elms," explained Bunter. "I had the squirt of ink all ready in the hollow tree. Facing Prout, I let him have it full in the chivvy."

"Facing him?" gasped Bob.

"Yes. Face to face, you know—"

"Then he saw you?"

Bunter started.

"Nunno! In the dark, you know—"

"But it wasn't dark."

"What I mean is, it was dark under the tree, where I was standing," said Bunter hastily. "When I say I faced him face to face, I don't mean exactly face to face. I mean—"

"Well, what do you mean?" demanded Hazeldene.

"I—I mean I kept behind the tree, so that he shouldn't see me, and—and whizzed the ink at him," said Bunter. "Mopped it all over him, you know. And laughed! Laughed at him! Ha, ha! Just like that!"

The Removites gazed at Bunter. That Bunter was lying, as usual, was clear to every fellow there. Why he was lying was not so clear. Had Bunter really mopped that ink over Prout it was absolutely certain that he would not have stayed to laugh "Ha, ha!" before bolting!

"Then I walked away," said Bunter airily. "I didn't run, as you fellows would have done. Just walked away calmly."

"Yes, I can see you walking away calmly—I don't think!" gasped Bob.

"Well, that's what I did," snorted Bunter. "Cool as ice. A little thing like that wouldn't fluster me. You, perhaps—not me! You see, I've got nerve."

"You must have," remarked Skinner.

"Lots—to spin us a yarn like that."

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"What did Prout do when he got the ink?" asked Bolsover major.

"Yelled," answered Bunter. "Yelled like anything. I heard him in the Rag."

"You heard him in the Rag?" shrieked Bob Cherry. "Were you in the Rag when it happened?"

Bunter gave another start. Bunter belonged to the class of persons who, it is said proverbially, should have good memories. But Bunter hadn't a good memory. His fictions never fitted together well.

"Oh! No. I mean—" he stammered. "I mean, I could have heard him in the Rag if—if I'd been there. I wasn't there, of course. I was—was on the spot, laughing at Prout, all inky. Ha, ha! Just like that!"

"Well, my hat!" said Harry Wharton blankly. "When Bunter told us last night that he heard a yell in the quad and saw Prout come in all inky we thought he was lying. We thought he had done it. But he wasn't lying then—he's lying now."

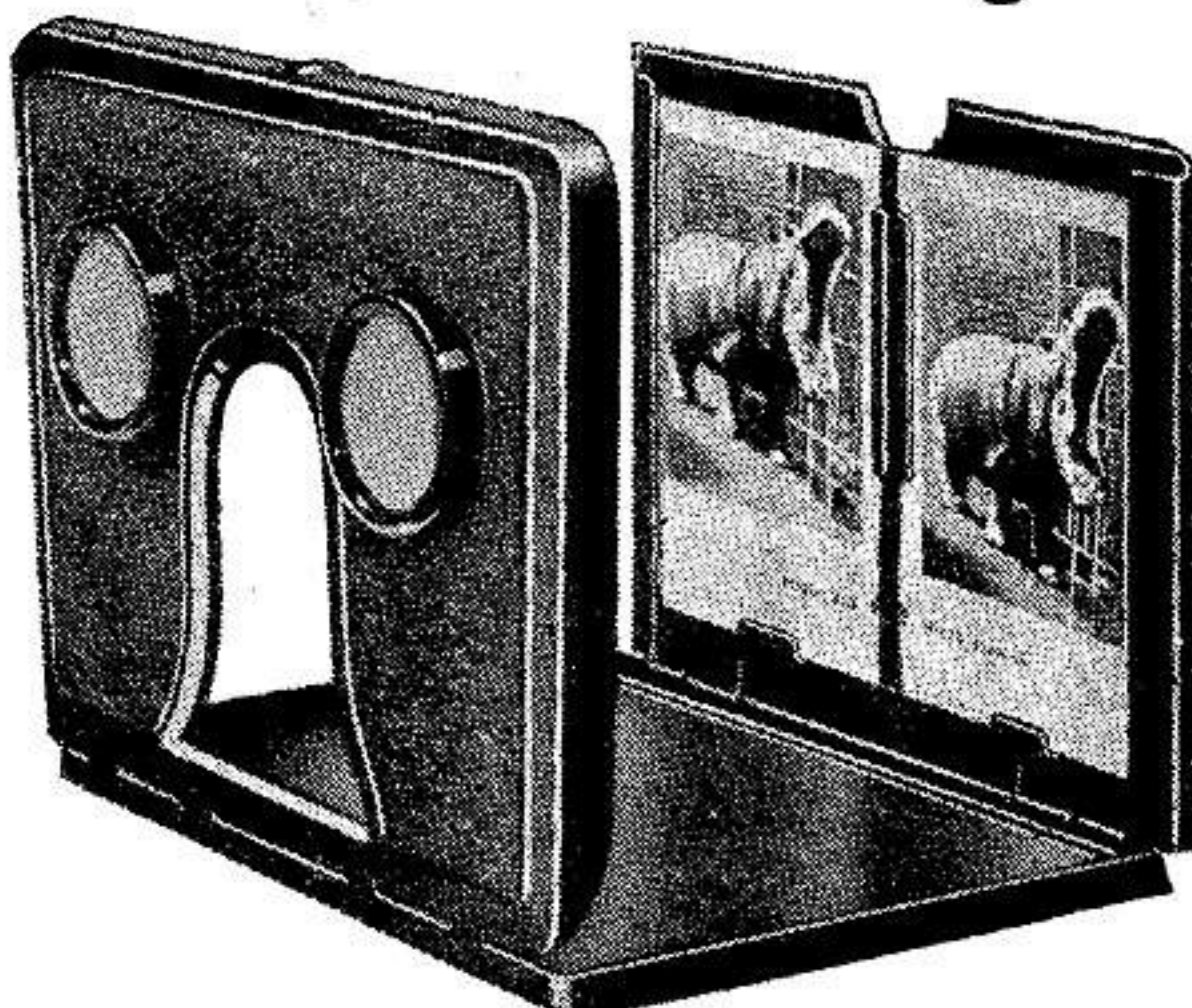
"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Then who inked Prout, if Bunter didn't?" asked Bob.

"Goodness knows! Somebody must have found the squirt that the fat idiot got ready, and used it. A Fifth

(Continued on next page.)

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Form man, perhaps. Some of them loathe Prout."

"I say, you fellows, I did it!" yelled Bunter. He saw his glorious reputation as a bold, bad ragster slipping from him. He was as eager now to claim the glory of ragging Prout as he had been to disclaim it the previous evening. "I say, you fellows, I jolly well did it!"

"Gumption!" growled Johnny Bull.

"I did!" shrieked Bunter. "If you fellows fancy I was scared and didn't do it, you're making a silly mistake. Think I'm the fellow to bolt, after getting all ready to ink him?"

"Just the fellow," grinned Bob.

"I tell you——"

"Who on earth inked Prout?" asked Bob. It was clear to all the fellows now that Bunter hadn't. Bunter was out for a little cheap glory, and every fellow could see it. "Bunter meant to, but he hadn't the nerve, as we all jolly well knew that he hadn't. But somebody——"

"It was me!" howled Bunter. "I said I would, and I did. Nobody else was on the spot. How could anybody have found the squirt I left under the tree, and inked Prout with it?"

"So you left the squirt under a tree with the ink in it," grinned Skinner.

"Nunno! I—I mean——"

"You mean to make out that you inked Prout, when you did nothin' of the kind," said the Bounder. "I'd like to know who did, though. Some lad!"

"I guess it was some Fifth Form guy," said Fisher T. Fish. "I'll say they'd better look in the Fifth."

"Shouldn't wonder," assented Bob, happily unconscious of Fishy's excellent reason for desiring to divert suspicion to another Form. "That ass Coker is ass enough for such a game, and he's always rowing with Prout. I wonder if it was Coker?"

"Coker's idiot enough," said Harry.

And there was a murmur of assent. It was common knowledge at Greyfriars that Coker of the Fifth was idiot enough for anything.

