

BUNTER, the DODGER! and THE BLACK HERCULES! inside
Ripping School Yarn of Greyfriars. Amazing Story of African Adventure.

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Bunter the Dodger!



By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Rebels of the Remove!

HERE they come!"

"Look out!"

"Back up, Remove!"

There was a roar of voices in the Rag at Greyfriars School.

It was time for prep. But nobody in the Greyfriars Remove was thinking of prep.

The Remove were in rebellion!

Not a fellow had gone up to the studies for prep. The big oaken door of the Rag was locked, and table and chairs piled against it. The big window that looked on the quadrangle was crammed with excited juniors. Outside, the June sunset glowed on grass-plots and grey old buildings. It glowed also on half a dozen stalwart Sixth Form men, who were coming towards the crowded window with determined looks.

Harry Wharton & Co. had front places at the window. Plenty of other fellows crowded round to back them up. The seniors, led by Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, were determined to get in. The juniors, led by Harry Wharton, were determined to keep them out. It looked as if a wild and whirling time was coming.

"Back up!" roared Bob Cherry, brandishing a cricket stump.

"Owl!" howled Johnny Bull. "Keep that stump off my napper, you fat-head!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My esteemed idiotic Cherry—" gasped Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, ducking his dusky head just in time.

"Keep that stump for Wingate's napper, old bean!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Steady, the Buffs!"

"I say, you fellows—" came a fat

squeak from Billy Bunter. "I say, keep them out, you know! Oh crikey!"

Billy Bunter was well behind the front line. The forefront of the battle had no appeal for the fat Owl of the Remove.

But the Famous Five were made of sterner stuff. They were ready for the fray.

Wingate of the Sixth halted under the window of the Rag. The other prefects halted behind him. None of them appeared to relish very keenly the task in hand.

"No admittance, Wingate!" said Frank Nugent.

Wingate frowned.

"Now, look here, you young asses!" he said. "Don't play the goat. You've got Bunter there—"

"And he's staying here!" said Bob. "We're sticking to him, Wingate!"

"The stickfulness is terrific!" declared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You've got Bunter there," repeated the Greyfriars captain. "Bunter's been expelled by the Head, and he's got to go. Do you think you can keep him here against Dr. Locke's authority?"

"We're going to try," answered Harry Wharton coolly. "Bunter's been sacked for nothing. The Head's made a mistake! When he finds that out he will be glad that we never let Bunter go."

"Hear, hear!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"You'll be sacked yourself, Wharton, if you keep this up!" said Wingate warningly.

"We're risking that. I don't think the Head will sack a whole Form—and we're all in this together."

"The togetherness is—"

"Terrific and preposterous!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've no time to waste on you!" growled Wingate. "Will you open the door of that room?"

"No, we jolly well won't!"

"Then we shall come in at the window and do it. It's the Head's orders—and that's that!"

"Head's orders be blowed!" said Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars.

"Shut up, Smithy!" said Wharton. "Don't cheek the Head!"

Wingate stared at him from the quad. "You don't call it cheeking the Head to try to keep Bunter here after he's been sacked by your headmaster?" he demanded.

"Well, we can't help that," said Harry. "We're not letting a fellow in this Form be turned out of Greyfriars for what he hasn't done."

"No fear!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Never!"

"The neverfulness is terrific!"

"Don't be a young ass!" hooted Wingate. "You know jolly well what Bunter's done. He mopped ink over a Form-master—drenched him from head to foot with ink from a garden squirt! Do you think any fellow could be allowed to stay on here after doing a thing like that?"

"No. But Bunter never did it!"

"The Head thinks he did, and that's good enough. Prout thinks he did—and it was Prout got the ink!"

"Serve him jolly well right!" said the Bounder.

"Shut up, Smithy!"

"Our Form-master, Quelch, doesn't think that Bunter did it," said Harry Wharton, "and what our Form-master thinks is good enough for us."

"You cheeky young ass!" roared Wingate. "Do you think your Form-master approves of this kind of thing?"

"Well, no; I suppose not. All the same, he's against Bunter being turfed out, and we jolly well know it. And we're standing by Bunter!"

"Bunter's not going!" declared Bob Cherry.

"I tell you——"

"You can talk till you're black in the face, Wingate," said the captain of the Remove. "But we're not giving Bunter up. Bunter doesn't matter very much, personally——"

"Oh, really, Wharton!" came a fat squeak from the rear.

"He's a silly ass, and a frabjous owl, and a fat fibber, and a grub-raiding gorgor, and——"

"Beast!"

"And all that, but he's a Remove man, and we're going to see that he has fair play."

"Fair play's a jewel!" said Squiff.

"Hear, hear!"

"If you want to get busy, Wingate, you can get down to finding the chap who really inked Prout! We shan't make any fuss about the Head turfing him out, whether he's a Remove man or not—if you get the right man. But Bunter's not going!"

"The Head——"

"Blow the Head!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Shut up, Smithy!" roared Bob Cherry. "I'll jolly well kick you if you cheek the Head."

"The cheekfulness of the absurd Head is not the proper caper, my esteemed Smithy."

"Oh, rats!" growled the Bounder.

The Remove were in rebellion against their headmaster, on account of Bunter. At the same time, they wanted to make it clear that they respected the venerable gentleman as much as ever. It was rather a fine distinction, which the reckless Bounder was not inclined to draw.

"Look here," rapped Wingate, "enough said—we're coming in! If you have the neck to resist Sixth Form prefects you know what to expect."

"And if you barge in where you're not wanted you know what to expect, too!" said Johnny Bull. "You're not coming in here."

Wingate glanced round at his followers—Gwynne, Sykes, Loder, Carne and Walker. All big, sturdy, Sixth Form men.

"Follow on!" he said briefly.

And Wingate placed his hands on the sill and clambered up.

For a second, perhaps, there was hesitation on the part of the garrison of the Rag. It was an awfully serious matter to "handle" a prefect. Indeed, in ordinary circumstances, it meant the "sack," short and sharp. And Wingate was a popular prefect—the most popular man at Greyfriars.

The Famous Five of the Remove simply hated the idea of handling Wingate with unfriendly hands. But if they hesitated, it was only for a second. Either they had to resist or give up Bunter to what they all believed to be an unjust punishment. And that they were not going to do.

Wingate clambered in. He had head and shoulders inside the window when six or seven pairs of hands were laid on him at once. Bob Cherry mercifully forebore to use his stump. And there were hands enough to handle Wingate, hefty as he was.

Seized by his collar, his shoulders, his ears, and his hair, George Wingate was unhooked from his grasp on the window and hurled back.

He went back with a crash on his

followers, gasping. Loder went spinning in one direction, Carne in another. Wingate landed on the hard, unsympathetic earth with a bump and a roar.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Something Like a Scrap!

"MAN down!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh!" gasped Wingate, as he sprawled. "Oh! Ow! Why, I—I'll——"

He scrambled up, crimson with wrath.

"You young sweeps!" roared Gwynne of the Sixth.

He made a leap for the open window, and plunged headlong in. Wingate was at his side in a moment. Loder and Carne, Walker and Sykes pushed on behind, bunking and shoving the leaders in.

"Back up!" shouted Harry Wharton.

"Give 'em beans!"

"Mop 'em up!"

All prudence was thrown to the winds now. The battle was raging; it was Sixth against Remove. Man to man, the juniors would have had no chance. But the odds were heavily on their side, and the position of defence was strong. Whacks and smacks and thumps fell on Wingate and Gwynne thick as hail, but much harder and heavier.

Billy Bunter has been kicked out of the school—but like the proverbial bad penny, he keeps on popping up! From being the most unimportant member of the Remove Form, he suddenly becomes the most conspicuous character at Greyfriars!

They struggled valorously to force an entrance. They had the Head's order to do so, and it was up to the prefects to carry out the Head's order—if they could. It looked, however, as if they couldn't.

With seven or eight excited juniors grabbing, gasping, clutching, banging, and thumping them, Wingate and Gwynne struggled in vain. And Bob Cherry reached past them, lunged with his stump at Loder, catching him in the waistcoat with the business end. There was a wild gurgle from Gerald Loder as he backed away.

Squiff hurled a hassock, which caught Walker under the chin. Walker sat down with startling suddenness, clasp his chin and spluttering.

"Give 'em gip!" roared the Bounder.

"Sock it to 'em!"

Smithy had hold of Wingate's back hair. He banged the Greyfriars captain's features down recklessly on the window-sill.

Wild howls came from Wingate during that painful process.

"You young spalpeens!" bawled Gwynne. "You young omadhauns! Faith, and I'll—Yooop! Whooooop! Yarooop!"

A lick from a fives bat cut short the flow of Gwynne's eloquence, and he tumbled back into the quad.

"Let go!" raved Wingate. "Oh, my hat! Ow! My nose! Oh crumbs! You young villains! Leggo! Ooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wingate was hurled back again. Carne of the Sixth jumped forward, but

jumped back again barely in time to escape a swipe from a stump. Walker landed out with his ashplant and caught Bob Cherry, who roared, and handed back one with the cricket stump. One was enough for Walker; he fairly bounded out of reach.

"Come on!" yelled Smithy.

"This way for wallops!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Hurrah!"

"Come on, Loder!" howled a dozen voices, as the bully of the Sixth charged at the window.

That jolt on the waistcoat had hurt Loder and enraged him. He fairly hurled himself at the window, and barged in so fiercely that the mob of juniors facing him were borne back.

Loder sprawled half-way in. Another moment, and he would have rolled in headlong, and the combat would have been at very close quarters. But in that moment the Bounder slammed down the sash.

"Wow!" howled Loder, as it shut on his back.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well caught!" roared Bob Cherry.

The Removites roared with laughter. Loder roared from quite another cause. He roared and raved. Half of him was inside the Rag, half outside; his infuriated face glared at the juniors within, while his legs sawed the air without. He had no chance of lifting the sash that was shut down on his back—the juniors saw to that.

His arms were grasped and held; likewise his nose. It was rather a prominent nose, and gave Bob Cherry a good hold. Bob's hefty grasp drew a suffocated howl from Loder.

"Got him!" roared Bob.

"The gotfulness is preposterous!"

"I say, you fellows, lemme gerrat him!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "I'll show the beast whether he's going to collar me! Lemme gerrat him!"

With the bully of the Sixth so safely held, Billy Bunter was as bold as a lion. He rolled on the scene of action with an inkpot in his fat hand.

Loder, gasping and gurgling, glared at him in infuriated apprehension.

"Keep that ink away!" he spluttered.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter "went it." The inkpot was upended over Loder's head, and the ink streaked down his crimson face in black streaks, giving him a peculiar zebra-like look. The Removites howled with merriment.

"Urrrrgh!" spluttered Loder, as some of the ink trickled into his mouth. "Ooooo-er! Urrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, hold him! I'll get some soot from the chimney!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Outside the closed window, Wingate & Co. rallied to Loder's rescue. Wingate grasped the sash to push it up, while several fellows within held it down. There was a sudden fearful howl from Wingate as one of Loder's lashing feet caught him on the side of the head.

"Ow! You clumsy ass, Loder! Wow! Oh, my hat!"

The Greyfriars captain jumped away.

"They're beaten!" yelled the Bounder.

"We've whopped the prefects! Now let Loder have the soot!"

"Buck up, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter was raking in the chimney of the Rag with a shovel. He came back to the window with a shovel full of soot.

"I say, you fellows, give a fellow room!"

The juniors did not need telling that. They backed out of reach while Bunter handled the soot.

Loder squirmed frantically. But there was no escape for Loder. The fire-shovel tapped on his wriggling head, and the soot landed. Soot clothed Loder like a garment.

"Urrrrggh!" came an agonised gurgle through clouds of soot.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder was not held now. He was too sooty to hold. He made a terrific effort and forced up the sash, and wriggled back. He was not thinking of plunging headlong into the Rag now. He had had enough of the Remove rebels at close quarters. He was only thinking of getting out of their reach. He went rolling backwards, and landed in the quad, scattering soot.

"Come on!" Bob Cherry brandished his stump in the window. "Come on! Go it, ye cripples! Who's coming on?"

Six panting and exasperated prefects eyed him almost wolfishly. But they did not come on. It was not good enough. The job was a size too large for them, and they realised it.

Loder set the example of retreat. He tramped away in search of a wash. There was no doubt that he needed one. Walker and Carne followed him.

"You young rascals!" panted Wingate. "You'll get sacked for this!"

"Bow-wow!"

"Rats!"

"Go home, Wingate!"

Wingate and Gwynne and Sykes eyed one another. They had tons of pluck, but the thing simply couldn't be done. There was no entrance by the window of the Rag so long as the Remove rebels were determined to defend it, and there was no doubt of their determination.

"Better report to the Head, I think!" gasped Wingate.

And the enemy departed, followed by howls, yells, and cat-calls from the victorious rebels.

"Remove wins!" chuckled the Bounder.

"We've beaten them! Hurrah!" roared Bob.

"Hurrah!"

All over Greyfriars School rang and echoed that shout, telling fellows of all Forms, from the Sixth to the Second, that the Remove were in rebellion, and that they had won the first round.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bumps for Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"All serene, Bunter!"

"But, I say——"

"We're sticking to you, old fat man!"

"Yes, but I say——"

"Sticking to you like glue, fatty!"

"The stickfulness is terrific!"

"But, I say, you fellows, let a fellow speak!" howled Bunter.

Billy Bunter had a worried look.

Some of the other fellows, perhaps, were a little worried. Nobody could tell how this extraordinary rebellion was going to turn out.

Most of the fellows were absolutely determined. The Famous Five were as firm as granite. The Bounder, always ready for a row, was enjoying the outbreak, and would have been sorry to see it end on any terms. Mark Linley and Tom Brown, Peter Todd, and Squiff, Lord Mauleverer and Tom Redwing, were as determined as the famous Co. And they had plenty of backers.

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Skinner and his friends were rather doubtful and dubious. They agreed that a Remove man ought not to be expelled for nothing. But a contest with authority was rather too terrifying for them to like it. They did not venture, however, to express their dubious views at present. It was probable that they would have been kicked by the harder spirits. But they wished that they had been anywhere but in the Rag when the outbreak started.

Fisher T. Fish, on the other hand, seemed as keen as anybody on standing by Bunter. Which was rather remarkable, for Fishy was anything but bold and reckless, and nobody had ever before known him to bother his oute transatlantic head about anybody but Fisher Tarleton Fish! Fishy did not take an actual hand in the scrap with the prefects. But he gave it his hearty approval from the rear.

Bunter looked more worried than any other fellow in the Rag. More than an hour had passed since the attack at the window. Nothing had transpired since; the Head seemed to be leaving the rebel Form alone for the present. Perhaps he was a little puzzled what steps to take in this extraordinary and unprecedented state of affairs. Perhaps, in his wisdom, he concluded that the whole thing would "fizzle out" if left to itself.

Anyhow, there had been no further move from the enemy, though footsteps and voices could be heard outside the barricaded door of the Rag.

With every passing minute Billy Bunter looked more and more worried. His champions, supposing that he was getting into a funk, cheerfully assured him of their support. Bunter was not going, if the Greyfriars Remove could prevent it—and they hoped that they could.

"Don't you worry, old fat bean!" said Bob Cherry, giving Bunter a smack on the shoulder, which elicited a loud howl from the fat junior. "We're seeing this through to a finish! You're jolly well not going to be bunked, unless they bunk the whole Remove along with you!"

"And they can't do that!" grinned the Bounder. "I'd like to hear what the governors would say to the Head if they were told that he had sacked a whole Form!"

"We're all right if we stick together!" said Harry Wharton.

"Hang together, lest we hang separately, what?" chuckled Bob. "Anyhow, this is better than prep!"

"Hear, hear!"

"I say, you fellows——" roared Bunter.

"Don't you worry, old podgy porker!"

"Will you let a fellow speak!" shrieked Bunter. "What about supper?"

"Supper!" repeated half a dozen fellows, staring at Bunter.

In the excitement of the rebellion they had forgotten supper, which was now shortly due. But it was not a thing that Billy Bunter could forget! When Billy Bunter ceased to think about his last meal, it was to begin thinking about the next.

"Yes, supper!" said Bunter warmly. "I'm hungry!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I had precious little tea! It's not much I eat, as you know, but a fellow wants his supper. What about supper?"

Billy Bunter blinked very seriously and earnestly at the staring juniors as he propounded that problem.

The Removites were taking terrific

risks, to stand by Bunter, in refusing to give him up to be sacked. That, however, was not what was occupying William George Bunter's fat thoughts. Bunter's podgy thoughts had been turning more and more to supper, and now they were absolutely concentrated on that more important function. Other and lesser matters faded from his mind.

"What about supper?" repeated Bob Cherry. "Is that a riddle?"

"You silly ass!" hooted Bunter. "I suppose we can't cut supper, can we? If you think you're going to keep me here without supper, I can tell you that you're jolly well mistaken!"

"Isn't he a prize packet?" chuckled Peter Todd. "Isn't he nice? Isn't he gorgeous! How they must love him at home—and how I wish they had him there!"

"Oh, really, Toddy——"

"Nothin' to stop you from goin' along to Hall to supper, old fat freak!" grinned the Bounder. "I dare say the beaks will be glad to meet you there."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Smithy——"

"You fat rotter!" roared Johnny Bull. "Shut up!"

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"Kick him!"

"Beast!" roared Bunter. "Look here, we've got to have supper, I suppose! Do you think we can live on air? I jolly well know I can't!"

Some of the Removites laughed. Some looked serious. So far, the rebels of Greyfriars had only been thinking of standing by Bunter, and refusing to give him up to be sacked. The outbreak had been very sudden, and no preparations whatever had been made for it. Certainly, not a single thought had been bestowed on the question of "grub."

It was like Bunter to be the first to think of it. But now that he mentioned it, the other fellows had to think about it, too. It was certainly true that they could not live on air!

"By gum!" said the Bounder. "Is that why the Beak's givin' us a rest—thinkin' that we shall come out to supper?"

"I dare say he feels pretty certain that we shall!" said Frank Nugent. "I hadn't thought about it so far, but——"

"If we open that door, we're done!" said Smithy.

"That's a cert!" agreed Harry Wharton. "And we're not opening it! We're sticking it out!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Shan't!" roared Bunter indignantly. "If you think you're going to starve me, you can think again, see?"

"Bump him!" yelled Johnny Bull, greatly exasperated.

"Good egg!"

"The bumpfulness is the proper caper!"

"I say, you fellows—— Yaroooh!" howled Bunter, as a dozen indignant Removites collared him on all sides.

Bump, bump, bump!

Thrice the fat form of William George Bunter smote the floor of the Rag, and every time a fearful yell woke the echoes.

"Now say 'supper' again, and we'll give you some more!" snorted Bob Cherry.

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter did not say "supper" again. He did not want any more bumps! But he glared at the rebels of the Remove with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

Nobody looking at Bunter just then would have guessed that he was a

fellow in danger of expulsion, defended at all risks by his Form-fellows. He might have been supposed to be a deeply wronged fellow, with a deep, deep grievance! But that was Bunter all over!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Trouble Among the Beaks!

"SCANDALOUS!" said Mr. Prout.
 "Shocking!" said Mr. Capper.
 "Who ever heard of such a thing?" asked Mr. Hacker, the master of the Shell.
 "Quite unheard-of!" said little Mr. Wiggins.
 "Unprecedented!" said Prout, who

was not going to retreat. He marched in with a heightened colour and a glinting eye, and a group of masters, seeing him exchanged glances. They ceased to state that the affair of the Remove was scandalous, shocking, unheard-of, unprecedented, in Mr. Quelch's hearing. In his presence sympathy was their cue; sympathy being, perhaps, more annoying to Quelch than anything else.
 "It is too bad, my dear Quelch!" said Wiggins. "Believe me, I am very sorry for this."
 "Very disagreeable for you, my dear fellow, on your return to the school after so long an absence," remarked Hacker.
 "But you must not take it to heart!" said Mr. Capper.
 "Oh, no, no!" said Mr. Twigg. "Not at all! Bear up, my dear Quelch!"

I am sorry to say, with a total absence of tact."
 Prout's plump face reddened.
 "If you are alluding to the circumstance that I, at the request of the headmaster, have taken the Remove in third school for a few days—" he began warmly.
 Grunt from Quelch.
 "If you suggest, sir, that I am responsible, in the remotest degree, for this lawless outbreak, I repudiate the suggestion, sir!" exclaimed Prout, still more warmly. "I repudiate it utterly, sir!"
 "Come, come!" murmured Mr. Capper. "Quelch does not suggest that, my dear Prout! Quelch is perturbed—distracted—"
 "I," said Prout, "have been attacked by a boy in the Remove—drenched with



Bunter raked out a shovelful of soot from the chimney, and then went back to the window. "I say, you fellows," he said, "give a fellow room!" Loder squirmed frantically, but there was no escape. The fire shovel tapped on his wriggling head, and the soot landed. "Urrrrgh!" came an agonised gurgle through clouds of soot.

never used a word of four syllables if he could think of one containing five.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, had a set face and a glinting eye. In the doorway of Common-room, where beaks most did congregate, the Remove-master had the pleasure—or otherwise—of hearing the opinions of his colleagues on the subject of the present state of affairs at Greyfriars.

It was bitterly annoying to Quelch. He was strict on discipline. Obedience to authority was one of the first articles of his creed. Yet it was his Form that was in revolt.

His Form, the Remove, were barred in the Rag; in a state of rebellion against their headmaster. Every other beak at Greyfriars, of course, was keen to point out that such things could not possibly have happened in his particular Form.

Quelch rather wished that he had not dropped into Common-room. But he

"Your Form is a little out of hand!" said Capper. "After your long absence it is, perhaps, natural, to some extent. Certainly they are very much out of hand."

"No doubt the expulsion of the chief offenders will reduce them to order!" remarked Prout. "I feel for you, Quelch! I should feel very deeply an expulsion in the Fifth Form. Fortunately, it is not likely ever to occur."

Mr. Quelch breathed hard.

"Neither, I hope, is it likely to occur in the Remove!" he barked. "My boys are, unfortunately, acting very lawlessly. I am sorry to say that the provocation has been great, though certainly that is no excuse for them."

"The provocation, sir?" repeated Prout.

"Yes, sir!" barked Quelch. "During my absence, my Form has been taken by other masters, and in some instances,

ink! Drenched from head to foot! The offender has very properly been expelled by the headmaster. That is the cause of this amazing outbreak. Evidently all the boys in the Remove consider it a light matter for a member of Dr. Locke's staff to be assaulted, and—and inked—"

"Not at all, sir!" said Mr. Quelch. "The boys in my Form believe that an error has been made, and that Bunter was not guilty of the assault you mention."

"A mere pretence, sir, to excuse their lawlessness!" hooted Prout, forgetting that he had intended to be sympathetic. "It is perfectly well known, and clearly proved, that Bunter waylaid me on the Elm Walk and squirted an enormous quantity of ink over me from a garden-squirt."

"The Remove are not satisfied with

the proof, at all events!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Does it imply, sir, that you share their belief that an injustice has been committed?" exclaimed Prout.

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips. That, as a matter of fact, was exactly his belief. But he could not say so without appearing to criticise his respected chief.

"I did not say an injustice—I said an error!" he snapped.

"An error, in such circumstances, amounts to an injustice!" said Prout.

Quelch was silent. Prout had him there.

"The proof," said Prout, "was clear and decisive. Had it not been so, can we imagine that Dr. Locke would have sentenced the boy to expulsion?"

"Certainly not," said Hacker.

"Obviously not!" said Wiggins.

"Such a suggestion is a reflection upon the Head!" pursued Prout. "I trust, Quelch, that when you are calmer—"

"I am perfectly calm, Mr. Prout!" hooted Quelch.

"Let me speak, sir! I trust that when you are calmer, you will realise that no such suggestion should have been made. I trust, sir, that you will express your personal regret that a boy in your Form should have attacked a member of Dr. Locke's staff—"

"I will certainly express my regret, sir, when I am assured that such was the case!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, goaded, as it were. "But I do not believe that Bunter did anything of the kind."

"Mr. Quelch!"

"You did not see the boy who squirted ink over you, Mr. Prout. It is known that Bunter had the squirt and the ink, and intended to play such a prank. But his statement is that he abandoned the idea and left the squirt under the elms

when he ran away. This is quite in accordance with his character, and I believe the statement."

"Then whom, sir," almost bawled Prout, "do you accuse?"

"I accuse no one, sir! But it is fairly clear that some other boy must have found the squirt where Bunter left it, and used it—"

"Some other Remove boy—"

"That does not follow, sir!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch hotly. "It does not follow in the least! If a Form-master is ragged, sir, the natural inference is that he was ragged by a member of his own Form. I suggest, sir, that you look in the Fifth Form for the offender."

"Sir!" gasped Mr. Prout.

"Sir!" retorted Quelch.

"I will not tolerate this, sir! I will not tolerate the suggestion that a Fifth Form boy, a senior—a boy of my own Form—" Prout spluttered with wrath. "I will not tolerate it, sir! Conclusive proof has been adduced; and you, sir, are deliberately closing your eyes to it. And I have no doubt, sir, that it is a knowledge of your view of the matter that has encouraged your Form to break out in reckless defiance of the Head."

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

He had no doubt of that, either! It was a terribly uncomfortable position for a schoolmaster who was a whale on discipline!

"I was bound, sir, to speak up for the boy, believing that he was innocent!" he rapped.

"Believing that the Head had committed an injustice?" hooted Prout.

"An error!" corrected Quelch.

"An error, sir! Do you ask me to believe that you would repeat that statement in the presence of the Head?"

"Gentlemen!" murmured peaceful Mr. Capper.

"I decline to discuss the matter with you, sir!" said Mr. Quelch, pale with anger and mortification. "It does not concern you, sir!"

"Gentlemen!" said Mr. Wiggins.

"I repeat—" roared Prout.

"Gentlemen!" said Mr. Hacker.

"I repeat—"

Hacker, Wiggins, Capper, and Twigg moved between the Remove master and the Fifth Form master. Really it seemed to be needed; for the two exasperated beaks were facing one another like two excited turkeys. Capper waved a soothing hand.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen!" he said.

"I repeat—" almost foamed Prout.

"You may repeat yourself, sir, as often as you choose!" hooted Quelch. "But I beg you to excuse me from staying to listen to your repetitions, sir!" And Quelch whisked out of the Common-room.

There was an excited buzz of voices after he went. Never or hardly ever, had there been such a sensation in the masters' room at Greyfriars. What had happened was what the juniors would have described as a shindy! It was really as scandalous, unheard-of, and unprecedented as what was going on in the Rag!

Quelch, as he went down the passage, breathed hard through his nose.

He was intensely annoyed with the fussy, interfering master of the Fifth. But the worst of it was that he had been "drawn" by Prout; he had been exasperated into uttering open criticism of his Chief! Sooner or later, somehow or other, that would reach the headmaster's ears. If the Remove rebellion went on what was Quelch's position to be like—known to be in his heart on the side of the rebels? He could scarcely remain at Greyfriars, in such discord with the Chief he was bound to respect and obey.

Mr. Quelch went back to his study.

For a long, long time he paced that room in bitter and troubled thought. Then, at last, he left it and went quietly to the door of the Rag.

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THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter is Fed-up!

"**A** NYBODY hungry?"

Bob Cherry asked that question, and there was a laugh from some of the garrison of the Rag.

There was a groan from one fellow! That one, of course, was Billy Bunter! It was growing quite late.

It was past the usual bed-time of the juniors. Supper in Hall was long over; and there had been no supper for the rebels of the Remove.

Schoolboys, as a rule, had healthy appetites. Every fellow in the Remove wanted his supper. Nobody wanted to cut it out and wait till breakfast.

Moreover, what were the prospects for brekker? There was nothing to eat in the Rag. It was no more possible to get out in the morning for brekker than to get out for supper. Getting out of the Rag meant surrender, or, at least, defeat, and the end of the rebellion.

So far as that went, nobody but the reckless Bunter wanted the rebellion to continue. But they were not going to give up Bunter!

"The fact is," remarked Peter Todd, "we've been rather asses! If we were going to take this line, we ought to have planned it ahead."

"Well, it had to happen suddenly," said Harry Wharton. "It was a question of letting them bag Bunter, or not!"

"And the bagfulness of the esteemed

and idiotic Bunter was not the proper caper!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "I'm hungry!" came plaintively from Bunter.

"Think we're not?" snarled Skinner. "Beast!"

"We've got to stick it out!" said the captain of the Remove quietly. "We're standing by Bunter, and that's that!"

"What about to-morrow?" sneered Skinner.

"Same as to-day!"

"They haven't made a move," said Snoop. "They're going to starve us out, and save themselves the trouble of bursting the door. You'll see."

"Let them try it on!" said Harry.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Don't you worry, Bunter!"

"I'm hungry!"

"Oh, shut up!"

"Beast!"

Perhaps Billy Bunter was grateful for all the trouble and risk the Remove were facing in his defence. If so, he had no time to think about it. He was thinking of the missing foodstuffs.

Other fellows could get hungry without making a song and a dance about it! But Bunter's hunger was a more serious matter. When Bunter was hungry, nothing else in the wide universe was of the slightest consequence in comparison. If Bunter had to miss a meal, it was not merely tragic—it was catastrophic! Not only was Bunter the fellow to make a mountain out of a molehill; out of such a molehill as this he would make a whole range of Himalayas. Squatted in an armchair, with a long and lugubrious face, Billy Bunter groaned in bitterness of spirit.

It was all very well for these fellows to save him from being bagged and turfed out. But what was the use if he had to miss meals? Turfing out was not nice; but it was a pleasure in comparison with missing grub!

Bunter was not, in point of fact, feeling grateful. He was feeling fierce! He would have told these beasts what he jolly well thought of them, only it would have earned him nothing but a kicking.

When ten o'clock chimed out from the old clock-tower, the fat Owl of the Remove felt that flesh and blood could stand no more.

He heaved himself out of the armchair.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter!" yawned Squiff.

"Beast! I say, I'm fed-up!"

"Wish I was!" sighed Bob Cherry.

"I'm feeling as empty as a drum."

"Take it out in sleep!" suggested the Bounder. "We're not giving in."

"No fear!"

"I say, you fellows, I tell you I'm fed-up!" howled Bunter. "I tell you I'm jolly well not going to stay here and starve, to please you."

"To please us!" gasped Bob.

"Yes, you beast! You can cut meals if you like—I'm not going to! I'm jolly well getting out of this."

Bunter rolled to the door.

"Lend me a hand to get this beastly table away!" he snorted.

"If you go out of this room, you fat-head, you'll be nailed!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Well, there's nobody in the passage now," said Bunter. "I'm jolly well going to look for some grub."

"It's too risky, you fat duffer."

"I'm not so afraid of risk as you fellows are!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Nothing funky about me, I hope!" said Bunter scornfully. "Lend me a hand with this table, and shut up."

Harry Wharton looked at him. Then without another word, he lent a hand

with the table and pulled it away from the door. If Bunter chose to put an end to an almost impossible position, of his own accord, it was no business of Wharton's to stop him.

Bunter unlocked the door. He peered out into a dark passage. Hungry as he was, the fat Owl was cautious.

But there was nobody at hand. All Forms but the Sixth were in their dormitories; bedtime had cleared off the crowd round the door of the Rag. And the Sixth-Form prefects, if they were not gone to bed, were not bothering

GREYFRIARS CARTOONS

By HAROLD SKINNER.

No. 4.—BOB CHERRY

(One of the Famous Five of the Remove.)

This week our lightning artist has had a shot at Bob Cherry. But since doing so, he's been conspicuous by his absence lest the curly-headed Bob retaliates with a cricket stump!



Here's ourly, sunny-tempered Bob,
He bats in hefty style,
And when the bowler tries a lob
It goes about a mile!

He's full of spirits every day,
And cheers the dismal chumps!
When Bob comes roaring down your way
You can't be in the dumps!

about the Remove. Some of them had damages to bother about which occupied all their attention.

"Safe as houses!" said Bunter. "I'm going! If you fellows feel nervous, you'd better lock the door after me."

And Bunter was gone!

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

"What a game!" jeered Skinner. "We've all asked for a flogging, or the sack, on that fat freak's account; and this is the thanks we get."

"The thankfulness is not terrific!"

grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed Bunter is a corker."

"I guess this lets us out, though!" said Fisher T. Fish. "I'll say that now Bunter's vamoosed, the sooner we absquatulate the better."

Wharton closed the door after Bunter. He was rather nonplussed. The bone of contention had vanished; and the rebels were left with nothing to rebel about! The contending forces at Greyfriars were rather in the position of the ancient Greeks and Trojans struggling for the body of Patroclus, if that body had suddenly vanished away like a Boojum!

"Game's up!" said Bob Cherry with a laugh. "Let the fat idiot rip!"

"That's all very well," said Nugent. "But will the Head let us rip? We've asked for rather more than we want."

"Let's hold out!" suggested the Bounder. "If we stick it out, the Head's bound to come to terms."

"Oh, rats!"

"Rot!"

"Rubbish!"

"The rotfulness is terrific."

Smithy shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, we've asked for it; and if we give in we shall get what we've asked for!" he said.

"I guess the Beak can't sack the whole caboodle!" said Fisher T. Fish.

Tap!

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, that's somebody at the door!" exclaimed Bob.

Tap!

The knock at the door showed that, whoever was there, he was unaware that the door was now unlocked and unbaricaded. Whoever it was, beak or prefect, evidently he had not seen Bunter sneaking away from the Rag.

"Who's there?" called out Wharton, hastily catching hold of the key, ready to turn it.

"It is your Form-master, Wharton!" came the quiet tones of Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!" Wharton did not turn the key.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Peace or War!

"QUELCH!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Lock the door!" whispered the Bounder.

Wharton shook his head. Vernon-Smith promptly jammed his foot against the door, so that it could not be opened from outside. But the handle did not turn; Mr. Quelch was not seeking to enter. Evidently he had no doubt that the Rag was still in a state of defence.

"Wharton!"

"Yes, sir!" said Harry. "I—I say, sir, we—we're all sorry that this has happened, sir, after you've been away so long."

"The sorrowfulness is terrific, esteemed sahib!" said the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"I am glad to hear you say so, Wharton! I am speaking to you as my head boy!" said Mr. Quelch. "I hope that you will listen to reason! Whatever may be your opinion with regard to the expulsion of Bunter, you cannot possibly hope to contend against the authority of your headmaster."

"Can't we?" murmured the Bounder.

"Shut up, Smithy!"

"Let this riot cease," said Mr. Quelch, "before more harm is done! You are aware, Wharton, that it places me in an intolerable position, as master of a Form in revolt. I am here to make an appeal to you."

"Oh, sir!" exclaimed Wharton, quite

overcome at the idea of the grim, unbending master of the Remove making an appeal to anybody.

"I will endeavour," said Mr. Quelch, "to make your peace with the Head, so far as may be possible, if you return to obedience at once. Come out of that room, and go quietly to your dormitory. To-morrow—"

"To-morrow, floggings and sackings!" jeered the Bounder.

"Will you shut up, Smithy, you cheeky ass?" growled Johnny Bull.

"To-morrow," said Mr. Quelch quietly, "there will assuredly be punishment for this lawless outbreak; but I think I can prevail upon your headmaster to the extent that there shall be no expulsions."

The juniors looked at one another. Mr. Quelch, it was clear, supposed that Bunter was still there. Had Bunter been still there, the Remove could not have given in without surrendering him—and that was not their idea at all. But Bunter was gone! He had chosen to take his fate into his own fat hands, and the cause of the rebellion had disappeared! Nobody but the Bounder was likely to think of keeping it up, simply for the sake of a shindy.

In fact, the juniors realised that, now that Bunter had dropped out, this visit from Mr. Quelch, and the offer of the olive branch, was a stroke of luck. It gave them a chance of doing gracefully what they had no alternative but to do.

Wharton glanced from face to face, and all the fellows nodded, only the Bounder shrugging his shoulders.

The captain of the Remove opened the door.

"Please come in, sir!" he said respectfully.

Mr. Quelch stepped in.

Whether he was angry with his Form or not, there was no doubt that he was relieved by this sudden and rather unexpected end of the rebellion. He had had but a faint hope when he came to the Rag.

"You will now go to your dormitory!" he said. "You may leave Bunter here!"

Without answering that, the Removites filed out of the Rag, the Bounder suppressing a grin as he went.

When they were all out, the Remove master glanced round the long room without seeing Bunter there.

"Bunter!" he rapped out.

The juniors in the passage smiled. Evidently Quelch was under the impression that the fat Owl was in hiding.

"Bunter!" Mr. Quelch's voice grew deeper. "Bunter! Show yourself at once, Bunter!"

Skinner, peeping back in the doorway, saw the Remove master stoop and peer under the table. He chuckled. But he dodged quickly after the other fellows, as Quelch came to the door.

"Wharton!" called out the Form-master.

"Yes, sir?" Harry Wharton looked round.

"Where is Bunter?"

"I don't know, sir!"

"What do you mean, Wharton?" Mr. Quelch's voice was sharp. "He was in this room with you!"

"He left before you came, sir!" answered the captain of the Remove demurely.

Mr. Quelch stared at him. It dawned upon him now why he had had such an easy success with the rebels. Perhaps he wondered what would have happened had Bunter still been there. Fortunately Bunter wasn't!

"You do not know where he is now, Wharton?" he asked at last.

"No, sir!"

"Very well. You may go to your dormitory."

Some of the Removites had an impression that Quelch was not exactly displeased at the disappearance of the bone of contention. As he did not want Bunter sacked, he could not really want to be the one to hand him over to that fate.

The juniors marched off, and Mr. Quelch rustled away, greatly relieved in his mind. He looked in at the prefects' room, where Wingate and some more of the Sixth were up.

"Wingate!" said Mr. Quelch quietly.

"Oh, yes, sir!" The Greyfriars captain jumped up.

"I shall be obliged if you will see lights out for the Remove."

Wingate blinked.

"Lights out for the Remove, sir?" he stuttered. "B-b-but, sir, the Remove are barred in the Rag—"

"My Form are in their dormitory, Wingate," said Mr. Quelch calmly. "And if you will kindly see lights out there—"

"Oh! Yes, sir, certainly!" gasped the astonished Wingate. And, in an amazed state, he made his way to the Remove dormitory—where he found the late rebels turning in.

"So you're here, you young sweeps!" said Wingate, staring at them.

"Here we are, you old sweep!" answered the Bounder.

Bob Cherry swung round his pillow and caught Herbert Vernon-Smith on the head. There was a yell from Smithy, as he sat down suddenly.

"You silly ass!" he roared. "What are—"

"Shut up, Smithy!"

"I'll jolly well—"

"You'll get six, Vernon-Smith, if you don't mind your step!" said Wingate quietly. "Now turn in."

TO ALL MY CHUMS!

A Personal Appeal by
Your Editor.

For over 25 years the MAGNET's Companion Paper has been the GEM, the famous all-school story paper, and every reader of MAGNET ought to make a point of getting the GEM every Wednesday. I give you my word, as Editor of both publications, that you will enjoy the GEM from the first word to the last. At the present time, this old-established story-book is better than ever, and I flatter myself that the MAGNET and GEM together, form the finest combination of school story papers that ever ran in double harness. Let me appeal to you, then, chums, with all the earnestness at my command, to put the GEM to the test by ordering next Wednesday's issue from your newsagent to-day, at once, while you think of it! You will? Thank you! I knew I should not have to appeal in vain to the most loyal body of readers an Editor ever had!

I do not often ask a favour of you, my chums, but to-day I do so. For friendship's sake get next Wednesday's GEM, and you will keep on reading it thereafter for your own sake!

YOUR EDITOR.

The Bounder had to realise that rebellion, and cheeking the prefects, was already a thing of the past. He turned in sulkily.

Wingate put out the light, and left the dormitory. Considering his experiences at the window of the Rag that afternoon, most of the juniors thought it was "jolly decent" of Wingate to be so cheerfully good-tempered. Only the Bounder had a grouse.

"Quelch might have let us have some supper!" he grunted.

"Oh, blow supper!" said Bob Cherry. "We shall get brekker in the morning, anyhow, and that's something to be thankful for."

"I've a jolly good mind—"

"Oh, cheese it, Smithy!"

And the Bounder sulkily settled down to sleep, and, at that unusually late hour, it was not long before all the Remove were in the embrace of Morpheus. What was going to happen on the morrow was rather doubtful; but the morrow was left to take care of itself.

Mr. Quelch strolled into Common-room, where the beaks were still in deep and eager discussion of the rebellion. There was a faint smile on the Remove master's face. So far, the other masters knew nothing of the end of the "row."

Prout gave him a belligerent look.

"May I ask, Mr. Quelch, whether the boys of your Form are to be left undisturbed where they are for the night?" he inquired sarcastically.

"Certainly," answered Mr. Quelch blandly.

"They are to be left—"

"Undoubtedly!"

"Undisturbed—"

"Quite!"

"And you are satisfied with this state of affairs?" exclaimed Prout.

"Perfectly!"

"I do not think, sir, that the Head will be satisfied!" snorted Prout.

"I think, on the other hand, that he will share my satisfaction," answered the Remove master. "I am sure he will be glad to learn that my Form have gone quietly to their dormitory, and are asleep in bed. I am now going to inform him of the fact, and I have no doubt whatever that he will be both satisfied and pleased."

With that, Quelch walked out of the Common-room again—leaving Prout with his mouth open, like a landed codfish, staring—all the wind taken out of his portly sails.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter, the Dodger!

CLANG!
Snore!

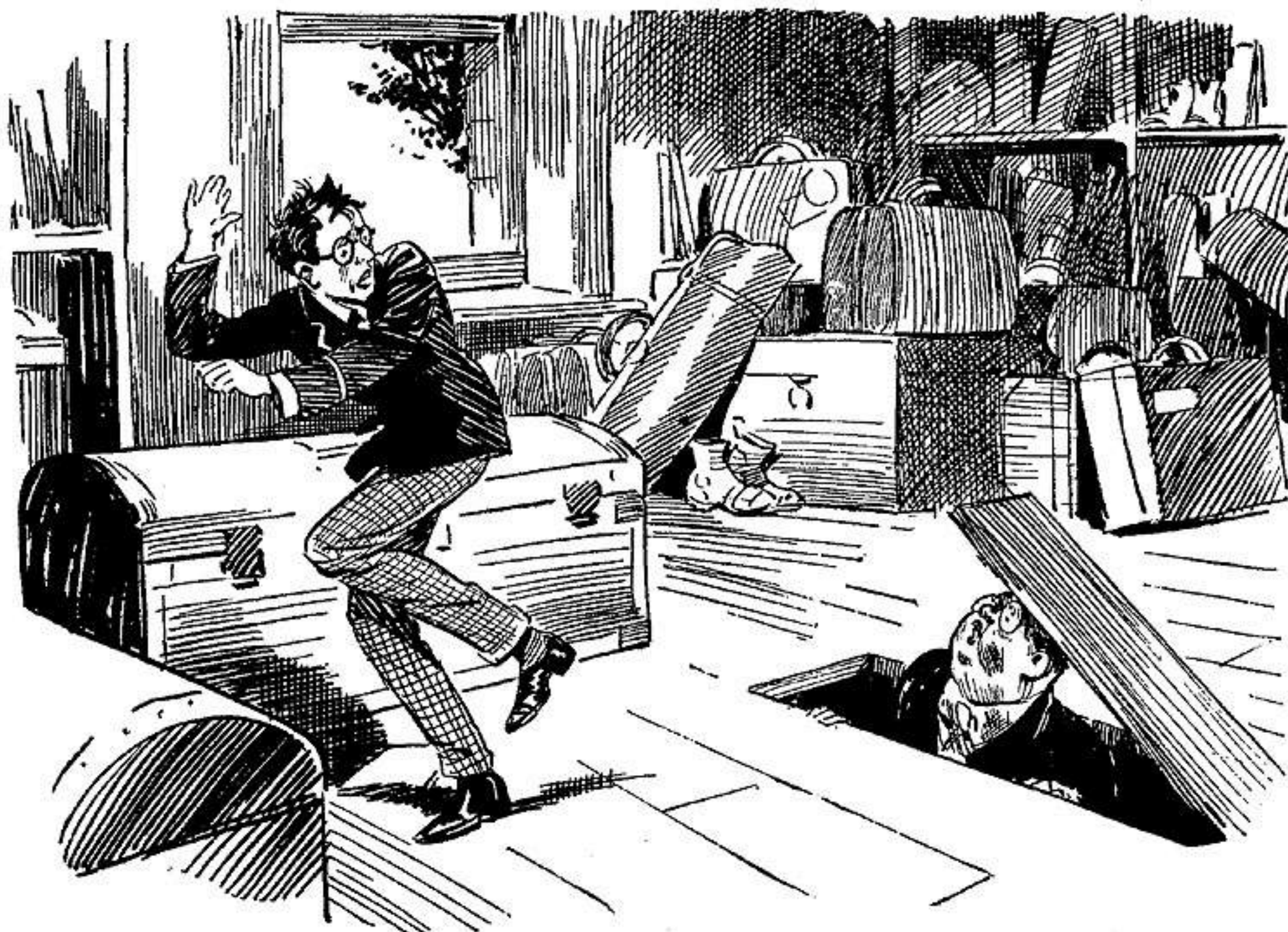
"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

The clang of the rising-bell, in the summer's morning, was a sound to be expected in the Remove dormitory. But the snore from Bunter's bed was rather unexpected.