"I say, you fellows——" squeaked Bunter.

"Oh, shut up, Bunter!"

"But I tell you——"

"Rats!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's the bell!"

The Remove went in to Form, convinced by this time that whoever the mysterious inker was, it wasn't Billy Bunter. Now that Bunter asseverated that it was, they all knew that it wasn't, and the fat Owl of the Remove was shorn of his brief glory. And had he been aware of what was coming, Billy Bunter could have asked for nothing better than to remain shorn of it.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Sacked!

"THE Head!" breathed Nugent.

Dr. Locke was in the Remove Form-room when the juniors arrived there for first school. Rather a hush fell on the Remove as they saw him. According to the time-table on the board, Mr. Lascelles was to take the Remove in first school that morning. As Dr. Locke was there instead of the maths master, it was clear that something was going to happen. And all the Form could guess that that "something" was in connection with the affair of Prout.

Very quietly the juniors went to their places. Fisher T. Fish felt an inward tremor. He had been in danger of the

"sack" so long as his business book was in Prout's hands; but the method by which he had recaptured it made the sack an absolute certainty if he was discovered. But he comforted himself with the assurance that the beaks never could discover who had done the inking. It had not yet occurred to Fishy's cute, spry brain that they might "discover" someone who hadn't done it. Unscrupulous as he was, Fisher T. Fish had no idea in his mind of laying the guilt on innocent shoulders. Though if it happened to be laid there in error, Fishy was hardly the man to get it shifted to the right shoulders.

Dr. Locke looked over the Form with a keen, searching glance. Then he spoke in very distinct tones:

"Bunter!"

The fat Owl jumped.

"It—it wasn't me, sir!" he stuttered.

"You will stand out before the Form, Bunter."

"Oh, really, sir——"

"Stand out at once!"

Billy Bunter, in a very dismayed frame of mind, rolled out. With the Removites he had been very keen to claim the glory of having inked a beak. With the headmaster he was very far from keen on claiming that glory. As he realised that he was under suspicion his fat knees knocked together.

"Bunter, Gosling has reported you for abstracting a garden squirt from his woodshed yesterday afternoon."

"Oh lor'!"

"You do not deny this, Bunter?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I never went near the woodshed, sir! I didn't know Gosling was there till I opened the door."

"What did you do with the garden squirt, Bunter?"

"I never touched it, sir! I didn't know there was one in the woodshed at all!" groaned Bunter. "It wasn't there when I went in, sir, and—and I—I left it on the shelf when I went out, sir."

"I warn you, Bunter, to speak the truth," said the Head mildly. "This is an extremely serious matter. Surely you understand that?"

"Oh, yes, sir! Quite, sir! M-m-may I go to my place, sir?"

"You may not, Bunter."

"Oh lor'!"

"Your guilt appears to be clearly established, Bunter, but I desire to hear any explanation you may have to make," said the Head. "You abstracted the garden squirt from Gosling's shed. It was found this morning under the elms in an inky condition. It is clear that it was used for the outrageous attack on a member of my staff."

"I—I didn't, sir——"

"Yesterday afternoon, Bunter, you were seen taking a large bottle of ink from this Form-room. A prefect saw you with it in the House, and Mr. Prout saw you with it in the quadrangle."

"It—it wasn't me, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I—I think it must have been some other chap that Wingate saw, sir. Besides, I told him that I was only going to fill the inkpot in my study."

"Bunter!"

"And—and it was an empty bottle that Mr. Prout saw me with, sir, in the quad. I told him so," said Bunter dismally. "It wasn't a bottle full of ink, sir; and I never filled the squirt with it."

The Removites were silent.

At any other time Billy Bunter's fatuous prevarications might have made them smile. But it was not a smiling

matter now. It was too terribly serious for that.

Bunter, whether he had done the deed or not, had made all the preparations for it. He seemed to have taken excessive care to leave as many clues behind him as possible. The juniors doubted whether Bunter had done the deed; but it was hardly possible for the headmaster to doubt.

Dr. Locke compressed his lips.

"You left the House last evening during preparation, Bunter?"

"Oh, no, sir! I—I was in my study."

"Will your study-mates, Todd and Dutton, bear out that statement, Bunter?"

"Oh lor'!"

"I understand, Bunter, from Mr. Prout that he had occasion to cane you yesterday for untruthfulness," said the Head. "I am amazed that such a reckless scheme of vengeance should have entered any boy's head. I can only account for it on the supposition that you are an uncommonly stupid boy, Bunter. But though I desire to make every possible allowance for your stupidity, it is impossible to overlook such an act as an attack on a member of my staff. You will be expelled from Greyfriars, Bunter."

Bunter blinked at him, his little round eyes almost popping through his big, round spectacles.

He could hardly believe his fat ears.

"Me, sir!" he gurgled.

"You, Bunter! I am sorry to have to expel any Greyfriars boy, but in this case I have no alternative."

"Oh crikey!"

"You will not remain in Form, Bunter! You will go to the dormitory and pack your box!"

"Oh lor'!"

"I shall send you home in charge of a prefect, Bunter, who will take a letter from me explaining the matter to your father."

"B-b-but, sir," gasped the hapless Owl, "I—I can't go home, sir! My—my father would be awfully waxy, sir."

"What?"

"Frightfully waxy!" gasped Bunter. "I shouldn't wonder if he whopped me! He would be so fearfully waxy, sir!"

The Head gazed at Bunter. It had fallen to the headmaster's lot to expel fellows before. It seldom happened; but it had happened once or twice. Fellows in such circumstances did not like it—but never had a fellow objected in this strain before. It appeared that Bunter considered the possibility that his father might "whop" him for being sacked a good reason why the Head should not sack him.

Bunter blinked anxiously at his headmaster. He was indignant, as well as anxious and alarmed. It seemed to Bunter pretty "thick" that he should be picked on like this. After all, though he had intended to ink Prout, and had bragged of inking Prout, he hadn't actually inked Prout.

"You see, sir, I never did it," said Bunter anxiously.

"Your guilt is perfectly clear, Bunter!" rapped the Head.

"Oh, really, sir! How can it be, when I never did it?" wailed Bunter. "I never touched that squirt, sir. If Gosling thinks he saw me in the shed, sir, I—I think perhaps he had been drinking, sir. He drinks. I know that."

"Bunter!"

"As for taking that bottle of ink out of the Form-room cupboard, sir, I never even knew it was there. Smithy knows—I mentioned it to him. Didn't I, Smithy?" Bunter blinked round at the Bounder for support.

"Oh, my hat!" said Smithy. It was all he could say.



In the crowd of people making for the train Bunter saw his chance. He stopped, and allowed half a dozen people to get ahead of him. "This way, Bunter!" said Wingate, glancing round impatiently. "Come here at once!" Instead of obeying Wingate's command, however, Bunter suddenly turned and bolted out of the station. "Bunter!" roared Wingate, staring after the fleeing junior.

"Bunter, leave the Form-room at once!" said the Head. "Go and pack your box! You will leave the school within the hour."

"I—I say, sir—"

The Head pointed to the door.

"Go!" he said, in a voice of thunder.

"Oh lor!"

Bunter quaked, and went.

Mr. Lascelles came in, to take the Form in maths. The Head rustled out. Larry Lascelles did not find it easy to get the attention of the Remove fixed on mathematics.

Bunter was sacked. It was a thrilling occurrence for a fellow to be sacked in the Remove. And it was not pleasant. It was all the more unpleasant, because most of the fellows were convinced that a mistake had been made—and that the Head had, so to speak, got the wrong pig by the ear.

Sacked! Last term the Bounder had been sacked, but he had been allowed, after all, to stay on. But this was the real thing—there was no second chance for a fellow who had assaulted a Form-master. A Remove fellow had been sacked—and soon all Greyfriars would be ringing with the news. The Remove were not likely to bestow much attention on maths, in the circumstances.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Homeward Bound!

WINGATE of the Sixth came up the passage and glanced in at the door of the Remove dormitory.