Bob Cherry sat up, and stared at that bed. Billy Bunter's fat face pressed the pillow, the eyes shut, and the mouth open. What had become of Bunter when they went to bed the Removites had not known—only they could guess that he had been in search of provender. Apparently he had arrived later, after they were asleep—for here he was, snoring.

"Bunter!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Jolly old Bunter!" grinned the Bounder. "The beaks can't know that he's here, or they'd have hooked him out."



From the cavity in the floor appeared a fat and rather grubby hand. It was followed into view by a fat and exceedingly grubby face. "Search me!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. Billy Bunter, from the opening in the floor, blinked round him through his big spectacles. Then, as he sighted the astounded Fishy, he gave a sudden squeal of alarm.

Snore!

The Remove turned out, all of them staring at the sleeping beauty. Bunter snored on, regardless. Sticky traces on his fat face seemed to hint that he had been successful in his search for provender overnight. Bunter, it seemed, had not, after all, missed his supper. The juniors grinned as they looked at him. Plenty of fellows in Bunter's peculiar circumstances, would have found it difficult to sleep peacefully. Bunter, fortunately, could always sleep. It was, in fact, his long suit.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry, bending over him. "Wake up, Bunter! Wake up, old fat bean!"

Snore!

Bob jerked off the bedclothes. Then Billy Bunter came out of slumber with a jump.

"Ow! Beast! Lemme alone! Ow! Wharrer marrer? Urrgh!"

Bunter sat up, and blinked.

He groped for his big spectacles, set them on his fat little nose, and blinked again at a crowd of grinning faces.

"Wharrer you wake me up for, you beasts?" he demanded.

"Rising-bell's stopped!" said Harry Wharton.

"Blow the rising-bell! No need for me to turn out at the bell!" grunted Bunter, "Gimme my blankets."

"Did you bag some grub last night, after all?" chuckled Bob.

"Eh! Yes! Luckily, I found Mrs. Kebble's supper laid, and she'd gone over to speak to Mrs. Mimble," said Bunter. "Lucky I saw her go, wasn't it, and guessed that Mary might have laid supper in her room?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We never had any supper!" grunted Skinner.

"Well, if you'd looked into the house-dame's room, as I did, you could have had some!" said Bunter. "I wasn't going without my supper, I can jolly well tell you. Not that there was enough for me—only a cold chicken and a few odd things. Still, it was better than nothing! Look here, I'm not getting up yet—"

"Suppose the beaks come and catch you here?" grinned Bob.

"Oh, they won't think of looking for me here," said Bunter. "That's all right! Gimme my bedclothes."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, is that Quelch coming?" exclaimed Bob, suddenly.

"Oh, lor'!"

Bunter was out of bed with a bound. With another bound, he vanished underneath it.

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

"I say, you fellows!" gasped Bunter, from under the bed. "Keep it dark! Don't let that beast know I'm here! Oh, lor'!"

"All serene, old fat man, nobody's coming!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "But you'd better get your clobber on in case somebody does."

"Beast!"

Bunter crawled out from under the bed. Now that he was up, the fat junior realised that he had better get dressed, and ready for dodging. If he was going to remain at Greyfriars, in spite of the fact that he was expelled, it was evident that Bunter had a lot of dodging to do.

Bob Cherry, as usual, was first out of the dormitory. But when Bob went out, he came in again very quickly. He spotted Wingate of the Sixth coming along from the stairs.

"Look out, Bunter—" he exclaimed.

"Yah!"

"Here comes Wingate—"

"Rats!"

"You silly ass—"

"Beast!"

Having had one false alarm, Bunter was not to be taken in a second time! He did not trouble to park himself under a bed at the news that the Greyfriars captain was coming.

A minute later, Wingate arrived at the door of the dormitory. He looked in with a frowning brow.

"Have you kids seen anything of Bunter?" he demanded. "I've just heard that he snaffled the house-dame's supper last night, and it seems that he's still in the House. If you've seen him—why—what—" Wingate broke off, as his eyes fell on a well-known podgy figure and fat face. "Bunter!"

"Oh, crikey!"

Wingate strode into the dormitory. "I say, you fellows, keep him off!" yelled Bunter, in alarm. "I say, I won't be taken to the Head! I say, I'm not going to be sacked! I say—" The Owl of the Remove broke off, and scuttled along the dormitory, before Wingate could reach him.

"Stop!" roared Wingate.

"Beast!" gasped Bunter.

An outstretched hand touched his fat shoulder. Bunter bounded headlong over a bed, barely escaping.

"Go it, Bunter!" yelled the Bounder.

Wingate rushed round the bed to grab Bunter on the other side. The fat junior tore away up the dormitory. Close on his track went the prefect, gaining fast.

A few seconds more and the fat Owl would have been in his grasp. At the

psychological moment Fisher T. Fish put out a long bony leg, and Wingate stumbled over it and crashed.

"Oh!" he roared, as he hit the dormitory floor. "Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good man, Fishy!"

"Hook it, Bunter!"

Bunter did not need telling! He was hooking it, as fast as his fat little legs could go. Before Wingate could pick himself up, the Owl of the Remove vanished out of the dormitory doorway. The patter of rapidly running feet died away down the passage.

Wingate scrambled up, red with wrath.

He glared round for Bunter, but Bunter was gone. Then he glared at Fisher T. Fish.

"You tripped me!" he roared.

"I—I—I guess it was an accident, Wingate!" stammered Fisher T. Fish in great alarm. "I'll say it was jest an accident—I'll say—whoop! Yoooop! Yarooop! Oh, scissors! Oh, great gophers and horned toads! Yaroooh!"

Wingate seemed cross! Had he had his official ashplant with him, no doubt he would have given Fishy "six." As it was, he grasped the American junior, spun him over, and spanked him.

Spank, spank, spank!

Fisher T. Fish's nasal voice was heard on its top note! Wingate of the Sixth had a heavy hand.

"Yarooop! Let up!" shrieked Fishy. "You pie-faced jay, I'm saying let up! Whoop! Great Abraham Lincoln! Yoop!"

"Rescue!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Stand back, you young sweeps!" roared Wingate.

But the Removites did not stand back! Fisher T. Fish had surprised the whole Form by taking a hand, or rather a foot, in helping Bunter to escape! It was not Fishy's way, as a rule, to help a lame dog over a stile. But he had done it, and the other fellows were not likely to leave him to bear the brunt unaided.

Harry Wharton and Co. rushed to the rescue. The Remove rebellion had ended—but the spirit of rebelliousness was evidently not defunct. The Famous Five collared Wingate on all sides, jerked him away from Fishy, and rolled him over.

"Pile in!" yelled the Bounder, eager as usual for trouble. And he lent a hefty hand.

Wingate, gasping for breath, hardly knowing whether he was on his head or his heels, was rolled out of the Remove dormitory. He departed in a dishevelled and dusty state.

"Ow! Wow! Ow!" groaned Fisher T. Fish, wriggling like an eel. "I'll say I'm hurt! I'll sure say I'm damaged some! Yep! I'll say this is the bee's knee! I'll tell a man it's the elephant's side-whiskers! Wow!"

"Good old Fishy!" said Bob. "You're not such a funk as you've always made yourself out to be."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Wow! I guess I'm sure damaged!" groaned Fisher T. Fish. "That pesky guy has beat me up, a few! And then some! Wow!"

The Removites went down from the dormitory, Fisher T. Fish wriggling his way after them. Fisher T. Fish was damaged, and he was wriggling painfully; but he had rather risen in the estimation of his Form-fellows. The Removites were not aware that Fishy's conscience was at work! They were not, in fact, aware that he had a conscience! But he had—and it rather

worried him on Bunter's account. For Fishy, little as anyone at Greyfriars School suspected it, was the fellow who had "mopped" the ink over Mr. Prout, and who was justly entitled to the "sack" that had been awarded to the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove.

That, however, was Fishy's secret, which he was not likely to reveal. He was concerned for the hapless Owl, even to the extent of helping him if he could; but not to the extent of owning up and taking his gruel! With the sack in prospect, Fisher T. Fish was not likely to spill the beans.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Gone from Greyfriars!

"WHERE'S Bunter?"

"Gone!"

"Must be gone!"

It looked like it!

There was rather a strained atmosphere in the Remove Form Room that day. The Removites could not help feeling acutely conscious of the fact that they had very recently been in rebellion against authority. They had barred their headmaster out of the Rag. They had handled prefects! They could hardly expect the matter to blow over.

But it seemed that it did!

Billy Bunter having vanished, probably the Head decided that the least said the soonest mended, and that the whole affair could be washed out and buried in oblivion.

No doubt Mr. Quelch had used his influence in helping the Head to come to that wise and lenient decision.

Greatly to the surprise of the Removites, and infinitely to the relief of most of them, nothing more was said on the subject of that outbreak in the Rag.

The Bounder was a little disappointed. He had been looking forward to a tremendous shindy. But all the other fellows were relieved, and glad that the storm had blown over.

If Bunter was gone, and the sentence of the "sack" carried into effect, they could do no more to help him; neither had Bunter's peculiar kind of gratitude for services rendered increased their enthusiasm.

And that he was gone seemed certain.

Greyfriars School had been searched for him, almost combed with a small comb, and no trace of the fat Owl had been found.

Skinner declared that if he was still about the place something would be seen or heard of him at dinner-time. But at dinner-time nothing was seen or heard of him. That, according to Skinner, settled it! It was unimaginable that Billy Bunter could miss a meal and keep quiet about it.

"Gone!" said Bob Cherry, convinced at last.

"The gonfulness is terrific!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed and absurd Bunter is now with the old mokes at home."

"I suppose the Head will hear from his father, if he's got home," said Harry Wharton. "He must be gone! It's rotten hard luck, for we jolly well know that he never did ink Prout, and Quelch knows it as well as we do! Still, I suppose the Head couldn't do anything else, when the fat duffer took so much trouble to make it look as if he did it! But—" The captain of the Remove broke off, frowning.

"Nothing we can do now!" said Bob.

"No! Nothing! But—"

"It's sure hard tack," said Fisher T. Fish. "But if the fat guy's gone, he's gone, and that's that!"

"And what cannot be cured must go

longest to the well, as the English proverb remarks!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I guess it gets my goat, but it sure can't be helped!" said Fishy, who was by no means easy in his mind.

"Well, there's one chance for him yet," said Harry thoughtfully. "It may come out who really inked Prout—"

"Eh?" ejaculated Fisher T. Fish, in alarm.

"If they get the right man, they're bound to let Bunter come back," argued the captain of the Remove.

"Oh, wake snakes!" murmured Fisher T. Fish. "I guess it was one of the Fifth, you guys, and they'll never cinch him! Nope!" And Fisher T. Fish hastily detached himself from the group of Removites, and jerked away.

Fisher T. Fish was very far from anxious for the fellow who had inked Prout to be discovered! Fishy was genuinely concerned for Bunter; but he was still more deeply and closely concerned for himself.

Harry Wharton & Co. went down to the cricket ground after class, for practice. They could not help feeling troubled about Bunter, whom they regarded as the victim of an unjust fate; but at the same time they realised that they were well out of the "row" with the Head. Bunter had solved a very difficult problem by clearing out of the school—if he had cleared out. And it looked as if he had.

When the juniors came in from cricket, however, the captain of the Remove was called into his Form-master's study. He found Mr. Quelch with a knitted and troubled brow.

"Has anything been seen of Bunter to-day, Wharton?" asked the Remove master abruptly.

"Not that I know of, sir, since this morning in the dorm," answered Harry, in surprise. "Hasn't he gone home?"

"It was taken for granted that he had, Wharton, when he could not be found in the school. But Dr. Locke has communicated with his father, of course; and it appears, from Mr. Bunter's reply, that the boy has not gone home, so far, at all events."

"He can't be here, sir!" said Harry.

"I am sure not; and yet what can he be doing?" said Mr. Quelch, with a very worried look. "It may be that he dare not face his father, having been expelled from the school. He can scarcely be staying away from home, however, unless he is provided with money. Are you aware whether he is provided with money, Wharton?"

Wharton smiled faintly.

"I'm pretty sure not, sir," he answered. "He's generally rather hard up."

"Very well, Wharton; if you know nothing of him, you may go."

And Wharton went.

He followed his friends up to the Remove passage. There was going to be tea in Study No. 14—the study that belonged to Squiff, Johnny Bull, and Fisher T. Fish. Wharton's brow was thoughtful as he joined his chums.

"Anything up?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Bunter's not gone home!" answered Harry.

"Where the dickens can he be, then?"

"Goodness knows!"

"Poor old Bunter!" said Nugent.

The juniors went along to Study No. 14. As they reached that study the door opened, and Fisher T. Fish came out suddenly. He came out as if he was doing a nose-dive, and landed in the passage with a bump and a yell.

"What the thump!" ejaculated Wharton.

But the cause of Fishy's sudden and startling exit from his study was visible the next moment—in the shape of a

boot in the doorway. The boot belonged to Johnny Bull.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's this game?" roared Bob Cherry.

Johnny glared out of the study.

"That skinny tick at the moneylending accounts again!" he snorted. "I've kicked him out! If he comes in, I'm going to kick him out again!"

"You pie-faced clam!" gasped Fisher T. Fish, scrambling up on his bony legs. "You dog-goned, pesky jay, I guess a guy's coming into his own study!"

"Do!" said Johnny Bull grimly.

Fisher T. Fish glared at him.

"I'll sure make potato-scrappings of you, if you aim to keep me out of my own study!" he howled.

"Get on with it!"

"Aw, go and chop chips!" snorted Fisher T. Fish; and, instead of making potato-scrappings of Johnny Bull—which might have proved a rather difficult task—Fishy went along the passage to the box-room stair. Trouble in Study No. 14 was not infrequent for the Shylock of Greyfriars; and on such occasions he was wont to retire to the box-room to do his precious business accounts.

"Come in, you men!" said Johnny Bull hospitably, his ferocious glare at Fishy changing into a grin of welcome to his chums. "You can lend a hand getting tea! The stuff's in the cupboard!"

After cricket practice all the juniors had good appetites, and were ready for tea. They crowded into Study No. 14. Johnny Bull opened the door of the study cupboard. He reached in to lift out a parcel of tuck, placed there earlier in the day, to unpack it for tea.

But he did not lift out a parcel of tuck.

He stared into the cupboard.

"What——" he began. "Who——"

"Hand it out, old bean," said Squiff. "What's the row?"

"You haven't shifted it?" asked Johnny, glancing round at the Australian junior.

"Eh! No! Isn't it there?"

"No!"

"Wha-at?"

The other fellows stared into the cupboard. Like that of the well-known Mrs. Hubbard, it was bare. The parcel of tuck, laid in for tea for six, was gone from their gaze like a beautiful dream!

"Great pip!" exclaimed Bob Cherry blankly. "Look here, what's become of it? There's no grub-raider in the Remove now Bunter's gone."

"Bunter!" gasped Johnny Bull.

"But he's gone——"

"Has he?" snorted Johnny. "Does this look like it?"

"Oh, my hat!"

The chums of the Remove gazed into the empty cupboard. They gazed at one another. All through that day it looked as if Bunter had gone. But at tea-time undoubtedly it looked as if he hadn't!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Haunted Box-room!

WHAT the great horned toad!" grunted Fisher T. Fish.

Fishy was irritated.

It was not the first time that he had been kicked out of his study, when either Johnny Bull or Squiff had come upon him engaged in his amateur moneylending business there. It had, indeed, happened often; but Fishy had never grown to like it. He was feeling quite cross as he went up the narrow stair to the box-room. As he would have expressed it, his dander was riz. And he was still more annoyed when, crossing

the little landing outside the box-room door, he heard a sound within.

Most fellows hardly ever came up to the box-room, unless they happened to want some article that had been left in a box or a trunk. But there were certain fellows who made it a resort on certain occasions. Skinner & Co., when they had expended pocket-money recklessly on smokes, would seek that secluded apartment to smoke their cigarettes in safety from beaks and pre-fects.

Fishy had no objection to Skinner & Co. playing the "giddy ox" as much as they liked, but he did object to their presence when he was going to immerse himself deep in accounts and revel in the calculation of profits. It was sure fierce, Fishy considered, if a galoot, fired out of his own shebang, could not find peace and repose in a dog-gone box-room. So he gave an angry grunt as he tramped on the little landing and hurled open the box-room door.

"Say, you geeks, see here——" began Fisher T. Fish.

Then he broke off as he saw that the room was empty.

He stared round it in astonishment.

He was sure that he had heard a sound within—the sound of a hurried

ing it had caused more than a spot of bother.

He laid it on top of Lord Mauleverer's big trunk, which he used as a table, with his papers. He sat on a smaller box. He took out his fountain-pen and started on figures.

Fishy revelled in figures. He liked—indeed, loved—adding up the small sums he received in interest on the little loans he made among impecunious fags. Fishy could not wait till he was grown up before he started business operations. He was too keen on the "dollars" for that. Many and various were Fishy's schemes for making money; and they did not all turn up trumps, by any means. Often he came out, as he would have expressed it, at the little end of the horn! But he always began again, with undiminished confidence in his own vast abilities.

Deep as he was in that entrancing occupation, Fishy suddenly started and looked up, as a sound fell on his ears. It was the sound of a grunt; and Fishy could have sworn that either there was an escaped pig from a neighbouring farm at hand, or that Billy Bunter was somewhere around. He stared around him, puzzled.

He was alone! That was clear. Nobody else was in the box-room. Yet he was certain that he had heard a fat grunt.

He scanned the room, from the dusty old ceiling, the bare walls, to the bare planks of the floor. Had his ears deceived him again? He rose from his box, stepped quietly to the door, opened it suddenly, and peered out. Nobody was there.

"Carry me home to die!" murmured the puzzled Fishy. "I guess I'm hearing things a few! I'm sure beat!"

He sat down to his accounts again. This time, however, he did not succeed in sinking his cute, spry mind so deeply in the enthralling subject of money. Every now and then he glanced up, with a suspicious eye, as if in doubt whether some unseen fellow was larking with him.

Grunt!

Fishy jumped.

There it was again—and this time there could be no mistake! Clearly and distinctly he had heard a fat grunt, such as might have emanated from Billy Bunter when short of breath.

"That fat geck!" breathed Fishy.

But he was more perplexed than ever. If it was Bunter, where was Bunter? Unless the fat junior had borrowed the cloak-of-darkness from the fairy tale and could make himself invisible, he was not in the box-room. But if Bunter was not, his grunt was. And Bunter's grunt could scarcely be there without Bunter!

It was puzzling, perplexing—in fact, unnerving. It seemed as if the Remove box-room was haunted by a disembodied grunt! Fisher T. Fish quite forgot even his precious accounts as he stared about him.

"Search me!" he murmured, with quite a creepy, uneasy feeling. It was rather disconcerting to be haunted by Billy Bunter's grunt.

Fishy gave another start as there was the sound of a creak. His eyes almost bulged from his head as they were fixed on the floor in a corner of the room. In that corner a board was rising from the floor, as if of its own volition. Fishy gazed at it, spellbound.

It was a short, but wide, length of board, which had rested on the floor-joists, but was resting on them no longer! It was tilting up on one end in the most astonishing way.

But a moment more, and that strange

HOW'S THIS FOR A GREYFRIARS LIMERICK?

Horace Coker, the world's biggest
duffer,
With his "stink bike" a lot has
to suffer.
It will take him away,
Then conk out for the day,
And poor Horace returns home by
"puffer"!

Roy Tyson, of 35, Barrett Road,
Walthamstow, E.17, has been
awarded a useful leather

POCKET WALLET

for the above winning effort.
Pile in with your attempts, chums,
if you want to win one of these
useful prizes!

movement. Yet there was no one to be seen.

"Search me!" ejaculated the puzzled Fishy.

He looked round among the boxes. He even looked into the big trunk belonging to Lord Mauleverer. But there was no one to be found. Skinner & Co. had not dodged out of sight, fearful of being caught by a prefect. Skinner & Co. were not there.

Fishy wondered whether it had been the house-dame's cat. But there was no sign of the cat, and the window was shut.

He concluded at length that his long, sharp ears must have deceived him. Anyhow, there was nobody there. Dismissing the puzzle from his mind, the American junior proceeded to business.

He drew various papers from his pockets, into which they had been hastily crammed in Study No. 14, and a little account-book—the same book that had once fallen into Mr. Prout's hands, and to recover which Fishy had taken the terrific risk of squirting the Fifth Form master with the ink Bunter had got all ready for him.

Fishy was very careful indeed of that book now. He had lost it once, owing to Squiff pitching it out of the study window, when it had dropped on Prout's head. Now it was safe in his possession again, though his method of recover-

mystery was explained. From the cavity in the floor, pushing up the board, appeared a fat and rather grubby hand. It was followed into view by a fat and exceedingly grubby face.

"Search me!" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

Billy Bunter, with his fat face and his fat head projecting from the opening in the box-room floor, blinked round him through his big spectacles and grunted breathlessly.

Then, as he sighted the astounded Fishy staring at him, he gave a sudden squeal of alarm and disappeared, and the plank fell back into its place with a thud!

Bunter had vanished again! And Fisher T. Fish stared blankly at the floor that hid the Owl of the Remove from sight.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Lying Low!

"**C**ARRY me home to die!" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

He rose from his box and crossed to the corner of the room. Now that he bent his head and scanned it closely he could see that that short board was loose. The nails that had once secured it to the joists underneath had been loosened by time, no doubt. Anyhow, they were now pulled out, and the board lay in place, unsecured.

That was Bunter's hiding-place—Bunter's latest! Certainly, it was not likely to be spotted, or even suspected.

"Waal, search me!" murmured Fisher T. Fish. "The pie-faced geck! The pesky gink! He ain't hit the horizon, after all! He's sure still around! It's the frog's pyjamas!"

He stared down at the loose board. Bunter, he guessed, skulked in the box-room and retreated to that dismal hiding-place when he heard anyone coming. It could not have been nice there—in darkness, and dust, and spiders. Even the sack and an angry reception from Mr. Bunter at home would have been preferable to a prolonged residence in that unsalubrious quarter.

Fishy, as he stood over the hiding-place, frowned with annoyance. He had not wanted Bunter sacked. He had, indeed, lent the hunted Owl a helping hand. But, at the same time, Bunter's departure from Greyfriars would have made all safe for Fishy. And "Safety First" was Fishy's motto; and he was extremely unused to thinking of anyone by Fisher Tarleton Fish. It was rather a blow to Fishy to discover that Bunter was still at Greyfriars, playing his weird game of hide-and-seek with the school authorities.

But Fishy, unscrupulous as he was in the pursuit of cash, had his limits. Had there been a reward offered for the discovery of Bunter, the fat Owl's fate would have trembled in the balance. Fisher T. Fish could hardly have resisted the lure of cash. Now, annoyed as he was, Fishy was feeling that it was up to him to stand by the hunted Owl, so far as he could do so without undue peril to his precious self. Undoubtedly it was on Fishy's conscience that he had done the deed for which Bunter had been expelled.

He jerked up the loose boards from the joists.

There was a startled, breathless squeak from below.

"Oh, lor'!"

"O.K., you fat gink!" snapped Fisher T. Fish. "You can sure come out!"

Bunter's fat face glimmered up from the dusk below.

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"Oh! Is it you, Fishy?" he gasped.

"I guess it ain't no other guy!" grunted Fisher T. Fish.

Up from the gap in the floor came the head and shoulders of the fat Owl. Bunter gasped with relief.

"I say, it's jolly stuffy down there!" he gasped. "I say, was it you I saw when I lifted the board, a moment ago? I thought it might be one of those beasts hunting me! I say, nobody knows I'm here—what?"

"I'll sure say that nobody's wise to it," said Fisher T. Fish.

Bunter crawled out and shook off dust and cobwebs. Fisher T. Fish stared down into the cavity under the floor. There was a wide space between the box-room floor and the ceiling of the apartment below, though not enough for a fellow to stand upright in. Resting on two beams was a box, which Bunter had taken down apparently to serve as a store cupboard. The lid was open, and Fishy could see bottles of ginger-beer, several paper packets, and other things, in the box. Evidently the hunted Owl had snaffled supplies of food from somewhere.

"Waal, I'll say this is the bee's knee!" said Fisher T. Fish. "Say, you gink, how long you figure you're going to keep up this game?"

Bunter sat down on a trunk and gasped for breath.

"Well, I'm not going home," he said. "I told the Head I couldn't go home. My father would be in a fearful wax if I went home in the middle of the term! Besides, I'm not going to be sacked! I never inked Prout, did I?"

He wiped dust from his big spectacles and set them on his fat little nose again.

"I thought Quelch would see me through," went on Bunter. "Quelch knows I never did it. He's rather let me down. Still, there's a chance, Fishy—they may find the man who inked Prout—"

"Oh!"

"Then it will be all right, won't it?"

"Oh!"

"The fellow must be a putrid sort of rotter, not to have owned up before this. Don't you think so?"

"Oh!"

"Some absolutely cringing worm, you know," said Bunter. "Fancy a fellow keeping mum and letting another fellow be sacked for him? What do you think of a rotter like that, Fishy?"

Fisher T. Fish did not answer that question. It was rather a difficult one for him to answer, in the circumstances.

"Of course, in his place, I'd own up like a shot," said Bunter.

"Aw, can it?" grunted Fisher T. Fish.

"Don't let on that you've seen me here, Fishy. It's pretty safe to camp here, and dodge under that plank when anybody comes. I can keep it up, so long as I have enough grub. Luckily, I found some things in Johnny's study. I looked round while the fellows were in class, you know. Lucky, wasn't it?"

"I'll say Bull sure thinks so," said Fisher T. Fish sarcastically.

"I shall be all right till supper," said Bunter. "It's not pleasant here—still, it's no worse than class; and prep, you know. After all, it's something to be getting out of classes."

Evidently Bunter, in his peculiar position, was able to see the silver lining to the cloud.

"Don't jaw it all over the place that you've seen me here," went on the Owl of the Remove. "But you can tell Toddy, and Wharton, and Bob Cherry—they'll stand by me. In fact, I want them to know. I want somebody to sneak me some blankets from the dormitory—I shall have to camp out here to-night. And I shall want some supper.

Tell my friends I expect them to rally round."

"Search me!" said Fisher T. Fish.

Bunter gave a sudden start. There was a creak of the box-room stairs under a footstep.

He jumped up and dived into his hiding-place. Swiftly Fisher T. Fish replaced the board over him, and the floor presented its normal appearance. As swiftly he jammed his account book and papers into his pocket. Then, as a footstep crossed the landing to the door, Fishy bent over a box, as if looking for something within. If it was a master coming he had to account for his presence in the box-room.

The door opened.

The angular figure and frowning face of Mr. Quelch appeared. He stared at Fisher T. Fish, and then glanced quickly round the room.

"What are you doing here, Fish?"

Fishy jumped up from the box.

"Oh, I guess I didn't see you, sir! Looking for a book I left in my box, sir; but I guess I can't find it."

"You are alone here?"

"Yep!"

"I thought I heard voices," said Mr. Quelch.

"Did you, sir? I guess I was jest saying, I wondered where that pesky book had got to?" said Fisher T. Fish innocently.

"You have not seen Bunter, Fish?"

"Bunter?" repeated Fisher T. Fish.

"Isn't he gone home, sir? All the fellows think he's gone home."

Fishy, as he answered the Remove master, was listening, in an agony of apprehension, for a sound from Bunter. In the stuffy atmosphere of his peculiar hiding-place, Bunter was only too likely to snort, or sniff, or gasp, or grunt. Any such sound would have put the Remove master on the track at once.

Fortunately, the Owl of the Remove remained quite silent. Mr. Quelch glanced round the room again.

He was suspicious, Fishy could see that. Evidently he had visited the Remove box-room, with the idea that the hunted Owl might be lying low there. Still, there was nothing to be seen of Bunter, and nothing to be heard from him. The Remove master went out of the box-room, and Fisher T. Fish, breathing hard through his long, thin nose, wiped a spot of perspiration from his brow.

He did not linger in the room. A minute after Mr. Quelch was gone, Fisher T. Fish was gone also. When the loose board was lifted again and Billy Bunter blinked out, the box-room was empty.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Heavy Hand!

"**U**NPRECEDENTED!" said Mr. Prout.

Other members of the staff were not always, indeed seldom, in agreement with Prout. But now they agreed with that pompous and portly gentleman. It was unprecedented.

The whole school agreed that it was. Such a state of affairs was, in fact, incredible. Not only was it unprecedented—it was unparalleled—another of Prout's favourite words.

Several days had passed. Days, whole days—nights, whole nights, and the mystery of Billy Bunter remained a mystery.

He had not gone home. Replies from Mr. William Samuel Bunter—very tart replies—made that fact clear. Mr. Bunter had seen nothing of his hopeful son, And Mr. Bunter made it plain



"Hook it, Bunter!" said Bob Cherry, from his seat on Coker's head. "Take the tuck and hook it! We'll look after Coker!" "Grooogh! Lemme gerrup! Grooogh!" yelled Coker, heaving in vain. Bunter picked up the tuck and made for the door!

that he regarded the headmaster of Greyfriars as responsible in the matter.

As Bunter had not gone home, and as he was not to be found at Greyfriars, there had been an early impression that he was, so to speak, wandering in space. But that impression had soon been corrected.

Bunter, it was certain, was still in or about the school.

Evidence to that effect accumulated. Bedclothes had been surreptitiously removed from Bunter's bed in the Remove dormitory. That bed being no longer required for a fellow who was no longer there, Mrs. Kebble, the house-dame, had been going to pack the things away. But they had disappeared.

Sheets and blankets, pillow and bolster, even the mattress, had disappeared. Obviously, they had been taken by Bunter, or for Bunter, and the fact pointed clearly to his continued presence at Greyfriars. He was camping somewhere.

But where?

That remained a mystery; though the Head and the other masters suspected that it was not a mystery to all the Remove. They had little doubt that the hunted Owl had confederates in his Form. It was pretty certain that Bunter himself could not have carried off all those things from the Remove dormitory unseen and undiscovered. Some other person had carried them off for him—probably a number of other persons. Probably a dozen fellows had had a hand in it.

Apart from the vanished bedclothes there were traces discovered of an unseen and surreptitious inhabitant of the House.

Wherever Bunter was obviously he could not stay permanently in the same

spot, like St. Simon Stylites on his celebrated pillar.

Bunter was not keen on exercise, but he had to get some exercise. He was not keen on fresh air, but he had to come up to breathe, as it were, like a whale. And he was keen on grub—fearfully keen. That somebody was secretly supplying him with food, was fairly certain. That Bunter did not regard the supply as sufficient, was equally clear—for on several nights there had been raids on the larder. These could only be attributed to a hidden and hungry Bunter.

Prout was certainly right in declaring that it was unprecedented. He might even have used a longer word if he had thought of one.

Some of the fellows took it as a joke. There was a good deal of merriment on the subject of the hidden Owl.

Sixth Form prefects were still looking for him; but after such a lapse of time they naturally did not look very hard or very often. Really, they had other matters to think about. Loder of the Sixth, anxious to "grease" up to the Head by a keen attention to duty, was the keenest. But Loder had no luck. Coker of the Fifth, who had no business to meddle in the matter at all, barged in for that very reason, and twice or thrice was Horace Coker rolled down the Remove staircase, when he went a-hunting in that quarter. The Removites tried to make it clear unto Coker that a Fifth Form man was expected to mind his own business, and, in fact, they made it painfully clear.

This state of affairs, with an expelled fellow hiding somewhere in the school, could not, of course, continue. Only it did continue. Left on his own, no doubt Bunter would soon have been rooted out. But with confederates in the

Remove, helping him in every way, he was not rooted out, and, indeed, it began to look as if he might finish the term at Greyfriars under these extraordinary conditions.

That the Head was deeply annoyed and angry all Greyfriars knew. What Mr. Quelch thought about it nobody knew, as the Remove master said nothing, and his face gave no sign. Perhaps he was hoping that the real assailant of Prout might be brought to light and the hapless Owl cleared and pardoned. But of that assailant's identity, if it was not indeed Bunter, nobody had the remotest suspicion.

"Scandalous!" said Prout in Common-room. "I have said that it is scandalous, and I repeat it!"

"Very extraordinary at least!" said Mr. Capper. "Quelch ought to do something as the boy's Form-master."

Snort from Prout.

"I fear that Quelch does not wish the boy to be found and sent away," he said. "I cannot help suspecting so. I fear that he approves of this defiance of the headmaster's authority."

"My dear Prout—" murmured Capper.

"But, sir," said Prout, "something shall be done! Something must be done, sir, and something shall! And if Quelch will not take steps, I will, sir!"

Prout raised a plump hand.

"Wherever the boy is hidden," he said, "it is clear that he ventures forth at night. Proofs have been found of this. By day he dare not reveal himself, but at night, sir, he steals forth, like an animal from its lair! Watch must be kept for him."

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(Continued from page 13.)

"Dear me!" said Capper.

"Perhaps, Capper, you would care to sit up with me and keep watch for the young rascal?" suggested Prout.

"It is hardly my affair, Prout," said Mr. Capper hastily. Whether it was his affair or not, the Fourth Form master had no fancy for sitting up all night in company with the pompous Prout.

"What do you think, Hacker?" asked Prout, turning to the master of the Shell. "Would you care—"

"I should not!" said Hacker briefly. Another snort from Prout!

"Then I shall stay up by myself!" he said, with dignity. "And I have little doubt that I shall catch that young rascal when he ventures forth from his lair."

Whereat the other beaks smiled. Prout was a good sleeper, as the snore that was often heard from his room testified. It was probable that if Prout stayed up on the watch, he would nod off in a very short time, and that the surreptitious Owl would have little to fear from him. Prout, however, was determined. It was time, in Prout's opinion, that this unprecedented state of affairs came to an end.

Dr. Locke was of the same opinion. While Prout was holding forth in Masters' Common-room, the headmaster of Greyfriars was in Mr. Quelch's study, consulting with the master of the Remove.

"It is nearly a week, my dear Quelch," said the Head, "and obviously the present state of affairs cannot be allowed to continue. I have had several communications from Mr. Bunter of a tart—I might almost say disagreeable—nature."

"No doubt, sir," said Quelch. "But—"

"It is clear," said the Head, "that the boy could not remain in hiding in this way without help from others."

Quelch was silent. He was well aware of that, and at the bottom of his heart he did not blame the fellows for standing by a junior whom they believed to be unjustly sacked.

"I shall question the Remove on the subject," said Dr. Locke. "Please have your Form assembled in the Form-room."

"Very well, sir," said Mr. Quelch quietly.

Ten minutes later the Remove were assembled, and the Head came into the Form-room. His face was grave, almost portentous.

"Trouble coming!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Bet your nat!" agreed the Bounder. "Silence in the Form!" barked Mr. Quelch.

There was silence in the Form. All eyes were fixed on the stern face of the Head.

"Boys of the Remove," said Dr. Locke in a deep voice, "you are aware

that Bunter, of this Form, remains in concealment in the school. It is certain that he has assistance from members of this Form. All boys who are aware of Bunter's present whereabouts will step out."

Nobody stepped out.

"No takers!" murmured the Bounder, and there was a suppressed chuckle.

The Head waited—in vain! Grimmer and sterner grew his brow.

"Very well!" he said, in a tone that hinted that it was far from well. "Very well! Until Bunter is found, this Form will be detained for all half-holidays."

There was a gasp from the whole Remove.

This was rather drastic!

"On every half-holiday, so long as Bunter remains in hiding at Greyfriars, this Form will remain in the Form-room, and will be given a Latin lesson!" said the Head.

There was a moment's silence. Then the Bounder called out:

"Shame!"

Dr. Locke started.

"What? What? Who spoke?" he exclaimed.

"I did, sir!" said Vernon-Smith coolly.

"Vernon-Smith—"

"Shame!" roared Bob Cherry. He would not have said it, but he was not going to leave Smithy to face the music alone.

"Cherry—"

"Shame! Shame! Shame!" came a roar from a dozen Removites.

Dr. Locke's face was crimson.

"Mr. Quelch," he snapped, "I am sorry to see this state of rebellious disrespect in your Form. I trust, sir, that you will be able to induce your Form to treat their headmaster with greater respect. That, sir, is all that I have to say!"

And the Head whisked out of the Form-room.

There was silence again. Mr. Quelch's face was pale with mortification. The Remove wondered whether there were going to be "whoppings" all round. Mr. Quelch picked up his cane. To the general surprise, he laid it down again.

"Dismiss!" he barked.

And the Remove marched out—unwhopped!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Coker on the Track!

COKER of the Fifth frowned.

Coker was in the school shop with his friends, Potter and Greene, after class. They had been at cricket practice with the Fifth, and Coker, as was his custom on the cricket ground, had been adding considerably to the gaiety of existence at Greyfriars.

Now he was entertaining Potter and Greene with a description of what would have happened if something else hadn't happened to happen. It appeared that when he bowled to Blundell's wicket, that wicket would infallibly have gone down but for this, that, or the other! When, on the other hand, Coker batted, and Fitzgerald of the Fifth knocked his bails off six times in succession, amid laughter, it appeared that Coker was not really batting badly. This, that, or the other had caused his wicket to go down like clockwork!

Listening to Coker of the Fifth, one might have supposed that a really good bowler was a fellow who did not take wickets, while a first-class bat was a

man who incessantly captured ducks' eggs!

Coker entertained his friends with this; but they did not mind, as he was also entertaining them with cake and ginger-beer. There is no rose without a thorn, and there was no cake and ginger-pop for Potter and Greene without conversation from Coker. So they gave the great Horace his head.

But Coker left off talking cricket, and frowned, as aforesaid, as a bunch of Remove juniors came into the tuckshop. The three Fifth Formers were sitting at a little table in the corner, and Harry Wharton & Co. did not even glance at them. But Coker gave the cheery Co. his very special attention, frowning disapprovingly.

Coker noted that the Famous Five were making purchases which they did not consume on the spot. Fellows often did make purchases to be conveyed to their studies for tea. But it was after tea-time now, and Coker was drawing conclusions Coker knew, as everybody else knew, that somebody must be supplying the hidden Owl of the Remove with food. Already he suspected the Famous Five of being the "somebodies."

"It's rotten!" grunted Coker.

Potter raised his eyebrows.

The three were eating cake, and Potter rather rationally supposed that Coker's remark referred to the cake. He had not noticed the chums of the Remove come in, and was unaware of the thoughts that were passing in Coker's powerful brain.

"Rather good, I thought," he answered.

"What?" ejaculated Coker.

"Don't you think so, Greeney?"

"Quite!" said Greene, with his mouth full.

Coker stared at them.

"Well, I say it's rotten!" he snapped. "I say that it's absolutely rotten, and it's time it was finished, see?"

"Well, we'll finish it, if you like," said Potter, still referring to the cake.

"Certainly!" said Greene heartily. "Leave it to us, Coker, if you like. We'll finish it."

"Fat lot you could do!" said Coker disdainfully. "Even the Head doesn't seem able to do anything."

"The H-Head!" stuttered Potter.

"Or Quelch!" said Coker. "Mind, I don't think Quelch is keen on it. I shouldn't be surprised if he'd be willing to let it last all through the term."

This was Greek to Potter and Greene. "But it's going to finish!" said Coker darkly. "The prefects can't do anything. I fancy I can. And I'm going to."

It dawned on Potter and Greene that Coker was not, after all, talking about the cake! What he was talking about they did not know! Neither did they care very much.

"It's lasted a whole week now," went on Coker. Obviously this could not refer to the cake. "Pretty state of affairs, if you ask me! Not that I expect you fellows care! It's our Form-master who was drenched with ink by that fat young scoundrel Bunter! It's up against the Fifth, in a way. But you fellows don't care!"

"Oh!" gasped Potter.

He realised that Coker was talking about the affair of Bunter.

"Prout's an old ass," went on Coker, "and a bit of a blighter! Look how he rags a man in class; and, mind you, he's generally wrong! I've never been satisfied with Prout!"

"Poor old Prout!" murmured Greene. "He must feel that!"

"He doesn't seem to, that I know of," answered Coker, who was blind and deaf to sarcasm. "Too much bounce! Pompous old ass, to put it plain! Still, he's our beak! Remove fags ain't going to rag our beak and get away with it! What?" Coker jerked his head towards the Famous Five. "Look at those young sweeps! What do you think they are up to?"

"Scoffing tuck, I suppose!" yawned Potter.

He was not in the slightest degree interested in the juniors.

"They're packing it into a bag!" said Coker.

"Are they?" yawned Greene, without troubling to turn his head.

Coker was afflicted with a constitutional inability to mind his own business. But this seemed rather the outside edge, even for Coker. Why he

was concerned about the Remove fellows, and what they were doing with their tuck, was a mystery to Potter and Greene.

"They are!" said Coker. "And I know why!"

Coker paused, evidently in the expectation that Potter and Greene would display keen curiosity. But they didn't! They did not seem to care whether Coker knew why, or didn't know why. They helped themselves to more cake. The cake was good, even if the state of affairs was, as Coker stated, rotten! Potter and Greene were more deeply interested in the cake than in the state of affairs.

"I know why!" repeated Coker, handing out the news unasked, as it was not inquired after. "They're feeding that young villain Bunter! They're

getting that bag of grub to take to him now."

"Young asses," said Potter. "Decent of them to stick to the sticky little beast though, what?"

"Don't be a silly ass, Potter!"

"Well, it's rather decent of them, Coker," said Greene. "They've got some idea that the fat lunatic never did ink Prout."

"Don't be a fathead, Greene!"

"Look here—"

"Shut up, if you can't talk sense!" suggested Coker.

Potter and Greene devoted themselves to cake. Both of them intended to remember a pressing engagement as soon as the cake was finished. And it was at its last slices now.

"It's rotten, as I said!" resumed Coker. "It's got to be finished! I'm

(Continued on next page.)



Our cricket specialist is never happier than when he's solving knotty problems for "Magnetites." Write to "UMPIRE," c/o The MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, then watch out for his reply in this paper.

UNLUCKY LORD'S!

BY way of a start this week let us remember Thomas Lord. That was the name of the cricket enthusiast who, over a hundred years ago, owned a piece of land at St. John's Wood, London, on which cricket matches used to be played. And it is on this self-same spot that England and Australia are playing the second Test match of the five which are on the fixture list this season.

It is because the land was originally owned by this man named Lord that the ground is still given the title of Lord's. As you know, it is the headquarters of cricket, but a lot of people do not know what the letters M.C.C. stand for.

Many—including one of my MAGNET readers—think that the letters mean Middlesex County Club. They don't. They mean Marylebone Cricket Club, and Middlesex only play their county matches at Lord's by permission of the Marylebone club!

Having answered that question about the ground, let us turn to the cricket—the Test match cricket—which has been played there. What memories the ground holds: what stories could be told if only the turf could speak.

There is a disturbing thought, so far as England is concerned, connected with this Lord's ground. It can almost be said with truth that it is the pitch on which England never wins. Shall we break the spell this season—the unlucky spell which seems to hang over Lord's so far as we are concerned? The answer to that question will soon be known. Away back in 1896, which, if my arithmetic is still good, is thirty-eight years ago, England did win a Test match at Lord's.