It was second school at Greyfriars and all the fellows were in the

Form-rooms, excepting Wingate—and Bunter. Bunter was to go home before the school came out in break, and Wingate was to take him home. And the captain of Greyfriars looked in for him, expecting him to have finished by that time packing his box for transit.

Instead of which Bunter, not even having started packing, was sitting on the box. Though he was not engaged in packing, he was not wholly idle. He was eating toffee.

Wingate stared at him.

A fellow sacked and just going home might have been expected to be down in the mouth—much too dismal for finding comfort in toffee. But Bunter was not looking specially dismal. He was evidently deriving keen satisfaction from the toffee, in spite of the tragic circumstances under which he was devouring it.

Perhaps Bunter did not quite realise the awful seriousness of the situation. Bunter's powerful intellect moved in a mysterious way its wonders to perform.

"Bunter!" rapped out Wingate sharply.

The fat junior blinked round.

"Oh! Yes! All right!" he said hastily, and the remnant of toffee disappeared into his pocket. "I—I'm not eating toffee, Wingate!"

"Are you ready?"

"Ready?" repeated Bunter, blinking at him.

"Have you packed?"

"Eh? Oh! No."

"You young ass, I've been waiting for you to come down! There's a taxi at the door, and Gosling's ready to carry down your box."

"Oh, really, Wingate—"

"Well, get a move on, you young duffer. We've got a train to catch," said Wingate. He wanted to be as kind as possible to a fellow who was expelled, especially such a hopeless duffer as Bunter. But really Bunter was rather an exasperating sort of duffer.

"I say, Wingate, do you think the Head really meant it?" asked the Owl of the Remove.

"Oh, my hat! Of course he did, you young fathead!"

"You don't mean that you think I'm really sacked?" asked Bunter.

Wingate could only stare. There was no doubt about it in his mind. But there seemed some doubt in Bunter's.

"You see, it won't do!" explained Bunter. "I can't go home before the end of the term. The pater would be in a fearful wax. I told the Head so," added Bunter, in an injured tone; "but he didn't take any notice."

"Oh, great pip!" said Wingate helplessly.

"Perhaps he will change his mind later on," suggested Bunter. "You see, I can't go home. That's all rot. Besides, I never inked Prout, you know. I can't be bunked for inking Prout when I never inked him. What?"

"Get a move on."

"Shall I go back to the Form-room?" asked Bunter. "I don't mind going back to the Form-room, Wingate—they'll be finished with maths now."

"You don't seem to have started packing," said the Greyfriars captain, "and the Head has told me that you're to catch the train at Courtfield. You'll have to go without your box, Bunter, and it can be sent after you. I've got

direct orders from the Head to take you to the station for the eleven train, and the taxi's waiting. You've had lots of time to pack."

"Oh, really, Wingate—"

"Come on!"

"But look here—" objected Bunter. Wingate strode into the dormitory, grasped the fat junior by the shoulder, and hooked him off the box.

"This way!" he rapped.

"Beast!" gasped Bunter.

Wingate walked him out of the dormitory. Bunter was allowed to collect his cap, and then he was walked out of the House. As his luggage was not ready, he had to go without luggage; but Bunter was not bothering about that. He did not want to go at all—and he still seemed unable to get it into his obtuse head that he had to go.

"Get in!" Wingate opened the door of the taxi.

"I say, suppose I go and speak to the Head?" suggested Bunter. "You see, I can't go home. Old Locke doesn't seem to understand that. Perhaps I'd better go to the Sixth Form-room and tell him—"

"Get into the cab!"

"Or I might see Prout!" further suggested Bunter. "The pompous old ass may think that I inked him—you never can tell with an old ass like Prout! But I suppose he would take a fellow's word. What do you think, Wingate?"

"I think I shall pitch you neck and crop into that cab, if you don't get in!" hooted Wingate.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. And he got in—just in time to avoid being pitched in neck and crop.

The taxi rolled away to the gates. It buzzed away up the road to the town of Courtfield. Billy Bunter, blinking back from the window, had a last glimpse of the grey old tower. Some realisation of his position seemed to dawn on his fat brain, and his fat face lengthened a little.

"I say, Wingate, are you really going to take me home?" he inquired, as the taxi rushed on by the road over the green expanse of Courtfield common.

"Can't you get that into your silly head yet?" demanded the Greyfriars captain.

"But—but—but I can't go, you know! I never inked Prout. You being a prefect, Wingate, you ought to find out who inked Prout. Don't you think so?"

Wingate did not answer that question.

"I dare say it was Smith!" remarked Bunter. "Or if it wasn't, it may have been Wharton, or one of his lot. They're up against Prout. But I think very likely it was a Fifth Form man, Coker, most likely. Anyhow, it wasn't me, Wingate. I never touched that bottle of ink—"

"I saw you with it."

"I—I—I mean—that is, I—I—mean—"

"Shut up, you young ass! Here we are in Courtfield."

The taxi stopped at the station. Wingate stepped out and paid the fare, and Bunter followed him. The fat face was growing longer and longer. More and more Billy Bunter was realising how matters stood. Difficult as it seemed for him to understand it, he actually was on his way home, in the official charge of a prefect, who was to hand him over to his father, with the Head's explanatory letter. The thought of facing Mr. Samuel Bunter was dismaying. Bunter had no hope that Mr. Bunter would kill the fattened calf to celebrate the return of his prodigal son. He expected Mr. Bunter to be in a fearful wax—a terrific wax! Mr. Bunter was never exactly

enthusiastic about his son coming home for the holidays. What he would feel like when William George came home in the middle of the term, hardly bore thinking of. It was altogether too dismaying and terrifying.

"Look here, Wingate, I—I can't go home!" gasped Bunter, as the Greyfriars captain walked him into the station. "I keep on telling you that I can't go home, Wingate."

"This way!" said Wingate.

There were quite a number of people making for the platform for the eleven o'clock train. The senior and junior were separated for a moment and Wingate called sharply to Bunter!

Bunter's eyes glimmered behind his spectacles.

He had said that he couldn't go home; and the Head had taken no notice, and Wingate was taking no notice! But that didn't alter the fact that Billy Bunter couldn't—and wouldn't—go home! In the crowd of people making for the train the fat Owl saw his chance.

He stopped and allowed half a dozen people to get ahead of him. Wingate glanced round impatiently.

"This way, Bunter! Come here at once!"

Bunter did not "come here." Instead of coming after Wingate he suddenly turned and bolted out of the station.

"Bunter!" roared Wingate.

He stared after the fat junior, fleeing as if for his life, for a second. Then he charged in pursuit. But there were people in the way; and Billy Bunter was going at about sixty miles per hour. He whizzed out of the station before Wingate could get near him.

A few moments later the prefect rushed out in pursuit. He stared round for Bunter!

Bunter was not to be seen!

"My hat!" breathed Wingate.

Up and down and round about he stared for Bunter! But the Owl of the Remove had vanished! There was a good deal of traffic in the street and a good many passengers on the pavement. Bunter had vanished among them.

Wingate called to a taximan.

"Did you see a kid run out of the station a minute ago?"

"Yes, sir! He cut round that corner."

Wingate ran to the corner. He stared down the side street. But Billy Bunter, evidently, had turned another corner. He was gone!

Wingate breathed hard and deep. He had lost Bunter! Having lost him, he could not take him home! That was certain! What the young duffer supposed he was going to do on his own in Courtfield, Wingate could not imagine. But he had lost him, and that was that; and he could only return to the school and report the same to the Head.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Going—But Not Gone!

"GONE!"

"The gonefulness is terrific!"

"Poor old Bunter!"

The Remove were out in break. The first thing every fellow did when they were out was to inquire what had happened to Bunter. And they learned at once that he had gone to the station in charge of a Sixth Form prefect.

It was rather a shock to the Remove! The fellows could hardly believe that Bunter really was gone; that the fat familiar face would never be seen in the old quad at Greyfriars again.

"Poor old Bunter!" said Bob Cherry. "And I don't believe he did it."

"I'm pretty certain he didn't!" said Harry Wharton. "The howling ass meant to, but he never did."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Wingate coming in."

All the Remove stared at Wingate of the Sixth as he came in at the gates and crossed to the House. He was frowning.

"Wingate can't have seen him home," said Nugent. "He wouldn't be back yet! I suppose he's put him in the train for home!"

"Let's ask him!" said Bob.

And a number of the Removites intercepted Wingate before he reached the House.

"Has Bunter gone, Wingate?" asked Harry.

"Yes!" snapped Wingate.

"Gone for good?"

"Yes."

Wingate went into the House.

"I say, this is pretty rotten!" said Harry Wharton in a low voice. "That fat idiot did everything he could think of to make the beaks think that he did it—but he never did! And he's sacked."

"I guess it's fierce!" said Fisher T. Fish, whose bony face wore quite a worried look. "It's sure fierce."

Fisher T. Fish was not wholly without a conscience. It gave him quite a jolt to realise that a fellow had been sacked for what he, Fisher T. Fish, had done. Fishy would have done anything he could to prevent such an act of injustice—anything except owning up and taking the medicine himself! That did not even occur to him. Had it occurred to him, certainly he would have guessed, reckoned, and calculated that it was better for that fat clam Bunter to be sacked than for his worthy self to undergo that hard fate. But he was sorry for Bunter—he really wished that it hadn't happened. Still, it was, as he told himself, the pesky jay's own fault. He had asked for it; and, after all, he had meant to ink Prout, though actually he had not inked him, and Fishy had!

The other fellows little dreamed of what was on Fisher T. Fish's mind. Nobody even thought of Fishy in connection with the inking of Prout.

"The rottenfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh dismally. "The sorrowfulness is great for the esteemed and idiotic Bunter. But what cannot be cured by a stitch in time must go longest to the well, as the English proverb remarks."

The matter was still under excited discussion when the bell called the Remove in to third school. Billy Bunter was not highly prized in the Remove, neither was his company longed for. But all the fellows were feeling that he had had hard measure.

They did not, of course, blame the Head, who had come to the only decision possible in the circumstances. But they told one another that Bunter had been sacked for what he hadn't done, and that it was rotten.

Mr. Prout was in the Remove Form-room for third school as usual. The Removites were rather curious to see Prout; who had not been seen by them since his inking. There was no ink about Prout now, he was his usual plump and portly self. A little unreasonably the Removites rather blamed Prout for Bunter's severe fate. Prout, certainly, had not asked to be inked, or wanted to be inked.

"Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, Hurree Singh, Bull," recited Prout. "you may place your lines on my desk."

The Famous Five stared at him. In the midst of the late exciting happenings they had rather forgotten that they had a "row" on with Prout about those

lines. Prout, it seemed, had not forgotten.

"You have done the lines?" rapped Prout.

"No, sir," said Wharton.

Prout compressed his plump lips.

"I will give you till tea-time to write your lines," he said. "As it is a half-holiday you will have ample time. If the impositions are not handed to me by tea-time I shall cane you all severely."

"If you please, sir—" said Harry.

"You need say no more about the matter, Wharton."

"I was going to speak about Bunter, sir!"

Prout stared at him.

"Bunter!" he repeated. "What do you mean, Wharton? Bunter has been expelled from Greyfriars for an act of unparalleled ruffianism—"

"I'm bound to speak, as head boy of the Form, sir," said Harry quietly. "Most of us believe that Bunter never did it, sir."

"Nonsense!"

"We're sure he never did, sir!" said Bob Cherry. "We all believe that it was some other fellow, sir."

"What—what? Absurd! What other boy do you accuse?" snapped Prout.

"Oh, nobody, sir! But it must have been some other fellow if it wasn't Bunter. And we don't think it was Bunter."

"We're sure it was not, sir!" said Harry.

"What—what?" boomed Prout. "Are you setting yourselves up, Wharton, to know better than your headmaster? Are you venturing to imply, Wharton, that an act of injustice has been committed? What—what?"

"We think there's been a mistake, sir—"

"Silence!" boomed Prout. "How dare you suggest such a thing, when I actually saw the boy with the bottle of ink in his hands, and Gosling reported him for taking the squirt that was used! This is impertinence, Wharton!"

"But, sir—"

"Silence! Another word, and I shall cane you! Sit down!"

Wharton sat down. Evidently it was futile to attempt to change Prout's fixed belief on the subject.

When the Remove were dismissed, the Famous Five went into the quad together with thoughtful and serious faces. Bunter had not had justice, they were convinced of that, and, as head boy of the Remove and captain of the Form, Wharton could not help feeling that it was up to him to do something in the matter. Exactly what he could do was not clear, but he felt that he could not let the matter rest where it was.

"Something's got to be done," said Harry, as the chums of the Remove strolled by the elms. "We can't leave it at this. No good talking to Prout, but if I went to the Head—"

"The trouble is that the howling ass did everything he could think of to make it look as if he inked Prout!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"Well, he would have inked him if he'd had the nerve," said Johnny Bull. "He had it all cut and dried."

"All the same, he didn't do it!" answered Wharton. "Goodness knows who did—but I'm convinced that Bunter didn't! Whoever did it must be a rotten worm not to own up now a fellow's sacked for it. Bunter's a howling ass and a blithering idiot, of course, but—"

"I say, you fellows—" squeaked a fat voice.

The Famous Five jumped at the sound of that familiar voice.

The ghost of a fat voice could not have startled them more.

They stared round blankly.

It was Billy Bunter's voice! But Billy Bunter was not to be seen. According to the general belief at Greyfriars, Billy Bunter was homeward bound—probably home by that time. It was amazing to hear his voice in the Greyfriars quad. For a second the chums of the Remove wondered whether they were dreaming.

But the next moment they glimpsed a fat face and a pair of gleaming spectacles peering from behind a tree.

Bunter was there—in cover.

"Bunter!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"The esteemed and idiotic Bunter!" gasped Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Bunter!" ejaculated Wharton.

"I say, you fellows, don't yell!" said Bunter anxiously. "If I get spotted I shall be walked off again!"

"How on earth did you get here?" gasped Wharton.

COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS.

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address: The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped, addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

IT is indeed a pleasure to open my post-bag these days and read the hundreds of letters congratulating me on the high standard of the MAGNET. "Long may it reign," says a contented reader from "down under." "The Old Paper's 'going great guns' here in Australia. I really don't know how I should fare if I didn't have a standing order with my newsagent." My chums in the Dominions, and they are gaining in numbers every week, should bear this tip in mind!

Do you know where the expression

"I HAVEN'T GOT A STIVER"

came from? Bernard Green, of Halt-whistle, has been puzzled to account for it, so he asks me if I can tell him. Quite simple. A "stiver" is an actual coin which was issued in the West Indian islands of Essequibo and Demerary about the year 1813. It was only a copper coin, worth very little, and seamen who served on the sugar-carrying ships used the expression, "I haven't got a stiver" to mean that they were so hard up that they couldn't buy anything or lend any money.

Needless to say, if you had a stiver nowadays, it would be worth considerably more than it was when it was first minted.

Talking of money, a friend of mine showed me

AN INTERESTING FIND

which he had picked up in a building in London which was being pulled down. This was a silver penny, minted several hundreds of years ago, and yet the coin was in perfect condition—exactly the same as it had been when it was first used. Silver pennies were marked with a cross on one side, so that they could be cut into four portions, each portion of which could be used as currency. That is how the

"Eh? Walked!" answered Bunter. "I couldn't take a taxi, being short of money. I mentioned to you fellows that my postal order hadn't come—"

"But—but—but you're supposed to be gone home!" gasped Nugent. "Didn't Wingate put you in the train?"

"I dodged him at the station—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"You see, I can't go home," said Bunter, blinking at the amazed juniors. "I told the Head so, but he didn't seem to see it. The pater would be fearfully waxy! I told Wingate, but he took no notice."

"Oh scissors!"