Tom Richardson—that great fast bowler you may have heard people talk about—was mainly responsible for seeing England safely through

on that occasion. He and Lohmann bowled the Australians out in one innings for the meagre total of 53 runs all told!

England won the match by six wickets. But we haven't won a Test against the Australians at Lord's since that day. Tragedy has often accompanied our efforts. People still talk of the day in 1902 when Fry and Ranji, two of the greatest batsmen the game has ever known, were back in the pavilion before a run had been scored.

DON BRADMAN DID IT!

COMING right down to our own times—the times even my young readers will remember—we lost to Australia at Lord's on the last occasion on which a Test match was played there—in 1930. What a memorable game that was—a game of many records. As I think about it now, I am convinced that England lost that Test at Lord's in 1930 because we did not realise what the change-over from three to four-day games really meant. On the first day of the match we were piling up a big score—thanks mainly to K. S. Duleepsinhji. He played a wonderful innings on the first day, but when he had passed the 150 mark, and the shadows were growing long across the pitch, that fine Indian player evidently thought he—and England—had scored enough.

"Duleep" began to take all sorts of risks, running almost half-way down the pitch even before the ball was delivered. You can't do that for long with impunity, and Grimmett got him. Now if "Duleep" had only been content to stay in till the drawing of stumps, and then could have started fresh again the next morning, we might have scored a lot more runs. But everybody—and I include myself—thought that a first innings total of 425 was sufficient to save England from defeat.

We were taught better before the match was finished. And the man who taught us, chiefly, was Don

Bradman. We didn't know so much then about what he could do. But Bradman did it. He scored 254 before he was out; captain Woodfull got 155, and the Australians were able to declare at 720 for six wickets!

It was a total which nobody had ever dreamt a side could make in a Test in this country. Even the people who made the score-board had not anticipated such a score, for there was no figure seven in the hundreds' column of that roll of figures which tell the spectators how many runs have been made. In all, well over one hundred thousand people watched that memorable 1930 game. We lost by seven wickets, making the Test matches one each, and eventually we lost the last one at the Oval, and the Australians took home the "Ashes."

"TEAM-WORK."

I SHALL always remember one particularly smart bit of fielding in that game, because in it there was a lesson which my young readers may like to bear in mind. A ball was played round to leg by an England player. Oldfield, the Australian wicket-keeper, and Bradman each ran towards it.

Oldfield got there first, but realising that Bradman was a much better thrower of the ball than he was, the wicket-keeper turned it to Bradman with his foot. Don picked up the ball, threw down the wicket, and the batsman was run out. Smart, eh? I should say so. A delightful bit of "team-work" if I may put it that way.

My correspondence this week suggests that there is some doubt in the minds of player-readers concerning ways in which a batsman can be caught out. For instance, I am told that in a recent match at New Malden the batsman played the ball on to his pads, and thence it went to a fielder who caught it, before the ball had touched the ground. The question is: Was the batsman out? And the answer is—yes. The fact that the ball hit a part of the batsman's person after being played does not prevent the catch being a good one, provided, of course, that the ball had not touched the ground.

Then I have also a question as to whether a batsman can be caught without the ball having touched the bat at all. In this case, too, the answer is in the affirmative. The laws of cricket state very plainly that the batsman can be caught out off his hand, but not off his wrist, or, of course, any other part of the body.

"UMPIRE."

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going to finish it! I know what those young sweeps are up to! When they go out of the shop with that bag we're going after them!"

"Are we?" murmured Potter.

"We're going to shadow them to where that fat tick Bunter is hidden!" explained Coker. "Then we can root him out! See?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"It will show the Sixth that they aren't everybody, if Fifth Form men handle a thing that's got them beat!" said Coker, evidently very keen on showing the Sixth Form of Greyfriars that they weren't everybody! "Hallo, they're going! Come on!"

Coker jumped up. Potter and Greene bolted the last relics of the cake and followed suit. Harry Wharton & Co. were going out of the school shop, Bob Cherry carrying the bag under his arm. Coker hurried after them, and Potter and Greene followed Coker—more slowly.

Behind Coker they exchanged a glance and a wink.

"Are we shadowing those fags, Greeney?" murmured Potter.

"I don't think!" murmured Greene.

And as Horace Coker strode across the quad, on the track of the Famous Five, Potter and Greene turned a corner and strolled away to the cricket grounds. If Coker was going to play detective, Coker was going to play it on his own. Unaware, for the moment, of this base desertion, Horace Coker strode on, and did not look round for his followers till the Famous Five went into the House.

Then Coker turned to speak to Potter and Greene, whom he supposed to be at his heels, as faithful followers of so great a man ought to have been.

"That's pretty clear," he said. "The fat tick's in the House, and they're going——" Coker broke off, staring. "Potter! Greene! Well, my hat, if those silly owls haven't wandered off somewhere! Potter! Greene!" Coker hooted. "Greene! Potter!"

But answer there came none! Coker gave an angry snort!

But he had no time to look for Potter and Greene if he was going to keep on the track of the Famous Five. Having expressed his feelings by a snort, Coker hurried into the House.

He glimpsed the juniors on the stairs, and followed them up. They were heading for the Remove passage, and Coker would have preferred his friends with him when he entered that rather perilous quarter. But Horace Coker feared no foe; indeed, it seemed to be Coker's chief mission in life to demonstrate the truth of the proverb "that fools rush in where angels fear to tread!"

Harry Wharton & Co. disappeared up the Remove staircase, and Coker negotiated that staircase after them.

He stopped on the Remove landing and looked along the passage. Nobody was in sight. Most of the fellows were out of doors, after tea, in the bright summer weather. But five fellows, at least, were about—Coker had seen them come up! Apparently they had gone into one of the studies. Coker trod cautiously along the passage, his eyes gleaming. He felt, he knew, that he was on the track!

And he was! For from the half-open door of Study No. 7 in the Remove, a fat and well-known voice reached his ears:

"I say, you fellows! You've kept me waiting a jolly long time! I say, I'm fearfully hungry! I say, I hope you didn't forget the jam tarts!"

Coker grinned.

Evidently the hidden Owl had come out of his hiding-place, wherever that was, and was in his old study—where those young sweeps, exactly as Coker had so keenly divined, were taking him supplies. Coker could not help being pleased with this proof of his own perspicacity! And he grinned!

Grinning, he strode on to the door of Study No. 7, hurled it wide open, and barged triumphantly into the study.

"Got you!" announced Coker.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Horrid for Horace!

BILLY BUNTER jumped. Harry Wharton & Co. jumped.

It was a complete surprise!

Billy Bunter was eagerly opening the bag that had been dumped down on the study table. But he forgot even the contents of the bag as he blinked round at Coker, his little round eyes almost popping through his big round spectacles.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "Oh, you beast, you startled me! I say, you fellows, it's only Coker!"

"Only little me!" grinned Coker. "And I've got you! What?"

Harry Wharton exchanged a glance with his comrades, slipped behind Coker, and closed the study door. Coker stated that he had "got" Bunter; but Harry Wharton's idea was that Coker also was rather "got," though that had not occurred, so far, to Coker's powerful intellect.

"You needn't shut that door, Wharton," said Coker. "I'm taking Bunter down! Come on, you fat tick."

"Oh, really, Coker——"

"I've got you!" grinned Coker.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Come on!" Coker made a grab at the Owl of the Remove, who promptly dodged round the study table.

"I say, you fellows, keep him off!" yelled Bunter.

"Hold on, Coker, old bean!" said Harry quietly. "Can't you mind your own business just for once?"

"I don't want any Remove cheek!" said Coker. "Come on, Bunter! If I have to handle you, you'll know it."

"Beast!" gasped Bunter.

He eyed Coker of the Fifth warily across the table. Coker evidently meant business; though it was no business of Coker's! The fat Owl of the Remove rather regretted that he had come down to the study. Still, safe as the box-room was, with his hiding-place under the floor so handy, Bunter had got fed-up with the box-room. The "beaks" were aware that the hidden Owl sometimes wandered forth at night. They were not aware that he sometimes wandered forth by day as well, when the coast was clear. The Remove were standing manfully by Bunter, and they kept his secret well. Now, however, it looked as if the game was up.

"Don't you worry, old fat man!" said Bob Cherry encouragingly. "Coker's not going to take you down——"

"I jolly well am!" said Coker emphatically.

"And he's not going to mention that you're here till you've had lots of time to clear!" added Bob. "Coker's going to stay here with us and enjoy our improving society, while you go on your travels!"

"Hear, hear," grinned Johnny Bull.

"Collar him!" said Frank Nugent.

"And sit on him!" said Harry Wharton.

"The sitfulness on the esteemed Coker is the proper caper!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Look here——" Coker, about to pursue Bunter round the table, paused. Coker was not quick on the uptake; but it dawned on him that he had woke up something in the nature of a hornet's nest! "Don't you cheeky fags dare to interfere—don't you dare to—yarooooo-oooooooh! Whooooo! Oh crikey! Whoop!"

Five fellows jumped at Coker, as if moved by the same spring.

Coker was a hefty fellow; a truculent fellow; and a good man of his hands! But five to one were too many for Coker—many too many! Coker went over with a crash, and was strewn along the floor of No. 7 study.

Five fellows were strewn over Coker!

"Oh!" gasped Coker. "Ow! Wow! You young—groogh—rotters—wooooo! You rascally young—yooooon! Whooop! Oh, gum!"

"Squash him!"

"Sit on him!"

Coker resisted desperately! He put up a terrific fight! But it booted not, as a poet would say! The odds were too heavy! Coker was flattened out face downward! His arms were held; a fellow sat on his back, and another on his head; another trampled on his legs. Coker was getting into a dusty, dishevelled, and damaged state! Breath failed him! He gurgled, he gasped, and he guggled!

"He, he, he!" Billy Bunter chuckled. "I say, you fellows, jump on him! Give him jip! Give him beans! He, he, he!"

"Urrrrrrggh!" came in suffocated accents from Horace Coker. "Yurrggh!"

"Hook it, Bunter!" said Bob Cherry from his seat on Coker's head. "Take the tuck, and hook it! We'll look after Coker!"

"Grooogh! Lemme gerrup! Groogh!"

Coker heaved, like the mighty ocean. He heaved in vain. The Famous Five flattened him down again.

"Hook it, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter picked up the bag of tuck. Coker, wriggling in anguish under five juniors, watched him go to the door. He watched him disappear! Coker had tracked down the hidden Owl; but he had not, after all, "got him." It was Coker of the Fifth who was "got"; and as Hurree Jamset Ram Singh remarked, the gotfulness was terrific.

The door closed on Bunter.

He was gone! Coker knew that he was gone back to his secret den, wherever that was! He made a terrific effort to throw off the Removites. For two or three thrilling moments they rocked.

Then Coker collapsed again, and was pinned down, gurgling feebly.

Billy Bunter's footsteps died away.

But the Famous Five still stood, or sat, on Coker of the Fifth, keeping him safe! Bunter had to be given plenty of time to get back into hiding before Coker was let loose. The following ten minutes were very disagreeable to Horace Coker. A breathless, gurgling fellow, sprawled on the floor, with two fellows sitting and three standing on him, could not expect to feel as if he was on a bed of roses. It was distinctly uncomfortable for Coker.

"Bunter's all right by this time!" said Harry Wharton at last. "Roll the fathead out and roll him home!"

"Good egg!"

There was no resistance left in Coker of the Fifth. Hefty man as he was, he was at the end of his tether. He only gurgled as he was rolled out of the



Mr. Prout rolled along the Remove passage with an army of juniors following in his wake. Bob Cherry began to sing: "We're following in father's footsteps! We're following the dear old dad!" There was a chortle. Prout frowned and rolled on.

study, and moaned as he was heaved along to the landing, and rolled, heaved, and shoved into the Fifth Form passage. There he was left—struggling spasmodically for his second wind. And Harry Wharton & Co. strolled out into the sunny quad, with that happy feeling of satisfaction which follows the doing of a good deed!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

No Luck!

"IT'S too thick!" growled Skinner.
"Too jolly thick!" grunted the Bounder.
"Rotten!"

"The jolly old limit!"

"Are we going to stand it?" demanded Vernon-Smith hotly.

There was great wrath in the Remove. For it was the first half-holiday following the pronouncement of the Head; and on that bright, sunny summer afternoon the whole of the Remove were under detention.

Bunter had not been discovered! Until he was discovered, his Form was under detention! It was a drastic sentence, but there it was!

It was clear enough to the Head that the Remove knew where Bunter was, and were backing him up in his game of hide-and-seek. Probably he expected them to get tired of it after a few detentions. Without the help of his sympathisers it was certain that the hidden Owl could not keep it up. And, from the headmaster's point of view, the state of affairs was intolerable. It was not really surprising that the headmaster had come down heavy on a recalcitrant Form! But it was very unpleasant, and very annoying. A rebellious spirit was rife in the Remove.

A Form match was due that afternoon with Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth. It had to be put off. It was not an important function; still, it mattered to the Removites. The cricketers were intensely irritated. Other fellows had been going up to Popper's Island on the river; but Popper's Island, like the cricket match, had to be washed out. Smithy had been going over to Lantham to see his father, who was coming down there on business that day. Now he couldn't go! Detention claimed the whole Form, and from end to end of the Remove there was resentment and discontent.

"Let's cut!" suggested the Bounder.
"Let the whole Form jolly well cut! We got off all right after the last row!"

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"Better stick it!" he said.

"The stickfulness is the proper caper!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "We do not want to cause trouble to the excellent and execrable Quelch."

"There's the rub!" said Bob Cherry. "We jolly well know that Quelch thinks the same as we do about Bunter, and we don't want to bother him."

"It's about time Bunter went, I think!" grunted Skinner.

"Kick him!"

"Owl! Wow!" roared Skinner.

The Remove went into detention. Mr. Quelch came in to take them in Latin. He was very grave, but very kind and considerate to the detained Form. The more thoughtful fellows realised that Quelch was getting detention, as well as themselves; and that he could not have liked it! He had to give up his afternoon.

Even the Bounder admitted that there was no sense in ragging Quelch. He had done all he could for Bunter; and though he said nothing on the subject,

they knew that his view of the case was similar to their own. It was that knowledge that held the rebellious spirit of the Form in check.

It was a dismal afternoon. Bright sunshine outside, cheery shouts from the cricket-field, did not make detention any pleasanter. But everything comes to an end, and the detained Form were dismissed at last. And when Harry Wharton & Co. went up to tea, they found the indefatigable Coker roofing about the Remove passage, and derived considerable satisfaction from rolling him down the Remove staircase.

Tea was going on in Study No. 1 when an elephantine tread was heard approaching from the stairs.

"That's Prout, or a hippopotamus escaped from the Zoo!" remarked Bob Cherry.

It was not a hippopotamus, though it sounded like one. It was Prout. A moment later the Fifth Form master was looking into Study No. 1.

The Famous Five eyed him rather inimically. Prout did not speak; he simply looked over the study, then stepped back, and progressed up the passage. The juniors exchanged glances.

"He's after Bunter!" said Bob.

"And he's heard that the fat Owl's been seen in a study at tea-time," said Nugent. "That meddling fathead Coker—"

"Come on!" said Harry. "We can't roll Prout down like Coker, but we can make him understand that we don't want him barging in our studies!"

And the chums of the Remove left their tea unfinished and followed Prout. He was throwing open the door of Study No. 2, where Hazeldene and Tom Brown stared at him. Then he went on to Study No. 3, and looked in on

Russell and Ogilvy. Evidently Prout had a strong suspicion that Bunter might be found in a Remove study at tea-time. He was looking into study after study, obviously in search of the fat Owl.

"Follow on, my infants!" called out Bob Cherry; and the fellows turned out of the studies and followed on.

Prout looked into Study No. 4, where Redwing rose to his feet, and the Bouncer sat, where he was and stared at him far from politely.

"Want anythin', sir?" snapped Smithy.

"I am looking for Bunter," said Mr. Prout in his deep, fruity voice.

"Has the Head made you master of the Remove, sir?" asked Vernon-Smith. Prout frowned.

"I do not want any impertinence, Vernon-Smith!" he snapped.

"Neither do we, sir!" said the Bouncer coolly.

The Fifth Form master decided not to answer that. He moved on to Study No. 6, and Smithy and Redwing joined the crowd following him up the passage. Quite a large party was now in Prout's wake.

Morgan, Micky Desmond, and Wibley were at tea in Study No. 6. Prout, having given them the once-over, went on, and they, too, joined the army in the passage. At the door of Study No. 7 Prout glanced round at his numerous followers.

"You boys may go back to your studies!" he said.

"Thank you, sir!" said Bob Cherry politely.

"Go back at once!" boomed Prout.

"Mayn't we walk up our own passage, sir?" asked Nugent.

Prout breathed hard. He could scarcely forbid Remove fellows to walk up their own passage if they wanted to.

He rolled on, majestic, after staring in at Study No. 7, from which study Peter Todd and Tom Dutton came out to reinforce the army. Bob Cherry began to sing:

"We're following in father's footsteps!
We're following the dear old dad!"

There was a chortle, and Prout stared round, frowning. He frowned, and rolled on to Study No. 8. Bunter was not there; but Penfold and Newland were there, and they joined up. From Study No. 9, after Prout had peered in, emerged Trevor and Elliott. From Study No. 10 came Bolsover major and the French junior, Dupont. It was a swarm of fellows now that followed Prout, and they were all laughing.

Prout was feeling far from comfortable—as the young rascals intended. But he rolled on, and in Study No. 11 Skinner & Co. blinked at him.

Skinner, Snoop, and Stott joined the swarming crowd in the passage, and then Lord Mauleverer and Jimmy Vivian joined up from Study No. 12. Very red in the face, but still determined, Prout stared into Study No. 13, with no result, except that Mark Linley and Wun Lung were added to his numerous followers.

Then he arrived at Study No. 14, where he found Squiff and Fisher T. Fish. This was the last study, and Prout had drawn the whole Remove passage blank. He had not found Bunter, but he had woke up the Remove like a nest of hornets.

Prout gave the hornets a glare, which did not affect them in the very least. Then he rolled on to the box-room stair at the end of the passage. In a moment a rush of Removites swarmed up that stair ahead of him. It was a narrow stair, and they crammed it. Bunter was in the box-room, and he had to be given time to get out of sight.

"What—what!" boomed Prout. "Allow me to pass! How dare you bar my way! Allow me to pass up that stair at once!"

"Who's stoppin' you?" asked the Bouncer.

"Come down from that stair immediately!" boomed Prout.

"Mr. Quelch allows us on this stair, sir," said Harry Wharton.

Bob Cherry had cut up to the box-room, leaving the stair blocked by a crowd behind him.

"Stand aside!" roared Prout. And he forced a way up the crowded,

narrow stair, nothing doubting that the hidden Owl was to be found there.

It was not easy for Prout to get through. Fifteen or sixteen fellows crowded the stair, and Prout was stout. The juniors did not exactly oppose Prout, but they remained where they were, as they had a right to do. It was hard work for Prout to get through, and, short as the stair was, it was full five minutes before he emerged from the crush on to the box-room landing.

Gasping for breath after his exertions, the plump master of the Fifth rolled into the Remove box-room. The door was wide open, and Bob Cherry was there, standing at the open window.

Nobody else was to be seen. Bunter, if he had been there, had vanished. Prout was not likely to guess that a box had been pulled over a loose board, and that under that loose board quaked a hidden Bunter. He rolled across to the open window.

"Cherry," he gasped, "you have helped Bunter out of this window!"

"Think so, sir?" asked Bob blandly.

Really, it was very obliging of Prout to suspect exactly what Bob wanted him to suspect!

"I have no doubt of it, Cherry!"

"Dear me!" said Bob.

"If you were in my Form, Cherry, I should cane you severely!"

"So glad I'm not in your Form!" said Bob politely.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a roar from the stairs.

Prout stared out of the window. If Bunter had gone that way, he had vanished. Prout had no doubt that he had. Mr. Prout breathed hard and deep.

"You young rascals!" he exclaimed.

"You old rascal!" came a voice from the stairs, recognisable as the Bouncer's.

"What—what!" gasped Prout.

"Go home, Prout!"

"Roll away, old Pompous!"

"Hook it, Prout!"

"Chuck him out!" shouted the Bouncer.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Prout, purple, rolled out of the box-room and barged a way down the crowded stair through packed juniors. He gasped for breath as he went down the Remove passage again. A yell followed him:

"Go home, Prout!"

"Get off the grass, Prout!"

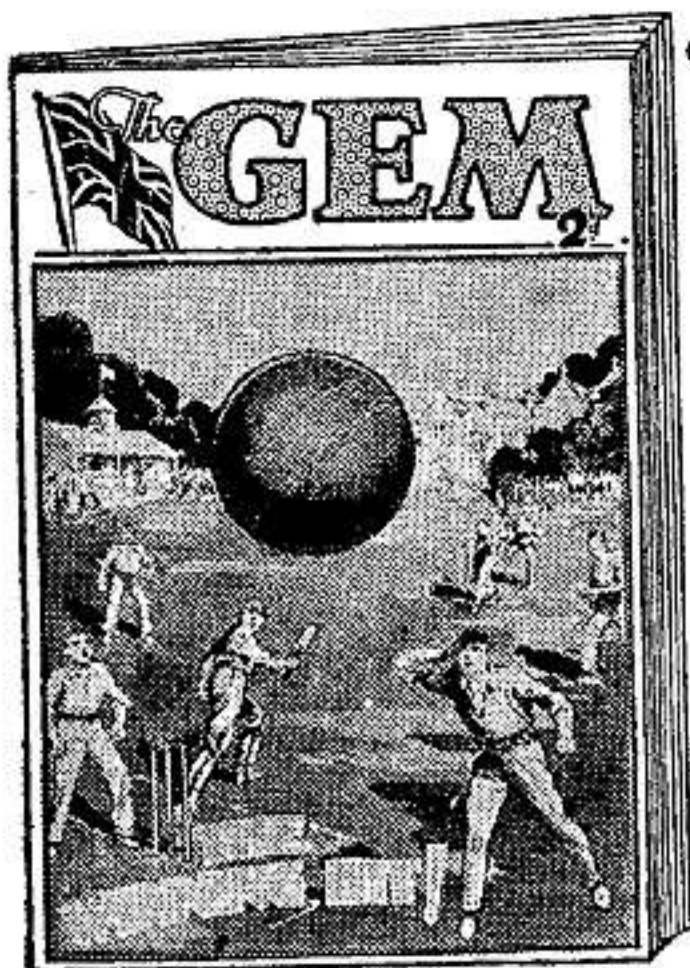
"Buzz off, old Pompous!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Prout was crimson when he got away and the howls and cat-calls of the Remove ceased to ring in his ears. He was not likely to search the Remove passage again at tea-time.