"Don't let on that you've seen me, of course," said Bunter. "I'm not going. Quite impossible, you know! But I shall have to be a bit wary."

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at him. They were dumbfounded. There was no doubt that Billy Bunter would have to

(Continued on page 26.)

name "farthing," meaning a fourth of a penny, came into use.

Here's another interesting point. Do you know why a sovereign was called a "pound"? Two hundred and forty silver pennies actually weighed 1 lb., hence the expression "one pound" came to be used to denote a coin that was worth 240 silver pennies.

Have you ever heard of

THE LAKE OF STONE?

It must certainly be one of the most amazing sights in the world. It is in Mexico, where a long-extinct volcano once erupted such masses of lava that a lake was formed in a valley. As the lava cooled, it became petrified, with the result that the lake of stone was formed. The most curious thing about this natural curiosity, however, is the long chain of caves, many of them running into each other, which are found beneath the surface. These caves were formed by mighty air bubbles which were trapped in the lava and were still there when it hardened.

Several years ago, during one of the numerous Mexican revolutions, a band of revolutionists made this lake of stone their headquarters, and knowing the secret entrances to the caves, and the manner in which one led to another, they defied the governments for many years. It was only with the greatest difficulty that the revolutionists were forced out of them—and that was not until they had raided and looted Mexico city on numerous occasions.

Space is running short, chums, so here's a reference to next week's fine programme. Frank Richards tops the list with:

"BACKING UP BUNTER!"

the second yarn in his grand new series, featuring the ever-popular chums of Greyfriars with Billy Bunter, the "scream of the Remove," playing a prominent part. You'll find fun and excitement galore in this sparkling school story, chums, so don't miss it whatever you do!

There will be the final chapters of Hedley Scott's detective thriller, a "Greyfriars Herald" supplement which is calculated to bring a grin even to the face of a hard-boiled hermit, an interesting cricket talk with "Umpire," and another brilliant effort by the Greyfriars cartoonist, while I shall be "in the office" as usual for another chat.

So long, chums.

YOUR EDITOR.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,374.

The MAN BEHIND the SCENES!



Starring **FERRERS LOCKE**, detective, and his clever boy assistant, **JACK DRAKE**.

BY
HEDLEY SCOTT

HOW THE STORY STARTED.

Posing as a wealthy Argentine bookmaker **FERRERS LOCKE**, detective, together with **DRAKE**, his boy assistant, gets on the trail of **MERVYN VILLIERS** and **JULIUS TANKERHEAD**, two clever crooks who have been pulling off big coups in connection with sporting events. Realising eventually that Locke has been bluffing them, the two swindlers set a cunning trap to blow the detective and Drake to smithereens and then leave for the Continent. The diabolical plot fails, but Locke, however, devises a scheme to lead the criminals into thinking that their efforts have met with success, and thereby bring them hurrying back to England. Meanwhile, Tankerhead is rather disturbed by the words of a quack fortune-teller, who tells him he is being pursued by a relentless foe.

(Now Read On.)

A Dastardly Crime!

TANKERHEAD forced a weary smile.

"Then Madame Verella wasn't right," he muttered. "She told me that a relentless foe was pursuing me—that he threatened my life! By gosh, Mervyn, I'm glad it's all over!"

He did not see the deadly gleam which flickered for one second in Villiers' eyes or he might have traced some connection between the charlatan fortune teller's words and the double-crossing partner who shared all his secrets.

"Then Mervyn," said Tankerhead, all of a flutter now, "it's safe for us to return. I'm all eagerness to work that big stunt at the Albert Hall we talked about. There should be big and easy money in a World's Heavy-weight Boxing Championship—at least," he added, with a conceited laugh—"at least, in the way we should stage it. What d'you say, Mervyn—shall we fly back to-morrow?"

"Of course," agreed Villiers. "Why, we may be in time to attend our dear late friend Ferrers Locke's funeral."

Tankerhead shuddered. He was not so utter and complete a villain as his partner in crime. His conscience did not jibe at planning an innocent man's death, but it jibbed at attending the funeral.

"Come, Julius!" chuckled Villiers, taking his partner by the arm. "Let's

try our luck at the Casino! It should be "in" after what we've just heard."

But here, apparently, the luck deserted the two schemers for, try as they might, neither of them could woo the goddess of luck with any success. Yet that visit to the Casino brought about a helpful result where Ferrers Locke was concerned, for a keen-eyed private detective quickly identified the two gamblers as the men for whom his Paris agency were making a widely-flung search, and wired back the information.

Thereafter, Villiers and Tankerhead were followed. The detective took a room at the end of their corridor and kept a check on their movements. Thus, when the two conspirators paid their bill in the morning, the detective paid his and followed them at a discreet distance. When Villiers and Tankerhead booked seats in the air liner which was due to depart for Croydon at three o'clock in the afternoon, the detective was near enough to hear and take note of that proceeding.

Long before the air liner rose from the aerodrome Ferrers Locke had been notified by telephone that his "birds" were due to arrive at Croydon aerodrome at four o'clock.

"Now, Dean," smiled the famous detective, "we are nearing the final stage of what has been the most interesting case of my career. When our two friends"—he grimaced playfully—"when our two friends arrive at Croydon we shall be there to greet them."

"With handcuffs!" chuckled Jack Drake.

Locke smiled.

"With handcuffs, as Jack says, and with Inspector Pycroft, of Scotland Yard, to give the whole business the correct official aspect."

But even detectives make mistakes—and this pardonable optimism on Ferrers Locke's part was destined to include a mistake—for while Locke anticipated arresting the two crooks upon their arrival at Croydon, Fate had already ordained that he should arrest only one.

Tap!

Mervyn Villiers, busily writing at the small bureau, seemed unconscious of the tap upon the door. On the pad before him were several sheets of paper, upon each one of which had been written the same phrasing, word for word. Had Villiers been a schoolboy, one would have thought immediately that here was an offender writing an imposition fifty or so times. But Villiers, the gangster, was not engaged upon so innocent a task. Propped up in front of him was a fair specimen of Julius Tankerhead's handwriting; and the sheets of paper, some of them still wet, which carried the same phrasing, indicated plainly enough that they had been drafted in a clever attempt to imitate Tankerhead's writing. That Villiers was not satisfied with his efforts at forgery, so far, was very apparent by the impatient survey he gave to the last sheet of paper and to the handwriting which served him as a specimen. With a growl, he spotted two or three faults in the forgery, and drawing a clean sheet of paper started his task anew, this time determined to produce so realistic an imitation of his partner's handwriting as to deceive even the most practised eye.

Tap! Tap!

Villiers heard the knocking as it was repeated in louder form, and laid down his pen.

"What is it?" he asked harshly. "Who is it?"

The voice that came in reply, gave Villiers cause to congratulate himself that he had locked the door of the writing-room.

"It's I—Julius! Open up, old man!"

"Oh, it's you, is it, Julius?" replied Villiers genially. "Well trot along and give me another five minutes. I'm frightfully busy!"

Tankerhead gave a grunt.

"You must be! Frightfully important, too, I should say, if you have to keep your door locked against your best pal."

He paused then, obviously giving his secretive partner an opportunity to relent, little dreaming of the nature of

the business which kept a locked door between them.

"Oh, don't be an ass, Julius," replied Villiers, forcing a gaiety he was far from feeling. "I won't keep you five minutes. Meet you for a drink!"

He heard his partner tramp away, muttering beneath his breath, and then with admirable concentration immediately settled down afresh to his "perfect forgery." The result pleased him. Even under the magnifying-glass Villiers could detect no flaw—the writing was identical with Tankerhead's in every particular. The signature would have been passed by Tankerhead's own bank manager.

With great care Villiers folded the sheet of paper, placed it in a foolscap envelope, and boldly addressed it to:

"THE CORONER."

Even those two words were clever forgeries of Tankerhead's handwriting. That little job done, Villiers very deliberately tore the unwanted sheets of paper into pieces, placed them in the grate, and set a match to them. Soon nothing but ashes remained of them. Pocketing the forgery he gazed at himself in the mirror, seemed satisfied with the rather mocking, villainous reflection which flashed back at him, and crossed the room.

He joined his partner and gave him a cheery smile.

"Getting ready for our return journey, Julius?" he asked boisterously. "Have you packed?"

"Of course I've packed!" grumbled Tankerhead; and then suspiciously. "What was keeping you behind locked doors?"

Villiers' face expanded into a broad smile.

"A little surprise for you, old boy, if you really want to know."

The soft answer brought about the required effect. Tankerhead's clouded face cleared. He glanced at his watch and whistled.

"Jove, Mervyn. We're cutting it rather fine. The plane leaves in half an hour."

"Plenty of time," was Villiers' careless answer. "Come on, let's make a start."

Overcoat over his arm, Tankerhead followed at the heels of his partner, little dreaming of the true nature of the surprise Villiers had planned for him.

Neither of them took any particular notice of the private detective who had trailed them since the previous day. They entered a taxi and drove to the aerodrome; the detective followed them in another taxi.

A big twin-engine eight-seater cross-Channel plane was waiting on the tarmac. Officials fussed around it, superintending the embarkation of the passengers and their luggage.

Tankerhead and Villiers were shown into their seats. The former, always highly strung, seemed more so than ever now that the contemplated return to England was about to start, whilst Villiers was a model of self control and looked the successful business man, accustomed to aerial trips, to the life.

The watching detective did not consider his job done until he saw the plane rise into the air and head for the coast. Then he hastened to the telephone and put his message through to Ferrers Locke.

"Okay! Your two 'birds' have just taken the air. Plane's timed to arrive at four."

Meanwhile, the twin-engine monoplane was climbing, and heading for the coast. Tankerhead chattered away in

nervous fashion, completely ignorant of the murderous thoughts which roamed his partner's mind—ignorant, too, of a certain long envelope addressed to "the Coroner" which Villiers had already managed to smuggle into Tankerhead's overcoat pocket.

But as the coastline gradually came within sight of the passengers, Villiers seemed to lose some of his composure. He waited until the plane was travelling five or six miles clear of the coast, at a height of four thousand feet, and then rose to his feet.

At the end of the main cabin was a small cloak-room, with an emergency exit door. Tankerhead idly watched his partner disappear, only to be signalled by him a moment later.

Tankerhead got to his feet and walked to the cloak-room. Here he saw something in Villiers' face which frightened him—a maniacal expression which

One minute later, Mervyn Villiers was back at his seat, apparently absorbed in his newspaper. Not until ten minutes had passed was Tankerhead's absence noticed. A white-faced steward came rushing along the gangway to where Villiers sat.

"Sir! Sir! Something terrible has happened, I believe!" He gulped for breath and pointed at the empty seat beside Villiers. "Your friend has gone!"

Villiers jumped to his feet with well-assumed alarm. Roughly he shook the steward by the shoulder.

"What are you talking about? Gone? What do you mean?"

The steward gulped, and pointed to the cloak-room.

"There are bloodstains on the floor, sir," he blurted out, "and the emergency door is open. Oh, sir—"

By this time the other passengers were becoming aware that something was amiss. They craned their necks just in time to see Mervyn Villiers dart to the cloak-room. He returned, obviously distraught. The steward eyed him in horror.

"He's gone, hasn't he, sir! Committed suicide!"

Villiers licked his lips.

"Poor Julius," he murmured hoarsely. "He was always talking of suicide, but I never thought he would do it."

In the fashion of a man who has received a knock-out blow, he sank wearily in his chair, his head buried in his hands. Soon the news of the tragedy was in the possession of the remaining passengers and the pilots. The senior pilot, however, held to his course. He could do nothing. Below him lay the rolling sea with two or three miniature smoke-stacks wreathing skyward, indicating the presence of cross-Channel steamers. The second pilot quickly gave news of the tragedy to his head office by means of wireless, and to Croydon aerodrome whither the plane was bound. In due course the cross-Channel steamers were notified by wireless and instructed to keep a look out for the body of Julius Tankerhead.

Gloom settled on the twin-engined plane as it throbbed its way towards the English coast. The steward officially took charge of Tankerhead's coat and baggage, and reminded the passengers that they would not be allowed to leave the plane at Croydon until the police had questioned them.

Mervyn Villiers acted his part with the skill of a consummate actor. Mock tears furrowed his cheeks, and all the passengers were soon aware of the fact that he and Tankerhead had been bosom friends.

But perhaps the villainous and hypocritical Villiers would not have felt so confident had he known that the battered body of his late partner had already been picked up by one of those cross-Channel steamers and that the news had been flashed back to Croydon long before the plane arrived.

Other news had arrived with it, too—such news as was giving Ferrers Locke and Inspector Pycroft food for thought. Both men, together with Drake and Christopher Dean, were at Croydon aerodrome.

"The skipper of the Danatia reports that Tankerhead was shot—through the head," the harassed inspector informed Locke.

"So!" ejaculated the private detective with upraised brows. "What else?"

"He also reports that papers in the

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TELL A TALE

and win a

USEFUL POCKET KNIFE

like C. Crabtree, of 2, Berry's Mill Lane, Newhey, near Rochdale, who sent in the following winning effort:



Coker (who has crashed into a car): "You clumsy idiot, you ought to be wheeling a pram!"
Driver of Car: "Yes, and you ought to be in it!"

(All attempts should be addressed to: "Limericks and Jokes" Editor, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4.)

prompted Tankerhead to attempt to back out of the room. But Villiers suddenly gripped him by the wrist and dragged him closer.

"This is where you and I say good-bye, Julius!" he hissed. Simultaneously with the words, his disengaged hand came into view, with a revolver held firmly in it.

Before Tankerhead was fully convinced that his partner intended to use that revolver against him, it spoke with a dull muffled report. The silence on the weapon drowned the discharge amid the mild murmuring of the engines and the song of the thrashing wind.

Even as Tankerhead collapsed at his feet Villiers swung open the emergency doorway let into the fuselage, and pushed the inanimate figure of his partner clear. He turned his eyes away as the body plunged out into space and dropped seawards at a sickening rate.

man's clothes prove him to be Julius Tankerhead."

Locke broke in curtly.

"We know that! What else?"

"He concludes his report with the remarkable statement that a revolver was found on the body—a revolver fully loaded."

Locke fastened on to that unexpected information like a ferret.

"Fully loaded, eh? Then Tankerhead didn't commit suicide, it seems to me! Pyecroft, the plot thickens. When's the plane due in?"

"Five minutes' time," replied the C.I.D. man. "I say, what the deuce are you doing?"

His question was quite natural, for Ferrers Locke suddenly thumbed open a small attache case, withdrew from it a black wig and short moustache, and hurriedly donned them.

"What's the big idea, Mr. Locke?"

"The idea, Pyecroft, is that I have got to change my plans. And a change of plan means I must change my identity, too. You will introduce me as Chief Inspector Robson, and kindly"—this very firmly—"kindly allow me to conduct my own cross-examination of the passengers. Do this for me, Pyecroft, and you'll never regret it. This is the grand finale curtain to one of the biggest crime investigations you and I have ever carried out."

The inclusion of himself mollified the somewhat bewildered C.I.D. man. Still, he had reason from past experience to know that Ferrers Locke was a person worth humouring. Many a notorious case had been brought to a successful conclusion by Inspector Pyecroft, so the police records showed. But Pyecroft was not blind to his own limitations; in nine cases out of ten on the police records he had had to thank Ferrers Locke for their successful conclusion.

He could hardly contain himself now as the minutes dragged by.

"What about you, Drake and this fellow you call Dean, Mr. Locke?" he asked, for want of something to say.

"They will remain out of sight until

I send for them. But one final word, old man. Keep your eyes on Villiers all the time. He's a dangerous, desperate man."

"Oh, he won't get past me, Mr. Locke!" smiled Pyecroft, tapping his uniformed chest. "Where will you cross-examine the passengers?"