But that unpleasant experience in the Remove quarters had made Prout more determined than ever, and that night, when all—or nearly all—Greyfriars slept, Prout carried out his plan of keeping watch for the elusive Owl. At the witching hour of midnight a plump form, in a voluminous dressing-gown, emerged from Prout's room, and ensconced itself in a chair on the middle landing, to wait and watch.

Harry Wharton & Co., fast asleep in the Remove dormitory, did not dream that Prout was on the watch, if they dreamed at all. Billy Bunter, if he was planning another raid on the larder, was not likely to suspect it. In silence and darkness, Prout waited and watched, ready to start at a sound. He heard the chimes at midnight. After that there was a sound that he did not hear. It was his own snore! Prout had fallen asleep on the watch!



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THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Done in the Dark!

OOOOOOGH!" murmured Potter of the Fifth. Something was waking him. It seemed to Potter of the Fifth that a hand had reached out of the darkness, grasped him, and was shaking him. It seemed like a horrid dream.

But it was no dream. A hand had! It was the hand of Horace Coker, and, as Potter started into wakefulness, he heard Coker's voice.

"Wake up, you silly ass!"

"What the thump—" gasped Potter. "Is that you, Coker?"

"Yes, you dummy! Wake up!"

Potter, in startled amazement, sat up in bed. In the dark he could not see Coker, so he was unaware that Horace was bending over him. He became aware of it quite suddenly as his head came into violent contact with a hard object, and there was a howl.

"Ow! Wow! My nose! Wow! Oooooogh!"

"Ow! I've knocked my head on something!"

"Wow! My nose!" groaned Coker, in anguish. He had left off shaking Potter. Both his hands were clasped to his suffering nose, which had received an agonising jolt from Potter's head. "Oh, you ass! Oh, you dummy! Ow!"

Potter rubbed his head and blinked at him in the dark.

"Wharrer you waking me up for, you ass?" he hissed. "Is the house on fire, or what?"

"You've nearly smashed my nose—"

"Sorry—I wish I'd quite smashed it!" said Potter. "Can't you let a fellow sleep? What are you up to, you fat-head?"

Coker caressed his nose for some moments before replying. There was a pain in it—quite a severe pain. But he answered at last:

"Get up! I want you."

"What for?" snapped Potter.

"I want you to come with me! Don't make a row and wake the whole dorm. I'm going after that fat tick Bunter, and you're coming with me."

"B-b-b-Bunter!" stuttered Potter. "You—you—you're going after Bunter in the middle of the night? Mad?"

"Don't yell! I've thought this out!" Coker condescended to explain. "That fat scoundrel is hidden somewhere in the Remove quarters. He comes down at night to raid grub. The larder's been raided half a dozen times. Nobody's thought of catching him at it—nobody but me, I mean."

"You're the man to think of it!" gasped Potter.

"Well, yes, I fancy I am the fellow to think of things!" agreed Coker.

"Just the man to think of a blithering, blethering, fatheaded stunt and wake a fellow up in the middle of the night to tell him about it!" hissed Potter. "Go back to bed, you footling chump, and let a fellow sleep."

"But I want you—"

"Idiot!"

"I want you to come along—"

"Dummy!"

"Look here, Potter—"

Potter did not speak again. He felt that it was time for action, not for words! He grasped his pillow, and, taking aim at the sound of Coker's voice, delivered a terrific smite.

Crash!

That smite took Horace Coker by surprise. He was not expecting anything of the kind! Really he might have expected something of the kind—but he didn't! Coker went over backwards as if a cannonball had hit him,

and landed on the floor of the Fifth Form dormitory.

"Yooo-hooop!" gasped Coker, as he landed.

"Take that!" hissed Potter. "Now go on jawing and I'll get up and give you some more!"

"What on earth's that row?" came a yawn from Greene's bed.

"Only Coker—mad, as usual!" answered Potter.

Coker scrambled up. He fairly hurtled at Potter. The swiping pillow met him as he hurtled, and he sat down again. Five or six sleepy voices now demanded to know what was up.

"Coker's up!" said Potter. "That idiot Coker—that blithering ass Coker! He can't let a fellow sleep, and he can't mind his own business! He doesn't dig up enough trouble in the day-time, so

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he wants to dig some up in the middle of the night!"

Coker scrambled up again. This time he did not hurtle at Potter. Even Coker realised that a shindy in the dormitory was not consistent with the stealthy silence required for the task he had set himself.

With a tremendous effort, Coker restrained his just wrath and turned away. He could deal with his faithless friend on the morrow. Potter would keep—and Bunter wouldn't!

The door of the Fifth Form dormitory was heard to open and shut.

"He's gone!" said Greene.

"Let's hope the beaks will spot him out of dorm and make him sit up!" growled Potter.

Coker was really running rather a risk in getting out of dormitory bounds after midnight. All the rules of the school were against such proceedings;

but the great Horace, as usual, was a law unto himself.

His handling in the Remove passage had not taught Coker to mind his own business. Like Prout, he had grown all the more obstinate. And, like Prout, he had hit on the idea of catching the hidden Owl when he stole forth from his hiding-place at night. That idea, Coker was assured, was a winner. His faithless friends refused their aid; but he was ready to "go it" alone! And he went it.

On tiptoe Coker headed for the middle landing. Bunter was somewhere upstairs. The food supplies were downstairs. Anyone keeping careful watch and ward on the middle landing was certain to catch him coming or going if he was abroad that night.

Coker gave a sudden start.

He was listening keenly for a sound of the creeping Owl! From the gloom of the vast landing a sound came to his ears.

It was not the sound of a creeping footstep! It was the sound of a snore! It rumbled unmistakably from the darkness.

"My hat!" breathed Coker.

He stopped and listened intently. There was no mistake about it! Somewhere on the landing somebody was snoring!

"The blithering young idiot!" muttered Coker. He grinned in the dark.

He had not expected his task to be so easy as this! He had expected to hear the Owl of the Remove creeping about. But certainly he had not expected Bunter to sit down in the armchair in the corner of the landing and go to sleep there! That was absolutely unexpected!

Snore!

Guided by the sound, Coker crept across the landing.

He had no doubt, of course, that it was Bunter! Who else could it be but Bunter? Who else was likely to be out of bed? And it was like the fat Owl to sit down and rest after negotiating many stairs and drop off to sleep! It was just like him, in fact!

Closer and closer crept Coker!

He had his man now!

His only fear was that Bunter might wake and dodge away by one of the many passages that opened off the landing. And Coker was taking care that Bunter did not do that! Bunter was going to wake in Coker's grasp—and not till that powerful grasp was on him!

Closer and closer he crept on tiptoe! The steady snore went on without a pause! Coker had the faintest glimpse of something dark in the armchair. He had no doubt what and who it was that snored just under his nose. How could he have?

This time Coker was in luck! This time there were no cheeky Removites at hand to intervene between him and his quarry! This time it was all clear!

And Horace Coker, bending over the sleeping figure in the chair, grasped it suddenly in a mighty grasp and dragged it off the chair with a bump to the landing.

And Mr. Prout, thus awakened from balmy slumber, crashed on the landing and yelled.

"Oh! Ow! Whoooh! Good gad! Who—what— Goodness gracious—whoooop!"

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Thrilling!

HORACE COKER let go Mr. Prout as if the Fifth Form master had suddenly become red-hot! He jumped back from the sprawling figure tangled in THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,376.

the voluminous dressing-gown. He knew Prout's voice—and it sent a chill of horror and terror to the very marrow of his bones.

It was Prout! It was not Bunter—it was Prout! It was his Form-master that Horace Coker had dragged headlong out of that chair and crashed on the landing!

Coker gasped.

What Prout was doing there at that time of night Coker could not guess. Probably Prout, on his side, would have been equally puzzled to guess what Coker was doing there! Both had turned out that night from an inability to mind their own business. But neither, of course, guessed that the other had! But whatever Prout was there for, it was Prout! There was no mistaking Prout's roar!

"Who—what—who—upon my word! Rascal! Wretch! You dare—you dare to attack me a second time—you—you—you young ruffian, Bunter—"

Coker backed swiftly away.

Fortunately, Prout could no more see in the dark than Coker could! He did not know who his assailant was!

Still, he had no doubt! Who could it be but Bunter?

That young rascal for whom he had been watching had come on him in the dark and caught him napping! Prout had no doubt! He scrambled wildly to his feet! Luckily for Coker he caught his foot in his dressing-gown and sat down again! That gave Coker time.

Coker was not one of those fellows who jump to things, who rise swiftly to every emergency! But Coker could be swift on occasion. This time he was swift! Backing out of Prout's reach, he turned and ran! He was not thinking of hunting Bunter now. He forgot Bunter. He was only thinking of getting back to the safety of the Fifth Form dormitory before Prout could find out who he was! Bunter had been sacked on the charge of inking Prout! What was likely to happen to a fellow who bagged him and bundled him in a heap on the floor? Coker ran as if for his life.

"Rascal! Stop!" boomed Prout.

He was on his feet again. He heard the sound of running footsteps and barged in pursuit.

"Bunter!" roared Prout. "Stop! I command you to stop!"

Coker fled on.

After him flew Prout.

Coker was not proceeding on tiptoe now! He had no time for that! He was running hard, and his heavy footsteps rang and echoed through the silence of the night. A deaf man could have tracked Coker. Prout tracked him easily enough. Nothing doubting that it was Bunter fleeing before him, Prout charged after Coker, into the corridor that led to the Fifth Form dorm.

That was Coker's objective! If only he reached it, and dived into bed before Prout reached him! That was all that Horace Coker asked of Fate in those wild and thrilling moments.

Coker won the race! Prout put up a good chase, but his weight was against him. Coker reached the dormitory, barged in, and banged the door after him. He gasped across to his bed.

"Is that Coker?"

"What the thump—"

"Trying to wake up the whole House?"

"You howling ass—"

Half a dozen Fifth Form men spoke at once. Coker had left them awake when he went, and they had not had time to get to sleep again before his

return. They sat up and stared in the gloom.

"That mad ass, Coker—" exclaimed Blundell.

"Coker, you potty chump—" hooted Hilton.

"Quiet!" gasped Coker. "Prout's after me! Not a word! Oh crikey!"

Coker dived into bed. He did not stay to Remove his clothes, or even his shoes! He plunged in, and drew the bedclothes after him. He panted under his blankets.

"Prout?" gasped Potter. "Prout? Is Prout up?"

"What on earth is Prout doing up at this hour?" howled Greene.

"Goodness knows!" groaned Coker. "I know he's up, that's all! He was in that armchair in the corner of the middle landing—snoring! I thought it was Bunter—"

"What?"

"And—and collared him—"

"Collared him?" gasped Greene.

"Yes; and it—it was Prout!"

"Oh, ye gods!"

"Quiet! I believe he heard me come for this dorm—he was after me! Not a word if he barges in! I bumped him on the landing—thinking he was Bunter, you know, in the dark—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up!" hissed Coker. "There's nothing to laugh at, you dummies—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" rippled along the Fifth Form beds. Coker could not see anything to laugh at in this unfortunate error in the dark. But it seemed that the other fellows could.

"Quiet!" hissed Coker. "You cackling dummies—"

"Did he see you?" gasped Potter.

"He couldn't, in the dark! But he heard me beating it! I heard him after me! Oh dear! Now I come to think of it, I shouldn't wonder if he was up after Bunter, too! And went off to sleep—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He thinks it was Bunter got him! Quiet!"

There was a heavy tread at the door, and the Fifth Formers suppressed their merriment. The door opened, and the light flashed on. Prout, crimson with exertion, panting for breath, stared into the senior dormitory.

Every head was on a pillow now. There was a sound of steady breathing, and a snore or two! Prout gazed at a slumbering form!

"Is anyone awake here?" asked Prout, in the innocence of his portly heart. He was happily unaware that the whole Form was awake.

Potter yawned, lifted his head, and blinked in the light.

"Somebody there?" he asked sleepily. "Oh! Is that you, sir? Is anything the matter?"

"I am sorry to disturb you at this hour!" gasped Prout. "But that wretched boy, Bunter, is wandering about the House, and he had the temerity to assail me in the dark—and he ran in this direction! I am almost certain that he has hidden himself in this dormitory. I am almost sure I heard the door close!"

"Bunter here, sir!" exclaimed Potter. "I—I—I hardly think he'd have the cheek, sir! Shall we look for him?"

"Oh, let's!" said Greene, waking up; and quite a number of the Fifth woke up, and turned out to look for Bunter.

Coker remained where he was. Getting up would have revealed the fact that he was in his clothes. Coker affected deep slumber.

But a dozen of the Fifth, with serious faces, rooted through the dormitory, while the portly form of Prout stood on

guard at the doorway, to cut off Bunter's escape, if he was there.

But Bunter was not there!

Prout was sure, or almost sure, that he had heard the fugitive dodge into the Fifth Form dormitory! Still, in the darkness, and the excitement of the moment, he could not be quite sure! It appeared now that he was mistaken! At all events, Bunter was not there!

"I am sorry to have disturbed you, my boys!" said Mr. Prout.

"Not at all, sir!" said Blundell.

"Good-night!"

"Good-night, sir!"

The seniors turned in again, the light was switched off, and the door closed on Prout. Not till his elephantine footsteps had died away did the Fifth Formers chuckle. Only Coker did not chuckle. Coker could not see anything to chuckle at. But Coker was the only fellow in the Fifth who couldn't!

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Trapped!

DR. LOCKE handed over the Sixth Form to Mr. Lascelles, the mathematics master, and left that Form-room.

It was the following day, and all the Greyfriars fellows were in class, with the exception, of course, of Billy Bunter of the Remove. Where Bunter was, was still a mystery; but it was a mystery that the Head hoped to solve. Dr. Locke paced down deserted corridors to the stairs, and slowly and majestically mounted the stairs. He crossed the Remove landing—into the Remove passage, and walked along that passage to the box-room stair, glancing into every study as he passed it.

That the hidden Owl was still in the House was certain. That he was hidden somewhere in the Remove quarters was hardly to be doubted. His hiding-place could not even be guessed at; but it was fairly clear that, whatever and wherever it was, the fat Owl did not remain in it permanently. When all was safe, he ventured forth. He had been seen in Remove studies. Prout had nearly nailed him in the Remove box-room. What was more likely than that, while the whole school was in class, the Owl would emerge from his lair? Dr. Locke hoped to catch him in an emerged state!

The studies were all vacant. Dr. Locke ascended the box-room stair, and he trod lightly. If Bunter was there, he did not want the fat Owl to escape by the window, as Prout declared he had done once. Almost on tiptoe the headmaster crossed the little landing, opened the box-room door, and looked in.

He gave quite a start!

He had hoped to spot Bunter. And he did!

The window was open. A fat figure stood at it, looking out, the podgy back turned to the headmaster. Bunter was taking the air at the open window, and feeling quite safe and secure.

The remnants of a feast lay on a box-lid. The Head's eye noted them, and he smiled grimly as he noted, also, that a board in the corner of the floor was out of place.

He knew where Bunter hid himself now, and he knew that if the fat Owl had heard him coming, he would have dodged into that cavity, pulled down the board after him, and left no sign. It was not by the window that he had escaped Prout! That was the way he had escaped! The secret of Bunter's mysterious disappearance was revealed now. Grimmer and grimmer grew the



"I say, you fellows! Rescue!" yelled Bunter, as Wingate and Gwynne whisked him out of gates. Gosling slammed and locked the gates, and away went Billy Bunter, walking and wriggling between the two prefects. The bars of the gates were crammed with excited faces. "He's gone!" said Harry Wharton blankly.

headmaster's face. He was about to speak, when Bunter's fat voice broke the silence. The fat Owl of the Remove was communing with himself.

"It's a bit thick!" murmured Bunter. "But, after all, this is better than the Form-room with old Quelch! I can stand this as long as the grub doesn't run out! And they'll never spot me here. That's one comfort! That old ass, Prout, never dreamed I was here! And old Locke is as big an ass as Prout—"

"Bunter!"

Billy Bunter gave him a blink! and whirled round from the window. His eyes and his spectacles fastened on the awe-inspiring figure in the doorway. Bunter nearly fell down!

"Oh!" he gasped. "Oh crikey! The—the Head!"

"I have found you, Bunter!" said Dr. Locke grimly. "You will follow me, Bunter!"

"Oh lor'!"

"Come!"

Billy Bunter gave him a blink! Then he stirred! But he did not approach the Head in the doorway! He made a jump for the cavity in the floor in the corner!

"Bunter!" thundered the Head.

He made a stride forward!

Too late!

Billy Bunter plunged through the gap and disappeared under the floor.

"Bless my soul!" gasped the Head.

He stood over the opening, staring down. Bunter squirmed away along the beams, under the floor, disappearing.

But several things met the Head's view—a box resting on the beams, a bundle of bedclothes, stacked away there in the daytime, two or three bags and packets. It was plain that Bunter's sympathisers had kept him fairly well supplied.

"Bunter!"

"Oh, lor'!" came a gasp from the unseen Owl.

"Bunter! Come out at once!" rapped the Head. "I command you to come out at once, Bunter!"

"Oh, crikey!"

There was a sound of rustling and crawling. Perhaps Bunter feared that his headmaster was going to pursue him, in the space between the floor and the ceiling below!

Dr. Locke was really very unlikely to undertake such a pursuit! But the terrified Owl was leaving nothing to chance! He was crawling away along beams and joists in dismal darkness and dust.

"Bless my soul!" gasped the Head. "The boy may meet with some accident!" That was only too probable, if Bunter missed the joists, in the darkness, and landed his weight on the space between them. No ceiling ever was made that would have carried Billy Bunter's weight.

"Bunter! Come back!" hooted the Head.

"Shan't!"

"What? What?"

"I'm not going to be sacked! I never inked Prout! I never knew anything about it! I—"

"Bunter, you will leave Greyfriars at once! You—"

"Beast!"

"Goodness gracious!" gasped the Head.

The rustling, creeping sounds died away. Bunter was gone into the mysterious, dusky recesses between the floor and the ceiling below. Dr. Locke stood nonplussed.

Certainly he could not pursue Bunter into those narrow, dusky, spidery recesses. He could hardly ask even a prefect to undertake such a pursuit.

Still, Bunter was trapped now. It was only necessary to wait till he emerged of his own accord! Obviously he could not prolong his stay in such a retreat, now that all help from his Form-fellows was cut off.

Dr. Locke stooped, and replaced the loose board, and drew a box over it. That was to keep Bunter safe while he left the spot. The elusive Owl was not to be allowed to begin his wanderings again and seek a new hiding-place.

Having thus bagged him, the Head quitted the box-room, and hurried away. It was barely five minutes later that he returned accompanied by Wingate of the Sixth, who wore an expression of the greatest astonishment.

At the Head's direction, Wingate removed the box and the plank, and the cavity was open once more. The prefect blinked into it.

"Can you see him, Wingate?" asked the Head.

"No, sir!"

"Kindly remain here, Wingate until he returns," said Dr. Locke. "He is, of course, sure to do so sooner or later. Secure him when he attempts to get out."

"Certainly, sir!"

Dr. Locke left the box-room again, leaving the Greyfriars captain on the watch beside the opening in the floor.

The Head was feeling relieved as he descended the stairs. There was no doubt of Bunter's capture now, and in a very short time he would be sent home in charge of a prefect, and done with. The sooner that happened, the better, in the opinion of the Head. He was quite pleased that matters had turned out so satisfactorily, now that he had taken the affair in hand personally.

Matters did not seem so satisfactory

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to the fat Owl, creeping on the joists among the spiders! Bunter was in a state of woe!

His first thought had been only to escape from the Head! But before long he was thinking still more anxiously of escaping from the dust and the spiders.

He crept back at last, along the joists, to the opening in the box-room floor. He hoped that the Head had gone by that time.

The Head had—long ago! But a prefect was in his place—and Bunter blinked up through dusty spectacles at Wingate of the Sixth.

"Oh, there you are!" said Wingate.

"Beast!" gasped Bunter.

"Come out!"

"Shan't!" hooted Bunter, desperately.

"I'll wait!" said Wingate, genially. "Come out when you get tired of the spiders! There's one on your neck now."

"Urrrrgh!"

Bunter dabbed his fat neck, and crawled away again, and disappeared, leaving Wingate grinning. The Greyfriars captain thought that it would probably not be long before Bunter decided to emerge. His game, evidently, was up; and that should have been clear, even to the fat Owl's obtuse intellect. But Bunter was desperate. In the faint hope of discovering some other way out, he crawled away again. Dust and plaster and spiders gathered on Bunter, thick as leaves in Vallombrosa. And then—

Bunter was no acrobat! And really, a very active and agile fellow was needed, to keep to the joists, crawling about in the dark. The fat Owl slipped from a thick beam on which he was creeping. He rolled heavily on the space between two beams. Lath and plaster were not likely to stand the strain!

Crash! Smash! Crash!

Bunter went through!

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Drops in—and Drops Out!

MR. PROUT was surprised. He had never, in fact, been so surprised in his life.

Surprised, indeed, is too feeble a word. He was astonished—astounded—flabbergasted!

The school were out in break; and Prout had retired to his study for a little well-earned repose in his armchair. He had lost some sleep the previous night! Filling the armchair almost to overflowing with his portly form, the Fifth Form master leaned back and closed his eyes.

He opened them again suddenly at the sound of a loud crack! He started and stared!

As he did so, a shower of plaster descended on him.

"Goodness gracious!" gasped Prout.

It seemed for a moment as if his study ceiling was falling in upon him! Some of it, in fact, was!

Plaster came down in a shower, with cracking and crashing and smashing! Dust floated about the room in clouds. But that was not the most surprising thing. The amazing thing was the sudden appearance through Prout's ceiling of two thrashing feet and a pair of fat trousers.

Prout gazed at them through the floating dust, in amazed incredulity. The ghost of a pair of trousers could not have startled him more.

"What—what—" gurgled Prout faintly.

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He wondered dizzily whether he was dreaming this remarkable occurrence.

But it was no dream! After the feet and the trousers came more of Billy Bunter! His legs thrashed about wildly. His voice was heard!

"Yaroooh! Help! I say, you fellows! Whoop!"

"Bunter!" articulated Prout.

He started up from the chair.

Bunter had grabbed at the beam as he crashed through the ceiling. He held on desperately. He hung and wriggled and roared. Plaster and dust showered down round him.

"Yaroooh! Help! Oh crikey! Wow!"

The fat hands slipped from their hold, and Bunter came down! It was really fortunate for Bunter that Mr. Prout, starting up from his armchair, interposed between him and the floor. Bunter fell on Prout!

His fall was broken! And, to judge by the fearful howl that came from Prout, he was broken, too!

Crash! Bump! Prout was on the study floor, gurgling. Bunter was on Prout, yelling. Dust and plaster and stray spiders rained down on both.

"Oh, lor'! Yaroooh! I'm killed! I say, you fellows, help! Oh crikey!" roared Bunter.

"Urrrrgh!" came in suffocated gurgles from Prout. "Wurrrgh! Gerroff! Oooooogh!"

Prout hurled Bunter aside, and sat up, breathing dust. Bunter rolled and roared.

Prout gasped for breath. He stared up at the gap in the ceiling. He stared down at Bunter!

Then he stooped and grasped the Owl of the Remove by the collar. He jerked him to his feet.

"You—you—you—" he gasped. "You—you—you have fallen on me! I—I—I am hurt! I—I am damaged! I—I— You—you—"

"Ow! Wow! Ow! Yooop!"

"Come!" gasped Prout.

Prout was hurt! He was breathless, he was shaken, he was rather bruised and battered. But he had got Bunter!

Whether Bunter was hurt, Prout did not inquire. Perhaps he did not care. He jerked him to the study door.

"Come!" he hooted.

"Ow! Leggo! Oh crikey! Wow!"

"Come!" roared Prout.

Bunter came—he had to. In Prout's iron grasp he was marched out of the study. A minute later he was marched into the Head's study—still with the iron grasp on his collar!

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Dr. Locke gazed at the Owl of the Remove, panting, dusty and plastered and spidery!

"Bunter!" he ejaculated.

"Bunter, sir!" gasped Prout. "He fell, sir, through the ceiling of my study. He fell, sir, on me! I am considerably hurt! My study, sir, is in a shocking state! And I, sir—"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head. "Fortunately, the boy does not appear to be hurt!"

Snort from Prout! He was not worrying about that! His own aches and pains were enough for Prout to worry about.

"Leave him to me, Mr. Prout," said the Head. "Please send a prefect to my study—or, perhaps, two prefects! After the trouble he has given us, we cannot be too careful with this very troublesome boy."

"I—I—I say, sir—" gasped Bunter.

"Silence!"

Prout puffed and blew away. Wingate and Gwynne of the Sixth arrived in the study. Bunter was handed over to them, with instructions from the Head.

With a stalwart prefect grasping either fat arm, Bunter marched away! His game was up at last. He was marched to the Remove dormitory, where he was allowed to take the wash that he badly needed and to change his clothes. Looking rather more presentable, Billy Bunter was marched downstairs. He was marched out into the quad.

"I say, I'm not going, you know!" gasped Bunter.

"I think you are!" said Wingate.

"Sort of!" grinned Gwynne.

"Beasts!" howled Bunter.

He was marched across to the gates. In the quad many eyes fell on him. This was the first news to the Remove of his capture.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Bunter! They've got him!"

"They've got Bunter!" yelled the Bounder.

"Great snakes! I guess he's cinched!" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish.

There was a yell from Bunter:

"I say, you fellows! Rescue!"

The next moment he was whisked out of gates. Gosling slammed and locked the gate. Up the road to Courtfield, en route for the railway station, went Billy Bunter, walking and wriggling between the two prefects. The bars of the gate were crammed with excited faces staring after him. He disappeared up the road.

"He's gone!" said Harry Wharton blankly.

"The gonefulness is terrific!"

"Gone!" said the Bounder. "The game's up!"

Bob Cherry's eyes flashed.

"The game's not up!" he roared.

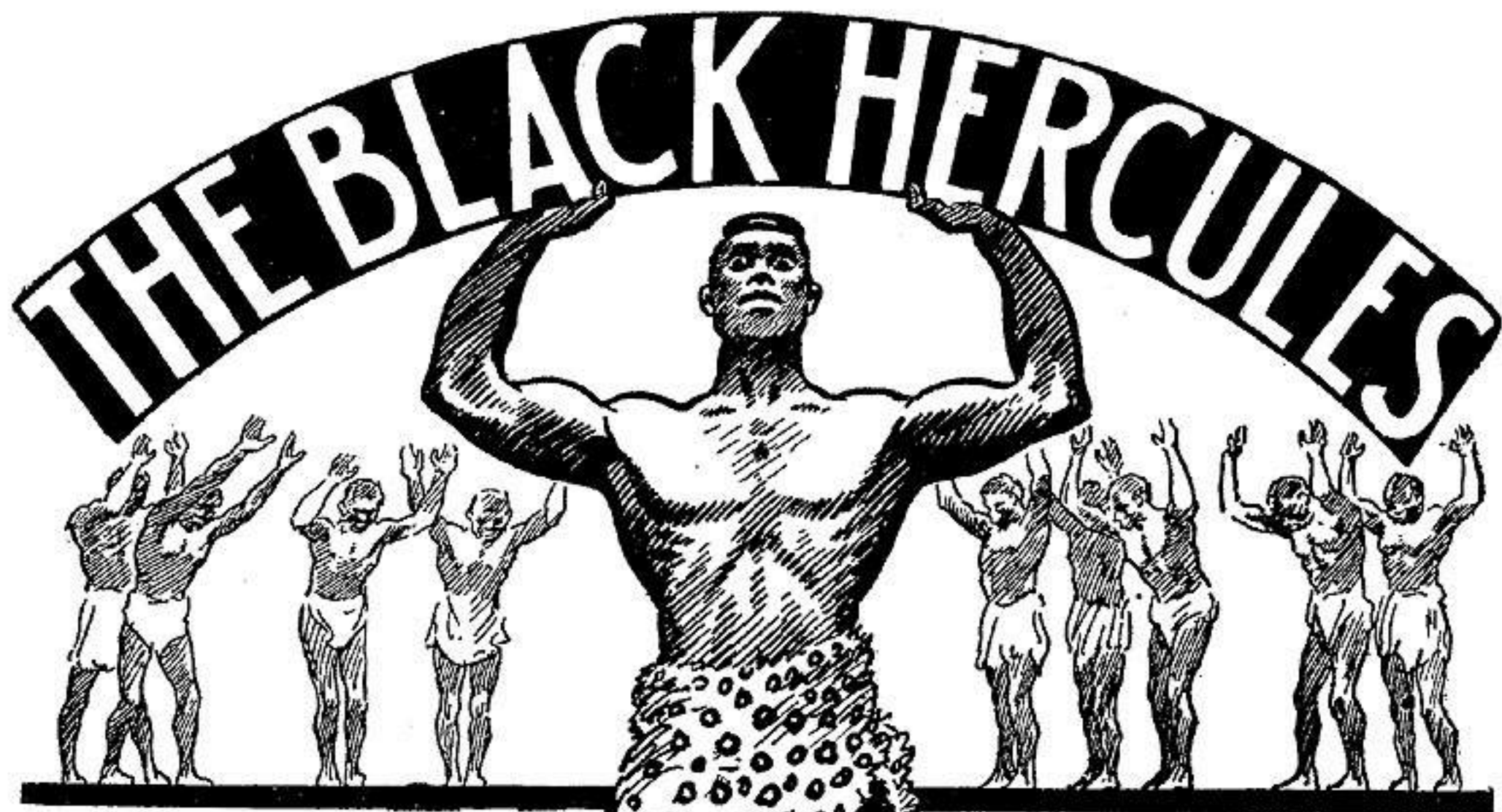
"We're standing by Bunter! He's not going to be sacked! Who's game to stand by Bunter? If Bunter goes, we'll all go!"

There was a roar from the Remove. The bell was ringing for third school; other Forms were going in. Not a man of the Remove went in. The bell clanged unheeded by that Form.

Mr. Quelch, at the door of the Remove Form room, waited for his Form to arrive—but waited in vain! Harry Wharton & Co. had other business on hand, and they had forgotten Quelch.

THE END.

(Be sure and read the next yarn in this exciting new series of school stories featuring the Greyfriars rebels. It's entitled: "IN OPEN REVOLT!" and it is full of startling situations. You can only make sure of the MAGNET by ordering your copy early!)



Stranded!

A VIVID blue light illuminated the dark, brooding expanse of African jungle far below the mail plane, flickered for a second, and was gone.

"Something wrong!" bawled Speedy Jack Carter, pulling frantically at the controls.

Tickler Johnson, the mechanic, stared wide-eyed at the instrument-board where the compass was swinging in all directions. A flash seemed to spring from the various dry batteries, and, with a choking sound, the engine gave out.

How high the plane was, the two airmen could not tell, as the altimeter had ceased to function. The night was pitch dark, and it was impossible to see what lay below.

Losing momentum, the machine began to stall, but, with an effort, Speedy Jack got her on an even keel once more. Summoning all his skill and past experience at gliding, he managed to get the plane into an air current and secure breathing space for a few seconds.

Carter knew well enough that there was a world of difference between manipulating a light glider and a heavy plane, but he had hopes of being able to glide to safety. The blue flash which startled him and seemed to have caused the trouble, had shown up clearly enough the nature of the country below, and he felt himself completely mystified.

The plane had been flying from Livingstone, Rhodesia, to Walvis Bay, on a trial run, and Jack knew, by the time they had been in the air, that they should be over the desolate Okavangi Swamp. Yet here they were above dense jungle, and must be at least 150 miles off their course.

The only solution was that the compass had been affected somehow or other, and now they were drifting goodness knows where!

Lower and lower dropped the plane, while Tickler strained his begoggled eyes in an endeavour to pierce the inky blackness below. There was nothing for it, but to take a chance, and Jack let the plane glide until the tips of huge trees were brushing the undercarriage.

By
**GORDON
GREY.**

"I have planned and schemed for the day when I will be master of a Continent. The zero hour is near. I will sweep all the 'whites' out of Africa and establish a Black Empire with myself at the head!"
—THE BLACK TERROR.

Then, with amazing skill, he flattened out, found a steady stream of air, and floated along just above the jungle, keeping his eyes fixed on the scenery below.

"There's a clearing!" exclaimed Tickler, his eyes accustomed to the darkness.

Just ahead Jack saw a small break in the dense forest of branches. With a heartfelt prayer he spreadeagled and let the machine "pancake."

With a crash, which seemed to jar every bone in the aviators' bodies, the plane hit the ground and sank up to the wheels in rotting vegetation, and then slowly tilted sideways.

"Gosh!" grunted Tickler Johnson, as they scrambled out. "That was a near one, Speedy!"

"It was," replied Jack. "And, what's more, I don't know how we are going to get going again!"

"I'll soon tune up the old bus," said Tickler. "Let's have a light!"

Jack produced a big torch from his pocket, but there was no answering beam of light when he switched on.

"Funny!" he muttered. "I put in a new battery only yesterday."

With the aid of a resinous branch, however, he made a torch, and in a few minutes Tickler was busy on the engine.

It did not take the mechanic very long to find out that ignition was faulty, and that he could get no sparks at all. Evidently the magneto was out of action.

For some time the aviators wrestled with the machine, and dawn had broken before they gave up the attempt.

Daylight showed that they were in the depths of a dense stretch of jungle, and all around birds and monkeys shrilled and chattered. The sun had not risen high enough for them to get any idea of direction, so, climbing back into the cockpit, they ate some sandwiches and waited.

Tickler was just finishing off his last mouthful when his eyes goggled. Following his companion's gaze, Jack saw half a dozen natives had appeared upon the scene and were staring at them. The negroes were magnificent physical specimens, each one standing well over six feet in height, with broad shoulders and rippling muscles.

They were dressed only in loincloths. But what amazed the two pals was the fact that each of the natives wore a tin helmet. Even more significant was the fact that they carried peculiarly shaped rifles, in addition to assegais and knobkerries.

"Peace unto you!" said Jack, speaking in the Bantu tongue, of which he had a fair knowledge.

One of the natives, who was wearing a brightly polished ankle-ring, stepped forward. He was evidently the leader of the party. Thinking it wisest to put on a bold front, Jack climbed out of the wrecked plane, closely followed by Tickler.

"Where did you come from?" asked the native.

The two airmen gasped, much too astonished to answer. It was amazing enough to find a crowd of natives armed with tin helmets and rifles. To be addressed by one of them in English, with

a strong American accent, was altogether too disconcerting.

"Aro—are you an American?" asked Jack.

"American?"

The native's voice sounded puzzled, and it was evident from his face that he did not understand what Jack meant.

"To what tribe do you belong, and what district is this?" asked Jack.

"We belong to King Hercules, and this is his country," replied the native.

"King Hercules?" queried Tickler.

"Who is he?"

It was the turn of the natives to be astounded.

"You must know. It is impossible that anyone should not know our king. He makes the light and power, gives us food and drink, and everything else we require. With one touch he can kill, and with another restore to life again. He provides us with the Amarobs who do all our work, and we are his humble slaves.

At these remarkable words all the natives raised their right arms in the Roman salute.

"I should like to see this king of yours," remarked Jack, wondering not a little at what the native meant.

A grim smile lit the black man's features.

"That you would have to do whether you wished it or not," he said, "for it is commanded that all strangers be brought to him, either dead or alive!"

There was a suggestive note in the voice which did not bode well for the audience which the two white men were to have with King Hercules.

The Black Giant!

WITH military precision, the natives formed a guard round the white men, and at a sharp word of command from the leader, the little party moved off.

At a brisk marching pace they proceeded down a leafy aisle. Suddenly there was a scratching noise in the branches above, and the party halted as an enormous male gorilla dropped right in their path.

Instinctively, Jack's hand dropped to the service revolver strapped at his waist. But before he could draw, one of the natives had raised his rifle. There was no report as the thick, muscular finger contracted round the trigger, but the gorilla stopped suddenly, coughed, and then pitched forward on its face.

"Well, I'm blessed!" said Tickler hoarsely, as they marched on past the dead animal. "How was that done?"

"Ask me another?" shrugged Jack. "There's something very startling in readiness for us, unless I am much mistaken."

Tickler passed a hand over his forehead.

"It's all too much for me," he groaned. "Do you see the anklet that chap's got? Well, if I didn't know it was impossible, I would swear that it was chromium plate."

Jack nodded.

"It is chromium," he said.

"B-but, it can't—"

Tickler's words broke off with a gasp as the two prisoners emerged from the darkness of the forest.

Stretched out before them was a great plain, and on it stood a sight which dazzled them. Right in the centre

stood a city of steel houses: row upon row set in orderly array all converging on a central massive tower. The tower was a shiny, jet black, except where the polished windows caught the rays of the sun, and flashed them back with dazzling brilliance.

On the near side of the plain were fields of mealies in which dark figures worked with odd, jerky movements. Over to one side was a compound in which were cows and goats. Far away on the side beyond the city, stood long buildings like workshops, and a persistent humming noise seemed to hang over everything.

Wide roads, made of some material like concrete, crossed the plain, dividing it into small squares, each one of which was apparently laid out for some definite purpose, while at each intersection of the roads stood a little tower.

The leader of the natives stepped to the nearest tower and pressed a button. Immediately a light flashed from the mast on top of the tower, and a long, rocket-like vehicle came speeding at a terrific rate along the concrete road from the city. It stopped in front of the little party, and a sliding door opened automatically.

The black leader stepped in and indicated to the white men that they were to follow. Rather gingerly, Tickler and Jack scrambled aboard. The door slid back into position, and the rocket machine shot forward. There was no bumping or jolting, just smooth, easy movement, although at the rate the fields slipped past the windows, Jack knew that they were travelling at well over six miles a minute. What puzzled the two pals was the entire absence of any apparent motive power; there was just a faint humming noise, and that was all.

In a little over a minute, the machine reached the city and came to a halt before the jet black tower. Armed negro guards were posted at the massive steel doorway, but they stood aside, and the door slid noiselessly out of sight.

The two airmen were led into a lift which shot rapidly upwards without stopping until it reached the topmost storey.

Beckoning to his prisoners, the negro stepped from the lift and passed along a wide thickly carpeted corridor until he reached a bright steel door. Here he pressed a button and waited. In a few seconds a blue light flashed, and instantly the native prostrated himself at full length as the door slid open.

"Come inside!" boomed a deep bass voice.

The native, trembling with a mixture of fear and excitement, ushered the two airmen into the room.

By this time Jack and Tickler had almost got past being amazed, but the sight which met their eyes made them gasp. The room was spacious and lofty, with enormous glass windows on all sides, giving a view of the surrounding country for miles.

To one side was a large control board, covered with switches, dials, and lamps, all of which glowed with a brilliant blue light. Opposite this was a large steel desk, littered with drawing instruments and plans.

Most striking of all, however, was the figure of the man who confronted the two pals. He dwarfed the six-foot native who had acted as their guide, and towered above the white men like a giant.

"You have done well," said the black

giant to the guide, displaying a grotesque-looking set of gold teeth.

He took a chromium-plated ring from his desk and handed it to the native.

Evidently this was a great honour, for the man seemed overjoyed. Slipping the ring on his ankle, where it jangled against the other, he prostrated himself once more.

"You may go," said the black giant, and the other backed out.

Jack and Tickler gazed in wonder, mixed with admiration, at the magnificent figure before them. There could be no doubt that this was the man who called himself King Hercules, and Jack was forced to admit that he looked every inch a king, and a Hercules.

The man's features were similar to those of a pure-blooded Zulu, and he wore on his head the ring of elephant-hair which denotes the full-blown warrior. He was dressed in a garment which had been made from the skin of a huge leopard.

A Sinister Motive!

FOR a few seconds the huge negro stared at Jack and Tickler, and the look on his face was decidedly not pleasant. Finding that his captives returned look for look and did not wilt under that fierce, malignant gaze, he abruptly commanded them to be seated.

"Who are you that you should come spying into my domains?" he asked suddenly.

"And who may you be?" demanded Jack boldly. "I've lived in Africa a long time now, but I've never heard of you before—although I freely admit you've got plenty to shout about."

The negro smiled, evidently pleased at the last few words.

"I am not surprised that you have never heard of me," he said. "No white man has—yet!"

There was a world of meaning in the tone, and once more that fierce look of hatred spread over the black man's face. Slowly it disappeared, and he continued.

"Perhaps I ought to introduce myself. I was once George Hercules Washington, of Harlem University, New York, but now I am Hercules, King of the Amazulu. You, my friends, are the first white men to see me since I ascended—or assumed—the throne of Africa; but you will not be the last!"

He stood up and displayed his magnificent body, showing proudly the colossal biceps and the enormous leg muscles.

"Look, while you can, on the first king of all Africa—perhaps king of the world! Look while you can, for you have not long to live."

Hercules strutted up and down like a peacock, and it was evident to the two Britishers that he was a man eaten up with vanity.

"If you kill us there will be awkward inquiries," said Jack calmly, although his heart was beating furiously.

"Bah!" spat Hercules. "Do you think I am a fool? Will there not be inquiries if I let you go? Besides, what do I care for your soldiery? I have here the means of wiping them out completely before they get within fifty miles!"

He waved his arm towards the glowing control board and laughed wildly.

"Behold the brain of the Black Empire! The brain which will drive every white man out of Africa and make me master of a continent!"

Hercules craned his thick neck forward and glared at the white men with a demoniac expression.

"You, white trash, think you are clever, think you possess all the knowledge and the power, that science and learning are in your hands entirely. Bah! Behind that board and those controls is a power which your greatest scientists have scarcely dreamed of—a power for which they have been searching and searching without success. Perhaps one day they will find it, but then it will be too late, for it is mine—mine—mine!"

He burst out once more into that wild, crazy laugh, which made Jack and Tickler shiver.

Carried away by his own enthusiasm, and perhaps finding for the first time an audience who could really grasp what he meant, Hercules told the two airmen of his plans.

He had, as he said, been a professor of the Negro University in New York, but all his life and outlook had been warped and embittered by the humiliating treatment meted out to negroes by the white population of the States.

Partly out of a spirit of revenge, and partly for his love of the work, he had devoted years of research to finding out the secret of cheap, abundant power. All the time, behind him was the burning impulse of avenging the countless wrongs heaped upon his fellow blacks since the days slaving first began.

Hercules had tried electric and atomic energy without finding what he sought, but at last he accidentally stumbled upon what he believed was a means of harnessing radium activity. Keeping his secret to himself, he had tried to secure a large enough quantity of radium to put his experiments to a real test.

But once again he found himself foiled by the domination and greed of the white man. The only commercial radium in the world is mined in the Congo, by natives, under the direction of a few Belgians. Output is deliberately restricted, in order to keep up the price, and in this Hercules saw a crying injustice to the world at large, and particularly to the negroes in whose country the wonderful metal is found.

Giving up his University post, he had travelled all the wilder parts of Africa in the hope of discovering another radium supply, and had succeeded in tracing pitch-blende deposits in Portuguese West Africa. It had not been difficult to persuade a lax administration to set aside this portion of the district as a native reserve in consideration of certain payments to various officials, and then Hercules had set to work.

Abandoning all connection with white civilisation, he had gone in with the tribes, and, by sheer force of his enormous body and well developed brain, had made himself recognised as chief over a wide area.

Then, slowly, and with caution, he had trained the natives to mine radium and iron. With elaborate care he had ensured that not a word should leak through to the outside world. The Portuguese officials had quite enough to do without worrying about the native reservation, and as there was never any trouble there and the country was mostly thick jungle, hard to traverse and reeking with fever, they left it severely alone.

As soon as he had got his first supply of radium, Hercules started off in earnest. With the energy generated he had iron smelted and steel houses built. Gradually, as the supply of power increased, he extended his work until it had reached the highly developed state that Jack and Tickler saw all around them.

Mechanical men—Amarobs, as Hercules called them—performed all the manual labour, directed from the nearest control tower, all of which were in turn directed from the main tower where Hercules had his headquarters.