"In the Customs shed, Pyecroft," replied Locke, looking up into the sky. "And here, unless I'm mistaken, is our plane."

An aerodrome official confirmed Locke's words, and at a signal from the detective, Inspector Pyecroft and two constables marched out to meet the plane. It came to rest on the short turf, like a bird, and taxied in towards the arrival hangars. Reporters and inquisitive sightseers were kept at a distance what time Pyecroft officially announced to the passengers that they would be questioned in the Customs shed.

Thither they went with their baggage, under escort, what time a police photographer exposed a dozen plates of the interior and exterior of the plane before allowing the aerodrome staff to enter or touch the machine.

Ferrers Locke, seated in deep shadow in the Customs shed, beckoned to the awe-struck passengers to come in.

His eyes rested searchingly on the anguished face of Mervyn Villiers, astonished at the man's cleverness as an actor, for already Locke had more than an inkling of an idea that Tankerhead's alleged suicide was a dastardly crime, cunningly planned by his more iron-nerved partner.

"Gentlemen," began Locke in even tones. "it is my duty to investigate the suicide of one Julius Tankerhead, who set out with you from the Continent. I will not detain you longer than can possibly be helped. Now, who first discovered that something was amiss?"

(Whatever you do, chums, be sure and read the thrilling closing chapters of this powerful detective yarn. You'll find them in next week's bumper issue of the MAGNET. Order your copy now!)

"THE 'BUNKING' of BILLY BUNTER!"

(Continued from page 25.)

be a bit wary—more than a bit, in fact—if he was going to remain at Greyfriars School after being expelled therefrom. Quite a lot of wariness would be needed!

"Keep it dark," said Bunter. "As pals, I expect you to stand by me. I've been watching for a chance to speak to you fellows. You can tell Toddy and Squiff and Smithy—any fellow you can trust. I expect all my friends to rally round, you know."

"Oh crikey!"

"I shall have to keep out of sight. I dare say it will be all right when Quelch comes back. Quelch will see me righted."

"Oh jiminy!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Here comes Prout!" gasped Bob. The portly figure of Prout loomed up in the quad.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter. He vanished among the elms, like a ghost at cock-crow.

Mr. Prout rolled by, casting a rather suspicious glance at the juniors. But Bunter was safe out of sight—and remained out of sight.

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

Bunter was sacked. But Bunter was not gone! And he did not intend to go if he could help it! And Harry Whar-ton & Co. could only wonder what was going to be the outcome.

THE END.

(Don't miss the second story in this grand new series featuring Billy Bunter and the chums of Greyfriars. It's entitled: "BACKING UP BUNTER!" and is undoubtedly one of the finest yarns Frank Richards has written for the MAGNET.)



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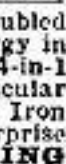
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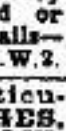
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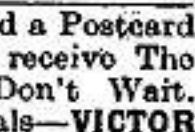
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THE NEW Greyfriars Herald



No. 89 (New Series).

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

June 16th, 1934.

HIKERS' HYGIENIC LUNCH

Price One Shilling. Packed ready for eating. Highly recommended for hikers who want a nutritious meal which takes up a minimum of space. Contents: 2 ozs. Caraway Seeds, 1 Large Raw Turnip, and 2 Dog Biscuits. All the profits go to the Comforts for Cannibals' Fund.—Send P.O.'s. to "LONZY," c/o GREYFRIARS HERALD.

GREYFRIARS 100 YEARS AGO

We cannot recall on any previous occasion experiencing pleasure at the departure of a scholar from the College. But we really do feel pleased at the departure this week of Andrew McPherson, of the Sixth Form.

Why McPherson ever came to Greyfriars is a mystery. He was not even a gentleman, being merely the son of a wealthy shipbuilder. But even apart from that, he was a most objectionable fellow.

He seemed to take a positive delight in expressing ideas utterly foreign to the spirit of Greyfriars. He approved, for instance, of the invention of the steam engine. He had a most unpatriotic liking for the Americans and boasted of having an uncle who lived in a North American village known as Chicago. He even advocated steamboats instead of sailing vessels for ocean travel—preposterous as that may sound!

What made him most offensive of all, however, was his absurd dislike for the Greyfriars curriculum. For some strange reason, he seemed to think that he ought to be taught other subjects besides Latin and Greek. He used to complain that there were schools where they taught modern languages and—horror of horrors!—Science! Apparently, he would have been quite happy if these freakish subjects had been introduced at Greyfriars!

With such an ignoble creature, it was impossible to argue. To point out that steamboats and North America and Science were ungentlemanly was futile—for the simple reason that McPherson was not a gentleman!

The result was that McPherson did not mix very much with the rest of us and spent a good deal of his time studying mechanics and similar plebeian subjects.

We understand that he is entering his father's business, where he will help to design steamboats and other abominations.

Unquestionably, he will feel much more at home in his new surroundings and the only pity is that he ever came to Greyfriars at all.

Now that he has returned to his natural element, we can, with sincerity, wish him all well for the future!

(The funny thing about that little lot is that if it had been 1934 instead of 1834, McPherson would probably have been one of the most popular fellows in the school. Ideas seem to have changed just as much as methods of travel in the last hundred years!—Ed.)

Dicky Nugent's Weekly Wisdom

I hoap the fellows who are talking of leaving my major sent to a mental home because he spends hours in front of a mirror pulling faces at himself and moaning pitteously will think better of it.

I can simperhise with my major.

Once upon a time I had ambishuns to be a crooner myself!

When Mauly saw Gwendoline Prout, he almost swooned. For the umpteenth time in history, he felt Cupid's arrow pierce his heart. In other words, he fell for her.

Gwendoline is Mr. Prout's niece. She has been staying at Greyfriars for a few days and her carrot hair and green eyes have affected other fellows besides Mauly—but none got it quite so badly as he!

Within an hour of his meeting her, Mauly was composing poetry in her honour. Soon afterwards, he had plucked up enough courage to show her his lyrical efforts—and, to Mauly's delight, they were received with enthusiasm!

"Your poetry's simply wonderful," she told Mauly. "You must be romantic, and I'm awfully keen on romantic persons. I often wish I could go to moonlit Venice or somewhere where troubadours or whatever they are sing serenades or whatever it is they sing. Don't you?"

"Yaas," agreed Mauly, who was in the mood to agree with the most idiotic ideas imaginable so long as they were Gwendoline Prout's.

"I suppose you never sing in the moonlight yourself?" Miss Prout added, with a wistful smile.

"Oh, gad! I never have—but there's no tellin' what a fellow can do when he tries!" Mauly gasped.

Something had to be done about it after that! And as Mauly has a gift for finding solutions to the most knotty problems, something duly was done!

First he borrowed a guitar (without the owner's permission) from Fitzgerald, of the Fifth, who occasionally has musical spasms.

MOONLIGHT SERENADE BY MAULY

Languid Lord's June Romance

The guitar being useless to him for all purposes but appearances, he next borrowed a length of flex and a loud speaker. The latter he hid behind one of the bushes near the Head's house, where Miss Prout was staying, while the former he trailed back through one of the windows in the School House to Mr. Lascelles' radio-gramophone.

He then hired a fag to creep down to Mr. Lascelles' at eleven o'clock and put on a gramophone record of

really brainy wheeze, and we must say it deserved to succeed.

Up to a point it did. Mauly duly turned up 'neath the window, the fag duly crept down to Mr. Lascelles' study, and music duly came through.

The only drawback was that the fag didn't know much about radio-grams and couldn't get the gramophone part to work. In the circumstances, he did the next best thing and switched on the wireless.

It must have been Mauly's!



Bang Crossley singing a romantic ballad to a guitar accompaniment.

All that remained to be done was for him to stand 'neath Miss Prout's window at the right time with Fitzgerald's guitar and move his lips about as though he were singing. The loud-speaker would do the rest!

We can't help congratulating Mauly on evolving a

unlucky evening. The programme happened to be a programme of old music-hall ditties—and the song that floated up through the romantic, rose-scented June air to Miss Prout was "Ginger, You're Barmy!"