Rocket-machines, driven by the same force, sped to and fro, while beyond the city, the rows of workshops turned out everything that would be required.

Even the mining, crushing, and refining of the radium was now performed by the activity it generated itself, and all the black inhabitants of the city had to do was perform two hours work each day watching a machine. For the rest, they spent their time learning mechanics, in physical training, or in military exercises.

Revenge!

SPEEDY Jack Carter drew in his breath when Hercules had finished. There was something admirable about the way this black giant had worked, schemed, and persevered, and yet, behind it all was that sinister, devilish motive.

Hercules enjoyed the impression he had made on the two Britishers, and led

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them to the windows where they could gaze out on the scene.

Away to the north, between the lines of factories and the surrounding belt of jungle, the plain was packed with row upon row of shining motionless figures. There were thousands of them, all standing with a sinister quietness brooding over them.

"What are those?" asked Tickler, pointing to the mass of figures.

Hercules laughed.

"They, my friend, are the Amarob warriors," he chuckled sardonically.

"What are they for?" inquired Jack.

"They are to drive the whites out of Africa," said Hercules. "They are made of steel and can be operated in just the same manner as the other Amarobs you see working in the fields. Two hundred and fifty thousand of them on the march will take a great deal of stopping. You see, they are quite impervious to either bullets or bayonets."

"But not to high explosives," said Jack cheerfully.

Hercules turned on him with a snarl and stretched out a huge ham-like fist. Then, suddenly relenting, he dropped his hand to his side.

"You are quite right. High explosive is the only thing to stop them once they get going. But never fear, there will be plenty more where they came

from, and if my experiments are successful they will be equipped with weapons of their own, far more dangerous than any you know of."

Wide-eyed, Jack pictured a scene very much as Hercules had visualised it. An inexorable horde of iron men pouring on to a defenceless town. On and on the Amarobs would march, breathing death and destruction; behind them a diabolical guiding genius who ordered their movements.

The very thought made him shiver. There could be no doubt that this black demon meant what he said. That mad light in his eyes proved it all too obviously. No wonder Hercules intended to kill them. Perhaps quickly and painlessly, more likely by some diabolical torture, for his hatred of the whites consumed everything else.

Jack's brain worked quickly: as they were to die in any case they might as well kill that huge black devil first. It would be doing the world at large a very real service.

Once more he thought of the unsuspecting cities and the black terror which was nearly ready to be released on them. Then whipping out a heavy revolver, he fired point blank at Hercules, aiming for the black man's heart.

Before he could press the trigger a second time, however, he felt himself seized in an iron grip and swept off his feet. The gun was snatched from his hand, and he was lifted high in the air.

At the same time a terrific blow caught Tickler on the head and laid him flat.

"Fools!" shrieked Hercules. "Fools! Do you think I would permit you to come here without being ready for treachery?"

He shook Jack like a rat, and kicked viciously at the prostrate Tickler. A wave of passionate anger swept over him and he flung Jack down with stunning force beside his unconscious friend.

As Hercules paced up and down, the fit of trembling and anger seemed to become more violent.

Pressing a button, he waited for a few seconds, and Jack's senses were just beginning to return when the door slid open and two armed men appeared, followed by two of the Amarobs.

The natives bowed obsequiously and Jack dimly observed that the two mechanical men also bowed with a jerky motion. It struck him as being oddly comical that the steel monsters should bow to the man whose brain conceived them.

Hercules pointed to the two men lying on the floor.

"Take them away," he ordered.

The men stood aside and the Amarobs marched forward, bent down, and each picked up one of the white men in a vice-like grip.

Jack felt a shudder as the steel claws tore his clothing and ripped his flesh, but Tickler was still unconscious.

"Your wishes, Master?" asked one of the guards. "Are they to be thrown into the iron furnace?"

Hercules was beginning to cool down, but he sprang forward as Jack lifted his head and feebly muttered: "Murderer!"

For a moment Hercules looked as if he would tear the white men limb from limb himself. The two guards shrank back fearfully, but the impassive Amarobs stood motionless.

"No," snarled Hercules. "The furnace is too good for them. Let the Amarobs take them down into the snake pit. It will be useful as an experiment."

The guards bowed; the Amarobs bowed, crushing their human burdens more tightly as they bent their steel bodies forward. Then the party wheeled about and marched out of the room, leaving Hercules glaring angrily at his control board, for one of the blue lights had suddenly turned to red and was flashing excitedly.

The King's Deputy!

THE glare of the tropical sun and the jerky movement of the Amarob brought Tickler back to his senses. He struggled to free himself from that relentless iron grip, but found he could scarcely move.

With an effort he craned his neck round and saw that Jack was in a similar plight. Keeping exactly abreast, and moving in perfect unison, the pair of steel monsters bore their prisoners forward.

On between the long rows of sheds, in which the busy hum of machinery could be heard, out past the hordes of motionless steel men, the two Britishers were carried until they came to a deep, circular pit, where the Amarobs halted.

The two armed natives advanced and peered over the side, drawing back hastily as angry hisses greeted them.

Apparently undecided as to what they should do, the black men held a low-toned conversation. From snatches which reached him Jack gathered that they were not quite sure whether to throw the victims into the snake pit immediately or await further orders from their master.

From his cramped position Jack saw another figure coming towards the little group. The new arrival was a particularly villainous-looking mulatto, who was dressed like a European and carried a heavy sjambok.

"What's the trouble?" demanded the mulatto, cracking his whip.

One of the natives bowed low and explained their difficulty.

"Fools!" snarled the mulatto, for no apparent reason.

He stalked round the Amarobs and scowled at the two prisoners. Out of sheer brutality he flicked the ugly

rhinoceros-hide thong across Tickler's face. The youngster winced, but did not make a sound.

"You cowardly brute!" cried Jack.

The mulatto laughed—a harsh, unpleasant laugh—and struck Jack with the handle of his whip.

"Address me as 'Excellency!'" he growled. "I am Mister Leopold, the king's deputy!"

Jack turned his head away in disgust at the repulsive face of his tormentor, and this only served to infuriate the mulatto.

"Throw the white trash into the pit at once!" he bellowed. "Death from the bite of a puff-adder is long drawn and painful!"

"Yes, Excellency," replied the native obediently.

The Amarobs marched forward with their jerky movements, stepped into space, and fell headlong into the pit, with the two airmen still clutched tightly in their steel arms.

Leopold stood at the edge of the pit, grinning hugely at the prospect of seeing the helpless prisoners struck down by the deadly snakes.

He was so interested that he did not see the big, shining, bullet-car, used only by Hercules himself, come shooting at terrific speed towards the pit.

Jack closed his eyes as he felt himself falling. He had caught a glimpse of the appalling scene below, and it was not pleasant to look upon.

The pit was about ten feet deep, and had sides which rose smooth and sheer. The bottom was literally covered with a writhing, hissing brood of serpents, their forked tongues darting in and out, and their beady, lidless eyes glinting like jet buttons.

As the steel figures crashed to the hard floor the angry hissing increased. But the snakes drew back for a moment. Their fright was only momentary, and their sinuous bodies quickly came gliding forward once more.

A puff-adder reared its venomous head—and struck—once, twice, at Tickler's neck. Another swollen reptile crawled over Jack's face, and with a shudder of fear he felt the fangs sink into his hand.

At that instant the bullet car reached

the pit, and Hercules jumped out. With one leap he was beside the mulatto, who stood cackling with insane laughter.

"Idiot!"

With the flat of his hand the giant negro sent Leopold flying, and leaped into the pit. Careless of the angry reptiles hissing and squirming around his bare legs, he bent down and picked up the shattered Amarobs and their living burdens.

The strength displayed by the black man was enormous, for, without any apparent effort, he cast the two steel figures out of the pit. Kicking savagely at the distended jaws of the snakes which were coiling and striking at him, he bunched his magnificent body, and, with a prodigious leap, jumped out of the pit.

The whole business had taken place so quickly that Leopold was only just picking himself up.

The mulatto's look of savage glee had given place to one of abject terror, and he cringed and shivered with fear before his master.

Hercules did not take the slightest notice of his lieutenant. With a swift movement of his powerful hands, he tore the two lads from the grip of the now useless Amarobs.

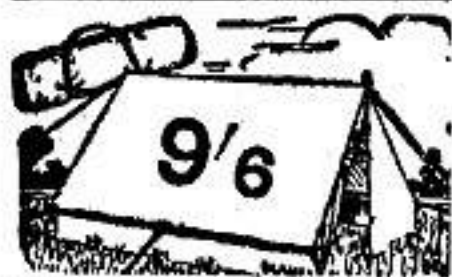
Then, with the touch of a qualified surgeon, he examined the snake-bites. Fortunately, the victims had lapsed into a merciful unconsciousness, and Hercules stared at their drawn faces.

"It is not too late!" he muttered. "The radium cauteriser will soon put you right. Radium! What a wonderful power!"

Still muttering, Hercules picked up the two boys and stepped into the bullet car.

Next instant it was flashing its way back to his marvellous surgical laboratory, leaving the sullen and angry, but thoroughly frightened, mulatto behind.

(*See, boys! Here's a sensational start to one of the most thrilling adventure yarns ever written. Be sure and read next week's gripping chapters. Meanwhile, tell all your pals about Jack Carter and Tickler Johnson—they'll just revel in their exciting adventures!*)



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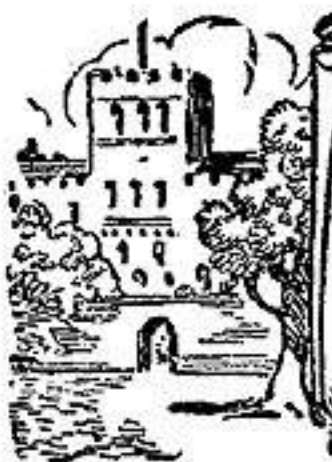
SPORTSMAN REQUIRES SMART LAD

To help him whilst training for the Throwing the Cricket Ball event at the School Sports. Must possess speedy eye and powerful field-glasses.—G. BLUNDELL, Fifth Form Games Study.

EXPLAINED!

Sir Hilton Popper has become a special constable.

This, no doubt, explains the curious printing error in a recent number of the "Courtfield Gazette," where he was referred to as Sir Hilton COPPER!



THE NEW Greyfriars Herald



No. 91 (New Series).

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

June 30th 1934.

EGGSPERT CATERER

Offers his services to piknik promoters. Tuck bought, packed, cooked and served. Suspicious beasts who don't trust a fellow's honesty need not apply! Yab!—W. G. B., c/o GREYFRIARS HERALD.

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GREYFRIARS 100 YEARS AGO

Last Saturday's excursion by the Greyfriars Rambling Club was the most successful function ever organised by this enterprising society. The day being a whole holiday given by the Governors to celebrate the railway company's decision not to build a line to Friardale, the club was able to wander unusually far afield, and to view beauties of Nature hitherto regarded as inaccessible.

Promptly at nine o'clock, having made their beds, breakfasted and listened to the headmaster's brief address, lasting only two hours, on "Rambling as a Means of Improving Character in the Young," the members assembled outside the School House. They presented a fine picture of well-dressed youth in their top hats, tailed coats, and light-coloured pantaloons, and drew much favourable comment from the rustics they passed on the first stage of their journey.

The ramblers were fortunate in having with them Professor Burbler, from Friardale, who was requested by the headmaster to give them moral instruction during the walk. The professor marched in the midst of the ramblers, and spoke eloquently all day on the sins and follies of youth, and the unhappy fate which would, he feared, overtake most of those present. Many of the ramblers were visibly affected, tears coming to the eyes of quite a number, while others groaned and moaned at frequent intervals. One and all were exceedingly glad to be able to enjoy such an uplifting discourse while they rambled.

The ramblers took the direction of Pegg village, whence they proceeded to Hawkscliff. Here, in the shady gardens of the Ship Inn overlooking the sea, they partook of a light meal in the shape of grilled herrings, steak-and-kidney pudding with potatoes, cabbage, and parsnips, boiled plum-pudding and bread and cheese, and order to wash them down with.

Professor Burbler, who contented himself with two helpings of everything, took advantage of the occasion to deliver a lecture on the perils of overeating, which was much admired.

In the afternoon the ramblers went inland again, and by a circuitous route made their way to Courtfield Common and so back to the college. Many picturesque spots were visited, each of which gave the professor material for a fresh discussion on the wisdom of Nature and the sinfulness of youth.

Altogether, it was a most enjoyable outing. The only incident which marred the ramblers' complete happiness came at the end of the day, when, by some unexplained mischance, the professor collided with one of the party and fell into the pond at Friardale. (We don't wonder at it, either!—Ed.)

Dicky Nugent's Weekly Wisdom

Hockins says that Coker's the last man on earth you can imagine composing mewsie; but I can hardly take that in.

Why, Coker is always making a song about something or other!

"I'M POISONED!"

Bunter's Tuck-Shop Collapse

A sensational lawsuit against a well-known tuck-shop proprietor seemed an absolute certainty last Wednesday afternoon, following a remarkable scene at the counter.

Just at the hour when Uncle Clegg's was crowded with a fashionable throng of Greyfriars juniors partaking of ginger-pop and ice-cream, Bunter of the Remove, who had just polished off half a dozen mixed ices, let out a frenzied howl of: "I'm poisoned!"

The effect was electric. The gay buzz of chatter stopped dead, and there was a rush to save Bunter as he slid off his stool and staggered across the floor of the tuck-shop.

It was seen at once that Bunter's face was a ghastly white. Somebody suggested sending for a doctor, but Bunter feebly groaned out that it was not necessary.

"It's all right, you fellows," he whispered faintly. "Nothing to worry about, really. It's just a simple case of poisoning. Just a week or so in bed and perhaps a holiday at the seaside afterwards will put me right again. I know what caused it. It was that ice-cream. Probably gone off a bit."

"Wot's that about my ice-cream?" asked Uncle Clegg sharply from the other side of the counter.

"Gone off a bit," said Bunter feebly. "Probably made from impure materials, you know. Of course, Uncle Clegg, I shall have to bring an action against you."

"What?" yelled Uncle Clegg.

"It will be distasteful to me to have to go to law with an old pal like you," sighed Bunter weakly, "but I have a duty to perform—protecting other members of the public against the same experience, you know. Don't worry, Uncle Clegg. I don't suppose it will cost you more than eighty or a hundred pounds all told."

"What!" shrieked Uncle Clegg.

"Naturally, I shan't touch the money myself. It would be against my principles to profit out of other people's misfortunes. I shall just deduct my incidental expenses—doctor's bills and the sea-



side holiday, for instance—and give the rest to charity," explained Bunter weakly. "All right, you fellows, I'm ready to go now. Better ring for a taxi."

It was at that moment that Bob Cherry felt impelled to examine Bunter's ghastly white face. He made a surprising discovery. Bunter's change of colour had apparently been caused by a hurried

application of white powdered chalk!

Bob hastily called a halt to the arrangements for ordering a taxi.

"Anybody else been eating ice-cream?" he asked.

About twenty other juniors had been doing so.

"Any of you feel ill?"

None of them did!

Then Bob's eye fell on a newspaper which Bunter had been reading during his orgy of mixed ices.

"Eighty pounds damages after poisoned ice-cream," he read aloud. "Funny coincidence, this, Bunter!"

The crowd thought it funny, too. The sympathetic buzz suddenly gave place to a roar of laughter. Bunter sat up and took notice.

"Look here, if you think I got the idea out of that paper, you're jolly well mistaken," he said. "Matter of fact, I haven't even seen the blessed paper, and even if I had, I wouldn't descend to such a trick. I'm too much of a gentleman!"

Well, of course, we all know that. But strangely enough, from the moment of Bob's find, Bunter recovered rapidly; and, on thinking the matter over, he informed Uncle Clegg that he had decided not to sue him for damages after all.

He'll "Owl" Over This!

Bunter announces that from now on he will ignore any one who addresses him by a nickname. He says he can't understand why anyone should use a nickname when it's so easy to pronounce his real name.

Well, it is rather difficult to see what "Porpoise" serves!

LOOKING FOR TROUBLE

Skinner's Strange Game Explained

Shortly after the arrival of the midday post one day recently, Skinner marched out of the School House wearing a very peculiar look on his face.

Walking up behind Bolsover, he gave him a terrific thump on the back and remarked: "I say, old chap, why do you wear that hideous mask instead of walking about like the rest of us?"

Having recovered his balance and breath, Bolsover howled: "What mask, you maniac?"

"Sorry!" said Skinner, after he had examined Bolsover's face more closely. "I thought it was a mask, but I can see now that it's your own face. My mistake, I'd scout!"

Bolsover's emotions at that explanation sent him almost cross-eyed for a few moments. Eventually, he gave vent to them by grabbing Skinner by the collar, holding him out at arm's length, and administering what is technically termed a sock on the nose!

Strange to relate, Skinner did not seem at all upset. Though he had to hold a handkerchief up to his damaged nasal organ, he looked quite cheerful as he went his way.

A minute later, he ran into Temple of the Fourth. Much to Temple's surprise he promptly struck a fighting attitude and asked in a sinister voice: "Who's an idiot?"

"You are, of course!" replied Temple, quite naturally, and immediately received the full force of Skinner's knuckles on his chin for his pains. He promptly retorted

by landing one on Skinner's right eye.

Skinner got up, nursing an eye which even a layman could tell was going to be highly discoloured at an early date.

Still he wasn't dismayed! For some reason, he seemed almost pleased with himself! Within five minutes, Skinner had succeeded in getting into trouble on similar lines with Bulstrode of the Remove, Hobson of the Shell, and Tomlinson of the Fifth, as a result of which he had collected a nice crop of very noticeable injuries.

The amazing thing about it was that the remains of Skinner, after that hectic five minutes, were just as cheerful as ever!

To a crowd of inquirers, anxious to know whether he had gone completely off his rocker, Skinner gave an explanation of his unusual conduct.

"The fact is," he said, "I received a letter from my Uncle Matt by the midday post to say he'll be looking me up this afternoon. Now I haven't seen this particular uncle for years, but I happen to remember that he was always a great lover of boxing who had no time for fellows who didn't go about with thick ears and other souvenirs of battle.

"The last time I saw him, he didn't give me a penny, although he's simply rolling in cash; and my pater afterwards told me it was because he thought I looked too mollycoddled and soft!"

"This time, I'm taking no chances—and if I don't get a fiver out of him on the

strength of these black eyes and bruises. I shall be very much surprised!"

We regret to have to inform our readers that by this time Skinner is a very much surprised man.



As soon as Uncle Matt saw Skinner, he snorted! "Disgusting! Monstrous! Pah! Huh! Gr-r-rgh!" and a lot of equally unfriendly remarks. While Skinner was dizzily wondering what it all meant, he turned on his heel and returned with all speed to the station!

From inquiries since made at home, Skinner has learned that during the last year or so Uncle Matt has given up the sporting life and become a staunch supporter of the Anti-Boxing Crusade instead.

Naturally, he did not approve of Skinner's battle-scarred appearance.

Nor, we might mention, did Mr. Quelch, when he spotted it. Up to the time of going to press, Skinner is still unable to sit down as a result of his interview with the master of the Remove over the matter.

Looks as if this is Skinner's unlucky week, chaps!

FOREIGN PHRASE BOOKS ANNOY LODER

"Foreign phrase books annoy me intensely," remarked Loder, the celebrated black sheep, gay spark, rorty dog, and general sportsman, to a "Greyfriars Herald" representative the other day. "I shall probably take another trip to the Continent this summer; but I question very much whether I shall trouble to take a phrase book with me."

"Look at the useless phrases they translate! 'Direct me, if you please, to the Art Museum,' for instance. Who the thump wants to go to a blessed art museum? Then there's 'It's a fine day to-day, is it not?' Absolutely futile!"

"The sort of phrase they ought to translate is: 'Do you happen to know a surr snip for the two-thirty to-day?' There'd be some sense in that. But they don't do it!"

For once in a way we quite agree with Loder. It really is time somebody set about revising those old-fashioned works of reference and brought them up to date. In case any of our readers feel like doing it, here are a few suggestions for phrases which would be found particularly useful to travellers of Loder's stamp.

"Hi, you! Gimme a packet of cigarettes and look sharp, too!"

"Get out of my way, hang you!"

"Where's the nearest casino (racecourse)?"

"My luck is simply atrocious."

"I deny that I have pinched this lady's (gentleman's) countess."

"It is my money, not hers (his)."

"I'm English; you'd better not arrest me!"

"All right; I'll go quietly."

"There is no need to use handcuffs."

Working on these lines, you could soon produce a new, original and awfully useful phrase book. Loder would simply love it!

That's Our Conclusion!

Alonso Todd has sent us his new 300,000-word novel to criticise.

Our chief objection to it is that it lacks finish!

Chuck It, Skinner!

Skinner says he would have made an excellent bowler if he'd been born before the advent of overarm bowling.

Ho always did strike us as an under-handed kind of chap!

Without Foundation!

Billy Bunter is willing to admit the truth of the allegation that he recently put a shilling on a horse.

He wishes to deny most strongly, however, the story that he is thinking of changing his name to Billy Punter!

Just So!

The fact that Upper Fourth raggies bound and gagged Mauleverer in his study last week didn't put the languid lord off his stroke; he simply went on snoozing.

Sleeping the sleep of the trussed, so to speak!



Bolsover major is always boasting that he can beat most Removies at weight-lifting. Johnny Bull, however, took him on, and shifted a weight which Bolsover had failed to budge!



William George Bunter's record time for washing and dressing is sixty seconds. Fifty-nine seconds were occupied in dressing—the remaining second being ample, in Bunter's opinion, for his ablutions!



When Skinner sneaked up behind his cronies, Snoop and Stott, and cracked their heads together, they fell upon him vengefully! As Bob Cherry remarked, each delight to bark and bite!



George Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, is an all-round athlete. He cleared the pole jump at 7 feet 10 inches, beating Tom North by an inch! Loder tried, but came a cropper!



Tom Redwing has constructed a sailing dinghy entirely on his own. It occupied him 400 hours. The craft gave every satisfaction when tested by "Smithy" and "Reddy" in Pegg Bay!



S. G. I. Field is an adept at 'hrowing the Australian boomerang. He learned the knack from an Aborigine, and can throw it 150 feet, the boomerang returning to his hand!