As Miss Prout's hair is definitely and unmistakably ginger, it is hardly necessary to say that Mauly's romance came to an abrupt end there and then!

Mauly did his best to explain things before Miss Prout left, and his explanations were received with great politeness and kindness. But with the opening bars of "Ginger, You're Barmy!" all thoughts of romance conked out completely!

Which is just as it should be!

Answers To Correspondents

S. J. SNOOP (Remove).—"W. I never I walk out of my study into the passage, I notice a funny smell that makes me dizzy and sick. What do you think it is?"

FRESH AIR!

R. RUSSELL (Remove).—"During the term, I've collected no less than eight farthings. What can I do with them?"

Get Ogilvy to give you two pennies for them. He's going to Scotland for his summer holidays and he may need them for tips!

G. TUBB (Third).—"My japes never seem to work. When I put tacks on chairs, nobody ever sits down on them."

Try some in Johnny Bull's study. He's the kind of fellow who always goes "straight to the point"!

Intending Ear-Ring Wearers

Whose ears are not already prepared can solve their difficulty cheaply by dropping into the music-room while Temple is having his singing-practice. Ten "ear-piercing" shrieks a minute absolutely guaranteed!

Keen On Air Travel?

If so, you'll be glad to know that we're giving away a Free Balloon to anyone who wants it. Call and see us about it. (N.B. Its name is Bunter and we're though, ghly fed up with it!).—PETER TODD & Co., Study No. 7, Remove.

ALMOST A GENTLEMAN

Where Angel Just Misses

In the editorial office of the "Herald" we pride ourselves on our politeness.

When Aubrey Angel of the Upper Fourth burst in the other day, looking like a tiger in search of its prey, we might easily have greeted him with ribald laughter, sneers and brickbats. We did nothing of the kind. We treated him with the same urbane politeness we bestow on our most honoured visitors.

Angel was holding a copy of the "Herald" in his hand. He pointed to it with a finger that trembled with rage.

"Attacking me again in your scurrilous rag, are you?" he roared. "I'll smash you—all the lot of you!"

"Won't you sit down?" the Editor asked, mildly.

"Someone in this office bears me a grudge!" hooted Angel. "I want to know who it is!"

The Editor made a gesture of polite dissent.

"My dear chap, you're entirely mistaken. Nobody here bears you any grudge. We merely think you just miss!"

Angel's face relaxed a little. "H'm, well, that doesn't sound so bad, of course. How do you think I just miss, then?"

"In several ways, old bean. Your face, for instance, just misses being tolerable. If you weren't so cross-eyed and lopped, we could stand it. As it is, we can't! You just miss!"

"Why, you silly ass—"

"Again, you just miss at cricket. Some would say you just miss being the world's worst cricketer. We're more polite—we say you just miss being the worst cricketer at Greyfriars!!

"Look here, you maniac—"

"In brief, old chap, you just miss all round. At times, you're almost a gentleman—but you always miss, usually by about a mile!"



"You frabjous idiot—"

"Well, that's all about that. Glad to have been able to put you wise. Drop in again whenever you feel like it!"

And the Editor signalled to the Fighting Editor, who grabbed the visitor by the scruff of the neck and the seat of the trousers and hurled him out of the office.

You'd have thought Angel would have been completely satisfied by his courteous reception and the painstaking editorial explanation, wouldn't you?

But he wasn't. Politeness is wasted on some people!

APOLOGY.

I, ROBERT CHERRY, hereby apologise for spreading the rumour that Loder blushed when the Head spoke to him in the quad, last week.

I didn't realise that somebody had been putting red ink in the band of Loder's topper!

CAVE OF HORRORS EXPLAINED

American Junior's Confession

The Cave of Horrors at Pegg, which has been the talk of Greyfriars for weeks, has at last yielded up its secrets!

We must admit that we've been completely floored by the problem of this curious cave. When you get indisputable evidence of a dancing skeleton, an acrobatic octopus, and a spider the size of a man, it's a bit difficult to think of a reasonable explanation!

But now that the explanation has been made, the whole thing turns out to be quite simple!

The man behind it all was Fisher T. Fish, of the Greyfriars Remove.

It's surprising that nobody thought of him before. The fellows who first saw the skeleton in the cave were looking for Fish when they saw it. They might have known that it was one of his money-making stunts—particularly as they'd been after him for the reason that he'd been borrowing money right and left without paying it back!

Fish is the man, anyway. Soon after the publication of Bunter's sensational report on the cave in last week's "Courtfield Gazette," he openly admitted that the skeleton and the octopus and the spider were all mechanical models which he himself had been working in the cave! Just to prove it, he took a party of juniors along to the cave and demonstrated the models before them.

The American junior grinned when the "Greyfriars Herald" reporter asked him politely whether he'd gone wrong in the upper story.

"No, sree!" he said, firmly. "Those exhibits cost me hard cash an' they were planted here with a purpose. I ain't loco. I'm jest a plain American business man with an eye to a good proposition. Have you ever thought how many trippers mosey in at Pegg during the summer season?"

"Thousands, of course, old bean, but—"

"Tens of thousands!" said Fisher T. Fish.

"Waal, what's offered them in the way of amusement when they get there, barring a look at the Shoulder through a telescope?"

"Nothing, but—"

"You've said it—an' this is where I come in!"

grinned Fish. "I sat down an' figured this thing out. I saw that something was needed—something big that would make every guy for miles around dip his hand into his pocket. Waal, hyer's the outcome—the Haunted Cave!"

"Great pip! You mean to say—"

"I mean to say that F. T. F.'s Cave of Horrors is gonna draw trippers by the thousand at a shilling a head for the rest of the season!" chorled Fish.

"I've leased the cave from the district council for three months, an' if I don't make a pile out of it in that time, well—"

There was the explanation! The "horror" of the cave had been deliberately introduced there as a money-making proposition by the man from New York City!

All Greyfriars knew, of course, in a few minutes. All the district knows now, for the "Courtfield Gazette" has featured the story in its latest issue.

And now mark the sequel!

Fish won't be running the Cave of Horrors after all—the Head has put his foot down firmly on that point. But as a result of the publicity given to the affair, however, Fish has re-sold his tenancy of the cave to a London firm of amusement caterers at a profit of £25!

GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!



Sammy Bunter of the Second Form, is an expert at "noughts and crosses," and offers to take on any fag. He invariably wins—and demands a doughnut as a reward!



Mr. Quelch has spent hours dining into Hurree Singh the difference between ordinary English and "Inky's" peculiar variety. But the Nabob still has an affection for the latter.



The position of head prefect makes Wingate appear in a rather stern light to juniors. But there is no more popular fellow, as is testified by the cheering which greets his "sides" on Big Side!



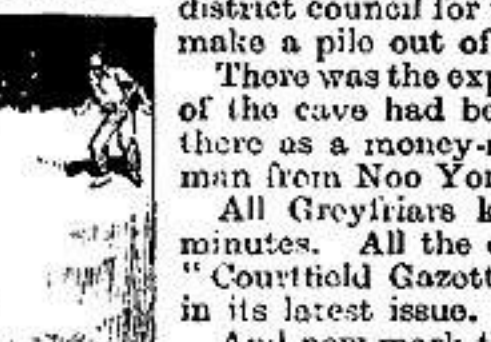
Mrs. Mimble states that Bunter's appetite shows no signs of slackening in the warmer weather. He is always good for as much "tick" as she will allow him—which is very little indeed!



Johnny Bull has a reputation for bluntness. When Loder, the prefect, asked whether he liked his late out or his on-drive best, Bull replied bluntly that he thought them both putrid!



Scoring eighty-seven for the Remove in a match against a Courtfield eleven, Frank Nugent showed that he is something more than a correct stylist. He can hit out with the best of them!



The Head has put his foot down firmly on that point. But as a result of the publicity given to the affair, however, Fish has re-sold his tenancy of the cave to a London firm of amusement caterers at a profit of £25!